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Enacting Perfection:
Buddhajñānapāda's Vision of a Tantric Buddhist World

By

Catherine Dalton

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Buddhist Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Jacob Dalton, Chair
Professor Alexander von Rospatt
Professor Robert Sharf
Professor Munis Faruqi
Professor Harunaga Isaacson

Spring 2019

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Abstract

Enacting Perfection:
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Catherine Dalton

Doctor of Philosophy in Buddhist Studies

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Professor Jacob Dalton, Chair

This dissertation focuses on the life, writings, and thought of the Indian Buddhist yogin and tantric exegete Buddhajñānapāda, remembered as the founder of the Jñānapāda School of tantric theory and practice. Through an in-depth study of his *oeuvre*, I attempt to excavate the late eighth-century world of tantric Buddhism as it emerges in his narrative, doctrinal, and ritual writings. I focus, in particular, on his most important composition, the *Dvītyakramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* in which Buddhajñānapāda uses autobiographical narrative and visionary revelation to frame assertions about the nature of reality and outline rituals that lead to its realization. I examine the key features of both the doctrinal positions articulated in his works, as well as the ritual systems through which a yogin was to embody and realize those doctrines, showing that Buddhajñānapāda was an important and innovative figure in the realms of both tantric Buddhist doctrine and ritual. The dissertation also includes a Tibetan edition and an annotated English translation of the *Dvītyakrama*.

For Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche,
whose kindness cannot be repaid.

Acknowledgements

To the Glorious One who has perfected bliss, who is endowed with the radiance of nondual profundity and luminosity; to his nature, which is peace, the blazing sixteenth part, the ultimate essence; and to the three supreme gurus who teach that, I constantly bow with my three activities of body, speech, and mind equally.

-Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvitiyakrama*

I would not have undertaken my doctoral studies in the first place had it not been for many years of encouragement from Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche to do so. His advice and support have remained instrumental throughout the process of researching and writing this dissertation, and indeed throughout many aspects of my life in the nearly twenty years that I have had the fortune to know him. The lightheartedness and joy of Tsikey Chokling Rinpoche has remained a constant source of inspiration for me through this whole process. I am also grateful for the advice and support of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and Dzigar Kongtrül Rinpoche, whose encouragement, along with that of Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, helped me to move forward as I came up against what were, for me, some of the more difficult materials in this dissertation. I have done my best to adhere to their guidance, as well as to maintain the academic rigor that they encouraged me to uphold. My personal approach to the materials studied in this dissertation comes from a foundation in the Buddhist tradition that was built through years of study with these and other teachers. In addition, the lamas, khenpos, and monks of Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery and the nuns of Nagi Gompa Nunnery, both located in Kathmandu, Nepal, have, over a period of nearly twenty years now, taught me not only how to approach Buddhist texts and practices, but how to appreciate Buddhism as a living tradition, a lesson that has been of direct and great benefit in helping me come to understand Buddhajñānapāda's 8th/9th-century world.

My advisor at the University of California, Berkeley, Dr. Jacob Dalton, whom I met at the "Translating the Words of the Buddha" conference in India in 2009, has supported and guided my work with kindness and generosity throughout the entire process. It was in my coursework with Jake that I first came to know of Buddhajñānapāda, and where Jake's passion and curiosity about the "intermediate period" of tantric Buddhism in which Buddhajñānapāda lived and wrote inspired my own. Jake's support and guidance throughout the process of the dissertation research and writing has been essential in helping me bring this project to fruition. The other members of my dissertation committee have each contributed to this dissertation in essential ways. Dr. Alexander von Rospatt has been a kind and generous source of personal and academic inspiration and support since we first met in Kathmandu when I was applying to Berkeley. Meeting periodically with Alex throughout the years of my dissertation research and writing to discuss my work, whether in his office at Berkeley or a garden restaurant in Boudhanath, has invariably left my horizons widened and my understanding of these materials richer. Dr. Harunaga Isaacson was kind enough to join my committee just a few months before I submitted my dissertation, but his great generosity with comments, corrections, and guidance during this final period of my work has significantly improved, and even shaped, the final form and content of this dissertation. Haru's kindness, and especially his unflagging enthusiasm for the material, provided much inspiration that enabled me to bring this work to completion.

My coursework and exam on Chinese Buddhism with Dr. Robert Sharf broadened my knowledge of Buddhist traditions, and Bob's guidance on the dissertation writing process was of great help to me in navigating my way through such a long and varied writing project. My exam on Indian History with Dr. Munis Faruqi, and his astute questions about my work at the outset of the research process helped me to frame my research within, and learn so much more about, the wider historical context of the Indian subcontinent. Munis also taught me much of value about the historian's craft.

I could not have completed my edition and translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* without the assistance of Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, who patiently and insightfully answered my many questions on the text and its commentary nearly every day over a period of several months in Boudhanath, Nepal in the winter and spring of 2016. The series of teachings that Khenpo Rinpoche gave to the monks of Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery for several months that winter, and which I was generously permitted to attend, were also instrumental in opening Buddhajñānapāda's writings to me. Khenpo Karma Gyurme of Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery kindly read through the entirety of the Tibetan translation of the *Ātmasādhānavatāra* with me, clearing up confusing points in the text, as well as confirming my suspicion that it is a genuinely difficult work!

Dr. Péter-Dániel Szántó very generously (and often unasked) shared with me quite a bit of his unpublished work related to Buddhajñānapāda. His draft Sanskrit editions of several texts were of tremendous help for me in writing the dissertation. A number of exciting Skype conversations with Péter as we worked together on a short encyclopedia article on Buddhajñānapāda were also very helpful for me as I moved forward with writing my dissertation. Likewise, Dr. Kimiaki Tanaka kindly shared with me an unpublished English translation of some of his work on Buddhajñānapāda, enabling me to read research that was otherwise inaccessible to me, as it was published in Japanese. Dr. Tanaka has also generously gifted me copies of several of his difficult-to-acquire publications on Buddhajñānapāda's writings over the past few years. Dr. Christian Wedemeyer generously shared with me a written copy of a paper that he delivered in a conference on tantra at Berkeley in 2014 (an updated version of which is fortunately soon to be published in 2019), which turned out to be of great relevance to my own research. Hubert Decler kindly shared with me several of his unpublished articles concerning Buddhajñānapāda's life story. I am also grateful to Hubert for introducing me to Tibetan culture when I was an undergraduate student on the SIT Tibet Studies program that he directed in the spring of 2000, and for his continued friendship since then. Dr. Ryūta Kikuya shared with me several of his published but difficult to access articles (in Japanese) on topics related to Buddhajñānapāda, and has been kind and encouraging of my work. Dr. Adam Krug generously shared with me his newly submitted dissertation before it was otherwise available, and several other helpful articles.

Dr. James Gentry offered helpful insights at several points in the research and writing process, as did the other members of Rangjung Yeshe Institute's Faculty Research group in the spring of 2015—Dr. Gregory Sharkey SJ, Joanne Larson, Dr. Karin Meyers, and Dr. Philippe Turenne. Dr. Douglas Duckworth and Dr. Thomas Doctor kindly helped me with some queries on points of philosophy. Dr. Mattia Salvini gave some very helpful guidance on points of Sanskrit and *kāmasāstra*. Dr. Takahiko Kameyama and Atsuki Nakagami generously helped me look through several articles written in Japanese. Ryan Damron patiently listened to quite a number of extensive and excited monologues (I

occasionally let him get a word in) on my research over the years, and always offered constructive feedback once I finally stopped to breathe. Ryan has also been consistently enthusiastic regarding my requests to look at a number of short Sanskrit passages with me along the way. Somānanda Dharmanātha has been a generous source of all sorts of information, as well as a delightful sounding-board for many discoveries and ideas over the years of my research and writing. Our dear friends Zack Beer and Sara Rojo have given my husband Gerry and me a warm and welcome (and migrating!) second home during our many visits to the Bay Area while I have been working on this dissertation. Many, many more friends and family members, too numerous to name, have supported me with their friendship and love over the years of my doctoral work, and not complained too much when I gave overly long and detailed answers to their polite questions about my dissertation topic.

Dr. William Waldron was the first to introduce me to Buddhism in 1998 in a seminar (on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*; what a place to start!) during my undergraduate studies at Middlebury. The inspiration from that and several other courses with Bill at Middlebury have carried me all the way through a PhD in Buddhist Studies, and I am grateful for his friendship throughout these years.

Ten years of study, teaching, and translating at Kathmandu University's Centre for Buddhist Studies at Rangjung Yeshe Institute prior to taking up my doctoral studies at Berkeley gave me a solid foundation in Buddhist Studies and Tibetan language, as well as leading to many lasting friendships in the unique and beautiful community there, and to making a real home in Kathmandu; I look forward to returning to the faculty at RYI next year. My MA thesis advisor at RYI, Dr. Andreas Doctor, helped extend my horizons beyond the world of Buddhist philosophy to the world of Buddhist ritual practice, a shift that has influenced the trajectory of all of my subsequent academic research. I am also grateful to the late Greg Whiteside, the principal at Rangjung Yeshe Institute for more than 20 years, for many years of friendship and for his always enthusiastic encouragement of my studies. I wish I could have celebrated the completion of these studies with Greg.

I may be one among the last generation of Buddhist Studies graduate students working in Tibetan who had the tremendous pleasure to know the encyclopedic scholar and consummate gentleman, the late, and it is no exaggeration to say great, Gene Smith. I had the fortune to spend time with Gene on several occasions, always on his visits to Kathmandu where I was living at the time, but this was before I began my doctoral studies, so I was not able to pick his brain about the topic of my dissertation. However, I cannot even conceive of having written this dissertation without the aid of Gene's BDRC (formerly TBRC), which has placed the entire Tibetan canon and more at my fingertips, and I have thought of Gene often and with gratitude throughout the process of my research and writing.

My parents, Phil and Sara Dalton, have lovingly supported me in every single endeavor I have ever undertaken. They also provided a warm and cozy space with pleasant company for the writing of the early part of this dissertation in their beautiful mountain home.

And last, but very, very far from least, my husband, Gerry Prindiville, has nurtured and supported me throughout the entire process of my graduate studies, especially during the dissertation phase, providing encouragement when I needed encouragement, care

when I needed care, space when I needed space, and love all the way through. It is difficult to imagine having made it through all of this without Gerry's love and support.

It has been a great personal pleasure for me to have had the time and energy to devote myself to the research and writing of this dissertation over the past several years. Generous fellowships from the Robert E. Ho Foundation, FLAS, UC Berkeley, and the Khyentse Foundation have provided the material assistance that enabled me to focus on research and writing, making the completion of this dissertation possible.

Over the course of researching and writing this dissertation I have gratefully received advice, guidance, and clarifications from a number of eminent Buddhist teachers and learned scholars. The flaws and errors that inevitably remain are entirely my own.

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Part II **Tibetan Edition and English Translation of Buddhajñānapāda's** ***Dvītyākramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama***

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Introduction

You are the father and the mother of all beings! Protect me and others from great danger! Master, lord of beings, dispel suffering! Emptier of the three realms, greatest of the great, you protect beings! You are beginningless, unvoiced, lacking the upper part of the *bindu*, the revered, the letterless, producer of nectar, the empty bliss of great joy! In order to benefit beings, O you Great Protector, please bestow happiness—the happiness that is great bliss—upon all the buddhas. The path to awakening, not stained by faults, which pacifies all types of suffering, and quenches thirst, liberates from the waves of *samsāra*, and places one in happiness—please teach this path which is not fathomed [even] by those who are victorious over all things!

-Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvīṭīyakrama*

These are the words that Buddhajñānapāda (ca. 750-820), remembered as the founder of the Jñānapāda School of tantric exegesis and practice, records himself as having cried out during a vision of the awakened bodhisattva Mañjuśrī¹ who laid out a tantric *maṇḍala* before Buddhajñānapāda's very eyes. Mañjuśrī's response to his supplication, also meticulously recorded by the Indian Buddhist yogin and tantric exegete, became the basis for Buddhajñānapāda's system of tantric theory and practice focused on the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. In his *Dvīṭīyakramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*, *The Oral Instructions on Training in the Suchness of the Second Stage*,² the text that records this visionary experience and its contents, Buddhajñānapāda articulates his vision of the tantric Buddhist path through a combination of autobiographical narrative, doctrinal reflection, and ritual liturgy. This dissertation focuses on the figure of Buddhajñānapāda and attempts to excavate the late eighth- and early ninth-century world of tantric Buddhism as it emerges in his narrative, doctrinal, and ritual writings.

Among the most influential of the Buddhist tantras, the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* and the rituals it inspired revolutionized Buddhist practice in India in ways that are still coming to be fully appreciated. Buddhajñānapāda played an important role in shaping the doctrinal and practice traditions associated with it, and thus too tantric Buddhism more generally. Fortunately, quite a number of primary sources are available that allow access into Buddhajñānapāda's life and thought. Eleven works that can be confidently attributed to him are preserved in Tibetan translation in the Tibetan canon, two of which survive in their original Sanskrit and three more of which survive partially in Sanskrit. It is, however, his *Dvīṭīyakrama*, quoted above, that serves here as the primary framework for my presentation of Buddhajñānapāda's life, writings, and thought. This truly unique composition defies even the concept of literary genre, spanning as it does autobiographical narrative, visionary experience, doctrinal claims about the nature of reality, and detailed ritual instructions for a variety of tantric Buddhist practices. Consequently, every other piece of writing attributed to Buddhajñānapāda can be related in some way to the content of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, and it serves as an exceptionally broad window through which we can see into his world—the world of tantric Buddhist north India at the close of the eighth century and the opening of the ninth.

In the extraordinary framing narrative of his *Dvīṭīyakrama*, Buddhajñānapāda describes the years he spent traveling through India, studying and practicing with several of the important philosophical teachers and tantric gurus of his day, culminating in the vision of his most exalted

¹ I discuss the identity of Mañjuśrī as he appears in Buddhajñānapāda's works in Chapter Two.

² I explain my departure from the title usually given for this work, the *Dvikramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*, in Chapter Two, and also in note 3 of my translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

guru, Mañjuśrī himself, who gave Buddhajñānapāda the instructions that form the core of his system of tantric theory and practice. In claiming such visionary inspiration for his writings and directly recording Mañjuśrī's words ensconced within the narrative of his own personal autobiography, Buddhajñānapāda places the *Dvītyākrama* at an unusual juncture between scripture and authored treatise. This unique position simultaneously gives the work the authority of scripture and yet links its contents, in a very personal way, with Buddhajñānapāda himself. His use of autobiography is unique within Indian Buddhist writings—apart from the *Dvītyākrama* and a composition by one of Buddhajñānapāda's disciples, Śākyamitra, which it clearly inspired, I know of no other autobiographical narratives in the whole of Indian Buddhist literature.

The practice of Buddhist tantra, and indeed arguably of Buddhism as a whole, is about re-envisioning identity. Buddhajñānapāda's writings participate in this process in a number of ways. His doctrinal reflections on the nature of both reality and personal identity, as well as his ritual and liturgical writings stem, our author himself tells us, from his personal experience of realization, a transformation effected through tantric Buddhist practice: “Due to abiding within the profound and luminous *maṇḍala*, I remain in unceasing *nirvāṇa*,”³ he boldly states in the *Muktilaka*. Through his teachings and writings, he attempted to bring about such a state of realization in his disciples, as well. Thus Buddhajñānapāda's works at once describe the necessary doctrinal knowledge and ritual means for the re-construal of identity that constitutes tantric Buddhist liberation, but they also—particularly his autobiographical narrative and statements—serve as his personal articulation of what it means to embody that awakening.

The period in which Buddhajñānapāda was writing was one of great creativity and development within tantric Buddhism, as new kinds of yogic practices were emerging and being incorporated into the tantric yogin's repertoire, and yet this period remains not well studied or understood by scholars of Indian tantric Buddhist history.⁴ Buddhajñānapāda's writings provide us with an invaluable window into this important period. As we will see, much of what developed, both doctrinally and ritually, in this period continued to have a tremendous impact on later tantric Buddhist traditions, and further studies of works and authors from this period are essential to our coming to a better understanding of Indian Buddhist tantra. This dissertation contributes to an improved appreciation and understanding of the early development of the “mature” form of Indian tantric Buddhism that took place in this period.

Previous Scholarship and Place of this Study in the Field

The present study of the life, writings, and thought of Buddhajñānapāda will add to a number of recent studies on Indian tantric Buddhism. While the field of tantric Buddhist studies is still in its early stages, the past fifteen years have seen a significant upsurge in the number of scholars writing on Indian Buddhist tantra and the publication of translations and studies of Indic tantric Buddhist materials. Many of the book-length scholarly writings on Indian Buddhist tantra have taken the form of investigations into a single tantra or tantric system.⁵ More recently,

³ *des na zab gsal dkyil 'khor bas// nga ni rtag tu mya ngan 'das//* (*Muktilaka*, D 47a.7-47b.1; P 57b.5-58a.1) The Dpe sdur ma edition (962) reads *da*, rather than *nga* in the beginning of the second line here but the Derge (47b.1), Peking (56b.8) and Vaidyapāda (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 49a.7) clearly read *nga*. Vaidyapāda's commentary makes the point even more clear, adding “I and others...” (*bdag sogs*) (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 49a.7).

⁴ J. Dalton (2004), for example, has referred to the period from 750 to 850 CE as an “ill-defined” “intermediate period” in Indian tantric Buddhist history.

⁵ See Snellgrove (1959) on the *Hevajra-tantra*; Beyer (1973) on the practices of Tārā; Fremantle (1971), Wayman (1977), and Matsunaga (1978) on the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*; Skorupski (1983) on the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra*; Tsuda (1974) on the *Samvarodaya Tantra*, Dorje (1987) and Garson (2004) on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*; Davidson (1982 and 1995) on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*; Hodge (1995 and 2003) on the

others have focused on the translation or study of a single tantric commentary or practice manual.⁶ Only a few scholars have made a book-length study of a single topic within Indian tantric Buddhism⁷ or attempted to give a broader picture of tantric Buddhism as a whole.⁸ Several recent works have addressed tantric Buddhism from a topical perspective, examining questions of tantric Buddhist apologetics (Onians 2003) and hermeneutics (Campbell 2009; Kittay 2011; Wedemeyer 2013). Finally, Ronald Davidson (2002) has recently made some important initial steps towards outlining a social history of Buddhist tantra while Christian Wedemeyer (2006; 2013) has offered some helpful critiques of Davidson's work, further refining our understanding of this topic.⁹ Prior to this dissertation, however, no systematic book-length scholarly study of a single Indian tantric Buddhist author has been undertaken.¹⁰

Moreover, despite his important role in the development of Buddhist tantra and the fact that a number of his writings are extant (most of them in Tibetan translation rather than their original Sanskrit) not a single one of Buddhajñānapāda's eleven surviving works has been fully edited or translated into any modern language (though editions of short parts of two of his works have been published),¹¹ and only four later Indian Jñānapāda School texts have received scholarly attention. The scholarly work on later Indian Jñānapāda School texts includes three editions of the *Guhyasamājamandalavidhi*, an important Jñānapāda School *maṇḍala* ritual composed by Buddhajñānapāda's direct disciple Dīpaṃkarabhadra;¹² two editions—one of

Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-tantra; Wallis (2002) on the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*; English (2002) on the tantric practices of Vajrayoginī; Kwon (2002) and Weinberger (2003) on the *Sarvathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*; Wallace (2004 and 2010) on the *Kālacakra-tantra*; Gray (2007) on the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra*; Szántó (2012) on the *Caṭuspīṭha*; Damron (2014) on the *Mahāmāyā-tantra*.

⁶ See Sferra (1990) on the *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga*; Skorupski (2002) on the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*; Onians (2003) on the *Abhiṣekaniruktī*; Tomabechi (2006) on the *Pañcakrama*; Wedemeyer (2007) on the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*; Campbell (2009) on the *Pradīpodyotana*; Wright (2010) on the *Piṇḍīkṛta*; Mori (2009) on the *Vajrāvalī*; Kittay (2011) on the *Vajramālā*; Klein-Schwind (2012) on the *Dāśatattvasaṃgraha*; Isaacson and Sferra (2014) on the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*; Tribe (2016) on the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*; and Szántó and Mallinson (forthcoming) on the *Amṛtasiddhi*.

⁷ See Sakurai (1996 (in Japanese)) on tantric initiation and Tanaka (1996 (in Japanese)) on the *maṇḍala*.

⁸ See Snellgrove (1987), and Tribe (2002). Snellgrove's several chapters on Buddhist Tantra are the most extensive attempt to present and overview of the topic. Tribe's is one chapter in a larger book on Buddhist thought in India, but attempts to give a comprehensive introduction to and overview of Indian Buddhist tantra.

⁹ Péter Szántó will be soon concluding a five-year postdoctoral fellowship at Oxford with the purpose of pursuing further research in the social history of tantric Buddhism.

¹⁰ The hagiographies of the Indian tantric Buddhist masters Tilopa (Torricelli and Naga 1995) and Naropa (Guenther 1963) have been translated from Tibetan hagiographical sources, but this is a very different project from the systematic scholarly study of those figures based on Indic sources.

¹¹ The surviving Sanskrit verses of Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* have, however, been edited in a number of publications by Tanaka and Kano (see note 13 below) and more still have been reconstructed, or partially reconstructed, in Péter Szántó's draft edition of the *Sāramañjarī*, Samantabhadra's commentary on Buddhajñānapāda's *sādhana*. Sakurai (1996) has edited verses 85-125 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in an appendix to his book (in Japanese) on tantric initiation.

¹² The three editions—none of which is accompanied by a study of the text—are, respectively, an edition prepared by Sabine Klein-Schwind, proof-read and revised by Harunaga Isaacson and circulated online (<http://www.tantric-studies.uni-hamburg.de/e-texts/bauddha/GuSaMaVi.txt>), one published in the journal *Dhīh* (2006), and, most recently, an edition edited by Bahulkar (2010). Szántó 2015 includes in a footnote a diplomatic edition of the final verses of the Sanskrit text as found in a newly discovered Cambridge manuscript of the text. These verses were missing (or reconstructed from the Tibetan) in the earlier editions which were based on the Göttingen manuscript, previously thought to be the only surviving recension, and which lacks the final folio of the text. Several scholars are currently working on this important composition. Ryūta Kikuya is in the process of bringing to publication his study (in Japanese) of the *pūrvasevā* section of the *maṇḍalavidhi* (Kikuya, personal communication, March 2014), and Harunaga Isaacson's student, Daisy Cheung, is planning to conduct her doctoral dissertation research on the text (Isaacson, personal communication, March 2014).

which also includes an introduction and a translation—of a fragmentary commentary of Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī*, a commentary on Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*;¹³ a study, including an edition and English translation, of Kṣitigarbha’s *Daśatattavasamgraha*, an eleventh-century Indic text pertaining to the Jñānapāda School;¹⁴ and a brief study and Sanskrit edition of the *Mañjuvajramukhyākhyāna*, a later Nepalese ritual manual based on the Jñānapāda School *maṇḍala*, but which also incorporates elements from Ārya School ritual texts.¹⁵

Buddhajñānapāda’s tradition and his works have been the subject of several articles (and received mention in several books) by Japanese scholars headed by Hakuyu Hadano, Kimiaki Tanaka, and Ryūta Kikuya, mainly in Japanese.¹⁶ Buddhajñānapāda has received brief mention in a number of Western-language publications,¹⁷ and more recently in two short English-language articles about his life and tradition,¹⁸ but prior to the present dissertation there have been no book-length studies of this important figure, his writings, or his tradition. In sum, the research that has thus far been done on Buddhajñānapāda and his writings has focused primarily on 1. establishing his dates and identifying his works and those of his main disciples, 2. publishing the fragmentary Sanskrit text of his important *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and identifying the few extant Sanskrit sources for his other writings or excerpts thereof, and 3. describing, in brief, some of the ritual structures found in his tantric works and in the works of other Indian authors of his tradition. No edition or comprehensive analysis of any single work by Buddhajñānapāda, let alone of his *oeuvre* as a whole, has yet been attempted, nor has any scholarly attention at all been paid to his doctrinal positions or his philosophical writings.¹⁹

Contents of this Dissertation

¹³ The editions of the *Sāramañjarī* are by Kimiaki Tanaka (2017), whose recent publication also includes an introduction and an English translation of the fragment of the commentary, and Péter-Dániel Szántó (unpublished), who has made an edition of a much longer recension of the same, still fragmentary, commentary, which he has very generously shared with me. The great advantage of the manuscript that Szántó’s edition is based upon is that it also contains many extensive quotations from other works, including Buddhajñānapāda’s *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, which is otherwise not available to scholars in Sanskrit.

¹⁴ Klein-Schwind 2012. Klein-Schwind’s dissertation is important in its highlighting and unpacking of a number of ritual details related to the Jñānapāda tradition and is therefore an especially important resource for studying Buddhajñānapāda’s ritual writings.

¹⁵ Tanaka 2018.

¹⁶ The Japanese scholar Hakuyu Hadano (1950 and 1951) researched the dates and context of Buddhajñānapāda and outlined his writings. More recently Kimiaki Tanaka (1991, 1995, 1996, 2007, 2010, and 2017) has published some Sanskrit verses from Buddhajñānapāda’s *Samantabhadra-sādhana* and a brief analysis of the *maṇḍala* and some of the ritual structures from that *sādhana*. Munenobu Sakurai (2007 and 2009) has written two short articles on the ritual structures of the *sbyor ba bdun* and the *pañcākārābhisambodhi* as handed down in the Jñānapāda School. Ryūta Kikuya (2000, 2000b, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2012b) has written a number of short articles on other ritual structures, including the *śaḍāṅgayoga*, the two stages of tantric practice (*utpattikrama* and *utpannakrama*), and the three *bindu* yoga in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and his tradition. Kazuo Kano (2014) has recently published a Sanskrit edition of verses 19-55 of the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.

¹⁷ The most substantial of these brief references are in Davidson 2002: 311-15, J. Dalton 2004: 13, Tomabechi 2008: 173-74, and Sanderson 2009: 93.

¹⁸ Szántó 2015 and C. Dalton and Szántó forthcoming. I also delivered a conference paper on the relationship of Buddhajñānapāda’s practice system with later tantric literature (C. Dalton 2014).

¹⁹ Tanaka (2018, 29) mentions a three-page 1985 article by Chizuko Yoshimizu that “argues the Jñānapāda school from the side of philosophy for the first time.” According to Tanaka’s bibliography, the article is titled “On the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika Theory in the Jñānapāda School,” but as the article is in Japanese I have been unable to consult it, and I am unsure whether it focuses on Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings or those of later authors in his tradition.

This dissertation is a first attempt at beginning to fill this lacuna, and entails a two-fold approach to the material, both analytical and textual. Part I of the dissertation is a study, in which I introduce and give an overview of Buddhajñānapāda’s life and work, and of both the doctrinal positions and ritual systems set forth in his writings. Part II is a Tibetan edition and annotated English translation of his most important work, the *Dvītyākramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*. Although the *Dvītyākrama*’s focus is—as indicated in its title—on the second stage of tantric practice, this work is so all-encompassing that each of the major topics discussed in the study of his thought is referenced at some point within the *Dvītyākrama*, and the text therefore serves as a framework, or an anchor, around which my study of Buddhajñānapāda’s life and thought is arranged. Because so little scholarly research has been done on Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and his thought until now, what I have been able to include in this dissertation is really just an initial step towards coming to understand and appreciate the quite influential work of this unique individual.

Part I: Study

My study of Buddhajñānapāda’s life and thought is divided into three sections focusing on narrative, doctrine, and ritual. The section on narrative introduces Buddhajñānapāda’s life and writings and discusses the narrative structure of his *Dvītyākrama*. Chapter One begins with a translation of Buddhajñānapāda’s own autobiographical narrative from the *Dvītyākrama*, supplemented by the commentary on that narrative from his disciple and most prolific commentator, Vaidyapāda. The chapter gives a brief overview of the historical and doctrinal context for understanding Buddhajñānapāda’s life and writings—tantric Buddhism in 8th-century India—and then presents what we know about his life, including identifying some of his gurus and their possible influences on his thought, as well as his important disciples. I then address Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, assessing the question of the authorship of the works attributed to him, and provide a short summary of each of his extant compositions. Chapter Two looks at the *Dvītyākrama*, specifically, examining the unique narrative structure of that work and its function in Buddhajñānapāda’s *oeuvre*. Here I take a look at the identity of Mañjuśrī as the “author” of most of the *Dvītyākrama*’s content, and provide a brief overview of the narrative structure and contents of that text.

The second major section of the study, on doctrine, takes a look at some of the doctrinal positions set forth in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. I constrain myself in this section to examining the views set forth in his tantric works, looking at some of the possible influences—both Buddhist and non-Buddhist—on his thinking, and noting what I have found to be some of the most prominent or remarkable doctrinal features of his writings. Chapter Three first considers Buddhajñānapāda’s articulation of nondual wisdom as the nature of all phenomena and of the mind itself, as well as the very source of the phenomenal world. I then examine the structure of the higher tantric path, by means of which nondual wisdom is first “obtained” and then cultivated, as it is set forth in his writings, drawing attention to Buddhajñānapāda’s reformulation of Śākyamuni Buddha’s own awakening narrative to hew to what seem to have been the most important features of that path. I show how Buddhajñānapāda’s writings privilege the tantric path—especially that of the perfection stage—and its result, and finally examine the relationship between ritual and the rhetoric of non-action as found in his writings on the perfection stage. Chapter Four examines the question of the relationship between Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and the early literature of the Great Perfection, with which it shares some significant doctrinal similarities.

The third major section of the study focuses on ritual. Here I look at the ritual systems of the generation stage, the perfection stage, and finally tantric initiation according to Buddhajñānapāda's writings. Parts of these chapters are more descriptive than analytical, primarily because the dearth of prior detailed studies of Buddhajñānapāda's ritual systems made it necessary to first describe the practices in question before discussing them. Chapter Five begins by looking at the division of tantric practice into two stages, which Buddhajñānapāda was one of the early authors to make. I first examine the distinction between the two stages as we find it articulated in his writings, and then give an overview of the different generation stage *sādhana*s he composed, before focusing on the most important of these, his *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, and some of its unique features. Chapter Six, which focuses on the perfection stage practices in Buddhajñānapāda's writings, first examines the way the term "the perfection stage," and its synonym "the second stage," are used in Buddhajñānapāda's works, and then takes a look at the perfection stage practice of the three *bindu* yogas described in Buddhajñānapāda's *Dvītyākrama* and his *Muktilaka*. In this chapter I also examine several points related to the sexual yogic practices that were an important part of the perfection stage in his system. Chapter Seven looks at the ritual sequences for the higher tantric initiations as they are described in both Buddhajñānapāda's writings and those of his disciple Vaidyapāda, and shows that initiation in the early Jñānapāda School already included the major elements of tantric initiatory practice found in the mature form of Indian tantric Buddhism.

In the Conclusion to Part I, I look at some of the ways in which Buddhajñānapāda's thought moved into and influenced the later tantric tradition, and offer some concluding reflections about his life, work, and thought. Chapter Eight examines the relationship between Buddhajñānapāda's writings and the *Samājottara*, showing the ways in which his thought, and in particular his ritual systems, have moved forward into the later tantric tradition. My concluding reflections bring together the major points of the preceding chapters, and offer some suggestions for further research.

Part II: Tibetan Critical Edition and Annotated English Translation of the Dvītyākrama

Part II of the dissertation consists of a Tibetan critical edition and an English translation of the *Dvītyākrama*. While this work was originally composed in Sanskrit (and most fortunately we find a scattered few parallel verses in later works that are still extant in Sanskrit), the *Dvītyākrama* does not survive in its original language, and I have therefore made an edition and English translation based on the 11th-century Tibetan translation of the text by Kamalaguhya and Lha Yeshe Gyaltzen that is preserved in the Tibetan canon, using all five extant recensions of the Tibetan Tengyur. I was unable to find any extra-canonical witnesses of the work. I did, however, also consider the testimony of the citations of the *Dvītyākrama* in Vaidyapāda's commentary, the *Sukusuma*, and occasionally selected these over what was found in all available recensions of the root text. While making an edition of a translation rather than of the text in its original language is, of course, not ideal, a careful study of Buddhajñānapāda's writings, including editing them—even those that are only available to us in Tibetan translation—is an important step in coming to understand his thought. Certainly, there are places where the Tibetan translation gives us an imperfect rendering of the original text, but on the whole the benefits of editing the Tibetan translations of Indic texts that only survive in Tibetan overwhelmingly outweigh the uncertainties and risks of occasional misunderstanding that are inevitable in studying such works without being able to consult the Indic originals. Understandably Buddhologists who are Sanskritists prefer to edit Sanskrit Buddhist texts, and Tibetologists tend to focus on works originally composed in Tibetan, but the fact remains that there are a

tremendous number of incredibly valuable Indian Buddhist texts—especially tantric ones—extant only in their Tibetan translations. While it is not the case that scholars completely ignore these works, scholars working in the West, at least, generally tend not to edit them.²⁰ Editing the Tibetan translations of Indic works, though, entails approaching these texts very closely, thus allowing for a more precise study of their contents and, as in the case of the *Dvīṭyākrama*, can mean opening up important aspects of the history of Indian tantric Buddhism that would otherwise remain obscure. For me, the process of editing the *Dvīṭyākrama* was invaluable in coming to a better understanding of Buddhajñānapāda’s text. I hope that this edition of the Tibetan translation of the *Dvīṭyākrama* will encourage and inspire scholars, despite the challenges of such an endeavor, to edit and carefully study more of the treasure trove of Indic Buddhist writings that survive only in Tibetan translation.

The annotated English translation of the *Dvīṭyākrama* that follows the edition in Part II was made to be able to stand alone. While this allows the interested reader to access the translation without reading my study of Buddhajñānapāda’s works, it also means that some of the notes therein repeat points that are made in the study of Buddhajñānapāda’s thought in Part I. There are also, however, many points taken up in the notes to the translation that are not examined in further detail in the study. Many of the annotations include short translations (with a basic edition of the translated passages, based on the Derge and Peking recensions of the work) from Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma*, a commentary on the *Dvīṭyākrama* that I found indispensable in coming to understand Buddhajñānapāda’s incredible, but sometimes rather opaque text.



Buddhajñānapāda lived, practiced, and wrote during a period of great creativity and growth within the Indian tantric Buddhist tradition, but one that is nonetheless still in the process of emerging into the light of historical study and analysis. His writings provide an important window into this period, and it is my hope that both the study of his life and thought, and the edition and annotated translation of his *Dvīṭyākrama* offered here will serve as a helpful contribution to shedding light on the historical development of tantric Buddhist traditions in India. It has been my great pleasure over the past years to venture a bit into Buddhajñānapāda’s world. I now invite you, the reader, to join me for some steps on that journey.

²⁰ There are certainly exceptions; for example, Vogel 1965. More typically, however, Tibetan editions of Indic Buddhist texts are made by scholars who are also producing a Sanskrit edition of the same text; for example, Wedemeyer 2009 and Isaacson and Sferra 2014.

Part I:
A Study of Buddhajñānapāda's Life, Works, and Thought

Narrative

Chapter One

Meeting Mañjuśrī: Buddhajñānapāda's Life and Works

The great bodhisattva Mañjuśrī looked upon me with a smiling face and said “Excellent!” three times. With this vajra song, like an echo, he taught to me the playful dance and the suchness of all phenomena.
-Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvitiyakrama*

A Life in Context

1. *Buddhajñānapāda's Autobiographical Account with Vaidyapāda's Commentary*¹

In a town called Takṣaśilā,² in the area of Khapir,³ in the land of Magadha, I pleased the guru Haribhadra,⁴ who had attained great fame. I received his instruction and studied many scriptures I investigated those and derived understanding.⁵ |3|

Then, in order to inspire faith in beings the revered master speaks about the story of his own encounter with suchness with the verse beginning with, **In a town called....** Our great guru first [went to] the region of **Magadha**, which is in the direction of Nālandā. The **area** is called **Khapir**. In that area there is a **town called Takṣaśilā**. In one part [of that town] there lived the **very famous Haribhadra**, a master who was respected by many noble beings and who had fatigued [himself] with [the study of] many different sections of the scriptures. Among these, he had received the Prajñāpāramitā and others. [Buddhajñānapāda] served him, **received instruction** on the Prajñāpāramitā, and **studied many other scriptures** [under his tutelage]. He **investigated** [all of] this using logic.⁶

¹ What follows is the autobiographical narration, in verse, of his life extracted from Buddhajñānapāda's *Dvitiyakrama*, which is translated in full in Part II of this dissertation. I have here interspersed Buddhajñānapāda's verses with excerpts from his 9th-century Indian disciple Vaidyapāda's prose commentary, the *Sukusuma*, on these specific verses. A portion of Vaidyapāda's commentary on these verses has been translated in Davidson (2002, 311-13). My reading of Vaidyapāda parts ways with Davidson's translation in a number of places. Vaidyapāda's commentary to the autobiographical sections of the *Dvitiyakrama* is the only Indian account of Buddhajñānapāda's life that survives; all other extant accounts were composed by Tibetan authors several centuries or more after Buddhajñānapāda's passing, and are all clearly based on Vaidyapāda (and, over time, each other). I address some of these later accounts in this chapter and in the notes to this translation.

² I address all of the toponyms in Buddhajñānapāda's account and Vaidyapāda's commentary, along with their possible identifications, below in my discussion of his life, so I will not address them in the notes here.

³ kha pir] D C S V(P), kha bir P N V(D). As in the notes to my translation of the *Dvitiyakrama* in Part II of the dissertation I only record in the notes to the root verses here significant variants that affected my translation choices. For the full critical apparatus of the root verses see the edition of the *Dvitiyakrama*, also in Part II.

⁴ Haribhadra's name is here and in Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* given as *Bzang po seng ge*, rather than the more common *Seng ge bzang po*. There is little doubt, however, about his identity, as Vaidyapāda explains that Buddhajñānapāda studied Prajñāpāramitā with this guru, a well known Prajñāpāramitā scholar, and Buddhajñānapāda himself wrote Prajñāpāramitā works. Later Tibetan histories also corroborate that this guru is Haribhadra.

⁵ rig 'byung. I remain slightly unsure about this line. Vaidyapāda's commentary does not address this phrase, and concludes his comments on Buddhajñānapāda's studies with a gloss of the term *rnam dpyad*, “I investigated.”

⁶ da ni 'gro ba rnam dad par bya ba 'i phyir/ rje btsun bdag nyid kyes de kho na nyid mnyes pa 'i lo rgyus gsungs pa/ dbus kyi yul chen zhes pa la sogs pa 'o// de la bdag cag gi bla ma chen pos dang por yul khams ni dbus zhes bya

At Śrī Nālandā, in response to the one of noble birth called *Guṇamitrā,
 With a [still] ignorant mind⁷ I composed some treatises joyfully.
 Thinking to benefit those who live there with those treatises,
 [While] I stayed there, I composed and taught. |4|

At the great Buddhist Institute of Nālandā there lived a *bhikṣunī* called *Guṇamitrā, who was brahmin by birth and had stable faith. At her request [Buddhajñānapāda] composed several texts. [He writes that he composed these] with a [still] ignorant mind because, although his mind was engaged in the Prajñāpāramitā, he had not yet realized suchness exactly as it is. [The texts he wrote there] were a few [compositions] including a summary of the Prajñāpāramitā,⁸ which he wrote and taught joyfully. Those Prajñāpāramitā texts were intended to benefit [those who received them].⁹

Then I travelled to the land of Uḍḍiyāna, the source of all positive qualities,
 [Where there lives] someone known as Vilāsavajra¹⁰
 From him I learned much and investigated, as well.
 And also, in that same place, I pleased a guru called Guṇeru¹¹ |5|

Then, two hundred and thirty *yojanas* to the north of Magadha is a place that is called **The Source of All Qualities** because most of those who have been blessed by the *ḍākiṇīs* come from there. It is [also] called **Uḍḍiyāna**. [Buddhajñānapāda] traveled to that place. The great *ācārya* **Vilāsavajra**, born in a part of Uḍḍiyāna called Ratnadvīpa, who had accomplished the *mahāmudrā* and was also known as Śrī Viśvarūpa,¹² lived there. With him [Buddhajñānapāda] studied many Kriyā and Yoga tantras. He also put great effort into examining them. Also, in an[other] area of that very same sacred land [of Uḍḍiyāna] there lived the great yoginī who had

ste/ na lendra'i phyogs so// yul gyi ming ni kha pir (pir] P, bir D) *zhes bya 'o de ni grong khyer rdo 'jog ces bya ba yod do// de yi phyogs gcig na 'phags pa mang pos bkur ba'i sde pa gzhung sna tshogs kyis dub pa las/ shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la sogs pa thob pa/ bzang po seng ge zhes bya bar grags par rab tu thob pa zhig yod pa de mnyes par byas nas pha rol tu phyin pa'i lung thob nas de las gzhan pa'i gzhung yang mang du thos pas de nyid la 'thad bsgrub kyis rnam par dpyad* (dpyad] D, spyad P) *cing gnas pa la* (Sukusuma, D 89a.7-89b.2, P 107a.3-7).

⁷ *blun blos*.

⁸ The Prajñāpāramitā summary likely refers to the *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* (Tōh. 3798), a Prajñāpāramitā commentary, which does seem likely to have been a composition that Buddhajñānapāda wrote early in his career, and whose colophon mentions *Guṇamitrā as the petitioner (*Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*, D 189a.5).

⁹ *śrī* (śrī] D, śrī P) *na le ndrār rig pa'i chos sgwra chen po na gnas pa'i dge slong ma yon tan bshas gnyen zhes bya ba* (ba] P, 'D) *bram ze'i rigs su skyes pa dad pa brten ba zhig yod pa de'i ngor/ blun blos zhes te pha rol tu phyin pa'i blos gnas pas de bzhin nyid ji lta ba bzhin du ma rtogs pa'i phyir ro// rab tu byed pa phyogs 'ga' rtsom byed pa'i zhes pa ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i bsdus don la sogs pa nyung shas cig la blo 'phrod ('phrod] D, brod P) *pas rtsom pa dang ston pa byas te/ pha rol tu phyin pa'i gzhung des phan gdags par bya ba'i phyir ro//* (Sukusuma, D 89b.2-89b.4, P 107a.7-107b.1).*

¹⁰ *Jo sgeg rdo rje*. The name Vilāsavajra is usually rendered into Tibetan as *Sgeg pa'i rdo rje*, but *'jo sgeg* is a synonym for *sgeg pa*, so the identification here seems rather certain, and is again corroborated by later Tibetan histories.

¹¹ *gu ne ru*] S P V (D and P), *gu ne nu* D C N.

¹² In the colophon to the Sanskrit text of Vilāsavajra's commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, it is stated that the author was also known as Śrī Viśvarūpa, and that he lived in Ratnadvīpa, exactly as Vaidyapāda here states (see Tribe 2016, 26).

encountered suchness called **Guṇeru**,¹³ who had received the instructions on the stages of the inconceivable.¹⁴ [Buddhajñānapāda] went to see [this master] and **attended her**.¹⁵

And received teachings from her.¹⁶ At the northern gate¹⁷ of that place
I pleased a girl of sixteen years named Jātig Jālā,¹⁸
Mahālakṣmī. For eight months
I took her instruction, and having received it, I achieved accomplishment. |6|

¹³ I believe the grammar of the passage clearly indicates that Guṇeru is herself the great yoginī, in which assessment it seems I am preceded by Gö Lotsāwa and Tāranātha (*Deb ther sngon po*, 447; Roerich 1976, 367; *Bka' babs bdun* 103; Templeman 1983, 7; See note 15 for the Tibetan of the passage). Chögyal Phagpa, however, identifies Guṇeru as a yogin (*rnal 'byor pa*) rather than a yoginī (*Gsang 'dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa'i rim pa*, 611).

¹⁴ *Bsam kyis mi khyab pa'i rim pa'i man ngag*. It is unclear whether this is meant to refer to the title of a text or not. A text of precisely this title is extant in the Tengyur (**Acintyakramopadeśa*, *Bsam kyis mi khyab pa'i rim pa'i man ngag* Tōh. 2228), where it is attributed to one **Kuddālīpāda* (*tog rtse zhabs*). The same work survives in a second Tibetan translation, apparently of a slightly different recension of the Sanskrit text, in a compendium of Sakyapa works; within the Sakyapa tradition the work is understood to represent one among a series of eight subsidiary instructions connected to the Lamdre (*lam 'bras*) root text (Davidson 2005, 194-95). The **Acintyakramopadeśa* is also considered, in the Tibetan tradition, one among a set of six Indian *mahāmudrā* works called the *Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* (*Snying po skor drug*) (Krug 2018, 328-9). The Sanskrit of the work, under the title *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*, survives and has been edited (Samdhong and Dwivedi). I have not had the opportunity to compare this against the Tibetan translations and am unaware of any such comparison having been reported in modern scholarship. (Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for first drawing my attention to the existence of this Sanskrit edition.) Regarding its author and period of composition, in his *History of Buddhism in India* Tāranātha mentions a **Kaudālīka/Mahā-koṭālī* (*tog rtse ba che ba*), who Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya have taken to refer to the same figure as Kuddālīpāda, and who Tāranātha says lived during the reign of King Gopāla, the Pāla king who reigned prior to Devapāla and Dharmapāla, who ruled when Buddhajñānapāda composed his writings (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, 262). However, the work as it survives at present focuses on perfection stage practices and was understood, at least by the 15th-century Tibetan scholar Ngorchen, to be based on the *Samputa-tantra* (though Davidson (2005, 196) notes that the connection is “only indirect” and Isaacson (personal communication) has also expressed some doubt as to the connection with the *Samputa*) (See also Davidson 2005, 195-96; Stearns 2006, 135). It is questionable whether this text is early enough to be the referent here in Vaidyapāda’s commentary. Krug (2018, 341) identifies the work as focused on the generation and perfection stage yogas of the Yoginī tantras. Apart from its content, further clues to the period of the author may be found in a lineage list given in the work itself, culminating in the author’s own guru, who he styles Bhadrāpāda (Krug 2018, 335-6). For now, whether or not Vaidyapāda is referencing this particular work must remain a question. It is possible, as well, that the text as written down was meant to preserve a tradition of oral instructions that had not yet been previously recorded, and that such a set of oral instructions (which of course would have been supplemented over time) could conceivably be Vaidyapāda’s intended referent here (Harunaga Isaacson, personal communication).

¹⁵ *de nas yul dbus las byang du dpag tshad nyis brgya sum cu'i phyogs na yon tan kun 'byung zhes te mkha' 'gro mas byin gyis rlob pa phal cher de las 'byung ba'i phyr/ u rgyan gyi yul la bya'o// der bgrod nas de'i phyogs gcig nor bu'i gling du sku 'khrungs pa'i phyag rgya chen po thob pa/ dpal sna tshogs gzugs zhes kyang grags pa/ slob dpon chen po 'jo sgeg rdo rje zhes bya ba yod de/ de la bya ba dang rnal 'byor gyi rgyud mang du thos nas/ 'bad pas rnam par dpyad pa yang byas so// yang gnas de nyid kyi phyogs gcig na bsam kyis mi khyab pa'i rim pa'i man ngag thob pa/ rnal 'byor ma chen mo de nyid brnyes pa gu ne ru zhes bya ba zhig gnas pa de'i drung du bgrod nas de mnyes par byas te/ (Sukusuma, D 89b.4-7, P 107b.1-107b.5).*

¹⁶ While Buddhajñānapāda does not specify her gender, and the unusual name gives no indication of gender, either, I have followed Vaidyapāda’s identification of this guru as a great yoginī.

¹⁷ *byang phyogs chab sgo*. See C. Dalton and Szántó (forthcoming) for a differing reading of this term where the term *chab sgo* is interpreted as a proper noun. I prefer to read it here as simply “gate,” especially given Vaidyapāda’s reading, which includes some grammatical particles omitted for metrical reasons in the *Dvitiyakrama* itself. Vaidyapāda reads: *u rgyan gyi gnas de yi byang phyogs kyi chab sgo na/ (Sukusuma, D D 89b.7; P 107b.6).*

¹⁸ *Dzā* (dzā] D C V (D), dza S P N, ‘dza’ V (P)) *thig dzā* (dzā] sugg. em. based on V (D); dza D C S P N, dzva V (P)) *lā* (lā] sugg em; la D C S P N).

He **studied** many [Yoga]niruttara¹⁹ tantras [with this master] and, having received this guru’s instructions, including *samayās* and initiations, he immediately put them into practice. Then he had a dream in which a deity told him, “**At the northern gate** of the sacred land of Uḍḍiyāna there is a **sixteen-year-old** outcaste **girl** called **Jātig Jālā**. She is [actually] the high-born yoginī **Mahālakṣmī**. Go there and you will achieve your aims.” So [Buddhajñānapāda] went there and befriended her, and then **served her for eight months**. Realizing that [Buddhajñānapāda] had an interest in the *mahāmudrā* she bestowed upon him some subtle **instructions**, and simply by [receiving them Buddhajñānapāda] **attained the accomplishment** of Jambhala.^{20 21}

Then I went to the village of *Ko no dze*²² in the area of Jālandhara²³
And met Bālīpāda,²⁴ who had attained great renown.
Having pleased him, I studied the scriptures and received many instructions.
Then I went to “the place with sky trees” in the Koṅkana, to the south. [7]

There is a **village** called *Ko no dze* in the area called **Jālandhara**. In one part [of that village] there lived one called **Bālīpāda** whose understanding of the tantras that emphasize wisdom was like a river. [Buddhajñānapāda] went before that master, **served him, studied scriptures and received instructions**, and then arduously applied himself to training [in these]. Three hundred *yojanas* to the south of Madhya there is an area called the **Koṅkana**. There is a place there called **The Place with Sky Trees**. Why is it called that? Because it is a place where the **trees** appear to lack roots and [yet] coil and spread upward.²⁵

¹⁹ Vaidyapāda here writes only Niruttara tantras (*bla med rgyud*) but given that he has in the earlier passage referred to Yoga tantras and in a later passage of the *Sukusuma* (D 108a.6-108b.1) he explicitly distinguishes between Yoga tantras (*rnal ’byor rgyud*) and Yoganiruttara tantras (*rnal ’byor bla na med pa’i rgyud*) (the latter of which he equates in that passage with Dākīṅī tantras (*mkha’ ’gro ma’i rgyud*)), I believe it is likely that Yoganiruttara tantras is what is intended here.

²⁰ I am not completely certain of the meaning of this passage. *des kyang phyag rgya chen po la brod pa yod* (sugg. em., yin D, P) *par rtogs nas/ phra mo’i lung stsal ba tsam gyis dpal jam bha* (dzam bha] D, ‘dza mbha P) *la’i grub pa thob par gyur to//* (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.2). Gö Lotsāwa rephrases the line from Vaidyapāda in a way that supports my reading (*des kyang slob dpon phyag rgya chen po la brod par rtogs na*) (*Deb ther sngon po*, 447). Later in the *Dvītyākrama* Buddhajñānapāda himself mentions receiving provisions from Jambhala, and he is also credited with composing three Jambhala *sādhana*s.

²¹ *bla na med pa’i rgyud mang du thos par byas nas ji skad du gsungs pa’i dam tshig dang dbang la sogs pas bla ma de’i lung thob nas gzod bsgom pa la zhugs so// lhas rmi lam du bstan pa u rgyan gyi gnas de yi byang phogs kyi chab sgo na/ gdol pa’i rigs dzā* (dzā] D, ‘dza’ P) *thig dzā* (dzā] D, dzva P) *la zhes bya ba la bu mo lo bcu drug lon pa zhig yod kyis/ de ni rigs las skyes pa’i rnal ’byor ma la kṣmī chen mo zhes bya ba yin gyis der song dang khyod kyi dgongs pa ’grub par ’gyur ro zhes pa dang/ ’phral du song nas de dang bshes su ’thams nas/ zla ba brgyad kyi bar du mnyes par byas so// des kyang phyag rgya chen po la brod pa yod* (yod] sugg. em., yin D, P) *par rtogs nas/ phra mo’i lung stsal ba tsam gyis dpal dzam bha* (dzam bha] D, ‘dza mbha P) *la’i grub pa thob par gyur to//* (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.7-90a.2, P 107b.5-8)

²² *Ko no dze*] D C S P N V(P), *ka no dze* V(D).

²³ dzā lendha] D C, dzā lāndha S P N

²⁴ bā li pā da] D C, ‘ba’ mo pa ta S P N. Vaidyapāda’s commentary has the name translated as *byis pa chung ba’i zhabs* which supports the reading from D and C (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.2). Szántó reconstructs the name as Bālīkapāda and suggests that the name may even read Bālīhikapāda as reflective of a master from the area of Balkh (Szántó 2015, 542; see also C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming).

²⁵ *de nas yul dzā lendha ra* (dzā lendha ra] D, dza len tha ra P) *zhes bya ba na grong khyer ka no dzer* (ka no dzer] D, ko no dzer P) *zhes bya ba yod de/ de’i phyogs gcig na shes rab gtso bor byed pa’i rgyud la bsam pa chu klung lta bur gyur pa byis pa chung ba’i zhabs zhes bya ba’i drung du bgrod nas/ de mnyes par byas nas de’i gzhung thos shing lung yang thob par byas te bsgom pa yang nan tan du byed do// de nas yul dbus nas lho phyogs su dpag tshad sum brgya yod pa na yul ko ngka na* (ko ngka na] D, kong ka na P) *zhes bya ba yod de/ de la nam mkha’i shing ldan zhes bya ste/ ci’i phyir zhe na/ rtsa ba med par shing rnams ’khril* (‘khril] P, la ’khris D) *shing steng du bras* (bras] P, bris D) *pa lta bur gnas pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.2-4, P 107b.8-108a.3).

[There] the lord of siddhas, renowned as Pālitapāda²⁶
Was surrounded by his disciples who could perform miraculous feats.
All of them regularly received requisites, clothing, food, and wealth.
I bowed at the feet of this sublime guru for nine years. |8|

In one area of that place there lived the **lord of siddhas**, named **Pālitapāda**, whose understanding of the tantras emphasizing method was like a great river, and who was held back [from achieving awakening] by only a single lifetime. He was **surrounded** by a retinue of **disciples who could perform miracles**. Who were they? They were the brahmin Catrara,²⁷ the brahmin Guhyaparta,²⁸ the *kṣatriya* Mañjuśrī, and the vaiśya Pūrṇabhadra, the *śūdra* Dīpaṅkara, the *śūdra* Karṇaputra, the prostitute Ālokī, and the prostitute Sādhuśīlā. All of their **requisites** [including] **clothing** and **food** were provided by the Goddess Vasudharā²⁹ who provided them daily with ten *māṣa* of gold, half a string of pearls, and three hundred *kārṣāpaṇa*.³⁰ [Buddhajñānapāda] **bowed** before this **sublime guru for nine years** and [himself] became held back [from achieving awakening] by only a single lifetime.³¹

I listened to the great *Samāja-tantra* together with its commentaries for eighteen [months].³²
[I said] “I have not realized it” and the great guru said the same.
Thinking, “Until I realize this,³³ anything else is useless,”
I affixed the volume around my neck and set off to the north. |9|

With the verse, **I listened to the great Samāja-tantra...** the master’s intention is as follows. **The Samāja-tantra** here means [its] yogas. **Its commentary** means the butcher girl Vimalamutrī(!?)³⁴ who was trained in [those] yogas. **I listened...together...for eighteen** means

²⁶ *bā li pā da*] D C, *ba li pa ta* S P N. Vaidyapāda (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.4; P 108a.4) identifies the teacher as *bsrung ba’i zhabs*. Szántó has recently provided evidence from a Sanskrit manuscript of the *Sāramañjarī*, a commentary to another of Buddhajñānapāda’s works, that this teacher’s name was Pālitapāda (Szántó 2015, 542-50; see also C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming).

²⁷ This is an unusual name. It could possibly be a corruption of Catura, which has the advantage of at least being attested as a name (Harunaga Isaacson, personal communication).

²⁸ I concur here with Davidson that we might here prefer Guhyapatra. Harunaga Isaacson (personal communication) also suggests a perhaps slightly less likely possibility of Guhyāvarta, though neither of these appears to be attested as a personal name.

²⁹ *lha mo nor gyi rgyun zhes bya ba*. Gö Lotsāwa (*Deb ther sngon po*, vol I, 448) normalizes the name to its more common *lha mo nor rgyun ma*.

³⁰ Monier Williams indicates that a *kārṣāpaṇa* is a coin that weighs differently depending on the material it is made of.

³¹ *yul de’i phyogs gcig na thabs* (thabs] D, thab ma P) *gtso bor byed pa’i rgyud la gongs pa chu klung chen po lta bur gyur pa skye ba gcig gis thogs pa grub pa’i dbang phyug bsrung ba’i zhabs zhes bya ba gnas te/ de yang rdzu ‘phrul dang ldan pa’i slob mas bskor ba’o// de dag kyang gang zhe na/ bram ze tsa tra ra zhes bya ba dang/ bram ze gu hya pa rta* (hya pa rta] D, ha par ta P) *zhes bya ba dang/ rgyal rigs ma ṅju śrī zhes bya ba dang/ rje’u rigs pū rṇa bha dra* (dra] D, tra P) *zhes bya ba dang/ dmangs rigs* (rigs] D, ris P) *dī paṅ* (paṅ] D, paṅ P) *ka ra zhes bya ba dang/ dmangs rigs kha rṇa pu tra zhes bya ba dang/ smad ‘tshong ma ā lo ki* (ki] D, gi P) *zhes bya ba dang/ smad ‘tshong ma’i sa du shi la zhes bya ba ste/ de kun gyi yo byad dang gos zas ni lha mo nor gyi rgyun zhes bya ba des nyi ma re re zhing gser gyi ma sha bcu dang mu tig gi ha ra phyed dang kā rṣa pa ṇa* (kā rṣa pa ṇa] D, ka rṣa pa na P) *sum brgya sbyor ro// bla ma dam pa de’i drung du lo dgu’i bar* (bar] D, par P) *du ‘dud cing skye ba gcig gis thogs par byas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.4-7, P 108a.3-7).

³² *bar du mnyan*] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), *rab tu mnyan* D C S P N.

³³ ‘di] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), ‘dir D C S P N.

³⁴ *D bi ma la mu dri*, *P bi ma la mu tri*. This is an unusual name, indeed. Her name is reported by Tāranātha as Mālamodi (*mā la mo di*) (*Bka’ babs bdun*, 104). Perhaps this should be Vimalamurtī, Vimalamudrā, or even

that [Buddhajñānapāda] practiced [with her] for **eighteen** months.³⁵ “**I have not realized it**” means that the waves of [Buddhajñānapāda’s] **realization** had not poured forth. When **the great guru, as well**, said “I have also not realized it,” he was somewhat discouraged. **Thinking, “Until I realize this, anything else is useless,”** he placed his seal on a **volume** of the *Samāja-tantra*³⁶ and, **tying this around his neck**, he **set off to the north**.³⁷

Behind Vajrāsana is the forest called Kuvaca
Which is full of tigers and bears—a terrifying place.
There I spent six months, and thus realized the suchness of phenomena.
I met an emanated monk together with two gurus. |10|

[Buddhajñānapāda] went to a **forest called Kuvaca**, which is **behind Vajrāsana**. [His] intention was as follows: “I remain among sentient beings who turn their gaze away from the Essence of Enlightenment. There are many **tigers and bears**, and so forth, [which are the manifestations] of desire and the other [afflictions]; it is a truly **terrifying place**. Since I want to be free from that, I will **remain** [here] **for six months** invoking [the deity?]³⁸ and practicing, by means of which I will **realize the suchness of phenomena**.” And how did he realize that? [This is explained] in the lines beginning with **I met an emanated monk...** This **monk** was an **emanation** of the Great Vajra Holder. His lower robe was open,³⁹ he had made a turban out of his dharma robe and was plowing a field. And the **two gurus** were an ugly woman with a small child and a white female dog with markings [on her coat].⁴⁰ When he met them, since he did not [yet] have waves

Vimalamudrī? Or, taking Tāranātha’s reporting into account, Vimalāmodā or Vimalāmodinī? Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for suggesting these possibilities on what this name may have originally been.

³⁵ Gö Lotsāwa’s periphrasis of Vaidyapāda supports my translation of this phrase (*gnas der rnal ’byor ma rnams dang lhan cig pa ’i spyod pa yang zla ba bco brgyad kyi bar du mdzad do/*) (*Deb ther sngon po*, 448; Roerich 1976, 368-9).

³⁶ This is one of the more enigmatic passages in Vaidyapāda’s text, and here I have not followed Gö Lotsāwa’s reading. Vaidyapāda’s commentary reads *rang gi phyag rgya ’dus pa ’i glegs bam du byas nas*. Gö Lotsāwa (*Deb ther sngon po*, 448; Roerich 1976, 369) has understood this to mean “he transformed his consort into the form of a volume of text” (*rang gi phyag rgya ma glegs bam gyi gzugs su bsgyur te/*), and Tāranātha (*Bka’ babs bdun*, 105) follows suit: “He had there a consort named Mālamodi whom he transformed into a volume of the *Samāja[-tantra]* and affixed to his neck...” (*der mā la mo di zhes bya ba ’i phyag rgya zhig yod pa ’dus pa ’i glegs bam du bsgyur te mgul du btags nas/*). (I believe that Templeman (1983, 72) has mistranslated this passage in Tāranātha.) Both readings of Vaidyapāda are grammatically possible, but I am somehow hesitant to translate following Gö’s and Tāranātha’s interpretation of the phrase, in part because a consort does not figure in any later part of the account.

³⁷ *’dus pa ’i rgyud chen zhes pa la sogs pa ni bla ma ’i dgongs pa ste/ de la ’dus pa ’i rgyud ni rnal ’byor rnams so/ de ’i ’grel pa ni rnal ’byor bslabs pa sme (sme) D, dme P) sha can gyi bu mo ’i bi ma la mu tri’o (tri’o) P, dri’o D// de dang bcas par bco brgyad bar du mnyan pa ni zla ba bco brgyad kyi bar du bsgrub pa’o// bdag gis ma rtogs pa zhes pa ni rtogs pa ’i dba’ rlabs ma ’phros pa’o// bla ma chen pos kyang bdag gis kyang ma rtogs zhes gsungs pa dang/ thugs cung zad chad nas ’di ma rtogs par gzhang ni don med do bsams nas/ rang gi phyag rgya ’dus pa ’i glegs bam (bam) D, bam P) du byas nas mgul du btags nas de las byang phyogs su bgrod de/ (Sukusuma, D 90a.7-90b.2; P 108a.7-108b.2).*

³⁸ Gö Lotsāwa definitely takes this to mean invoking the deity, and he specifies that it is done by means of a wrathful ritual (*lha drag tu skul ba ’i cho ga la brison pas*) (*Deb ther sngon po*, Vol. I, 448-9; Roerich 1976, 369 has omitted this detail in his translation.)

³⁹ Here I have emended *byi ba ’i sham thabs can* to *bye ba ’i sham thabs can* following Gö Lotsāwa and Tāranātha who both have this reading (*Deb ther sngon po*, Vol. I, 449; *Bka’ babs bdun*, 104).

⁴⁰ This account is further embellished in Chögyal Phagpa’s 13th-century version of the encounter, which I have translated below, but already in Vaidyapāda’s telling, nearly everything that could be wrong with this “emanated monk” is already there: he is accompanied by a woman (monks are celibate!) who has a son (monks are celibate!), is plowing a field (monks are prohibited from tilling the soil and other such farmwork!), and wearing his dharma robe on his head with his lower robe open (monks are to dress in a respectful and seemly fashion!).

of realization the guru [Buddhajñānapāda] felt no shame in front of them. Then, the monk knowing that [Buddhajñānapāda] was engaged in the supreme mantra conduct, in order to bring forth his vision [of true reality?],⁴¹ emanated the *maṇḍala* of Mañjuśrī.⁴²

On the eighth day of the seventh month, during [the constellation] Puṣya
At the time when Mṛgaśīrṣa and Hasta are fading,⁴³ in the early morning, right at dawn,
Towards the emanated *maṇḍala-cakra* of Mañjuśrī⁴⁴
I made a fervent supplication to understand the meaning. |11|

What was the date [when this happened]? **On the eighth day during [the constellation] Puṣya, at the time when Mṛgaśīrṣa and Hasta are fading.** What was the month? **The seventh month.** What was the time? **In the early morning, right at dawn.** [Buddhajñānapāda] was asked if he had faith in the emanated *maṇḍala* or the guru, and when he replied that he had faith in the *maṇḍala* the monk together with the gurus immediately [left and] entered a small house.⁴⁵ Then

⁴¹ *de la spyan ras kyis bca' ba'i phyir*. This line is also puzzling, and I am unsure of the translation. Gö Lotsāwa has paraphrased his understanding quite straightforwardly, “in order to benefit him...” (*de la phan pa'i phyir*) (*Deb ther sngon po*, Vol I, 449).

⁴² *rdo rje gdan gyi rgyab na ku ba tsa zhes bya ba'i tshal yod de der phyin pa'o// de yi dgongs pa ni byang chub kyi snying po las kha phyir bltas pa'i sems can rnams kyi nang na bdag gnas te/ de na 'dod chags la sogs pa'i stag dang dred la sogs pa mang zhing shin tu 'jigs pa'i sa ste (ste] D, te P) / bdag de las thar par 'dod pa'i phyir der zla ba drug bskul ba dang bcas pa'i bsgrub pas gnas pas (pas] P, pa'i D) chos rnams kyi de bzhin nyid rtogs so zhes so// ji ltar rtogs she na/ sprul pa'i dge slong zhes pa la sogs pa'o// de yang rdo rje 'dzin pa chen pos sprul pa'i dge slong bye (bye] sugg. em. based on *Deb ther sngon po* and *Bka' babs bdun*, byi D, P) ba'i sham thabs can chos gos las thod byas pa gcig zhing rmo zhing gnas pa dang/ bla ma gnyis te bu chung dang ldan pa'i bud med ngan pa (pa] D, ma P) dang khyi mo dkar ba mtshan ma can no// de rnams dang phrad pa las rtogs pa'i rlabs (rtogs pa'i rlabs] D, rtog rlabs P) mi mnga' bas bla mas de rnams la ma khrel to// de nas dge slong gis sngags kyi spyod pa'i mchog la gnas par shes nas/ de la spyan ras kyis btsa' ba'i phyir/ 'jam dbyangs kyi dkyil 'khor sprul lo// (*Sukusuma*, D 90b.2-5; P 108b.2-7).*

⁴³ Puṣya is the eighth lunar mansion in Indian astrology; Mṛgaśīrṣa is the fifth; Hasta is the thirteenth.

⁴⁴ *'jam dpal dbyangs kyi (kyi] S P N, kyis D C) dkyil 'khor 'khor lo (lo] S P N, lor D C) sprul pa la*.

⁴⁵ Gö Lotsāwa reports the account nearly verbatim from Vaidyapāda, but Roerich has understood it differently and translated it as follows: “(His teacher) asked him: “Do you have faith in the teacher or the *maṇḍala*?” and he replied: “I have faith in the *maṇḍala*.” (The *maṇḍala* then vanished), and he found himself and the teacher staying inside a small house.” (*Deb ther sngon po*, 449; *Blue Annals*, 369). This appears to be a misreading of the text on Roerich’s part, as neither Vaidyapāda nor Gö makes any indication that the *maṇḍala* vanished, nor indeed does Gö report that Buddhajñānapāda entered the small house. The account, in Gö Lotsāwa’s rendering simply states that “He replied that he had faith in the *maṇḍala* and then the monk together with the two gurus entered into a small house.” (*dge slong bla ma gnyis dang bcas pa khang pa chung ngu zhig gi nang du zhugs par gyur to//*) (*Deb ther sngon po*, 449). Because Gö did not earlier follow Vaidyapāda in clarifying that the “two gurus” referred to the woman and the dog, Roerich presumably had not seen the phrase “two gurus” before, and apparently took it to mean Buddhajñānapāda and Mañjuśrīmitra. However, in Vaidyapāda’s account, which Gö has in this section reproduced almost exactly, it was clear from the earlier reference that the two gurus are the woman and the dog and do not include Buddhajñānapāda. Gö goes on to explain that after Buddhajñānapāda made his supplication, the lord of the *maṇḍala*—and here the term used, *dkyil 'khor gyi gtsa bo*, more likely refers to a deity rather than a guru—gave him instructions. There is no indication in Gö’s account that the *maṇḍala* was somehow re-emanated, because he never indicates that it disappeared. In Gö’s account, just as in Vaidyapāda’s, the monk and the woman and dog simply responded to Buddhajñānapāda’s preference for the *maṇḍala* rather than the guru by leaving and going inside a house, and Buddhajñānapāda then received his instructions directly from Mañjuśrī, the main deity of the *maṇḍala*. The disappearance and reappearance of the *maṇḍala* is clearly articulated in the account by Chögyal Phagpa, who reports two versions of the story, the first in which Buddhajñānapāda says he wishes to receive initiation from the *maṇḍala* and the monk says, “Fine, receive it from the *maṇḍala*!” and leaves, and another version in which the *maṇḍala* vanishes after Buddhajñānapāda says he wishes to receive initiation from the deity, upon which Buddhajñānapāda supplicates the monk who then re-emanates the *maṇḍala* from his heart center at dawn (*Gsang 'dus ye shes zhabs kyi nram thar dang rgyud pa'i rim pa*, 614). I have translated this full episode from Chögyal

the great guru [Buddhajñānapāda] made the following **supplication** to the *maṇḍala* of Mañjuśrī **in order to** [be able to] **receive** suchness.^{46 47}

Then, the great bodhisattva Mañjuśrī
Looked upon me with a smiling face and said, “Excellent” three times.
With this vajra song, like an echo, he taught to me
The playful dance and the suchness of all phenomena. |19|

Then, as an introduction to Mañjuśrī’s speech the great guru said **Then... Then** means immediately after the supplication. He is called **Mañjuśrī** (“the gentle voiced one”) [because] he satisfies beings with his **gentle** and sweet **voice**, since he is the pure form of the great wisdom of all the buddhas. He is called a **bodhisattva** because he is integrated with **awakening** (*bodhi*), not because awakening is his goal. For that very reason he is called **great**, and is distinguished from the [bodhi]sattvas on the ten *bhūmis*. He **looked upon me with a smiling face** means he was quite delighted because of having realization of the ultimate state. [The fact that] he **said “Excellent” three times** indicates that he was pleased by [Buddhajñānapāda’s display of] various modes of conduct that accord with having obtained suchness, by his supplications made with speech that accords with that meaning, and by his having observed everything to be profound and genuinely luminous. The rest was already explained. **Like an echo** has the sense of being **like an echo**, which makes a sound but is not truly established. A **song** that is like a **vajra** is a **vajra song**, which is a pleasing song. With the words **he taught [this] to me**, the great guru makes others feel confident.⁴⁸

[What follows, amounting to ninety percent of the text of the Dvitiyakrama, are Mañjuśrī’s instructions to Buddhajñānapāda, recorded in Mañjuśrī’s first-person speech, and concluding with a prediction and command given by Mañjuśrī, in which he addresses Buddhajñānapāda directly in the second person. With the conclusion of these teachings, and the dissolution of his vision, Buddhajñānapāda returns to his autobiographical account.]

Phagpa’s account below. Amye Zhab gives both versions of the story from Chögyal Phagpa’s account (*Gshin rje chos ’byung*, 48a.1-4) and Dudjom reports only the version of the account where the *maṇḍala* disappears (Dudjom 1991, 494-96).

⁴⁶ *tshes gang zhe na/ mgo dang lag gnyis yol dang tshed brgyad rgyal la bab ces* (ces] D, zhes P) *so// nam zla gang zhe na/ ston zla ra ba zhes so// dus gang zhe na/ tho rangs skya rengs shar dus su zhes ’o// der sprul pa’i dkyil ’khor dang bla ma la mos pa dris pa dang/ sprul pa’i dkyil ’khor la mos par bka’ tsal pa dang/ dge slong bla ma dang bcas pa de nyid du khang pa chung du cig gi nang du zhugs so// de nas bla ma chen pos ’jam pa’i dbyangs kyi dkyil ’khor la de bzhin nyid blang bar bya pa’i phyir gsol ba ’di skad du btab bo//* (Sukusuma, D 90b.5-7; P 108b.7-109a.2).

⁴⁷ I have omitted here the seven verses of Buddhajñānapāda’s supplication to Mañjuśrī, as these verses (v 12-18) do not contain autobiographical content. See Part II for the full translation of the root text.

⁴⁸ *da ni ’jam pa’i dbyangs kyi gsung la ’jug pa’i tshig bla ma chen po’i zhal snga nas gsungs pa/ de nas zhes pa la sogs pa’o// de nas zhes pa ni gsol ba btab pa’i de ma thag pa’o// ’jam dbyangs zhes pa ni ’jam zhing mnyen pa’i dbyangs kyi ’gro ba rnams tshim par byed pa ste/ sangs rgyas thams cad kyi shes rab chen po rnam par dag pa’i phyir ro// de nyid byang chub dang ’dres pa’i phyir byang chub sems dpa’ ste/ byang chub la dmigs pa ni ma yin no// de nyid kyi ni chen po zhes te sa bcu’i sems dpa’ rnams dgar ba’o// ’dzum pa’i bzhin bltas zhes pa ni shin tu rangs pa ste/ mthar thug pa’i gnas rtogs pa’i phyir ro// legs zhes lan gsum gsungs zhes pa ni/ de bzhin nyid thob pa dang rjes su mthun pa’i spyod pa ji snyed pa dang/ don gyi rjes su ’brang ba’i gsung ji snyed pas gsol ba ’debs pa dang/ thams cad zab mo dang yang dag par gsal bar dmigs pa la thugs rangs pa’o// gzhan ni bshad zin to/ /sgra brnyan lta bur zhes pa ni brag ca lta bu ste grags kyang ma grub ces pa’i don to// rdo rje lta bu dang ldan pa’i glu ni rdo rje glu* (ni rdo rje glu] D, P om.) *ste dga’ bar byed pa’i glu’o// de lta bus bdag la bstan zhes bla ma chen pos gzhan yid brtan par mdzad pa yin no//* (Sukusuma, D 93a.1-5; sP 111b.1-7).

In this way with the vajra song like an echo, together with the playful dance
 And the [maṇḍala-]cakra, right then⁴⁹ he sang and praised me.
 Then, right there, he disappeared like a cloud into the sky
 And the monk and two gurus also likewise disappeared. |374|

Then, in order to conclude Mañjuśrī's speech, the master spoke about the dissolution of the *maṇḍala* with the verse beginning, **In this way... The playful dance** and the rest have already been explained. **And the [maṇḍala-]cakra** refers to Akṣobhya and the others. **Right then** means at that very time. As for, **He sang and praised me** [the words of that song of praise] should be known from the *Treasury of Verses*.⁵⁰ **Right there** means in that very place. **Into the sky** means into suchness.⁵¹ **Disappeared like a cloud into the sky** is said in order to indicate that, just like clouds and moisture arise from the **sky** and dissolve back **into** it, likewise the Bhagavan, as well, through the yoga of great compassion, appears out of suchness and **dissolves** back **into** it. This being the case, his 'causal emanations' should be known to [do] the same. Having understood that, in order to tell the story of how he carried out the benefit of fortunate [disciples] he said **I...** and the rest.⁵² **Realized a little bit** is said in order to abandon [the act of] holding back the teachings out of avarice from those who are suitable recipients, [since Buddhajñānapāda had, in fact] exhausted [the obscurations to realizing] the ultimate suchness of all phenomena together with their latent traces, and had, by means of the stages of *mudrā* as explained above, gained realization.^{53 54}

In a place fifty *krośas* behind Vajrāsana
 I lived in the Parvata cave. In order to benefit beings
 I compiled this [text, the *Dvīṭyākrama*], composed and taught all of the treatises, and so forth.
 Since excellent beings made extensive supplications, I was delighted [to do so]. |375|

⁴⁹ *de nyid*. I am following Vaidyapāda in interpreting this as referring to the immediate moment (*Sukusuma*, D 134b.6).

⁵⁰ This text is mentioned by Vaidyapāda earlier in the commentary as a composition of Buddhajñānapāda's. To the best of my knowledge, it is unfortunately not extant. I address Vaidyapāda's list of Buddhajñānapāda's writings below.

⁵¹ *nam mkha'i khams su zhes te de bzhin nyid* [+ *nyid* sugg. em.; P and D om.] *du'o//*. I have emended the text very slightly here, adding *nyid*, where it seems to have been left out. This is because without the emendation the content of the sentence does not make much sense; it would simply read **Into the sky** means the same." Also this emendation brings the meaning of the sentence in accord with what follows.

⁵² Unusually, this short section of Vaidyapāda's commentary appears to be commenting on a line or lines of the root text that are not extant in our version of the *Dvīṭyākrama*.

⁵³ I remain unsure about the meaning of this last sentence and suspect that the text may be corrupt.

⁵⁴ *da ni 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi gsung bsdu ba'i phyir bla mas sprul pa'i dkyil 'khor bsdu ba gsung pa/ de ltar zhes pa la sogs pa'o// rol pa'i gar zhes pa la sogs pa ni bshad zin to// 'khor lor bcas pas zhes pa ni rtag pa la sogs pa'o// de nyid ces pa ni dus der ro// glu dbyangs kyis bdag la bstod pa ni tshigs su bcad pa'i mdzod las shes par bya'o// der zhes pa ni gnas de nyid du'o// nam mkha'i khams su zhes te de bzhin nyid* [+ *nyid* sugg. em.; P and D om; see note 51] *du'o// sprin rnam med pa lta bur thim* (thim) sugg. em. based on *Dvīṭyākrama*; shes D, P) *par 'gyur/ zhes pa ni ji ltar sprin rlan* (D, P add *las*; I suggest omitting) *nam mkha' las byung zhing der zhi ba bzhin du/ bcom ldan 'das 'di yang thugs rjes chen po'i sbyor bas de bzhin nyid las* (las) sugg. em.; la D, P) *snang zhing yang der zhi bar bstan pa'i phyir ro// de bas na de'i rgyu'i sprul pa yang de bzhin du shes par bya'o// de ltar rang gi de shes nas skal ldan gyi don ji ltar byas pa'i lo rgyus gsungs ba bdag gi zhes pa la sogs pa'o// cung zad rtogs pa zhes pa ni/ dngos po thams cad kyi mtha'i pha rol du son pa'i de bzhin nyid du ni bag la nyal du bcas pa zad pa ste/ de phyag rgya'i rim pas gong nas gsungs pa ltar rtogs nas dpe mkhyud snod rung 'ga' la yang spang pa'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 134b.5-135a.2; P 162a.5-162b.3)

Behind Vajrāsana means to its northeast. A *krośa* is fifty fathoms. **Fifty** of those is six *yojanas* plus two *krośas*. The **Parvata cave** is [also] called *Ma ta hra ni tra*, the Dharma Sprout, and is a place where great lords of practice of former times stayed. **I lived** there means it was [his] residence. For what reason? **In order to benefit beings**, which means those who stayed nearby. Since there were many who were suitable recipients, the master mentions that it was **for their benefit** that he **compiled this [text]**, meaning the [*Dvīṭīyakramatattvabhāvanā*]-*Mukhāgama*. **All of the treatises** refers to those that were mentioned above.⁵⁵ **Composed** means produced. **Taught** means explained. The words **and so forth** include bestowing *samayas* and other activities. The cause for doing this was that **excellent being made extensive supplications**, just like those above. **I was delighted [to do so]** means that [it was done] with confidence. And [thus] in this way he engaged in the composition of those [texts].⁵⁶

Living there together, my retinue and I [received] necessities,
Clothing, food, a treasury of jewels, and various vast offering substances for *gaṇacakra*.
[From] the tenth-ground bodhisattva, the treasure guardian,⁵⁷ great Jambhala
Each day we regularly received seven hundred *kārṣāpaṇa*. |376|

Living there means there in that cave. **Together [with] my retinue** refers to the disciples who followed him. Among them there were eighteen who acted as his regents, and among those there were four who attained *nirvāṇa* in this very life: Dīpaṅkarabhadra, *Praśāntamitra, *Rāhulabhadra, and *Vajramahāsukha. They are like our primary scriptures as they [follow] the stages [of practice] of the great master just as [he taught them].⁵⁸ All of their **necessities—clothing, food, a treasury of jewels** like gold and so forth, a **vast** array of **substances** for making offerings to the Heart of Awakening,⁵⁹ and the necessities for himself and his students to engage in *gaṇacakra* practice—were provided by the **bodhisattva** of the **ten bhūmis**, who is himself the lord of treasures and is therefore [called] the **Treasure Guardian**. He appears in the form of a *yakṣa* and is therefore called the *yakṣa Jambhala*. **Each day** he provided each of them with **seven hundred karṣāpaṇa** of cowries.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ This refers to a list of texts in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that Mañjuśrī commanded Buddhajñānapāda to compose and the further elaboration of that list found in Vaidyapāda’s commentary. Many, but not all, of these texts can be identified and are extant. I discuss this list below.

⁵⁶ *rdo rje gdan gyi rgyab* (rgyab] D, ‘gab’ P) *ni byang shar gyi mtshams na’o// rgyang grags ni ‘dom lnga brgya’o// de lnga bcu ni dpag tshad drug dang rgyang grags gnyis so// parba* (parba] D, spar ba P) *ta’i phug ces pa ni ma ta hra ni tra* (ma ta hra ni tra] D, ma ta hrin dra P) *zhes te chos kyi myu gu zhes pa sngon gyi grub pa’i dbyang phyug chen po’i gnas so* (so] D, P om.)/ *de la brten te zhes pa ni gnas bcas pa’o// ci’i phyir sems can don bya’i phyir/ zhes pa ni de’i nye ‘khor rnams ni khyad par du snod du rung ba mang bas/ bla mas kyang de’i don du zhes so// ‘di bsdus zhes pa ni zhal gyi lung ngo// rab tu byed pa thams cad ces pa ni gong du smos pa rnams so// rtsom* (rtsom] D, rtsam P) *pa ni byed pa’o// ston pa ni bshad pa’o// sogs kyi sgras bsdus pa ni dam tshig sbyin pa la sogs pa’o// de’i rgyu yang dam pas gsol ba rgya chen po btab pas zhes gong ma ltar ro// bdag ni shin tu brod ces pa ni rang yid ches nas so// de rnams rtsom pa’i sbyor ba la zhugs pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 135a.2-5, P 162b.3-7).

⁵⁷ srung] D C V (D), gsung S P N V (P).

⁵⁸ *de rnams bdag cag gi dang po’i gzhung ltar de bla ma chen po’i rim pa ji bzhin pa’i phyir ro//*. I am unsure of the meaning of this line, which seems to be corrupt in some way.

⁵⁹ Presumably here this term refers to Vajrāsana.

⁶⁰ *der gnas ni phug der ro// ‘khor bcas rnams zhes pa ni rang gi rjes su spyod pa’i slob ma rnams kyi nang na rgyal tshab kyis pa’i gang zag bco brgyad yod de de rnams kyi nang nas mthong ba’i chos la mya ngan las ‘da’ ba bzhi yod de/ mar me mdzas bzang po dang/ rab tu zhi ba’i bshes gnyen dang/ sgra gcan ‘dzin bzang po dang/ rdo rje bde ba chen po’o// de rnams bdag cag gi dang po’i gzhung ltar de bla ma chen po’i rim pa ji bzhin pa’i phyir ro// de thams cad kyi yo byad dang gos dang/ zas dang gser la sogs pa’i nor gyi mdzod dang/ byang chub kyi snying po la mchod pa’i yo byad rgya chen po dang/ rang dang slob ma’i tshogs kyi sna tshogs ‘khor lo’i bya ba rnams sbyor bar byed pa ni/ sa bcu’i byang chub sems dpa’ ste de nyid gter rnams kyi bdag po yin pas* (yin pas] D, bas na P)

Then I traveled to meet the great guru Pālitapāda⁶¹
 In order to please that guru, I compiled⁶² some short *sādhana*s
 And the guru and all the others there were pleased.
 I returned to the place I had come from and⁶³ joyfully performed the benefit of some⁶⁴ fortunate
 [individuals]. |377|

Then he tells the account of having been invited by his guru, who had come to know of his blessings with the verse beginning, **Then...** The statement **I compiled some short *sādhana*s** refers to those mentioned above. **There** means there in that place in the south [of India]. The **guru** was Pālitapāda. By **the others**, we should understand those who were gathered there, that is, those [dharma] relatives who were present. **Were pleased** means [pleased] by his dharma teachings and so forth. **The place I had come from** means the Parvata [cave]. **I performed the benefit of some fortunate [individuals]** means those who hadn't been included in his previous activity.⁶⁵

Thus, in this way everyone, having come to know the detailed accounts [of my life],
 Should use all methods to please the sublime and sincere learned one,
 And listen to and contemplate his teachings, compositions, and so forth. |378|

Thus, having generated faith in that way (i.e. by means of telling the story of his own encounter with suchness), he teaches about the training in nondual wisdom and its result with the verse beginning, **Thus... Having come to know the detailed accounts** means the **detailed accounts** about the great master: the taming of Nālandā, making offerings at Vajrāsana, the [account of] the consecration and the others.⁶⁶ Through these accounts the faith of those who have fortune is

mdzod srung ngo (srung ngo] D, gsungs so P) / *gnod sbyin gyi cha lugs 'chang bas na gnod sbyin gyi gnas so* (gnod byin gyi gnas so] D, gnod gnas so P) // *des nyin re 'gron bu kā rṣā pa ṇa* (kā rṣā pa ṇa] D, ka rṣa pa na P) *bdun brgya re re la sbyor zhes so* // (*Sukusuma*, D 135a.5-135b.1; P 162b.7-163a.4).

⁶¹ bā li pā da'i] D C , bha li pa trī S P N. Vaidyapāda's commentary reads *bsrung ba'i zhabs*. I follow Szántó in giving his name as Pālitapāda, based on the presence of this guru's name in an 11th-century Sanskrit manuscript of Samantabhadra's *Sāramañjarī* (Szántó 2015, 542). Tāranātha has rendered it more or less correctly, as well, as *Pā li ta pa da* (*Bka' babs bdun*, 104). In my edition of the *Dvīṭyākrama*, however, I have left the rendering from the Derge and Cone Tengyurs—*Bā li pā da*—because to “correctly” phoneticize the teacher's name would make the line unmetrical.

⁶² It is worth noting that Buddhajñānapāda uses the word “compile” (*bsdus*) rather than “compose” (*rtsom*). In an earlier verse, he also uses the term “compile” to describe the compilation of the *Dvīṭyākrama*, but that is presumably because it is in fact Mañjuśrī's teaching, which he is only compiling within the framework of his own narrative. In this case “compiling” rather than “composing” these *sādhana*s may hint at a process more revelatory than compositional, but more likely it is simply an acknowledgement that the *sādhana* was compiled, at least in part, from other sources, most prominently the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* itself.

⁶³ nas] S P N, gnas D C.

⁶⁴ 'ga'] D C V (D and P), dga' S P N

⁶⁵ *de nas byin rlabs shes pas bla mas sphyan drangs pa'i lo rgyus gsungs pa/ de nas zhes pa la sogs pa'o// cung zad bsdus pa zhes pa ni gong du gsungs pa rnams so// de ru zhes pa ni lho phyogs kyi gnas der ro// bla ma ni bsrung ba'i zhabs so// sogs kyi sgras bsdus pa der rtogs so// (D + zhes) 'tshal spun zlar gyur ba rnams so// mnyes par byas te zhes pa ni chos kyi gdam la sogs pa'o// sngon gnas zhes pa ni parba* (parba] D, par pa P) *ta'o// skal ldan don 'ga' byas zhes pa ni sngon las ma gtogs* (ma gtogs] D, rtogs P) *pa rnams kyi'o// (Sukusuma*, D 135b.1-3; P 163a.4-6).

⁶⁶ Vaidyapāda here refers to several accounts of Buddhajñānapāda's life as if they are already well-known stories that will be understood by anyone reading his text. These same accounts are described in the later Tibetan histories in much more detail, though unfortunately only one such supportive detail is, to my knowledge, found in an extant Indian source, Atīśa's **Bodhipathapradīpapañjikā*, which I discuss below. Some of the Tibetan historians who

further increased. Then, the **learned one** who is learned in those scriptures that we uphold is the guru [Buddhajñānapāda] himself. Since he himself has overcome mental doubts he is sincere. [Beings should] **please him, using all methods** which were taught above. In order to familiarize themselves with these, they [should listen to and reflect upon] his **teachings**, which means his **compositions, and so forth**,—which [are called] **compositions** because they are very excellently composed—like the *Samantabhadrī[-sādhana]* and so forth. The **and so forth** includes the commentary on the tantra and other [texts]. **Listen[ing] to** these means also bring about attainment, since the stages of the grounds and paths come about through attainment. **Contemplat[ing]** them means repeatedly bringing about mental certainty through valid engagement [with them].⁶⁷

Through relying upon that, remaining in isolated places and the rest,
Training one’s mind in suchness, and genuinely realizing the way things are,
[One can] attain awakening in this very life, or [even] in [just] six months, and so forth—who could refute this?! |379|

Through relying upon that means **relying** upon those contemplations. In order to bring about suchness in a unique way one is meant to stay in isolated places, and so forth, as described above. Through **training one’s mind in suchness** means by means of the two stages, like the first [stage] and so forth. Through **genuinely realizing the way things are** means that through encountering signs of realization, realizing a little bit, genuinely realizing suchness, [and] by means of *vratas* and the like, one exhausts the remainders [of defilements] **in this life**, meaning during this very life. As for **[even] in [just] six months**, the text [also] states **and so forth**, which indicates an inferior [attainment, i.e. longer time periods]. [Within the various time frames mentioned, one can] **attain awakening**, which is the realization of the ultimate state. **Who could refute this** achievement, enacted through such unique methods? Indeed, this being the way things are,⁶⁸ [it] is difficult to refute, like a cascade of raindrops [falling] through the empty sky.⁶⁹

provide the more detailed accounts of Buddhajñānapāda’s life, like Tāranātha, do list Indian sources that are no longer known to us.

⁶⁷ *da ni de lta bus dad pas byas te/ gnyis su med pa’i ye shes bsgom pa ‘bras bu dang bcas pa gsungs pa/ de bas zhes pa la sogs pa’o// gtam rgyud rgyas par shes byas nas/ zhes pa ni bla ma chen po’i gtam rgyud rgyas pa na landa ([landa] P, lendra D) ‘dul ba dang/ rdo rje gdan gyi mchod pa byas pa dang/ rab tu gnas pa byas pa la sogs pa’i lo rgyus kyis skal ba dang ldan pa cher dad par byas nas/ des kyang rang gi ‘dod pa’i gzhung la mkhas pa ni bla ma ste (ste) P, sta D)/ de nyid kyis blo’i som nyi bzlog pas na gzu po’o// (P +de) dgong du gsungs pa’i thabs kun gyis mnyes par byas te (te) P, ta D) zhes so// de la (la) sugg. em., las D, P)/ goms pa’i phyir na lung ste/ rab tu byed pa la sogs pa’o// rab tu byed pa ni shin tu legs par byad pa’i phyir na ste/ kun du bzang mo la sogs pa’o// sogs kyi sgras bsdu pa ni rgyud kyi rnam par bshad pa la sogs pa’o// de rnams nyan pa ni thob byed dang bcas pa sa lam gyi rim pa thob pa las byung bas so// bsam par byas zhes pa ni ‘thad sgrub kyis yang dang yang du blo nges par bya’o// (Sukusuma, D 135b.3-6; P 163a.6-163b.3).*

⁶⁸ *de’i chos nyid*

⁶⁹ *de la rab brtan zhes pa ni bsam pa de la rab tu brten te de nyid khyad par can du bya ba’i phyir dgon sogs rab tu brten (brten) D, bsten P) byas zhes te gong ma ltar ro// rang gi sems de nyid bsgoms pas/ zhes pa ni/ rim pa gnyis kyis zhes pa dang po la sogs pa ltar ro// ji bzhin rab tu rtogs par (par P) pa D) byas pa yis/ zhes pa ni rtogs pa’i rtags rnyed pa dang cung zad rtogs pa dang/ de nyid yang dag bar rtogs pas brtul zhugs la sogs pas lhag ma zad pas tshe ‘di nyid la zhes te/ mthong ba’i chos nyid la’o// zla ba drug gis zhes pa ni sogs pa zhes pa tha ma’i tshig tu’o// byang chub thob pa ni mthar thug pa’i gnas rtogs pa ste/ thabs khyad par can gyis byed pa ‘di ni su yis bzlog ces te de’i chos nyid dgag dka’ ba ste/ bar snang la char gyi rgyun ltar ro// (Sukusuma, D 135b.6-136a.2; P 163b.4-7).*

2. Tantric Buddhism in Late 8th-century India

Playfully dancing the great dance, with your various arms twisting and holding tight,
you open the eight soft lotus petals and insert the vajra, the cause of nondual bliss. The secret suchness,
undefiled, becomes clear. The moon which is born from the vajra and petals is perfectly gathered: this is
the supreme suchness of all phenomena, born from means and wisdom. Revered master, in order to benefit
me, explain what is hidden!

-Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvīṭyākrama*

This extraordinary autobiographical narrative of the yogin and tantric exegete Buddhajñānapāda's travels throughout the Indian subcontinent studying with different gurus, receiving teachings directly from Mañjuśrī in a visionary encounter, and setting up a hermitage with his disciples in the latter part of his life provide us a rich picture of Indian tantric Buddhist practice in the late 8th and early 9th centuries. His account is further enriched by the additional details provided in Vaidyapāda's 9th-century⁷⁰ commentary. This was a period of immense creativity and development within tantric Buddhist traditions, and many doctrinal and especially ritual developments from precisely this period continue to frame the structure of tantric Buddhist practice up to the present day. While the cadence and timbre of Buddhajñānapāda's own voice clearly emerges from his surviving writings—and not only from the autobiographical narratives therein—we can better appreciate his individuality when it is approached from within the context of the world in which he lived and wrote, so it is to this that we will first turn.

The Political, Social, and Religious Climate of Early Medieval India

It is at our peril that scholars of Indian Buddhist traditions have often focused too narrowly on textual sources and developments only within the Buddhist world, and neglected to consider the wider social, political, and religious climate of the Indian subcontinent in which Buddhist doctrinal and ritual developments emerged. When we do thus widen our perspective, as is fortunately increasingly the case in recent scholarship, we have access to a much more holistic, and therefore deeper as well as broader, view of the traditions we seek to understand. Having let Buddhajñānapāda himself, and his disciple Vaidyapāda, speak their stories first, I would like to begin my own account of Buddhajñānapāda's life and writings by widening the lens to take in the broader world of the Indian subcontinent into which his voice emerged and was first heard.

The early medieval period in India (roughly the mid-6th to the early 13th century) was a time of upheaval, change, and immense creativity. Following the fall of the “golden age” Gupta empire in the 6th century of the common era there was a period of significant political restructuring. This was described by earlier scholars using a rhetoric of decline and decentralization, in which the process was termed “feudalization,”⁷¹ while more recent scholarship describes the same period using more positive language as a process of incorporation, in which newly founded state polities were both incorporating new territories and expanding into territories that had previously not been touched by a state polity.⁷² The general political climate of the period was neither a centralized state nor fragmented regional kingdoms, but rather, “a series of diverse and uneven political orders which, while regionally based, sought

⁷⁰ Vaidyapāda was likely a direct disciple or at furthest a grand-disciple of Buddhajñānapāda, thus placing him squarely in the 9th century. I address the dates of both in more detail below.

⁷¹ e.g. Kosambi 1956.

⁷² e.g. Chattopadhyaya 1994.

to relate themselves, in diverse ways, to ever more integrated political hierarchies which had as their ideal the notion of an imperial polity ruled over by a single supreme overlord, a king over kings.”⁷³ While the political rhetoric championed the idea of *digvijaya*, “conquest over the directions” as frequently mentioned in *praśasti*, the eulogistic poems dedicated to leaders that became an important literary mark of the political culture of the day, in actual point of fact such “conquest” often did not involve direct rule of the conquered lands by the overlord.⁷⁴ More commonly, the conquered areas continued to be ruled by their own, now “lesser” lords, who submitted to the “greater” lord, thus creating a complex system of social and political relationships.

An important aspect of this system was the gifting of land by new or established rulers, as a way of showing favor to their constituents, and sometimes also to encourage the expansion of agriculture into uncultivated areas. These land grants were often given to religious institutions—initially to monasteries, or individual brahmin families or communities, and increasingly, with the development of what is often called “temple Hinduism” to temples. In fact, religious grants seem, in most areas, to have been far more frequent than grants to non-religious beneficiaries.⁷⁵

This political situation of the early medieval period resulted in a number of important developments in the religious sphere. The first of these is a direct result of the expansion of state polities into new areas. This expansion involved the movement of peoples, which resulted in the meeting of more established and pan-regional religious traditions, such as the Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, with more local forms of religion.⁷⁶ This process sometimes occasioned the adoption of local deities into translocal traditions.⁷⁷ In addition, this political

⁷³ Ali 2004, 33.

⁷⁴ Pollock emphasizes the fact that the political styles and the tradition of composing *praśasti* was common to rulers from diverse religious traditions—Buddhist, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Jain. He notes that, in fact, they “all wrote more or less similar poetry and engaged in identical political practices” (Pollock 2009, 572).

⁷⁵ Thapar 2002, 451. The most common explanation of this land-granting practice, given in much of the historiography, is that this was a practice done for purposes of “legitimation.” The new rulers, because many of them were not from traditional ruling (*kṣatriya*) families, needed to justify their rule, and thus gave grants to brahmins who then wrote important “fictitious” genealogies (*vamśa*) legitimizing the rule of these families. While these developments which, described as “purāṇic,” may seem to apply only to religions that developed out of the brahmanical tradition, in fact the Buddhists and Jains both integrated themselves into these structures, as well, claiming descent from the so-called “Solar Dynasty” that is one of the two important lineages in the purāṇic genealogies (Samuel 2008, 68). What is more, the 8th-century Buddhist tantra, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, also contains a predictive royal genealogy, very much in the purāṇic model (Sanderson 2009, 94). Sheldon Pollock’s critique of the rhetoric of legitimation found in earlier historiography—essentially arguing that such legitimation does not make sense in the pre-modern period when rulers could (and did) simply force their rule upon people and did not need to rely on documents like genealogies to convince the populous that their rule was legitimate—is well taken (Pollock 2009, 521). However, Pollock himself admits that if legitimation does anything at all it builds ruling class consensus, rather than that of the larger populous (Pollock 2009, 523). This observation, in fact, makes perfect sense of the popular practice of granting land and receiving genealogical confirmation of one’s right to rule. These genealogies, which begin to appear from the 6th century, just as the Gupta empire was falling, insist on birth into certain types of lineages as a requirement for being part of the ruling class. Thus there was indeed a need for legitimizing oneself as belonging to a certain type of family in order to engage in the elite political culture of the time. Because of the structure of the political order, with its enmeshed polities and the important and intricate relationships that involved the exchange of gifts and women (which Daud Ali has carefully described in his 2004 work), it was impossible for a ruler to exist as a *completely* independent polity—one could not rule in a social and political vacuum. Political relationships were crucial to the maintenance of power, and to engage in these relationships, it was necessary to hold claim to a certain type of birth. Thus while the rhetoric of legitimation does not, as Pollock suggested, make sense as legitimation on behalf of the larger populous, it does make perfect sense when understood as a requirement for participation in the elite political culture of the time.

⁷⁶ Thapar 2002, 389.

⁷⁷ See e.g. Granoff 2004.

reorganization also involved significant warfare, which displaced populations and may have had some influence on de-urbanization in certain areas. When people and communities are on the move, they meet with other groups, leading to the intermingling of beliefs and practices, and creating a perfect environment for religious and cultural creativity. We can see this in the mutual influence between Buddhist and Śaiva tantric traditions⁷⁸ where we find extensive Buddhist textual borrowing from Śaiva tantras,⁷⁹ as well as examples of traditional Buddhist iconography passing into the Śaiva tradition.⁸⁰ Moreover, there is also documented evidence of Śaiva borrowing from earlier Buddhist tantras,⁸¹ and the Buddhist tantric use of transgression specifically as a method to cultivate nondual gnosis was later adopted by Śaiva authors.⁸² Certain techniques, such as the practice of *utkrānti*, in which the consciousness of a yogin is ejected from his body, and sometimes transferred into the body of another individual (or more frequently a corpse), are known in Śaiva, Buddhist, and Jain texts, indicating a culture in which yogic techniques were shared.⁸³ Many pilgrimage sites were also shared commonly among multiple traditions.

Another important way in which the political environment affected the religious trends in early medieval India involves what has been described as the parallel developments of the “apotheosis of the king” and the “feudalization of the gods.”⁸⁴ The early medieval period is thus characterized by the emergence of the idea of divine kingship. This process also involved the shift in ritual practices connected with kingship in which earlier Vedic rituals of royal consecration were replaced by *purāṇic* (Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva), and Buddhist versions.⁸⁵ The *purāṇic* legends of the time describe the gods in ways that reflect the political culture of the time—they marry, live in fortresses, and so forth, like kings and queens.⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, rulers were enthusiastic patrons of these religious developments.

The specific medieval Buddhist response to the political developments of the time has been studied by Ronald Davidson in his important work *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, in which he asserts that the metaphor of kingship is the defining metaphor of Buddhist tantric systems. Davidson’s analysis of the role of the political environment in informing the ritual world of the tantric *maṇḍala* remains an astute and important observation. In fact, Daud Ali’s work on early medieval court culture provides a number of examples, easily visible to the scholar of Buddhist tantra, which further corroborate Davidson’s thesis.⁸⁷ Indeed it does appear that one factor in the development of these particular forms of Buddhist practice was the current political climate; they appear to constitute a method for securing a place, as well as patronage, for Buddhism in the

⁷⁸ The relationships between these two traditions has been studied by Sanderson and Davidson, who take different, if not exactly opposing, perspectives (See Sanderson 2001 and 2009 and Davidson 2002).

⁷⁹ See Sanderson 2001 and 2009 and Hatley 2016.

⁸⁰ Davidson 2002, 86.

⁸¹ Hatley 2016.

⁸² Wedemeyer 2013, 166-67.

⁸³ See Smith (2006, 289) for an excellent description of this process in a Jain text, and for a description of the practice as allegedly performed by the 8th-century yogin Śaṅkara (Smith 2006, 294). The earliest description of the process of the ejection of consciousness that I am familiar with in a Buddhist text is in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Dvīṭīyakrama*, which has strong echoes in the *Catuṣpīṭha-tantra* (On which see Szántó 2012a, esp. pp. 455-62). I address the topic of *utkrānti* in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings in Chapter Six.

⁸⁴ Davidson 2002, 71.

⁸⁵ Davidson 2002, 127-31.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 71.

⁸⁷ For example, the king possesses a “seven-walled palace” (Ali 2004, 42); he has messengers (Skt. *dūtaka*, =Tib. *pho nya*) who carry out his business and doorkeepers (*dvārapāla*) guarding each door of the palace (*ibid.*, 45); he bestows favor on a supplicant if he is pleased or satisfied (*ibid.*, 106); sits on a lion throne and is fanned by whisk bearers (*ibid.*, 112).

changing political and social environment. However, it is also important to take seriously the soteriological aims that these writings themselves explicitly claim to pursue.

Another arena in which the social and political climate influenced religious developments, and one that is just beginning to be studied, is the realm of courtly culture. As Ali has shown with his groundbreaking work, the early medieval court “formed a key context for the production of knowledges that have more commonly been attributed to a generalised ‘society’ in ancient India.”⁸⁸ Many of these developments have been an important influence in the religious sphere, as well, and Ali has documented significant contact between the courtly and religious worlds. It seems that a substantial number of men of the court came from monasteries, hermitages or brahmin households that were supported by the king and many prominent courtly gentlemen became hermits or monks when their masters died, or when they themselves entered old age.⁸⁹ This certainly indicates a climate in which ideas could move freely between those two domains. Indeed Vatsyāyana, in his well-known *Kāmasūtra*, which typifies the pursuit of erotic and aesthetic pleasure central to the courtly life of the day, suggests that a young woman should learn erotic skills discreetly from an older sister, or from a nun (presumably one who had an earlier adult life as a laywoman!).⁹⁰ Ali also shows that aspects of court protocol “intersected with codes of conduct from a wider domain, particularly a religious one.”⁹¹

These religious developments in turn influenced the political culture, because, in large part, religious masters and institutions were successful in their aims to secure patronage. That is to say, the kings of the time supported these traditions, and incorporated their rituals into rituals of state, effectively replacing the earlier Vedic model.⁹² Kings spent tremendous amounts of wealth supporting religious institutions and religious specialists. Royal preceptors often became wealthy in their own right, allowing them to support the development of their own traditions, to build temples, or support monasteries. Indeed the enormous Buddhist monasteries of the early medieval period such as Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, and the breathtaking Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, and Śākta temples constructed during this period—the incredible outpouring of religious art, architecture, and literature—was primarily possible due to royal patronage.

We will see resonances of many of these broader developments as we look more closely at Buddhjñānapāda’s life, writings, and thought: clear evidence of his movement throughout the subcontinent; engagement with the large state-supported Buddhist institutions of his time and

⁸⁸ Ali 2004, 25.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 49.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 218.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, 103. The influence of courtly culture (rather than politics, which Davidson has examined) on specifically Buddhist literature and ideas is a tantalizing but little explored area. We can easily see the influence of the sumptuary culture of the court on the Mahāyāna sūtras, with their imagery of worlds of jewels and gems, and the posture of royal ease adopted by the bodhisattva imagery of the period (Ali 2002, 159). This culture continues to appear in later *śāstras*, as in the elaborate bathing and dressing pavilions described by the 7th-century Buddhist author Śāntideva in his famed *Bodhicāryāvatāra*. The literary theory of *rasa*, developed in the *nāṭyaśāstra* literature and very important to the courtly aesthetic, was brought into the Buddhist tantras in the 8th-century *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* (Smith 2006, 333). Moreover, with regards to erotology—another important cultural development that was made and refined in the courtly context—as we will see, Buddhjñānapāda, in his *Dvītyākrama*, uses the classic four-fold female erotic typology from *kāmaśāstra* in his description of tantric Buddhist consorts (*Dvītyākrama*, verses 50-67), in what is a very early instance of this classification system in Indian literature, preceding its appearance in extant *kāmaśāstra* literature by several hundred years (I discuss this further in Chapter Six). The same four-fold typology is also found in the later *Samvarodaya-tantra* (See Tsuda 1994, 155). Ali (2011, esp. pp 54-55) has explored some of the ways in which Buddhist tantric literature and practice seems to have influenced *kāmaśāstra*.

⁹² This is not to say that the earlier Vedic rituals were completely left behind. Indeed, many aspects of these much older rituals were incorporated into newer *purāṇic*, Buddhist, and Jain rituals. See, for example, Marko Geslani’s work on the incorporation of *śānti* rites into post-Vedic ritual contexts (Geslani 2011 and 2012).

with the political elite, as well as with other types of patrons and systems of patronage; evidence of his participation in a doctrinally and ritually eclectic milieu; and the incorporation of aspects of courtly culture into religious doctrine and ritual. Let us now narrow our focus one notch to survey the specifically Buddhist doctrinal and ritual context in which Buddhajñānapāda lived and wrote.

8th-Century Indian Buddhism

While his writings indicate, through their many references to and much terminology from non-Buddhist traditions, that Buddhajñānapāda was living in a religiously eclectic environment, they leave no doubt about his self-identification as a Buddhist practitioner. Within the Buddhist tradition, he also clearly identifies as a practitioner of Buddhist tantra, and indeed appears to have been participating in, and likely even contributing to, the cutting edge of Buddhist tantric ritual technologies of his time. His life and work, therefore, must also be understood within the framework of the Buddhist tradition as it existed in India in the 8th century.

The rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism around the turn of the common era brought with it a revelatory and visionary turn in the Buddhist tradition,⁹³ expanding the scope of Buddhist worlds, and bringing newly expressed philosophical orientations to the fore. The *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras* and Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka philosophy articulated a vision of reality whose emptiness of inherent nature allowed for infinite possibility, while the slightly later *sūtras* on buddha nature and those incorporating Yogācāra thought, along with their accompanying commentarial literature, attended more closely to the identity and nature of the mind that had access to such a reality. It was within the context of these doctrinal systems that Buddhist tantra began gradually to develop in the 7th century of the common era. However, while certainly it was in terms of such Buddhist doctrinal systems that the tantras were interpreted, the texts themselves appear to have emerged out of a more practical, that is to say a ritual, context.⁹⁴

By the 8th century when Buddhajñānapāda lived and wrote, Buddhist tantric traditions had developed to the point that contemporary authors were beginning to classify the tantras into different categories.⁹⁵ Buddhaguhya, a contemporary of Buddhajñānapāda's, divides the tantras into Kriyā tantras, which involve more outward practice, and Yoga tantras, which involve more inner yogic practices.⁹⁶ He also mentions what has sometimes been interpreted as a separate category, Ubhaya, or "both" (also sometimes called "Upa" or "Caryā"), which involve a mixture of external and internal practice.⁹⁷

The Yoga tantras, the most prominent early example of which is the 7th-century *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*, showed a significant turn towards concern with

⁹³ See, e.g. Harrison 1978 and 2003.

⁹⁴ See J. Dalton 2016; Dharmachakra Translation Committee <http://read.84000.co/translation/toh498.html>, i.21; and Shinohara 2014.

⁹⁵ See J. Dalton 2005, 121-31 for a summary of 8th-century Indian authors Buddhaguhya's and Vilāsavajra's tantric doxographies. These systems were almost certainly known to Buddhajñānapāda as Vilāsavajra is named in the *Dvītyākrama* as Buddhajñānapāda's own guru, and Buddhaguhya is sometimes mentioned, at least in the later Tibetan histories, as his disciple, though modern scholars have questioned this claim. Buddhajñānapāda's own *Dvītyākrama* contains a doxography, though not a tantric one (*Dvītyākrama*, 126-43). He simply places tantra as a whole above all non-Buddhist and Buddhist philosophical systems, which is rather unique given that, as Dalton points out in the article just referenced, the Indian systems of classifying different systems of tantra rely primarily on ritual, rather than doctrinal, distinctions (J. Dalton 2005, 119-20). See also note 100 below for the wide variety of doxographical categories found in Vaidyapāda's 9th-century *Sukusuma*.

⁹⁶ J. Dalton 2005, 123-4.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 123-5.

soteriological goals,⁹⁸ set forth the “mature” five-family *maṇḍala* system, and demonstrated full self-awareness of being a unique system of Buddhist practice.⁹⁹ However, in the 8th century Buddhist tantric systems began to undergo a further shift, with the development of what came to be called the Mahāyoga tantras. These texts, the most prominent of which is the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, bring antinomian elements of sex and violence that were marginal in the Yoga tantras into the fore.¹⁰⁰ The Mahāyoga tantras are furthermore characterized by the quite literal shift in the five-family *maṇḍala* arrangement from the centrality of Vairocana, the main buddha of the so-called buddha family, to that of Akṣobhya, of the vajra family. The 8th century also saw the emergence of the important *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, sometimes classified as a Yoga or Mahāyoga tantra, and other times as pertaining to the other newly emerging category of the Yoganiruttara or Yoginī tantras, which came into their full flourish in the 9th and 10th centuries with the *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra-tantras*, among others.

The 8th and early 9th centuries were also a particularly important period in terms of the unfolding of the ritual structures and frameworks within which tantric Buddhist practice took place. That is, the system of tantric initiations was developing precisely in this period from the five-fold series of initiations that characterized the earlier Yoga tantras,¹⁰¹ to the addition of the later sexual initiations: the *guhyābhīṣeka*, then the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and finally the so-called “fourth” initiation.¹⁰² The addition of these higher initiations corresponded with, and was likely necessitated by, the appearance of new modes of practice. The 8th century saw the use and development within the Buddhist tradition of sexual yogas, and the further development of practices that involved the manipulation of subtle energies within the body, which were often performed within the context of sexual practice. The addition of these new techniques into the tantric practitioner’s repertoire resulted in the division of tantric practice into the now ubiquitous categories of the generation (*utpattikrama*, *bskyed rim*) and perfection stages (*niṣpannakrama*, *utpannakrama*, *rdzogs rim*).¹⁰³ Though of course these newly developed categories were in flux, the generation stage can be loosely characterized by the visualization of oneself as a deity and the worship thereof, and the perfection stage by the manipulation of internal energies while in

⁹⁸ Tribe 2000, 209.

⁹⁹ See Weinberger 2003 (esp. pp. 185-89) which draws attention to the rewriting of the Buddha Śākyamuni’s awakening story as a narrative of tantric practice in the *Sarvatathāgatataṭṭva-saṃgraha*. Weinberger argues that this represents tantra’s “coming out party” or its “declaration of independence” as something distinct from earlier Buddhist traditions (Weinberger 2003, 189).

¹⁰⁰ While the term Mahāyoga tantra was certainly used to describe the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* and other tantras pertaining to this class, they also continued to be referred to by some authors as Yoga tantras. The tantric doxographical categories of the time were indeed so variable that even within a single commentary by a single author, such as Vaidyapāda’s 9th-century commentary on the *Dvītyākrama*, tantras are distinguished in multiple ways including those tantras “that emphasize wisdom” and those “that emphasize method” (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.2-4); Yoga and Mahāyoga tantras (*Sukusuma*, D 107a.6-7); Yoga and Yoganiruttara a.k.a. Dākiṇī tantras (*Sukusuma*, 108a.6-108b.1); and Kṛīya, Caryā, and Yoga tantras (*Sukusuma*, D 112a.4-5).

¹⁰¹ These are the water, crown, vajra, bell, and name initiations. See Isaacson 2010b, 264. When the later initiations were added, these five were re-classified as the “first” or vase initiation (*kalaśābhīṣeka*). I discuss initiation in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings in Chapter Seven.

¹⁰² Isaacson (2010b) gives a summary of the gradual development of these initiatory systems. I address this topic in more detail in the context of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings on initiation, along with those of several of his direct disciples, in Chapter Seven.

¹⁰³ The well-known scriptural *locus classicus* of the two stages of tantric practice is the *Samājottara*, though as I have pointed out in an earlier conference paper and will discuss further in Chapter Eight, this important verse in fact seems to have originated in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings (C. Dalton 2013). The terms seem to have been in somewhat general use, though, by the middle of the 8th century, as they are found in other texts from the time, such as Padmasambhava’s *Man ngag lta ba ’i phreng ba* (one of the few texts that scholars accept as having been composed by the historical Padmasambhava).

that form, often performed while in sexual union with a consort. As we will see, Buddhajñānapāda's writings are important for refining our understanding of both of the development of initiatory rituals and the two stages of tantric practice.

While these emerging systems certainly became popular modes of Buddhist practice that survive to this day as a central component of particularly the Tibetan and Newar Buddhist traditions, it is also clear that Buddhist tantra, like the Mahāyana before it, was not universally accepted among Buddhist communities. The tantras themselves and their exegetical commentaries, including Buddhajñānapāda's own writings, include a number of features and strategies that appear to be aimed at legitimizing these newly emerging and unsurprisingly controversial practice systems. There are, moreover, records of discord between those who accepted the new traditions and those who did not, including reports of Buddhist monks publicly burning tantric Buddhist scriptures and destroying tantric Buddhist images at Vajrāsana in the late 8th/ early 9th century.¹⁰⁴

From his writings we can see that Buddhajñānapāda, like his contemporary tantric exegetes, was well versed in a great deal of the Buddhist literature, doctrine, and practice systems that preceded him. This includes both exoteric Mahāyana *sūtras* and philosophical systems as well as earlier tantric traditions like those of the *Mahāvairocana-tantra*, the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra* and the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, citations from the latter two of which appear in his writings. But it is the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* that is most central to his oeuvre, and especially to the ritual systems he set forth. Indeed, Buddhajñānapāda became known as the founder of the eponymous Jñānapāda School of Guhyasamāja practice, one of several lineages of practice associated with this tantra that first flourished in India and were later brought to Tibet. Thus, in order to further contextualize Buddhajñānapāda's life and writings, we must again narrow our lens even more, to look at the emergence of and practice systems associated with the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*.

The Guhyasamāja-tantra

One indication of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*'s importance is its consistent inclusion in every known version of an otherwise variable list of eighteen quasi-canonical tantric compositions, that circulated from India into both China and Tibet during the 8th century.¹⁰⁵ The so-called *Vajroṣṇīṣa* (erroneously rendered as *Vajraśekhara* in earlier scholarship)¹⁰⁶ scriptures were transmitted to China by Amoghavajra and Vajrabodhi, and are described in a short summary text by Amoghavajra as eighteen "assemblies," of which the fifteenth has been identified as the Guhyasamāja.¹⁰⁷ The idea of such a group of eighteen tantras, or tantric cycles, was also passed on to Tibet, where they were known there as the *Māyājāla* tantras and ascribed to the class of Mahāyoga tantra. However, Orna Almogi has argued, on the basis of the great variety in terms of both content and organization of these lists preserved in Tibetan literature, both historical and doctrinal, that an actual list of the specific tantras that the group of eighteen

¹⁰⁴ Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 2010, 279; Maclean 1989, 12; and Flood 2009, 34. Incidentally, Flood interprets this as an act of hylotheism, which it clearly was not. The monks would not have been concerned that the tantric Buddhists were "confusing a transcendental god with matter" as Flood suggests (they certainly would have made and revered images of the Buddha, too), but that they were worshipping deities and engaging in modes of practice that the monks deemed non-Buddhist. Indeed, Tāranātha reports the monks to have said that the texts were "composed by Māra" (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 2010, 279).

¹⁰⁵ It is, in fact, one of only three texts that appear in all known lists of this group; the other two are the *Śrīparamādya-tantra* and the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*.

¹⁰⁶ On this issue see Geibel 1995, 109 and Davidson 2011, 24.

¹⁰⁷ See Eastman 1981 and Geibel 1995.

contained was likely not.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, all of the different Tibetan lists studied by Almogi contain the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*.¹⁰⁹ An Indian version of this list is found in a commentary on the *Āryaprajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśataka* (Tōh. 2647) by the late 8th-century Indian scholar Jñānamitra who mentions “eighteen sections” headed by the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-tantra*, but also including the *Guhyasamāja*.¹¹⁰

The *Guhyasamāja-tantra* survives in a number of Sanskrit manuscripts, at least three Tibetan translations, and one Chinese translation, again attesting to its importance.¹¹¹ Yukei Matsunaga’s studies of the historical development of the tantra (1964, 1977a, 1977b, 1978) still serve as the primary basis for research in the field. Like most Buddhist tantras, the *Guhyasamāja* is an accretive text: the first twelve chapters of the tantra comprise an earlier level of textual composition, chapters thirteen through seventeen constitute an additional level,¹¹² and the so-called eighteenth chapter, the *Samājottara*, first circulated in India as an independent text before being appended to the root tantra.¹¹³ Based on the presence of the summary of the “*Guhyasamāja-yoga*” among the eighteen “assemblies” noted in the account translated into Chinese (or perhaps composed)¹¹⁴ by Amoghavajra, who travelled in India between 744 and 746, it is clear that some form of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* was in circulation in the first half of the 8th century.¹¹⁵ However, the *Guhyasamāja* as described in Amoghavajra’s “eighteen assemblies” only covers the basic *maṇḍala* structure and neglects the more antinomian elements of the

¹⁰⁸ Almogi 2014, 51.

¹⁰⁹ Almogi 2014. On versions of the groups of eighteen tantras see also Eastman 1981 and J. Dalton 2005, 126 n32.

¹¹⁰ Geibel 1994, 114.

¹¹¹ The extant Tibetan translations are the canonical translation in the Kangyur (including the so-called eighteenth chapter of the tantra, the *Samājottara*); the translation preserved in the *Collected Nyingma Tantras* (*Rnying ma rgyud ‘bum* v 12, 89a-157a), which also includes the *Samājottara*; and a manuscript of the translation of the root tantra alone, without the *Samājottara*, from Dunhuang. Kenneth Eastman (1979) has studied these different recensions of the Tibetan translations, concluding that the Dunhuang translation is the basis for the other two. The Sanskrit of the tantra was first edited by Bhattacharya (1931) on the basis of four Sanskrit manuscripts, and subsequently by Bagchi (1965). The first Western-language translation was made by Fremantle, whose doctoral dissertation (1971) included a Sanskrit edition and a romanized transcription of the Tibetan translation of the root tantra from the Peking Kangyur, as well as an English translation of the root tantra. Her work does not address the *Samājottara*. More recently Matsunaga (1978) has made a more comprehensive Sanskrit edition, including the *Samājottara*. His edition takes into account not only the Sanskrit and Tibetan, but also the Chinese translation of the tantra.

¹¹² Indeed, even a quick glance at the composition of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* bears witness to the fact that the chapters, starting from chapter thirteen onwards suddenly become much longer than the first twelve.

¹¹³ Matsunaga 1977b. In fact, the *Samājottara* is still preserved as an independent text in the Derge edition of the Tibetan Kangyur, where it is entitled the *Rgyud phyi ma* (Tōh. 443). According to Matsunaga the *Samājottara* also underwent stages of development. He notes that, “...the Uttaratantra [= *Samājottara*] text which is quoted in Viśvāmītra’s commentary and which remains as an old Tibetan translation differs with the present text. Accordingly, it is likely that a small process of development occurred before the present form of the Uttaratantra was completed” (Matsunaga 1977, 117). Matsunaga’s observations with respect to the *Samājottara* as preserved in the Nyingma Canon may be accurate. However, with respect to Viśvāmītra’s commentary, *Dpal gsang ba ‘dus pa’i rgyud kyī man ngag gi rgya mtsho thigs pa* (Tōh. 1844), my reading of this text has led me to the conclusion (which I hold with considerable certainty) that it is, in fact, not a translation from the Sanskrit at all, but rather an indigenous Tibetan composition. In addition to lacking both a Sanskrit title at the beginning and a translator’s colophon at the end (which would not in and of itself preclude its being an Indic text), the commentary, which deals only with the *Samājottara* and not with the root tantra, is nearly twice the length of most Indic commentaries on the tantra and shows a number of linguistic features that I believe could only have arisen in an indigenous Tibetan composition commenting on a Tibetan translation of the *Samājottara*, rather than on the Sanskrit text.

¹¹⁴ Even traditional Japanese Shingon sources consider this text to be a composition by Amoghavajra rather than a translation (Geibel 1995, 108). Nonetheless, he is understood to be summarizing Indian sources with which he was familiar.

¹¹⁵ Matsunaga 1977b, 112. See also Geibel 1995.

present day form of the tantra, sharing more features with earlier Yoga tantras such as the *Sarvatathāgatattva-saṃgraha*.¹¹⁶ The text transmitted to Tibet in the period of the early translations (prior to the collapse of the Tibetan empire in 843), however, was the full root tantra.¹¹⁷ It is thus likely that while the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* originated in the early part of the 8th century, the text as we know it today was developed in the later part of that century. Buddhajñānapāda's life falls directly towards the end of the period in which we surmise that the root tantra took its final form and given that the *Samājottara* first circulated somewhat later than the root tantra, his relationship to both of these texts is an important question that I will address below.

The format of the tantras, with their compilatory nature, diverse topics, and swift jumps from narrative, to doctrinal content, to ritual, and back makes it difficult to summarize their contents.¹¹⁸ I will, however, just briefly outline some of the contents of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* to give a sense of the scripture that Buddhajñānapāda references in many of his works. The tantra begins rather dramatically with the statement that the Bhagavan was abiding in the *bhaga* (vagina) of the Vajra Consort, which was so novel that just the tantra's opening section was the subject of an entire commentary in its own right.¹¹⁹ The first chapter continues with the emergence of the *Guhyasamāja maṇḍala* which is generated by the speaker of the tantra, alternately called the Bhagavan, Mahāvairocana, and Bodhicittavajra. The deities produced are the five buddhas, beginning with Akṣobhya, who takes the central place,¹²⁰ the four buddha consorts, and the four wrathful gatekeepers, each of whom is generated by means of his or her own mantra.¹²¹ The tantra alternately discusses doctrinal questions, like the nature of awakening (usually in the narrative frame of a discussion between the main promulgator of the tantra and his

¹¹⁶ Matsunaga 1977b, 112.

¹¹⁷ Also of note for the late 8th-century dating of the root tantra is the fact that the translation of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (but not the *Samājottara*) preserved in the *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum* was, according to its colophon, translated by the early-period translators Vimalamitra and Kawa Paltsak (*Ka ba dpal brtsegs*), though Eastman notes that it was extensively altered after the thirteenth century (Eastman 1979, 3). The *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum* translation of the *Samājottara* states, confusingly, that it was translated by the translators Buddhaguhya, who lived in the 8th century, and Drogmi Palgyi Yeshe (*'Brog mi dpal gyi ye shes*) who lived in the 11th—while the translation of the *Samājottara* preserved in the Derge Kangyur states that it was translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo (*Rin chen bzang po*) (958-1055), of the later translation period. It thus seems likely that the *Samājottara* was not translated until the later period. The *Blue Annals* also confirms the early-period translation of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, but attributes the translation to the translator Che Tashi (*Lce bkra shis*), and makes no mention of the translation of the *Samājottara* (Roerich 1976, 359). Additionally, Campbell notes that a translation of Vajrahāsa's commentary on the root tantra is preserved in the *Ldan dkar ma* catalogue, thus dating the root tantra definitively before the early 9th century (Campbell 2009, 46).

¹¹⁸ Indeed most scholarship even on specific tantras makes no attempt to do so. The format of the Introductions to the 84000 Project translations of the Tibetan canon, which require the translator to provide at least some summary of the text she has translated, are therefore a welcome addition to the scholarship on Buddhist canonical literature (See <http://read.84000.co/>).

¹¹⁹ This is Vilāsavajra's *Śrīguhyasamājanidānagurūpadeśabhāṣya* (Tōh. 1910). The introductory narrative of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* of course follows the traditional *sūtric* narrative stating “Thus I have heard at one time, the Bhagavan was residing at...” Usually the location of his residence in the *sūtras* is a location in India, such as Rajgir in the instance of many of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*. The *Guhyasamāja-tantra* thus shakes up this traditional narrative structure and brings tantric sexual imagery immediately to the fore by locating the Bhagavan's residence not in an identifiable geographical location in India, but rather in his consort's *bhaga*.

¹²⁰ Other sections of the tantra, however, clearly prioritize Vairocana (see eg. Chapter 3). In some places we can see signs of the earlier three-family system, with just Vairocana, Akṣobhya, and Amitayus (see e.g. Chapter 9), as well as of a version of the five-family system where Vairocana is primary (see e.g. Chapter 12).

¹²¹ This basic thirteen-deity *maṇḍala* is not represented in either the *sādhana* literature of the Jñānapāda School or the Ārya School of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, which both have more elaborate *maṇḍala* structures. I have not, in fact, seen any *Guhyasamāja sādhana* with this simple thirteen-deity *maṇḍala* that directly accords with the tantra.

retinue of *tathāgatas* and bodhisattvas), and sets forth short *sādhana*-like practices including rites for the visualization of the buddhas, akin to those found in generation stage practice manuals, and yogic techniques like the *sūkṣma-yoga* that we find in perfection stage manuals. However, no full-fledged *sādhana* for either stage of practice appears in the tantra.¹²² Additionally, there are *maṇḍala* rituals, descriptions of sexual yogas, and practices including the injunction to consume the sexual fluids produced from union; injunctions to engage in antinomian behaviors like the consumption of traditionally impure substances; and injunctions to engage in behaviors associated with the three poisons of passion, aggression, and delusion, normally strictly proscribed in Buddhist practice.¹²³ The tantra also describes the practice of mantra recitation, as well as a number of wrathful rituals.¹²⁴ Like many tantras, the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* also contains “recipes” and instructions for the ritual production of certain substances that are to be consumed in order to gain (primarily) worldly accomplishments. There is also mention, but not a clear description, of initiation, as well as references to four stages of practice—*sevā*, *upasādhana*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana*—that have been variously interpreted and used by different authors, including Buddhajñānapāda, to structure tantric *sādhana*.

Given the almost chaotic nature of the Buddhist tantras, many of which are eclectic just like the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, commentaries providing interpretive frameworks and liturgical manuals providing practical details were necessary to give practitioners avenues for engagement in these complex systems. These were always supplemented by oral instructions, as well, passed down through a lineage.¹²⁵ According to the later Tibetan tradition, there were two main schools of *Guhyasamāja* exegesis and practice in India: the Jñānapāda School, eponymously named for Buddhajñānapāda, and the Ārya School, presumably named after its main exponent (Ārya) Nāgārjuna. These two were, however, not the only *Guhyasamāja* traditions practiced in India. A *Guhyasamāja sādhana* by the Indian tantric exegete Candrakīrti, extant in its original Sanskrit, refers to four schools of *Guhyasamāja* practice distinguished by the number of deities in their *maṇḍalas*; however, only the two mentioned above seem to have been passed on into the Tibetan tradition and we have little evidence of these other systems.¹²⁶ Among these two major

¹²² The tantra does, however, contain many short ritual sequences describing practices that seem to pertain to what later became classified as both of the two stages of practice. The nature of the relationship between *sādhana*s and other such authored ritual manuals and the tantras to which they are connected remains a topic that merits further study.

¹²³ These more antinomian elements of the Buddhist tantras have been interpreted variously by both traditional and modern scholars alike. Wedemeyer (2013) provides a helpful analysis of the various ways in which such practices have been, and ought to be read.

¹²⁴ Wrathful rituals gain prominence from chapters thirteen onwards.

¹²⁵ Indeed, it is said that the tantras are actually intentionally structured in a chaotic and confusing way specifically so that their content cannot be approached or practiced without the assistance of not only commentaries, but also oral instructions on the practices received directly from a guru.

¹²⁶ Tomabechi 2008, 171n1. His reference is to Candrakīrti’s *Vajrasattvanīṣpādanasūtra*. See Hong and Tomabechi 2009, 35 for the Tibetan edition. The *Guhyasamāja*-based *sādhana*s found at Dunhuang, however, are exceptional in displaying no evidence of a distinction between the Jñānapāda and Ārya schools, and thus *perhaps* represent a stage of *Guhyasamāja* practice before this distinction developed. See J. Dalton and Van Schaik 2006 for a catalogue of the Tibetan tantric manuscripts from Dunhuang. I have, however, noticed what I find to be a curious distinction in ritual structure between the Indian *Guhyasamāja sādhana*s (and in fact almost all other tantric *sādhana*s) preserved in the Tibetan Tengyur and those preserved at Dunhuang, which I believe suggests that the Dunhuang *Guhyasamāja*-related manuscripts somehow relate to a different “strand” of liturgical works than those preserved in the Indic sources. That is, throughout Dalton and van Schaik’s catalogue there are references to the three *samādhis* “of Mahāyoga,” by which Dalton and van Schaik mean the *samādhi* of suchness (*de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge ’dzin*), the all-illuminating *samādhi* (*kun tu snang ba’i ting nge ’dzin*) and the causal *samādhi* (*rgyu’i ting nge ’dzin*). Dalton (2004, 9) takes these same three *samādhis* to be characteristic of the generation stage practice of the Mahāyoga tantras on the whole. Indeed, in the Tibetan Mahāyoga practices of the Nyingma tradition up until the present day

Guhyasamāja practice traditions, Buddhajñānapāda's is the earlier one. The Ārya School's later date is determined both by its reliance not on the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* itself for its *maṇḍala* and ritual system, but on the later *Guhyasamāja* explanatory tantras—the *Vajramālā*, the *Caturdevīparipṛcchā*, the *Samdhivya-karaṇa*, and the *Vajrajñānasamuccaya*—and also by its more developed exegetical tradition.¹²⁷

these three are exactly the three *samādhis* that pertain to the generation of the deity in generation stage practice, and indeed these are the three *samādhis* as they are represented in *sādhanas* and other Mahāyoga works at Dunhuang, including those that pertain to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. But when we come to Indic liturgical texts, we find a different story. A search of the Tibetan Kangyur and Tengyur shows only four texts—two tantras and two commentaries—that set forth the particular system of three *samādhis* common at Dunhuang and in the later Tibetan Nyingma tradition. One of these four, though, is the *Dgongs pa 'dus pa 'i mdo*, which Dalton (2002) has shown to be a Tibetan composition rather than an Indian text. The other three are the *Śrītherukakarūṇākrīḍita-tantra*, translated by Śrīkīrti, which is one of the *Rnying rgyud*; Mañjuśrīmitra's *Bodhicittabhāvanādvādaśārthanirdeśa* (Tōh. 2578), which has no translator's colophon; and Vajravarman's *Vajravidāraṇādhāraṇīvr̥tti*, translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo. (The *Śrītherukakarūṇākrīḍita-tantra* and Mañjuśrīmitra's text both list only the second and third *samādhis*—the *kun tu snang ba 'i ting nge 'dzin* and the *rgyu 'i ting nge 'dzin* by name—but both also describe a *samādhi* prior to these two. The description of that first *samādhi* in both of these texts can, however, be correlated to the *de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin*.) Thus we find this particular set of three “Mahāyoga” *samādhis* in only three Indic texts surviving in the Tibetan canon, one of which is a from the *Rnying rgyud* section of the Kangyur, and another of which lacks a translator's colophon. What we do find frequently in the Kangyur and Tengyur, as well as in the surviving Sanskrit manuscripts, like those of the *Sāramañjarī*, is a different set of three *samādhis*, those already well known from the Yoga tantras. These three *samādhis* continue to be used throughout the liturgical literature preserved in Sanskrit and in Tibetan translation of the so-called Mahāyoga tantras (including every single reference in the Kangyur and Tengyur to the three *samādhis* within the *Guhyasamāja* corpus), all the way up through works on the later Yoginī tantras like the *Cakrasaṃvara*, *Hevajra*, *Samputa-tantras*. These other three *samādhis*, which are used in the Jñānapāda School and the Ārya School alike to structure their generation stage practices are the preliminary yoga *samādhi* (*ādiyoga-samādhi*), the supremely victorious *maṇḍala samādhi* (*maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi*), and the supremely victorious action *samādhi* (*karmarājāgrī-samādhi*). Tanaka (1996, 259), who works primarily with Indic texts, has observed that, “The stage of generation in late Tantric Buddhism is divided into three further stages, called *ādiyoga nāma samādhi*, *maṇḍalarājāgrī nāma samādhi*, and *karmarājāgrī nāma samādhi*...” We can compare this to the observation of van Schaik, who works primarily with Dunhuang texts, that “Meditation in Mahāyoga *sādhanas* tends to proceed along the structure of the three concentrations (*ting nge 'dzin*, Skt. *samādhi*)... These three are: (i) The concentration on suchness (*de bzhin nyid*), (ii) the concentration on total illumination (*kun tu snang ba*), and (iii) the concentration on the cause (*rgyu*)” (van Schaik 2012, 13). The fact that there is such a clear difference in the set of three *samādhis* that are consistently used in Tibetan Dunhuang tantric texts and those that are consistently used in the Indic tantric texts suggests to me that these two groups of texts pertain to, for lack of a better term, different ritual “strands.” Certainly, more research is necessary to determine more about the relationship between the *Guhyasamāja*-related texts from Dunhuang and those preserved in the Tibetan canon. Christian Wedemeyer is currently working on some of the Dunhuang *Guhyasamāja sādhanas*; his work will be a very welcome addition to the very little research that has thus far been done on this topic.

¹²⁷ See Matsunaga 1977, 115-16. Despite the fact that it is historically later, the Ārya School has received by far the most scholarly attention, both within the Tibetan scholastic tradition and the modern academy. There are several reasons for this. First, it was the Ārya School's practice tradition of *Guhyasamāja* that became popular in Tibet, especially in the Tibetan Gelugpa school, and consequently a number of scholarly commentaries and *sādhanas* have been composed following that tradition up to the present day. The presence of a living Tibetan tradition and indigenous Tibetan commentarial literature on the Ārya School has made its Indian source texts (whether in the original Sanskrit or in Tibetan translation) much more approachable for modern scholars. Additionally, the Ārya School has fascinated modern scholars because of the curious names of its major exponents—Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Candrakīrti—which are the very names of earlier Indian philosophers associated with the Madhyamaka philosophical tradition founded by the “original” Nāgārjuna, i.e. the non-tantric author of the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikās*. See Wedemeyer 2007, 7-43 for a detailed treatment of this issue. Moreover, a larger number of Indian texts pertaining to this tradition survive in their original Sanskrit. Following Alex Wayman's (1977) pioneering inquiry into the Ārya School of *Guhyasamāja* exegesis and practice—an informative if somewhat rambling monograph—more recent scholarship (Tanaka 1999-2004c; Tomabechi 2006; Wedemeyer 2007; Campbell 2009; Hong and Tomabechi 2009; Wright 2010; Bentor 2010; Kittay 2011; and Columbia University team, forthcoming) has devoted some further attention to the study and translation Ārya School texts. With respect

The two systems can be generally distinguished by their distinct generation stage *maṇḍalas*, their perfection stage practices, and the number of initiations in their respective systems. The Jñānapāda School *maṇḍala* has nineteen deities and centers on Mañjuvajra, as laid out in Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, whereas the Ārya School has a thirty-two deity *maṇḍala* centering on Akṣobhyavajra as laid out in Nāgārjuna's *Piṇḍīkrta-sādhana*. Regarding the perfection stage practices, Buddhajñānapāda's system (which we must again note has been far, far less studied in the modern academy) is less formally structured than that of the Ārya School but is characterized by a system of three *bindu* yogas that include the practice of *vajrajāpa* and several (but not all) of the yogas from the classical *ṣaḍaṅga* or six-branch yogas. These practices are detailed both in his *Dvītīyakrama* and his *Muktitilaka*. The Ārya School's perfection stage system follows the structure of the five stages (*pañcakrama*) according to Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama* and Candrakīrti's *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*.¹²⁸ The early texts of the Jñānapāda School preserve a system of just three initiations, concluding with the *prajñājñāna* initiation (as it seems the fourth initiation had not yet fully developed in Buddhajñānapāda's time), whereas the Ārya School initiatory rituals include the fully developed system of four initiations.¹²⁹ Given the paucity of modern scholarship on the Jñānapāda School our understanding of the relationship between the two traditions continues to develop, and the present study hopes to make some steps toward that understanding.

3. Buddhajñānapāda's Life

Everyone having come, in this way, to know the detailed accounts of my life, should use all methods to please the sublime and sincere learned one, and listen to and contemplate his teachings and compositions. Through relying upon this, remaining in isolated places, training one's mind in suchness, and genuinely realizing the way things are, it is possible to attain awakening in this very life, or even in just six months—who could refute this!?

-Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītīyakrama*

Name

to the study of Ārya School texts Wright (2010) and Tomabechi (2006) have made editions, translations, and studies of, respectively, Nāgārjuna's *Piṇḍīkrta*, the central Ārya School generation stage *sādhana*, and his *Pañcakrama*, a perfection stage manual. Their studies of these systems are supplemented by Wedemeyer's (2007) Tibetan and Sanskrit edition, translation, and study of Āryadeva's *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, which further elaborates Nāgārjuna's perfection stage system, and Tomabechi's (2006) Tibetan edition of the same text. In a series of articles Tanaka has presented an edition of Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi's *Śrī-guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-vimśati-vidhi*, a *maṇḍala* ritual according to the Ārya School's *Guhyasamāja maṇḍala* (See Tanaka 1999-2004c). Hong and Tomabechi (2009) present an edition of and brief introduction to Candrakīrti's Ārya School *Vajrasattvasādhana*. Campbell (2009), Bendor (2010), Kittay (2011), and the team from Columbia (forthcoming) all deal primarily with the hermeneutical approach of the Ārya School, rather than its ritual systems. Campbell's work considers the hermeneutics of Candrakīrti's *Pradīpoddyotana*, an Ārya School commentary on the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra, an edition and translation of which are currently being prepared by a team at Columbia University. Bendor examines the Ārya School interpretations of a single verse from the root tantra, while Kittay looks at the question of hermeneutics with respect to the *Vajramālā*, an explanatory tantra of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* that sets out the *maṇḍala* and ritual system of the Ārya School. Kittay's study includes a complete English translation of the *Vajramālā* from the extant Tibetan translation of the text (the Sanskrit is no longer extant) but does not include a Tibetan edition.

¹²⁸ Although the Tibetan tradition asserts the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* to be a "meaning commentary" (*don 'grel*) on Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama*, Tomabechi's analysis of the relationship between these texts has led him to conclude that the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* is actually *earlier* than the *Pañcakrama* (Tomabechi 2006, 36-38).

¹²⁹ Vaidyapāda's *Yogasapta*, which I examine in Chapter Seven, shows that "the fourth," though not yet identified as a separate initiation was indeed part of early Jñānapāda School practice.

Even before we address the details of his life and work, a few words ought to be said about Buddhajñānapāda's name, which is reported with quite some variety in the works available to us which include Buddhajñānapāda's own writings, the colophons of the Tibetan translations of his works, the writings of his direct disciples and other Indian authors (in Tibetan translation and in Sanskrit), and indigenous Tibetan texts.¹³⁰ One feature of some, but not all, of Buddhajñānapāda's writings, is the inclusion of his own name, cleverly inscribed within the dedicatory verses. In all five of the works in which he does this, he uses the words *buddhajñāna* (*sangs rgyas ye shes*), making it likely that this was the name he used for himself.¹³¹ *Pāda* is added as an honorific suffix to the names of quite a number of Indian masters, including many in Buddhajñānapāda's lineage. Although Buddhajñānapāda (*sangs rgyas ye shes zhabs*),¹³² and Buddhajñāna (*Sangs rgyas ye shes*),¹³³ are the most common names found in the colophons to his works, we find other versions of his name in the Tibetan colophons, as well: Buddhaśrījñāna (*Sangs rgyas dpal ye shes*),¹³⁴ and Buddhaśrījñānapāda (*Sangs rgyas dpal ye shes zhabs/ Sangs rgyas dpal kyi ye shes zhabs*).¹³⁵ In Indic works by his direct disciples and later writers we find a similar variety: Buddhajñānapāda, Buddhajñāna, Jñānapāda (*ye shes zhabs*), Śrījñānapāda (*Dpal ldan ye shes zhabs*), and Buddhaśrījñānapāda. Tibetan authors similarly run the gamut, naming him Buddhajñānapāda, Buddhajñāna, Buddhaśrījñāna, and Jñānapāda. Adding *śrī* to various places in his name was presumably done out of respect, and shortening names is also common practice. We can certainly not assume that all of the works in the canon ascribed to authors under these names were written by one and the same Buddhajñānapāda (and I will address the attribution of each of the extant works under the whole variety of these names below), but it is clear that a wide variety of names was used in various contexts to refer to the particular individual whom I here refer to as Buddhajñānapāda. Not only does this seem to be the most commonly used of his various names (though the shortened version, Jñānapāda may also be in the running for common usage), but since it seems he called himself Buddhajñāna, I have settled on Buddhajñānapāda.

Dates and Early Life as a Student

We have already heard the story of Buddhajñānapāda's life as he himself tells it, along with the details that Vaidyapāda adds to his guru's autobiographical narrative. These early Indian accounts were supplemented by later Tibetan histories whose reports of Buddhajñānapāda's life, albeit written hundreds of years after his death,¹³⁶ contain additional details not found in the

¹³⁰ In the secondary literature he is usually referred to as Jñānapāda, Buddhaśrījñāna, Buddhaśrījñānapāda, or Buddhajñānapāda.

¹³¹ The use of his name in the dedicatory verses is found in his *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, *Muktītilaka*, *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, **Gativyūha*, and *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*.

¹³² In the colophons of his *Guhyajambhalaśādhana* (D and P), **Gativyūha* (D), and *Mahāyānalakṣaṇasamuccaya* (D and P). It is also found in the colophon of Śākyamitra's *Mukhāgama*, which is often attributed to Buddhajñānapāda.

¹³³ In the colophons of his *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* (D and P), *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* (D and P), *Śrītherukasādhana* (D and P), *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana* (D and P), and **Gativyūha* (P).

¹³⁴ In transliteration as *Bud dha śrī jñā na* in his *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* (D), and probably erroneously in transliteration as *Bud dha śrī ka jñā na* in the *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* (P).

¹³⁵ In the colophons of the *Dvītiyakrama* (D and P), the *Muktītilaka* (D and P), and the *Caturaṅgasādhana* (D and P).

¹³⁶ The Tibetan histories I have relied upon in this study are Chögyal Phagpa's 13th-century *Gsang 'dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa'i rim pa*; Gö Lotsāwa Zhonnu Pel's 15th-century *Deb ther sngon po* (see also Roerich 1976); Tāranātha's 17th-century *Rgya gar chos 'byung* (See also Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970) and *Bka' babs bdun* (See also Templeman 1983); Amye Zhab's 17th-century *Gsang 'dus chos 'byung* and his *Gshin rje chos 'byung*; and Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje 20th-century *History of the Nyingma School*. This is certainly not an exhaustive list of the Tibetan accounts of Buddhajñānapāda's life. I have not been able to include here all of the

Indian sources and appear to thus be based both on the Indian sources (i.e. Buddhajñānapāda, Vaidyapāda, and other Sanskrit sources no longer available to us), as well as possibly on oral history.¹³⁷ Vaidyapāda seems to assume knowledge of such oral histories already in his commentary on the *Dvītyākrama* when he suggests that the “detailed accounts” that Buddhajñānapāda mentions include “the taming of Nālandā, making offerings at Vajrāsana, [the account] of the consecration and others.”¹³⁸ Since Vaidyapāda himself offers no further details, it seems he assumes his reader will know of the events he references simply by giving these names. As we shall see, although some of the Tibetan histories elaborate on and interpret aspects of Buddhajñānapāda’s life story in ways that seem to serve an apologetic or polemical function, we have no outright reason to doubt some of the details that are added in others of them, and they certainly add richer texture to what we know of Buddhajñānapāda’s life.

We are unusually fortunate in the realm of medieval Indian history to be able to give fairly precise dates for Buddhajñānapāda’s life. Of the six human teachers he mentions in the *Dvītyākrama* (setting aside for the moment his most important guru, Mañjuśrī himself), three are historically identifiable figures—Haribhadra, Vilāsavajra, and Pālitapāda—all of whom can be dated to the 8th century. In the colophon of his *Abhisamayālamkāṛālokā* Haribhadra states that it was completed at the Trikaṭuka Monastery under the reign of the Pāla king Dharmapāla (r. ca. 775-812),¹³⁹ and Tāranātha notes that Dharmapāla was a patron of both Haribhadra and Buddhajñānapāda, describing both masters as Dharmapāla’s gurus.¹⁴⁰ Vilāsavajra likewise lived in the latter part of the 8th century.¹⁴¹ Moreover one of Buddhajñānapāda’s own works, completed in the early part of his life, appears in the *IDan kar ma* catalogue which was completed in 824.¹⁴² On this basis we can reliably place Buddhajñānapāda’s life in the latter part of the 8th and early part of the 9th century.

In a recent article Péter Szántó has drawn attention to an account in Atīśa’s **Bodhipathapradīpapañjikā* in which King Devapāla, Dharmapāla’s heir, is said to have made an offering of his kingdom, his queen, and himself, to Buddhajñānapāda, which he later ransomed back with their weight in gold.¹⁴³ This would mean that Buddhajñānapāda’s activity

details included in these histories that differ from or supplement Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s accounts—they are divergent enough that such an endeavor would require a separate study, and my main concern here is with Buddhajñānapāda’s life and thought as we find it presented in the Indic tradition, rather than the later Tibetan interpretations of his life and tradition. However, I have included some accounts from the Tibetan sources, as the Tibetan historians do significantly supplement our knowledge of Buddhajñānapāda’s life, particularly several accounts from his later life that are only briefly mentioned in Vaidyapāda.

¹³⁷ With regard to other no longer extant or accessible Indic sources, Tāranātha, whose accounts of Buddhajñānapāda’s life include quite a number of details not found in the Indian texts known to us, explains that his work was based on several Sanskrit sources that now appear to be lost, including one of the Magadhan scholar Sa dbang bzang po, whose work covers the history up to the reign of Rāmapāla (r. ca. 1072-1126) (Sanderson 2009, 89). The later Tibetan accounts, moreover, unsurprisingly draw from the earlier Tibetan accounts, as well.

¹³⁸ *na landa* ([landa] P, lendra D) ‘*dul ba dang/ rdo rje gdan gyi mchod pa byas pa dang/ rab tu gnas pa byas pa la sogs pa ’i lo rgyus*’ (*Sukusuma*, D 135b.4; P 163a.8). Elsewhere in his commentary Vaidyapāda references and cites from a number of textual sources, so it seems that these references to stories of Buddhajñānapāda’s life, which are mentioned by topic rather than by referencing a particular text, do probably refer to oral accounts.

¹³⁹ Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 266n4; Ruegg 1981, 101n320; and Sanderson 2009, 93-4.

¹⁴⁰ *Rgya gar chos ’byung*, 262; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 274. The Pālas were, to quote Sanderson, a “robustly” Buddhist East Indian dynasty who used the Buddhist *dharmacakra* as a royal emblem, whose inscriptions began with praise to the Buddha, and a number of whose rulers are described in the manuscript and inscriptional record with the epithet *paramasaugataḥ* (Sanderson 2009, 87).

¹⁴¹ Tribe 1994, 9-23.

¹⁴² Tomabechei (2008, 175) cites Hadano on this point. This may refer to his *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*, the translation of which is indeed attributed to the Imperial era translators Kawa Paltsek and Vidyākarasiṃha.

¹⁴³ Szántó 2015, 539.

stretched perhaps further into the 9th century than previously thought, that is at least until some time after 812 CE when Devapāla ascended the throne. However, an identical account of the king offering himself and his queen to Buddhajñānapāda and later ransoming themselves back by paying their weight in gold is also recorded in Tāranātha's *Seven Transmissions* (*Bka' babs bdun*) and a different version of the story in which the king builds a temple in gratitude to Buddhajñānapāda is found in Chögyal Phagpa's *Biography and Lineage History of Jñānapāda's Guhyasamāja*. In both of those sources, though, the king in question is identified as Dharmapāla, rather than Devapāla.¹⁴⁴ While these accounts at least place in question Atīśa's version of the story involving King Devapāla, Tāranātha seems to have either received mistaken information or misunderstood his sources on the Pāla succession, as he incorrectly places Dharmapāla *after* Devapāla rather than before him and reverses some (but not all!) information about their respective reigns and activities.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Atīśa was both geographically and historically much closer to the events than either Chögyal Phagpa or Tāranātha, which perhaps makes his report more likely to be accurate.

Another factor to consider is that Buddhajñānapāda is asserted by Tāranātha to have been the first tantric *ācārya* at Vikramaśīla, and it seems likely that it was Devapāla, not Dharmapāla (as Tāranātha states) who founded Vikramaśīla Monastery. Devapāla's having constructed Vikramaśīla is mentioned in the colophon of Anupamavajra's *Ādikarmapradīpa*,¹⁴⁶ and this is further substantiated by the colophon of Atīśa's *Ratnakaraṇḍodghāta*, where he states that he composed the work "At the great temple called Vikramaśīla, the commitment of Devapāla," presumably indicating that the construction of Vikramaśīla was the fulfilment of one of King Devapāla's tantric commitments.¹⁴⁷ If that is the case, and if Buddhajñānapāda was indeed Vikramaśīla's first tantric *ācārya*, then he did very likely live into Devapāla's reign. The late 8th-century dating of his gurus Haribhadra and Vilāsavajra would also suggest the likelihood of Buddhajñānapāda's having lived at the end of the 8th century, and well into the 9th.¹⁴⁸ But if Tāranātha's account of his life, in which Buddhajñānapāda is said to have lived for 80 years, is correct, then his life could easily have spanned a good part of both of those centuries.

Buddhajñānapāda's own account of his life tells us nothing of his birth or childhood but begins only with his studies. It appears not to be until an account of his life written by Chögyal Phagpa in the 13th century, that we learn more about his early life, though the information in our sources here varies significantly. Chögyal Phagpa tells us that Buddhajñānapāda was born in a place called Sindhura in southeast India to a king called Gyaparuprabhava (!?),¹⁴⁹ whereas Tāranātha, in the 17th century, reports that according to some sources (to which we unfortunately no longer have access) Buddhajñānapāda was a brahmin who was ordained at Nālandā into the Mahāsāṃghika school, while according to others he was a *kṣatriya* "reader" (scribe?).¹⁵⁰ As

¹⁴⁴ (*Bka' babs bdun*, 106; Templeman 1983, 74; *Gsang 'dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa'i rim pa*, 617)

¹⁴⁵ See Sanderson 2009, 90-1. Tāranātha does, though, correctly assert Dharmapāla to roughly be a contemporary of King Trisong Deutsen (r. ca. 755-797) (*Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 264; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 276).

¹⁴⁶ Sanderson 2009, 91.

¹⁴⁷ *de wa pā la'i thugs dam bi kra ma/ shī la zhes bya 'i gtsug lag khang chen du* (*Ratnakaraṇḍodghāta*, D 116b.4).

¹⁴⁸ See Sparham 1989, 3 on Haribhadra's dates and Tribe 1994, 9-23 on Vilāsavajra's.

¹⁴⁹ *Rgyal po gya pa ru pra bha wa*. (*Gsang 'dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang brgyud pa'i rim pa*, 610). Amye Zhab's 17th century *Gshin rje chos 'byung* repeats this information (*Gshin rje chos 'byung*, 304a.4). His account begins as a slightly shortened, but otherwise word-for-word, copy of Chögyal Phagpa's account though there are places where Amye Zhab follows Vaidyapāda more or less word-for-word rather than Chögyal Phagpa. When he comes to the account of Buddhajñānapāda's meeting with the monk in the Kuvaca forest, however, Amye Zhab's account diverges from both.

¹⁵⁰ *Gsang 'dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa'i rim pa*, 610; *Bka' babs bdun*, 103; Templeman 1983, 71. On Tāranātha's sources, now lost to us, see note 137. Tāranātha's statement about Buddhajñānapāda's ordination

Buddhajñānapāda himself tells us, he spent a number of years in the earlier part of his life traveling quite extensively throughout the subcontinent studying and practicing under the guidance of different gurus with whom he remained for varying amounts of time—he mentions staying with one guru for just eight months and another for nine years. The teachers Buddhajñānapāda mentions in his account are Haribhadra, with whom he studied in the town of Takṣaśilā, in the area of Khapir, in Magadha;¹⁵¹ Vilāsavajra, Guṇeru and Jātig Jālā, with whom he studied in Uḍḍiyāna;¹⁵² Bālipāda, who lived in *Ko no dze* in the area of Jālandhara;¹⁵³ and Pālitapāda, who stayed at “the place with sky trees” in the Koṅkan, most probably at modern-day

in the Mahāsāṃghika school is the only one I have seen that identifies him as having taken monastic ordination, though his early career studying with Haribhadra and teaching at Nālandā are suggestive of his having monastic status, at least in the early part of his life. As for Chögyal Phagpa’s account of Buddhajñānapāda’s life, he closely follows Vaidyapāda’s narrative from the account of Buddhajñānapāda’s studies with Haribhadra onward, but also includes episodes not reported in Vaidyapāda. His source for the earlier information on Buddhajñānapāda’s birth and parentage is unclear, but its style of delivery (in addition to his being the son of a king, he also notes that from a young age Buddhajñānapāda was handsome and intelligent, etc.) is classically hagiographical. Phagpa also implausibly states that from Pālitapāda (who he styles Balipata) Buddhajñānapāda received initiation into the thirty-two deity Guhyasamāja *maṇḍala* (*Gsang ‘dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa’i rim pa*, 612). (Tāranātha also states that in the Koṅkan Pālitapāda heard teachings directly from Candrakīrti and received the text of the *Pradīpodyotana*, so there do appear to be some accounts of Pālitapāda’s having been an Ārya School practitioner (*Rgya gar chos ‘byung*, 260; I disagree with the translation of this passage in Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 273).) Phagpa’s account also contains the first version that I have seen of the expanded (from Vaidyapāda’s narrative) story of Buddhajñānapāda’s meeting with Mañjuśrī, in which he travels toward Wutaishan in hopes of meeting Mañjuvajra. I have translated this episode in full below. Tāranātha, Amye Zhab, and Dudjom all report abbreviated forms of this same account, which seem to be based on Phagpa’s, or else on the same sources he was using, though Phagpa’s hagiography contains several accounts not found in either of the others. See Templeman 1983, 72-3 and Dudjom 1991, 495-6 for English translations of Tāranātha’s and Dudjom’s versions of this story, respectively. (Templeman’s translation, in particular, suffers from a number of errors, some of which are understandable given that he was apparently not familiar with Vaidyapāda’s text, from which Tāranātha derives much of his material). While Phagpa’s account of Buddhajñānapāda’s life in some places seems implausible, and in this particular episode is so detailed as to seem suspicious (it even includes dialogue between Buddhajñānapāda, the monk, and the woman!), he reports multiple versions of certain portions of the account (some of which are included in Tāranātha’s, Amye Zhab’s, and Dudjom’s later tellings, and others of which are not), suggesting he was relying on multiple sources. At one point Phagpa details an account of Buddhajñānapāda’s visit to his guru Pālitapāda’s residence which is reported in Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī*. It is possible, then, that other of these more detailed accounts of certain episodes of Buddhajñānapāda’s life were present in Indian sources we no longer have access to, or are at present buried in extant texts, like the account of the visit to Pālitapāda in the *Sāramañjarī*, and are simply waiting to be unearthed.

¹⁵¹ The toponyms mentioned in the *Dvitiyakrama* and the *Sukusuma* are difficult to ascertain with certainty. The place names mentioned here in the context of Buddhajñānapāda’s studies with Haribhadra are *Dbu kyi yul chen*, *Kha pir* (pir] P, bir D), and *Rdo ‘jog*. *Rdo ‘jog* is a common translation of Takṣaśilā (see C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming). However, the region in which the town is said to be located, *Kha pir*, calls into question this being the commonly-known city of Takṣaśilā located in modern-day Pakistan. On one hand, *Kha pir* may be a corrupted rendering of Kaspīr, i.e. Kaśmir (see C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming). However, since this particular Khapir is specified as being in Magadha, such an identification is only possible if Magadha is understood to mean the Indian subcontinent more broadly, rather than the region of Magadha, which is not near Kaśmir. But Vaidyapāda describes Magadha as “in the area of Nālandā,” which again renders the identification of Khapir as Kaśmir difficult (*Sukusuma*, D 89a.7).

¹⁵² We may assume Uḍḍiyāna to be the region in the northwest of the subcontinent, often identified as the Swat Valley in modern-day Pakistan.

¹⁵³ Again here we have some difficulty identifying these locations. At first glance *Ko no dze*, or in the Derge edition of Vaidyapāda’s commentary *Ka no dze* (P reads *ko no dze*), does seem to be a transliteration of Kannauj, and Davidson (2002, 312) has rendered it as such. However, Szántó (2015, 542-3) places some doubt on this identification, since modern-day Kannauj is not near the modern-day city of Jalandhar, and C. Dalton and Szántó (forthcoming) note that at the time Kannauj was referred to as Kanyākubja, making the identification even less likely.

Kadri.¹⁵⁴ His most important guru was Mañjuśrī himself, who appeared to Buddhajñānapāda as an “emanated monk” who then emanated Mañjuśrī and his *maṇḍala* for Buddhajñānapāda in the Kuvaca forest behind Vajrāsana.¹⁵⁵ While the exact locations of these encounters are difficult to ascertain with certainty based on the toponyms given in his account, what is clear is that Buddhajñānapāda’s travels took him for thousands of kilometers across a wide swath of the subcontinent from its north-central area to the far northeast, to the southeast, and finally to the northeast.

Buddhajñānapāda’s Gurus and Their Possible Influence on his Thought

Haribhadra

As for his teachers and his studies, among those figures we are able to identify and about whom we know more from other sources, Haribhadra, the only non-tantric guru that Buddhajñānapāda mentions studying under,¹⁵⁶ is a well-known late 8th-century scholar of Prajñāpāramitā literature whose *Abhisamayālamkāra* remains important in many Tibetan monastic curricula even up to the modern day. Despite his own preference for writing on tantric topics, Buddhajñānapāda, who is considered Haribhadra’s principle disciple, was clearly influenced by this master. One of Buddhajñānapāda’s two non-tantric works, the *Saṅcayagāthā-pañjikā*, composed while he was staying at Nālandā early in his life and which is by far the longest of all his extant writings, is an extensive Prajñāpāramitā commentary. In this work he follows in Haribhadra’s footsteps in synthesizing Madhyamaka philosophy with the *Abhisamayālamkāra*.¹⁵⁷

Vilāsavajra

Vilāsavajra, the first tantric guru that Buddhajñānapāda mentions, is likewise a well-known late 8th-century author¹⁵⁸ who wrote treatises on a number of tantras including the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, and the introductory section (*nidāna*) of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*.¹⁵⁹ If indeed the Vilāsavajra who authored the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*

¹⁵⁴ *nam mkha’i shing ldan*. Vaidyapāda’s etymology for the toponym reads: *de la nam mkha’i shing ldan zhes bya ba ste ci phyir zhe na/ rtsa ba med par shing rnam ’khril* (P] *’khril*; D *la ’khris*) *shing steng du bras* (P] *bras*; D *bris*) *pa lta bur gnas pa’o//* (D 90a.4). According to Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel the term “sky tree” (*nam mkha’i shing*) means mangrove (or perhaps banyan?) (personal communication, March, 2016). The toponym was earlier identified by Davidson as Kānherī, based upon his reading of Vaidyapāda’s gloss of the name (2002, 313). I am more convinced, however, by Szántó’s more recent work, which suggests that the place mentioned may rather be Kadri, which is in the Koṅkan near Mangalore, rather than Kānherī (i.e. Kṛṣṇāgiri) which is not usually understood to be part of the Koṅkan. See Szántó (2015, 550-52) for the full details of his assessment, which I also discuss in more detail below in conjunction with Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Pālitapāda.

¹⁵⁵ Vajrāsana, we can safely say, is at Bodhgaya in modern-day Bihar.

¹⁵⁶ Haribhadra wrote four Prajñāpāramitā texts, but no tantric work attributed to him survives either in Sanskrit or in Tibetan translation in the Tengyur. He was, however, certainly familiar with tantric systems, as he advocates in one of his works that practitioners should visualize their meditational deity in the form of Vajradhara (Sparham 1989, 3). Haribhadra was himself the disciple of the unknown Vairocana-bhadra and of the well-known Śāntarakṣita, under whose tutelage he was a co-disciple of Kamalaśīla (ibid., 2-3).

¹⁵⁷ Ruegg 1981, 101-2. However, it appears that Buddhajñānapāda did not follow his guru Haribhadra’s interpretation of there being four *kāyas* instead of the three taught in the *Abhisamayālamkāra* (Makransky 1997, 6). The *Saṅcayagāthā-pañjikā* is the only one of Buddhajñānapāda’s extant works that I did not read in full as part of this study. This work, and particularly its relationship to Haribhadra’s Prajñāpāramitā writings, is a topic that certainly deserves further attention.

¹⁵⁸ On Vilāsavajra’s dates see Tribe 1994, 9-23.

¹⁵⁹ Vilāsavajra’s *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* commentary is the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, his *Guhyagarbha* commentary is the *Spar khab*, and his *Guhyasamāja* commentary the *Śrīguhyasamājanidānagurūpadeśabhāṣya*. In his

commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* was Buddhajñānapāda's guru, we find in that text the unusual instance of a guru citing his disciple's work.¹⁶⁰ However, this indeed appears to be the case here; the work cited by Vilāsavajra, the *Mahāyānalakṣaṇasamuccaya*, was composed by Buddhajñānapāda early in his career, most probably prior to his discipleship under Vilāsavajra.¹⁶¹ Moreover, we can say with certainty that Buddhajñānapāda knew Vilāsavajra's writing on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, since in his *Ātmasādhanaṅvatāra* Buddhajñānapāda reproduces (without telling us he is doing so) a lengthy section of Chapter Five of Vilāsavajra's *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* concerning the correspondences between the deities from the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti maṇḍala* and a number of Mahāyāna categories.¹⁶²

We can discern a number of possible ways in which his studies with Vilāsavajra may have influenced Buddhajñānapāda's thought. Vilāsavajra's *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* is written with an emphasis on Vijnānavādin perspectives combined with an acknowledgement of Madhyamaka systems¹⁶³ that is likewise prominent in Buddhajñānapāda's writings, and the central figure of Mañjuśrījñānasattva in the *sādhana* found in the fourth chapter of that work, which we now know that Buddhajñānapāda was familiar with, may perhaps have influenced Buddhajñānapāda's own use of Mañjuvajra as the central figure of the generation stage *maṇḍala* in his *Samantabhadra-sādhana*.¹⁶⁴ In any case, it seems likely that the identification of Mañjuśrī as an Ādibuddha figure in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* and the fact that this practice system was taught by his guru may have been a factor in Buddhajñānapāda's important personal connection with Mañjuśrī. And yet while Vilāsavajra also composed a *Guhyasamāja-tantra* commentary, and the *Guhyasamāja* was clearly the most important tantra for Buddhajñānapāda, there is no mention of Buddhajñānapāda's having studied the *Guhyasamāja* with him.¹⁶⁵

The most intriguing possibility of Vilāsavajra's thought influencing Buddhajñānapāda's concerns the former's relationship with the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*. While Buddhajñānapāda makes no mention at all of the *Guhyagarbha* in his oeuvre, he is mentioned in some later Tibetan histories and polemical treatises as an Indian author who uses the term "great perfection" (*rdzogs chen*) in his works. The term indeed appears in two instances in Buddhajñānapāda's writings in Tibetan translation (unfortunately the Sanskrit of neither passage is extant), but the context of its usage in these instances is less suggestive of a connection with great perfection traditions than are a number of other strains of his thought, including references to the immediate and direct

study of the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* Tribe notes that while the ascription of the *Guhyasamāja* commentary and the *Guhyagarbha* commentary cannot be definitively made to the author of the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, there are also no substantial reasons for doubting the ascription (Tribe 1994, 14). J. Dalton likewise asserts the same with regard to the attribution of authorship of the *Spar khab* to Vilāsavajra (J. Dalton 2005, 125n28).

¹⁶⁰ This was first noted by Tribe (1994, 16).

¹⁶¹ Szántó 2015, 541 and C. Dalton and Szántó forthcoming.

¹⁶² This passage in the *Ātmasādhanaṅvatāra* reproduces not a continuous segment of Chapter Five of the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, but rather a number of shorter passages from that chapter that Buddhajñānapāda has strung together to create several pages of the *Ātmasādhanaṅvatāra*. The presence of this passage is especially significant since the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* is extant in Sanskrit, so we now have access to yet another passage of the *Ātmasādhanaṅvatāra* in its original Sanskrit. I address this further below in my discussion of the *Ātmasādhanaṅvatāra*.

¹⁶³ Tribe 2016, 11.

¹⁶⁴ Tribe (1994, 8n20) suspects as much. Obviously Buddhajñānapāda's vision of Mañjuśrī would have been a more important factor in this decision.

¹⁶⁵ Vaidyapāda mentions only that Buddhajñānapāda studied "many Kriyā and Yoga tantras" with Vilāsavajra (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.5). As mentioned above, Vaidyapāda classifies the tantras in a number of different ways in the *Sukusuma* (see note 100), and it is not clear whether he would have included the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* under the category of Yoga tantras or held it to be exclusively a Mahāyoga tantra. In any case the *Guhyasamāja* is not explicitly mentioned as a topic of study with Vilāsavajra as it is in the case of Buddhajñānapāda's later guru Pālitapāda.

pointing out of reality by a guru to a disciple, an emphasis on the immediacy of awakening, and overtly anti-ritual rhetoric in the midst of a deeply ritual practice system.¹⁶⁶

Pālitapāda

The guru with whom Buddhajñānapāda studied the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* and whom he reports attending for nine years and then returning to visit again later in his life, Pālitapāda, has only recently emerged as a figure about whom more is known. Buddhajñānapāda describes studying with this guru in the Koṅkan in a location called *nam mkha' shing ldan*, literally “the place with sky trees,” and reports that he was surrounded by disciples who had miraculous abilities and that the whole entourage regularly received extensive support for their livelihood and practice. The unusual toponym mentioned for the location in the Koṅkan where Pālitapāda resided has been identified by Davidson as Kāṅherī and more recently by Szántó as Kadri, near present-day Mangalore.¹⁶⁷ Szántó’s assessment has the advantage of being the location of a Śaiva temple whose deity is called Mañjunātha, and an ancient inscription on the site identifies the place as a *vihāra*.¹⁶⁸ These details suggest that the temple was originally a Buddhist site devoted to Mañjuśrī, which of course fits well with Buddhajñānapāda’s system of *Guhyasamāja* whose central deity is Mañjuvajra, and suggests the possibility that yet another of Buddhajñānapāda’s gurus, in addition to Vilāsavajra, may have taught tantric practices centered on Mañjuśrī.

Such a possibility is furthered by Szántó’s report of a Sanskrit initiation manual called the *Parikramapadopāyikā* composed by a certain Śrīkīrtipāda who identifies his own guru as Pālitapāda, and mentions that guru as having taught *maṅḍala* rituals, presumably an initiation manual, in whose spirit Śrīkīrtipāda composed his own work.¹⁶⁹ Szántó further reports that the anonymous *Mañjuvajrodaya* (Tōh. 2590) shares significant parallels with Śrīkīrti’s manual, leaving the alluring possibility that the *Mañjuvajrodaya* might possibly be Pālitapāda’s work, on which his disciple Śrīkīrti based his own initiation manual.¹⁷⁰ Though Szántó does not report this, the *Mañjuvajrodaya* appears to be a *maṅḍala* rite for the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*.¹⁷¹ The fact that its title, and a number of instances in the text, refer to Mañjuvajra places the *Mañjuvajrodaya* at a very interesting crossroads between the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti* tradition and Buddhajñānapāda’s tradition of the *Guhyasamāja*. None of our sources report Pālitapāda to have taught the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*, but that certainly does not preclude his having done so. That the Pālitapāda mentioned by Śrīkīrti and Buddhajñānapāda’s guru by that name are one and the same teacher is especially likely, given that the Indian author Samantabhadra states that his *Sāramañjarī*, a commentary on Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, was composed at the command of one Kīrtipāda.¹⁷² Presumably the Kīrtipāda (a.k.a. Śrīkīrti; adding *pāda* as a marker of respect to the names of members of Buddhajñānapāda’s lineage was

¹⁶⁶ I discuss these issues in more detail in Chapter Three.

¹⁶⁷ Davidson 2002, 313; Szántó 215, 550-52.

¹⁶⁸ Szántó 2015, 551-2.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 552-3.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 553.

¹⁷¹ I have not had the opportunity to study the text in detail, but its location in the Tengyur among quite a few other works devoted to the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti* (and none devoted to the *Guhyasamāja*) suggests as much. In addition, the Tohoku Catalogue notes to Buton’s *Mtshan brjod kyi dkyil 'khor gyi bkod pa* specify that Buton’s text, a commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti* from the Yoga tantra perspective and including a presentation of its *maṅḍala* structure, makes reference to a number of works, including the *Mañjuvajrodaya* (databases.aibs.columbia.edu).

¹⁷² *Sāramañjarī*, D 1a.3; Szántó 2015, 554. And, yes, it is confusing that a person named Samantabhadra composed a commentary on a *sādhana* called the *Samantabhadra*, but he did.

common¹⁷³) who commanded Samantabhadra to compose a commentary on Buddhajñānapāda’s *sādhana* was a figure in his community who was senior to Samantabhadra, and a co-disciple of Buddhajñānapāda’s under Pālitapāda would fit that role well. Moreover, Szántó reports that Śrīkīrtipāda’s *Parikramapadopāyikā* is devoted in particular to the choreographical details of the *maṇḍala* ritual, and Buddhajñānapāda composed an entire text, the **Gativyūha*, devoted to such choreographical details, suggesting that this topic may have been a speciality of their common guru.

Buddhajñānapāda reports leaving Pālitapāda’s company after nine years when his guru admitted that he himself did not have full realization of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. He then traveled back to North India where he eventually had a vision of Mañjuśrī in the Kuvaca forest behind Bodhgaya, in which the instructions that formed the basis for Buddhajñānapāda’s unique system of Guhyasamāja practice were revealed to him. Nonetheless, Pālitapāda must have had a great influence on his disciple, as Buddhajñānapāda describes returning to visit Pālitapāda in the Koṅkan later in his life, on which occasion he composed some *sādhana*s to please his guru. This visit took place subsequent to his vision of Mañjuśrī, but presumably prior to his composition of the *Dvītyākrama*, given that the visit is mentioned in that text. Vaidyapāda reports that it was the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* that Buddhajñānapāda composed at Pālitapāda’s request, though Mañjuśrī himself had already commanded its composition in Buddhajñānapāda’s vision.¹⁷⁴

Other Gurus

The other three human gurus Buddhajñānapāda mentions studying with—Guṇeru, and Jātig Jvālā (the latter also seems to have been his consort), and Bālipāda—are at this point only known to us from their names and the details given in Buddhajñānapāda’s own account. It is worth noting, however, that two of these (unsurprisingly) historically unidentifiable gurus—that is, two among the six human teachers that Buddhajñānapāda names—Guṇeru and Jātig Jvālā, were women. Vaidyapāda also mentions two female co-disciples of Buddhajñānapāda’s under his guru Pālitapāda, the prostitutes Ālokī and Sādhuśīlā; a tantric consort trained in the Guhyasamāja yogas with whom he practiced also under Pālitapāda’s guidance, the butcher girl Vimalamutrī; and one female student of Buddhajñānapāda’s, the nun Guṇamitrā who requested him to compose a text at Nālandā early in his career. Thus we find women occupying the full variety of tantric roles in Buddhajñānapāda’s life—as gurus, consorts, co-disciples, and disciples.

Mañjuśrī[-mitra!?!]

The most important of Buddhajñānapāda’s gurus, whose direct first-person speech makes up ninety percent of the *Dvītyākrama* and whose instructions form the basis for Buddhajñānapāda’s system of *Guhyasamāja* practice, is none other than Mañjuśrī himself who appeared to Buddhajñānapāda in a vision—or so it seems in the *Dvītyākrama* and in Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma*. In both of their accounts, the “emanated monk” (in Vaidyapāda’s rendering he is further identified as an emanation of the “Great Vajra Holder”¹⁷⁵) who revealed Mañjuśrī and his *maṇḍala* to Buddhajñānapāda’s is eclipsed by the figure of Mañjuśrī himself as the direct source of Buddhajñānapāda’s revelation. In some (but, tellingly, not all) of the later Tibetan histories, though, the identity of this monk becomes much more central, and it is he who

¹⁷³ There are several instances of this in addition, of course, to Buddhajñānapāda’s own name. There is his disciple Vaidyapāda, as well as repeated references to Dīpaṅkarabhadra as “Bhadrapāda” in Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī*.

¹⁷⁴ *Sukusuma*, D135b.1; D 133b.6; *Samantabhadrī-ṅikā*, D 131b.6-7. See also Szántó 2015, 547.

¹⁷⁵ It is not impossible that this could be translating Vajradhara, as Davidson (2002, 313) has rendered the appellation in English, but the term that the Tibetan translators used, *rdo rje ‘dzin pa*, is not the common one for Vajradhara, which is *rdo rje ‘chang*.

is celebrated as Buddhajñānapāda’s most important teacher, rather than Mañjuśrī. The story of their meeting is, in several of the Tibetan accounts—starting with Chögyal Phagpa’s and including Tāranātha’s, Amye Zhab’s, and Dudjom’s—significantly expanded upon from Vaidyapāda’s account, on which it is clearly based. Let us first witness this encounter in Chögyal Phagpa’s delightful telling, the earliest expanded version I am aware of, before we address the question of the monk’s identity.¹⁷⁶ The episode is preceded by his teacher Pālitapāda being unable to cut through Buddhajñānapāda’s doubts about the meaning of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*.

[Buddhajñānapāda] went to Vajrāsana and made supplications to attain great awakening. Then he heard a voice in the sky that made a prophecy: “Son of good family, you must search for Mañjuvajra and through his blessings you will be freed from all of your doubts.” He asked the Ācārya Pālitapāda¹⁷⁷ for permission to go to Wutaishan in China, since that is where Mañjuvajra resides, and permission was granted. Setting off from Vajrāsana he headed north, and in the forest called Kuvaca¹⁷⁸ he saw that there was a woman and a female dog in front of a hut. Nearby a monk who had made his dharma robe into a turban was plowing a field. [Buddhajñānapāda] thought to himself, “Alas! There is a monk with a woman plowing a field! The Buddha’s teaching is certainly in decline!” and his heart was heavy.

However, it was almost noon, so he was thinking to go there to request alms when the monk said, “Go get the *ācārya* some food for his alms.” The *ācārya* [Buddhajñānapāda] sat down and the monk commanded the woman, “Serve this monk his lunch.” The woman had taken a fishing net to a stream, caught a fish, and cooked it. Then she had placed [it upon] a leaf in front of the female dog. [The monk] having commanded “Serve [his] alms,” the dog vomited [onto the leaf] and [the woman] brought that [vomit] along with the fish to the *ācārya*. This [meal], which was meant specifically for him, the *ācārya* [Buddhajñānapāda] regarded as flesh and filth, and he did not eat it. Another version of the story says that the woman killed many birds and cooked their flesh and brought it [to Buddhajñānapāda] who did not eat it. The woman then snapped her fingers and the cooked [birds] flew away, upon which the *ācārya* began to have some doubts [about his previous judgments regarding his lunch companions]. Then the monk said, “Alas [he is a] so-called worldly being; give him some ordinary food.” [The woman] then brought some cooked rice and yogurt, which the *ācārya* did eat. He then thought to depart, but the monk said, “If you leave from here now you won’t find a place to stay tonight; go tomorrow.” So [Buddhajñānapāda] stayed, but the monk went off somewhere else.

The *ācārya* was reciting the *Guhyasamāja* aloud, and whenever he came to a place [in the text] that he did not understand, the woman showed a displeased and sad

¹⁷⁶ Other versions of this account are found in Tāranātha’s *Bka’ babs bdun* (104-6), Amye Zhab’s *Gshin rje chos ’byung* (46a.3-48a.4) and Dudjom’s *History of the Nyingma School*. See Templeman (1983, 72-3) for an English translation of Tāranātha’s version of the same encounter, which unfortunately has a number of translation errors. See Dudjom (1990, 494-6) for an English translation of Dudjom Rinpoche’s version. Amye Zhab’s version of the account, in his *Gshin rje chos ’byung*, is reported to be translated in an unpublished article by Hubert Decler (Decler, unpublished), and is also discussed in Decler 1998. Decler’s 1998 article notes the strong parallels between the account in Tāranātha and Amye Zhab’s works and the narrative about Dharmasrīmitra in the ca. 15th Century *Svayambhūpurāna* (on the *Svayambhūpurāna*’s dates see von Rospatt 2015, 827).

¹⁷⁷ Chögyal renders the name *Pa li pa ta*, but I have corrected it here to what we know to be the name of Buddhajñānapāda’s *Guhyasamāja* teacher from the Koṅkan.

¹⁷⁸ Chögyal renders the name of the forest as *ku pa*, but I have corrected to the form given in the *Dvīṭyākrama*.

expression. The *ācārya* thought, “This woman certainly is clairvoyant and knows the minds of others! She will be able to cut through my doubts!” He prostrated to her and supplicated [for instruction] but the woman said, “I don’t know. But that monk from before, because he is my husband, is extremely learned. You should ask him.” “Where did he go?” asked Buddhajñānapāda, and [the woman] replied, “[He went] to buy beer.” “When is he coming back?” he asked, and [she] replied “He’ll be back in the late afternoon.” So [Buddhajñānapāda] waited. In the late afternoon [the monk] came back staggering¹⁷⁹ drunk. Seeing that, [Buddhajñānapāda felt] a lack of faith, but he swallowed his pride, prostrated and made the request, “Please teach me the *Guhyasamāja*.” “Ask for the initiation,” [the monk] commanded. “I’ve already gotten the initiation,” [Buddhajñānapāda] replied, upon which [the monk] said, “You must receive the initiation directly from me.” The *ācārya* searched for the ritual articles and requested initiation. According to a different account he gave [all] the money¹⁸⁰ he had to the woman and she emanated the [necessary] ritual articles, so he obtained them [that way].

Then, at midnight on the eighth day of the seventh month [the monk] emanated a celestial palace and at its center was the nineteen-deity *maṇḍala* of Mañjuvajra, which he emanated and showed directly [to Buddhajñānapāda]. The monk, however, remained in front of the *maṇḍala* in the very same form in which he had appeared before and asked the *ācārya*, “Will you receive the initiation from me or from the *maṇḍala*?” The *ācārya*, even though he knew that the *maṇḍala* had been emanated by the monk himself, was inspired¹⁸¹ by the form of the deity and replied, “I’ll receive it from the *maṇḍala*.” “Fine, take it, then,” said [the monk], and [Buddhajñānapāda] received the full initiation from the *maṇḍala*. According to a different account when [Buddhajñānapāda] said “I’ll receive it from the *maṇḍala*,” the *maṇḍala* disappeared and [the monk said] “I emanated the *maṇḍala*,” upon which Buddhajñānapāda understood the *maṇḍala* to be the monk’s emanation and prostrated [to him] saying, “You are the father and the mother of all beings...”¹⁸² In this way he praised him, asked his forgiveness,¹⁸³ and supplicated him. At dawn, from [the monk’s] heart-center the *maṇḍala* was [re-]emanated, and with a smile he said “Excellent!” and bestowed the initiation on him.

Then [the monk] began [to explain]¹⁸⁴ the condensed meaning of the *Guhyasamāja*, the [*Dvīṭīyakramatattvabhāvanā*]-*Mukhāgama* and other [instructions], and [thus] brought [Buddhajñānapāda] to realize all of the key points of the tantra. The *ācārya* was satisfied and delighted, so he said, “I want to make an offering; what will you accept?” “I don’t want anything,” the monk replied. “Take anything at all!” [Buddhajñānapāda] beseeched, so [the monk] said, “Alright, make the offering that you will prostrate every time you see [me].” The *ācārya* made that promise right on the spot as his offering. Then the monk said, “Because of [your] conduct with respect to food/ And holding a slight delusion with respect to me/ You will not, in this very life, gain accomplishment/ With those embodied aggregates/ But your mind will take on the vajra

¹⁷⁹ ‘*khyor*’ sugg. em. based on *Gshin rje chos ‘byung* which follows Chögyal Phagpa’s account word for word here; *Gsang ‘dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa ‘i rim pa* reads ‘*khyol*’.

¹⁸⁰ Lit. *kāṛṣāpāṇa*, a unit of currency mentioned in Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiography in the context of the offerings received by Buddhajñānapāda and his retinue from the wealth deity Jambhala when they were residing in the Parvata cave later in his life.

¹⁸¹ *mos*

¹⁸² This is the first line of *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 12.

¹⁸³ *bzod par gsol*

¹⁸⁴ *brtsams*. This could also mean that he “composed” the texts mentioned.

body/ And you will be liberated in the *bardo*.”¹⁸⁵ Then he said, “Although you practice you will not attain buddhahood in this lifetime, but benefit others and you will be liberated in the *bardo*.” And then he disappeared.¹⁸⁶

All accounts of Buddhajñānapāda’s life up to the 15th century with which I am familiar—that is, Buddhajñānapāda’s own, Vaidyapāda’s, and Chögyal Phagpa’s—refer to the figure that he met in the Kuvaca forest outside of Bodhgaya simply as a “monk,” or an “emanated monk.” It is Gö Lotsāwa in the 15th century who gives him a name: the master Mañjuśrimitra.¹⁸⁷ I am unsure of Gö Lotsāwa’s source for this information, but I can (and will, below) speculate on his possible motivations for including it. This identification of the monk who was Buddhajñānapāda’s teacher as Mañjuśrimitra persists in some of the later Tibetan biographies, but not all.

Tāranātha who, as mentioned above reports having access to several Indic records that no longer survive, does not identify the monk as Mañjuśrimitra, referring to him only with the unusual term “householder monk” (*khyim btsun*), presumably because in Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma*, on which Tāranātha explicitly states he relied,¹⁸⁸ he is both identified as a monk and as accompanied by a woman.¹⁸⁹ The Sakyapa scholar Amye Zhab, who like Tāranātha was writing in the 17th century, provides a somewhat conflicted account. In his *Gsang ‘dus chos ‘byung* he reports on the one hand that the Jñānapāda tradition “was bestowed upon Jñānapāda by the Ācārya Mañjuśrimitra who was indivisible from Mañjuśrī,”¹⁹⁰ but when reporting the encounter with the monk in the forest he makes the strange statement that Buddhajñānapāda “directly saw the face of the emanated monk together with two gurus—Vilāsavajra and Mañjuvajra.”¹⁹¹ Amye Zhab then goes on to report that it was directly from the mouth of Mañjuvajra that Buddhajñānapāda received the teachings recorded in the *Dviṭṭyakrama*.¹⁹² In his *Gshin rje chos ‘byung*, which contains an even more extensive account of Buddhajñānapāda’s life, Amye Zhab provides an equally confusing report that in the Kuvaca forest Buddhajñānapāda “had a vision of the *maṇḍala* of Mañjuśrī together with *Vilāsālīla (?! *jol sgeg rol pa*)”¹⁹³

¹⁸⁵ This is a rephrasing of Mañjuśrī’s comments to Buddhajñānapāda in verse 366 of the *Dviṭṭyakrama*, with an extra half verse about the *bardo* that is not present in the *Dviṭṭyakrama* added on here.

¹⁸⁶ *Gsang ‘dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa’i rim pa*, 612-15. The edition of Chögyal Phagpa’s text that I have translated from here includes readings from a second manuscript that occasionally adds short phrases with additional details. I have translated these, as well, wherever they are present.

¹⁸⁷ *Deb ther sngon po*, 449; Roerich 1976, 369.

¹⁸⁸ He notes in an earlier portion of the biography that Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the *Dviṭṭyakrama* identifies Guṇamitrā as a *bhikṣuṇī* (*Bka’ babs bdun*, 103).

¹⁸⁹ Tāranātha, in his *Bka’ babs bdun* (104-6), follows Chögyal Phagpa, or perhaps a common Indic source, in providing a version of the much more detailed account of Buddhajñānapāda’s meeting with this monk, translated above.

¹⁹⁰ *ye shes zhabs lugs ‘phags yul du dar tshul ni/ mgon po ‘jam pa’i dbyangs dang dbyer med pa’i/ slob dpon ‘jam dpal bshes gnyen gyis ye shes zhabs la gngang ba yin te/ (Gsang ‘dus chos ‘byung*, 56b.3-4).

¹⁹¹ *sprul pa’i dge slong bla ma gnyis ‘jol sgeg rdo rje ‘jam rdo dang bcas pa’i zhal mgon sum du gzigs te/ (Gsang ‘dus chos ‘byung*, 56b.4.) Earlier in his text Amye Zhab uses the same uncommon moniker for Vilāsavajra.

¹⁹² *ibid.*, 56b.4. Amye Zhab’s rather odd account of Buddhajñānapāda’s life is further complicated by his assertion that Buddhajñānapāda received teachings on the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* from some twenty-five masters, including every guru Amye Zhab mentions in the context of his life story apart from Haribhadra—that is Vilāsavajra, Guṇeru (who he styles *Gu ni ni*), Bālīpada (whose name he inexplicably renders *Ba mo la tsam pa ta*), and Pālītapāda (who he calls Bālīmta Ācārya) (*Gsang ‘dus chos ‘byung*, 56b.6-57a-3).

¹⁹³ In his *Gsang ‘dus chos ‘byung* Amye Zhab uses the unusual *jol sgeg rdo rje* for Vilāsavajra. I am assuming *jol sgeg rol pa* here is an error for *jol sgeg rdo rje*.

together with two emanated nuns (!) in front of an *ācārya*'s small hut."¹⁹⁴ In several short references to Buddhajñānapāda Jamgön Kongtrül, closely associated with the nonsectarian (*ris med*) movement in 18th-century Tibet identifies Buddhajñānapāda's teacher in two different ways, in one instance as Mañjuśrīmitra, and two others as Mañjuśrī himself.¹⁹⁵ Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, the great 20th-century Nyingma scholar, follows Gö Lotsāwa in very clearly identifying the monk who is Buddhajñānapāda's guru as Mañjuśrīmitra.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, Dudjom's biography of Buddhajñānapāda occurs in his encyclopedic *History of the Nyingma School* in the context of a list of lineage biographies of Great Perfection masters, where Buddhajñānapāda's primary role appears specifically to be a disciple of Mañjuśrīmitra in the Great Perfection lineage, given that no attention is given to Buddhajñānapāda's own disciples in the subsequent lineage history.¹⁹⁷

This brief, and certainly incomplete, survey of Tibetan historians' accounts of Buddhajñānapāda's life suggests that (with the exception of the Sakya scholar Amye Zhab, whose accounts of this particular episode of Buddhajñānapāda's life are anyway somewhat perplexing) it is primarily authors who are connected with traditions of the Great Perfection who identify the monk that Buddhajñānapāda met in the Kuvaca forest as Mañjuśrīmitra. Historians who are not so connected do not make this identification, and Kongtrül—who had a strong relationship to both the Nyingma and Sarma traditions—appears to have asserted both positions. This propensity of Tibetan scholars connected to the Great Perfection traditions to identify Buddhajñānapāda's teacher as Mañjuśrīmitra is almost certainly connected to the importance for these authors of further connecting Buddhajñānapāda—two of whose compositions contain in their Tibetan translations the word “great perfection” (*rdzogs chen*)—to the Great Perfection tradition. Given that the Indian origins of this tradition have been questioned by scholars from other Tibetan traditions and that the word “great perfection” is not found in many other Indic sources, placing Buddhajñānapāda in the Great Perfection lineage would indeed have been compelling. While we do not have the Sanskrit for either of the two passages where the term “great perfection” appears in the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda's writings,¹⁹⁸ on my

¹⁹⁴ *'jam pa'i dbyangs 'jol sgeg rol pa dang bcas pa gtso bor gyur pa'i dkyil 'khor dang/ sprul pa'i dge slong ma gnyis dang bcas pa slob dpon gyi khan gpa chung du zhing tu snang bar gyur to//* (*Gshin rje chos 'byung*, 47a.2-3) In this account of Buddhajñānapāda's life Amye Zhab relies heavily on both Vaidyapāda and Chögyal Phagpa, both of whose accounts he follows word-for-word at different parts of his narrative. However, with his unusual version of the account of the encounter in the forest behind Vajrāsana, he departs from both.

¹⁹⁵ In his great *Treasury of Knowledge*, in the volume on *Buddhism's Journey to Tibet* (2010, 229), Jamgön Kongtrül states that Buddhajñānapāda received *Guhyasamāja* instructions from Mañjuśrīmitra, while in his *Torch of Certainty*, Kongtrül states that “Buddhajñānapāda's faithless perception caused him to see Mañjuśrī as a married monk with children,” thus appearing to identify the master as none other than Mañjuśrī himself (Kongtrül 1994, 130), and in the *Treasury of Knowledge* in the volume on *The Elements of Tantric Practice* (2009, 145) he states directly that “The Guhyasamaja completion phase in the tradition of Jnanapada (Buddhashrijnana) [stems from] what are called the *Oral Teachings of Manjushri*. These *Teachings* were directly transmitted by Arya [Mañjuśri] himself to the master Buddhashrijnana.”

¹⁹⁶ Dudjom 1990, 494-6.

¹⁹⁷ The next biography given is that of Śrī Śiṅha, who is also said to be Mañjuśrīmitra's disciple, and who Dudjom reports may have even been one and the same individual as Buddhajñānapāda (!) (Dudjom 1990, 496). The only mention of Buddhajñānapāda's disciples is their own role as Great Perfection practitioners: “...it is implicit that the host of his followers and disciples belonged to the lineage of the Great Perfection” (Dudjom 1990, 496).

¹⁹⁸ What is more, in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* which was translated twice into Tibetan under two different titles, the word *rdzog chen* is found in only one of the two translations of the text, the one by Smṛtijñānakīrti. (But it also appears in one of the commentaries on the *Samantabhadra*, by Vaidyapāda, which was translated by a different set of translators, Kamalaguhya and Ngadak Yeshe Gyaltzen (*Snga bdag ye shes rgyal mtshan*)). The other translation of that same passage in the *sādhana*, by Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo (*Rin chen bzang po*), instead uses the word *bsam yas*. I address this point in further detail in Chapter Four.

reading, both of these instances seem to use the term in a sort of general way to refer to the result of practice, which is certainly not antithetical to, but also not precisely the way it was being used in the early (or proto-) Great Perfection literature of the late 8th and early 9th centuries (some of which is Indic, but all of which survives only in Tibetan). Vaidyapāda’s commentaries on those passages, however, *do* interpret the term in a way that brings it closer to—and in one case precisely in line with—contemporary 8th/early 9th-century usage of the term “great perfection.” I examine this point in more detail in Chapter Four, where I conclude that it is nonetheless unlikely that Buddhajñānapāda used a Sanskrit word with the semantic content of “great perfection” at any point in his writings. But whatever we make of the infrequent use of that particular term in the Tibetan translations of his oeuvre, we would certainly be too quick to write off as the mere apologetics of later Tibetan authors what does appear to be a genuine doctrinal affinity between Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and several early or proto- Great Perfection works from around the same period. I return to this connection below in Chapter Four.

Later Life as a Teacher and Author

Following his visionary encounter with Mañjuśrī, Buddhajñānapāda reports setting up residence with his students in the Parvata cave not far from Bodhgaya. The details that Vaidyapāda gives regarding the location of this residence, which he further specifies as the practice place of “great practitioners of former times,” enable us to identify it as being in the region of the Rajgir hills.¹⁹⁹ There, Buddhajñānapāda himself tells us, he and his disciples received daily donations from the wealth deity Jambhala, and it was there that Buddhajñānapāda compiled the instructions he had received from Mañjuśrī in the *Dvītyākrama* and composed other works. He likewise reports traveling back to the Koṅkan to visit his guru Pālitapāda who requested Buddhajñānapāda to compose a *sādhana*, which Vaidyapāda identifies as the *Samantabhadra*.²⁰⁰

As noted before, Buddhajñānapāda further mentions some “detailed accounts” of his life, which Vaidyapāda specifies to be “the taming at Nālandā, making offerings at Varjāsana, the consecration, and the others,” but gives no further information. It is only in the Tibetan histories, starting with Chögyal Phagpa, that we begin to find descriptions of these and other events from his later life. Some of the most detailed accounts of Buddhajñānapāda’s later life are found in the writings of Tāranātha. His *Seven Transmissions* contains a biography which references Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* directly and elaborates on each of the three episodes mentioned by Vaidyapāda by name. Tāranātha’s account of the offerings at Vajrāsana²⁰¹ is as follows:

Once at a time when the *ācārya* [Buddhajñānapāda] had built a straw hut near Vajrāsana and was staying there, King Dharmapāla came to Vajrāsana to make offerings, and all the other Buddhist *ācāryas* also came to offer. Seeing that this *ācārya* [Buddhajñānapāda] had not made offerings, [the king] thought he ought to punish him. He entered into the *ācārya*’s hut, but the *ācārya* was not there, and [instead] he saw an image of Mañjuśrī. He came outside and asked the [master’s] retinue [where he was], and they replied that he was right in [that hut]. [The king] again entered [the hut] and [the image of Mañjuśrī]

¹⁹⁹ See C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming.

²⁰⁰ Samantabhadra and later Chögyal Phagpa report that on that journey Buddhajñānapāda initially followed proper decorum and refused to teach in the presence of his guru and agreed only once Pālitapāda had himself given his assent (*Sāramañjarī*, D 2b.6-3a.2; *Gsang ‘dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa’i rim pa*, 615). This episode is also discussed in Szántó (2015, 548-9).

²⁰¹ An earlier and slightly variant version of this account is found in Chögyal Phagpa (*Gsang ‘dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa’i rim pa*, 617).

appeared as the *ācārya*. When [the king] asked “Why did you not make offerings?” [Buddhajñānapāda] replied, “I made them from here.” [The king] asked “How did you offer [from here]?” upon which the *ācārya* entered into equipoise and all of the images from Vajrāsana appeared directly in front of the *ācārya* like invited guests. [The king] then saw the *ācārya* make vast offerings to them. At that point the king felt confidence [in him] and requested initiation. Since he didn’t have anything else to offer as the initiation fee, he offered himself and his wife as [the master’s] servants. The next day, from the palace, gold equal in weight to both of their bodies [was brought] and offered as ransom.²⁰²

This account, elsewhere recounted as involving king Devapāla rather than Dharmapāla, as discussed above, is important in linking Buddhajñānapāda with the Pāla royalty, suggesting he may indeed have been a royal guru to one (or more) of the Pāla kings. In his *History of Buddhism in India (Rgya gar chos ‘byung)* Tāranātha further describes a close relationship between Buddhajñānapāda and King Dharmapāla in which the master gave predictions and advice to the king, advising him to have a great *homa* performed regularly to ensure the longevity of his dynasty as well as of the Buddhadharma. King Dharmapāla is said to have taken this advice and maintained the regular *homa* ceremonies at great expense.²⁰³ As described above, royal patronage of monasteries and religious masters was common in the medieval period, and the wealth and renown such patronage must have brought would have helped Buddhajñānapāda spread his teachings more widely. Such a position in connection to the king might also partly explain the great respect Buddhajñānapāda is said to have been shown by his own gurus, Vilāsavajra and Pālitapāda, who respectively cite and are said to have requested his writings. Atīśa’s brief reference to this episode (which he links to king Devapāla, rather than Dharmapāla) is important, as it is the only Indic account I am familiar with that links Buddhajñānapāda to the Pāla kings.²⁰⁴

Tāranātha goes on to recount “the consecration,” mentioned by Vaidyapāda, and specifies that it was the consecration of the great Vikramaśīla monastery:

The four temples at Vikramalaśīla,²⁰⁵ Odyantapūri, Śrī Nālandā, and Somapuri were cut off from one another by days of travel. Vikramalaśīla had been newly constructed, Somapuri had undergone reconstruction, and the other two [monasteries] had temples that had been newly built, so the king requested consecration for these many [temples]. The *ācārya* [Buddhajñānapāda] emanated four bodies simultaneously and performed the consecration of all four at once.”²⁰⁶

Tāranātha, in his *History of Buddhism in India* identifies Buddhajñānapāda as not only having consecrated Vikramaśīla but also having served as its first tantric *ācārya*, though to my knowledge this is not reported in any of the extant earlier histories.²⁰⁷ Buddhajñānapāda’s *Guhyasamāja* tradition was passed down by a number of masters who were likewise connected

²⁰² *Bka’ babs bdun*, 106-7. My translation here differs only in minor points from Templeman’s (1983, 74).

²⁰³ *Rgya gar chos ‘byung*, 266-67; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 278-79; See also C. Dalton and Szántó forthcoming.

²⁰⁴ *Bodhipathapradīpapañjikā*, D 288b.7-289a.1; See also Szántó 2015, 539.

²⁰⁵ As in much of the literature in Tibetan, Vikramaśīla is referred to by Tāranātha as Vikramalaśīla.

²⁰⁶ *Bka’ babs bdun*, 107. Again my translation differs only in minor points from Templeman’s (1983, 75). Tāranātha continues with a further account of a non-Buddhist yoginī who attempts to derail the consecration at Vikramaśīla, but whose attempts are magically foiled by Buddhajñānapāda. For this account see Templeman 1983, 75.

²⁰⁷ *Rgya gar chos ‘byung*, 7, 265-66; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 18, 278.

with Vikramaśīla, including Dīpaṃkarabhadra, Vaidyapāda, Ratnākaraśānti and Abhayākaragupta.

I must admit that I find it somewhat discouraging that neither Buddhajñānapāda nor Vaidyapāda makes any direct statement about Buddhajñānapāda's having had a connection with the Pāla royalty or having acted as the *vajrācārya* of Vikramaśīla, both of which seem accomplishments worthy of mention in an auto-/biography. Perhaps if these events did occur they happened after the composition of the *Dvīṭyākrama* and were thus not described there by Buddhajñānapāda, and Vaidyapāda felt compelled to constrain his elaborations in the *Sukusuma* to events Buddhajñānapāda had mentioned directly. The fact that at least one Indic source, Atīśa's **Bodhipathapradīpapañjikā* discussed above, recounts an encounter between Buddhajñānapāda and the Pāla king Devapāla is, however, supportive of the later accounts in the Tibetan histories.

The third episode mentioned by Vaidyapāda, the "taming at Nālandā" is elaborated upon in Tāranātha's *Seven Transmissions*, and the same events are likewise mentioned in his *History*. The episode centers around the criticism of Vajrayāna practices by *śrāvaka* monks.

The great *ācārya* was acting as the head of both Nālandā and Vikramaśīla. At that time some *śrāvaka* Sendhapas²⁰⁸ who resided at Udyantapuri and some monks who were distracted by conceptuality spoke negatively about him. One time when the *ācārya* was residing at Nālandā those monks repeatedly criticized him, saying "Buddhajñāna lacks discipline and it is therefore not suitable for him to be a preceptor who presides over the monastic *saṅgha*." They also criticized the Vajrayāna, and it is said that [also at that time] many Singhalese Sendhapas at Vajrāsana destroyed a silver image of Heruka. The king [subsequently] killed many Singhalese from Vajrāsana and as he was beginning to impose punishment on some other Sendhapas the *ācārya*, out of great compassion, successfully protected them from being harmed by the king. In order to overcome their lack of faith he miraculously traveled under the earth, and on several occasions many nonhuman beings made offerings to the *ācārya*: he displayed quite a variety of miracles. Moreover, he composed many treatises on the supreme conduct of [secret] mantra, establishing it as not being in contradiction to the *śrāvaka-piṭaka*.²⁰⁹

The reference in this episode to Buddhajñānapāda's lack of discipline presumably refers to his having a consort, which Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda both mention being the case at several points earlier in his life. As regards the general antipathy toward the Vajrayāna and Buddhajñānapāda's efforts to overcome this, we certainly see in his writings an effort to present the tantric teachings within the context of the general Mahāyāna and to validate Vajrayāna doctrine and practices, though in his extant work there is nothing that particularly addresses the *śrāvaka* teachings.²¹⁰ In his *History* Tāranātha further mentions that Buddhajñānapāda principally taught five among the "inner tantras:" the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, the *Māyājāla-tantra*, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, the *Guhyendratilaka-tantra*, and the *Yamāri-tantra*,²¹¹ with

²⁰⁸ *Sendha pa*. The referent of this term is unclear, but from the way that Tāranātha uses it, it appears to refer to a particular group or sect of *śrāvaka* monks, primarily from Ceylon. See Templeman 1983, 143n144 for a further discussion of their possible identity.

²⁰⁹ *Bka' babs bdun*, 108. Again, my translation differs only in minor points from Templeman's (1983, 75-6).

²¹⁰ The possible exception to this are his and Vaidyapāda's use of the unusual terms *thal byung blo can*, *thal byung zab mo* and *thal byung gyi stong pa nyid*, all of which seem to refer to a *śrāvaka*-like fixation on the quiescent aspect of meditative equipoise, a position that Buddhajñānapāda rejects. See note 148 in Chapter Three.

²¹¹ The latter is rendered *'jam dpal 'kros pa*, but presumably refers to the *Kṛṣṇayamāri-tantra*. *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 267; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 279.

the most emphasis on the *Guhyasamāja*. Though his surviving tantric writings are primarily *Guhyasamāja*-based, other Tibetan scholars including Amye Zhab include him as an important figure in the *Kṛṣṇayamāri* lineage.²¹² I will discuss Buddhajñānapāda's surviving oeuvre in more detail below, but let us first turn our attention to his principal disciples.

Disciples

The earliest reference we have to Buddhajñānapāda's disciples is in Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma*, which states that Buddhajñānapāda had eighteen disciples who functioned as his regents, among whom there were four who attained *nirvāṇa* in this lifetime: Dīpaṃkarabhadrā (*Mar me mdzad bzang po*), Praśāntamitra (*Rab tu zhi ba 'i bshes gnyen*), *Rahulabhadrā (*sgra gcan 'dzin bzang po*), and *Vajramahāsukha (*Rdo rje bde ba chen po*).²¹³ These same four principal disciples are mentioned in Śrīphalavajra's commentary on the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadrā-sādhana*.²¹⁴

Dīpaṃkarabhadrā

Of the four, we know the most about Dīpaṃkarabhadrā, who composed the well-known and influential *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, an initiatory ritual according to the Jñānapāda School that continued to influence later ritual manuals such as Abhayākara Gupta's *Vajrāvalī* and

²¹² *Gshin rje chos 'byung*, 16a.4. As regards the Yamāri tantra connection, in one lineage description Amye Zhab explains that Buddhajñānapāda's *Kṛṣṇayamāri* lineage originated with Mañjuśrī and was passed from Buddhajñānapāda to the *siddha* Śrīdhara (*Dpal 'dzin*), who passed it on to Nāropa (*Gshin rje chos 'byung*, 16a.4). Later in the same work, at the conclusion of a biography of Buddhajñānapāda Amye Zhab writes that Buddhajñānapāda received from (emending *la* to *las* to accord with the verb *gsan*) Mañjuśrī teachings on the cycles of the *Guhyasamāja* as well as *Vajrabhairava*. He continues, explaining that Buddhajñānapāda passed the *Vajrabhairava* cycle on to Dīpaṃkarabhadrā, who gave it to the *siddha* Śrīdhara, who composed many *Yamāri*-related works, which he then passed on to Nāropa (*Gshin rje chos 'byung*, 48a.4-5). (Dīpaṃkarabhadrā is credited with at least one *Yamāri-tantra* related text in the Tibetan canon, a work on the protection circle according to that tradition (Tōh. 1928), and many *Yamāri*-related compositions attributed to Śrīdhara survive in the canon.) Jamgön Kongtrül also briefly mentions Buddhajñānapāda's view on the perfection stage yogas of the *Yamāri-tantra* as being consistent with that of Saraha (Kongtrül 200, 149). Buddhajñānapāda's connection with the *Yamāri-tantra* tradition has been almost entirely ignored in the secondary literature (at least in English; there may exist references in Japanese of which I am unaware), with the exception of an unpublished article by Hubert Decler that notes Buddhajñānapāda's importance for the Sakyapas of the Ngor tradition as being the source of both their *Guhyasamāja* lineage and their *Kṛṣṇayamāri* lineage. In that article Decler identifies an image from a Sakyapa *thangka* as depicting scenes from Buddhajñānapāda's life (Decler, unpublished). I am grateful to Hubert Decler for sharing this unpublished work with me. Three *Yamāri-tantra* related compositions (Tōh. 2084, 2085, and 2086) are attributed to Buddhajñānapāda in the Tibetan canon, but I believe it is not likely that these are by the same Buddhajñānapāda who composed the many *Guhyasamāja* works that we know. I assess the attribution of these three texts to Buddhajñānapāda below in the section on his writings. To my knowledge there is not any other mention of Buddhajñānapāda's having taught the other three tantras mentioned by Tāranātha—the *Māyājāla*, *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, or *Guhyendratilaka*—but he certainly knew the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* as several lines of his *Dvīṭīyakrama* (v. 50; see also notes 123 and 276 of my *Dvīṭīyakrama* translation) are a paraphrase of verses in that tantra, and his disciple Praśāntamitra probably wrote a commentary on it, as well as one on the *Māyājāla-tantra* (which I discuss below). And Buddhajñānapāda's guru Vilāsavajra taught parts of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* in accordance with the *Māyājāla* (See Tribe 1994, 24).

²¹³ *Sukusuma*, 135a.5-6.

²¹⁴ *Samantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti*, D141a.6. The order of the list of the four main disciples is different here from Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma*, perhaps indicating that one list is not merely derivative of the other. Śrīphalavajra here also mentions three, but then names only two, of Buddhajñānapāda's co-disciples: *Dharmākara (*Chos kyi 'byung gnas*) of the Koṅkan and *Uṣṇīṣavajra (*Gtsug tor rdo rje*) of Mount Hasara (*ri bo ha sa ra*) (ibid., D 141a.5-6). The list of four principal disciples is repeated in several of the Tibetan histories, as well, and Tāranātha cites Śrīphalavajra's statement about Buddhajñānapāda's co-disciples (*Bka' babs bdun*, 109; Templeman 1983. 76).

Jagaddarpaṇa's *Kriyāsamuccaya*.²¹⁵ A very substantial portion of the *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi* is a direct paraphrase of Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and a good ninety percent of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra*'s verses appear rephrased therein. Tāranātha reports that Dīpaṃkarabhadra succeeded his guru Buddhajñānapāda as the second tantric *ācārya* at Vikramaśīla,²¹⁶ and that he was said to have achieved even higher realization than his master.²¹⁷ Tāranātha also identifies Vaidyapāda as Dīpaṃkarabhadra's disciple.²¹⁸

Praśāntamitra

Buddhajñānapāda's disciple Praśāntamitra is likely the author of a commentary on the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, one on the *Māyājāla-tantra*, and a third on the *Vajramaṇḍālamkāra*.²¹⁹ Tāranātha reports that Praśāntamitra received initiation from Buddhajñānapāda and had a meditative vision of Yamāri,²²⁰ and places him as the first disciple after Buddhajñānapāda in Jñānapāda's lineage of the "word" instruction.²²¹ He also identifies Vaidyapāda as a disciple of Praśāntamitra's.²²² About the other two among the four principal disciples mentioned in Vaidyapāda's and Śrīphalavajra's accounts, *Rahulabhadra and *Vajramahāsukha, we unfortunately can say nothing more.

Buddhaguhyā and Buddhaśānti

Although I am not aware of any such reference in an extant Indic text, Gö Lotsāwa and Tāranātha mention Buddhaguhyā and Buddhaśānti as disciples of Buddhajñānapāda's, with Tāranātha specifying that this discipleship took place early in Buddhajñānapāda's life.²²³ Buddhaguhyā is a well known early 8th-century commentator on a number of Kriyā and Yoga tantras, including an important commentary on the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi*. A number of works on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* are also attributed to him, though it is unclear whether it is the same author who wrote the Kriyā and Yoga tantra works and those on the *Guhyagarbha*.²²⁴

²¹⁵ Szántó 2015, 554. This work survives in Sanskrit and has been edited. It was first circulated in an e-text (Klein-Schwind and Isaacson), edited in Dhīḥ (2006), and later by Bahulkar (2010). Szántó 2015, 556n34 gives a diplomatic transcript of verses that were missing the Dhīḥ edition. Daisy Cheung at Hamburg University is working on this text for her dissertation. Quite a number of other works in the Tengyur are ascribed to Dīpaṃkarabhadra (*Mar me mdzad bzang po*), including a short *sādhana* for the protection circle in the *Yamāri-tantra* tradition (Tōh. 1928), but I have not had the opportunity to look at these and assess their content or authorship.

²¹⁶ *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 7.

²¹⁷ *Bka' babs bdun*, 110. Tāranātha gives a short biographical sketch of Dīpaṃkarabhadra (*Bka' babs bdun*, 109-112; Templeman 1983, 76-8).

²¹⁸ *Bka' babs bdun*, 112; Templeman 1983, 78.

²¹⁹ Szántó 2015, 547n22. The commentaries are Tōh. 1663, 2514, and 2515, respectively. I agree with Szántó here on the likelihood that these commentaries are indeed composed by the Praśāntamitra who was Buddhajñānapāda's disciple, especially given his note that this author includes a line in the dedicatory verses at the end of each text identifying himself as the author, a stylistic feature of many of Buddhajñānapāda's own writings and those of his other disciples.

²²⁰ *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 267-68; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 279-80.

²²¹ *tshig gi brgyud pa'i brgyud pa'i bka' babs. Bka' babs bdun*, 117; Templeman 1983, 66. It is unclear from Tāranātha's description precisely what this "word lineage" is, but it is perhaps worth noting that the fourth initiation is often referred to as the "precious word initiation" and Vaidyapāda's *Yogasapta* shows evidence of the early development of this initiation in Buddhajñānapāda's tradition.

²²² *ibid.*

²²³ *Deb ther sngon po*, Vol I, 451; Roerich 1976, 372; *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 269; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 280. Dudjom (1990, 465-6) repeats Tāranātha's assertion.

²²⁴ Hodge 2003, 23 and 1995, 69. Scholarly opinion on whether the Yoga tantra and Mahāyoga tantra author were one and the same or not appears to be divided between those who assert "maybe no" and those who assert "maybe yes," but there seems to be no certainty on the topic. Hodge (1995, 69) notes that Buddhaguhyā does not mention the *Guhyagarbha* in any of his other tantric works and that the two corpi seem to him different on stylistic grounds.

Buddhaguhya is reported in a number of Nyingma sources to have been a student of Vilāsavajra’s, from whom he received teachings on the *Māyājāla-tantra* and especially the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*.²²⁵ He was also invited to Tibet by King Trisong Deutsen, but declined the invitation on the advice of his tutelary deity Mañjuśrī.²²⁶ Some modern scholars have placed doubts on Buddhaguhya’s having been a disciple of Buddhajñānapāda’s, given that he appears to have been, if anything, Buddhajñānapāda’s senior contemporary rather than his junior, but the question remains unresolved.²²⁷ Of Buddhaśānti we know only of his association with Buddhaguhya as described in the Tibetan histories.²²⁸

Vaidyapāda

There is considerable question about whether or not Vaidyapāda, Buddhajñānapāda’s most prolific Indian commentator, was his direct disciple. However, like with Buddhajñānapāda, the first issue we must address is that of his name. In almost all of the secondary literature mentioning this master, he is referred to as Vitapāda.²²⁹ This is no doubt due to the fact that in the preponderance of colophons of the Tibetan translations of his work this author’s name is given as Vitapāda.²³⁰ However, we also find his name in other colophons as Vitapāta,²³¹ Vaidyapāda,²³² Vidyapāda,²³³ Viryapata,²³⁴ and even Hahitapāda (!).²³⁵ When this name is

Guarisco (Kongtrül 2005, 75n12) likewise notes that while traditional Nyingma scholarship identifies the author of these different works as a single figure, it is more likely that the author of the *Guhyagarbha* treatises is a different individual. Takahashi (2009, 198) however, opines that the claim of Nyingma authors that the author of the Yoga tantra and Mahāyoga tantra works are one and the same Buddhaguhya is worth taking seriously, especially given that both corpi seem to have been composed around the same period. She suggests that perhaps Buddhaguhya’s involvement with the *Guhyagarbha* teachings was less publicized by the author himself given their controversial nature, which would explain the absence of reference to the *Guhyagarbha*-related teachings in his other works. Van Schaik (2004, 187) simply notes that they “may be” one and the same. Germano (2002, 229-232) reports from Nyingmapa sources in which it is assumed to be one and the same Buddhaguhya who wrote both corpi, but does not express his own opinion one way or another.

²²⁵ Hodge 1995, 68-9.

²²⁶ *ibid.*

²²⁷ Hodge (2003, 22 and 2012, 68-9) and Weinberger (2003, 83) place doubts on the discipleship.

²²⁸ *Rgya gar chos ’byung*, 269-71; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 280-83. Tāranātha relates several accounts in which Buddhaśānti appears as a companion of Buddhaguhya. Contrary to the letter in which Buddhaguhya declines to travel to Tibet, the two yogins are reported as companions traveling near Mount Kailash during the time of King Trison Deutsen in the *Sba bzhed*, where Buddhaguhya’s name is reported as Buddhagupta (Kapstein 2000, 26). The two names Buddhaguhya and Buddhagupta seem to refer to the same person (See Hodge 2003, 70; Weinberger 2003, 84). Germano cites Nyingmapa accounts stating that the exchange between Buddhaguhya and Trisong Deutsen took place precisely during Buddhaguhya’s journey to Kailash, and that he declined to visit *central* Tibet (Germano 2002, 229).

²²⁹ However, at least two modern scholars have addressed the issue of his name, one of whom has concluded that it is probably better rendered as Vaidyapāda. Szántó (2015, 540n6) reports a presentation given by Leonard van der Kuijp at Oxford in 2008 in which he suggested as much. I am unfamiliar with the details of van der Kuijp’s assessment, which has not been published. Kikuya (2012a, 1276n3) likewise reports that he himself has written about “the problems of Vitapāda’s transmission and his name,” but as the article referenced is in Japanese I have not been able to check it.

²³⁰ *Bi ta pā da* in the colophons of his *Sukusuma* (Tōh. 1866) (in D and P), *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā* (Tōh. 1872) (P), *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā* (Tōh. 1873) (in D and P), *Siddhisamābhavanidhi* (Tōh. 1874) (in D and P), *Yogasapta* (Tōh. 1875) (in D and P), *Mahābalividhi* (Tōh. 1876) (in D and P), *Ratnamati* (Tōh. 1877) (in D and P), and *Ātmārthasiddhikara* (Tōh. 1878) (in D and P).

²³¹ *Bi ta pā ta* in the colophon of his *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā* (Tōh. 1872) (D).

²³² *Bai dya pā da*, in the colophon to his *Samyagvidyākara* (Tōh. 1850) in the Derge Tengyur; the Peking here reads *Bi dya pā da*.

²³³ *Bi dya pā da* in the colophon to his *Samyagvidyākara* (Tōh. 1850) in the Peking Tengyur.

translated into Tibetan—in the Tibetan translations of Indic works and in indigenous Tibetan writings alike—it is consistently rendered as *Sman pa 'i zhabs*, which fact already lends support to the Sanskrit Vaidyapāda, and perhaps even suggests that he may have been a physician (Skt. *vaidya*, Tib. *smān pa*).²³⁶ Gö Lotsāwa gives his name in translation as *Sman pa 'i zhabs*, but in his *Seven Transmissions* Tāranātha—who mentions a number of Indic sources on which his writings relied—gives the name both in transliteration as Vaidyapāda (*Bai dya pā da*) and in translation as *Sman pa zhabs*.²³⁷ In the dedicatory verses of his *Yogasapta* (in the colophon of which his name, incidentally, is given as Vitapāda), this master writes

[I] Vaidyapāda (*Sman pa 'i zhabs*) have received
 This supreme nectar of the seven yogas
 Accomplished through practice in the presence of the gurus
 Of the ocean of the Glorious *Samāja*.
 Having drunk this nectar
 May the fatal illness of
 Mistaken conceptuality
 Be completely dispelled!
 Freed from that [illness] may all beings
 Perfectly unfold the genuine aggregates
 And attain the suchness that is the result:
 The supreme nature of the seven yogas!²³⁸

It seems to me that in these verses Vaidyapāda is loosely playing on his name (“Mr. Doctor”) in reference to conceptuality as a fatal illness that is healed by the nectar of the seven yogas. Of course, the use of a medical metaphor is not unique—medical metaphors have been used in Buddhist texts from the very earliest literature. My sense, though, is that Vaidyapāda is using it here as a way of integrating his name more smoothly into the dedicatory verse. Vaidyapāda frequently emulates Buddhajñānapāda’s writing,²³⁹ and as we will see below, Buddhajñānapāda himself often wove his own name cleverly into the dedicatory verses of his writings. For a master whose name was “Mr. Buddha Wisdom,” that was, however, an easier task than for his disciple “Mr. Doctor.” It seems to me that here in the *Yogasapta*, Vaidyapāda found his chance.²⁴⁰ Of course, the “Vitapāda” in so many of our Tibetan colophons could certainly be a

²³⁴ Martin (2011, 2078) notes that the Black Hat Tanjur catalogue his *Yogasapta* reports the author of the *Yogasapta* as *Birya pa ta*.

²³⁵ *Ha hi ta pā da* in the colophon of the Derge edition of his *Multitilaka-vyākhyāna* (Tōh. 1870). The Peking reads *Bi ta pā da*.

²³⁶ Another possible understanding of the term, one not taken up by the Tibetan translators, is *vaidya* as in someone well versed in the Vedas. Though none of our extant Indic sources report anything about Vaidyapāda’s life, Tāranātha states that he was born a brahmin and was not only learned in the non-Buddhist doctrines but had become powerful due to them, presumably through practice, before becoming a Buddhist (*Bka' babs bdun*, 112; Templeman 78-9)

²³⁷ Neither Chögyal Phagpa nor Amye Zhab mention this master.

²³⁸ *dpal ldan 'dus pa 'i rgya mtsho las// bla ma 'i zhal snga* (snga] P, sngas D) *bsgrub pas na// sbyor ba bdun gyi bdud rtsi mchog// sman pa 'i zhabs kyis thob pa 'o// de 'dra 'i bdud rtsi de la ni// 'thung bye de ni log pa yi* (yi] P, yin D)// *rtog pa yis ni rab 'chi* ('chi] P, 'cing D) *ba 'i// nad ni kun nas med gyur cig// de med pas na sems can kun// yang dag phung po rgyas 'gyur te// sbyor ba bdun gyi rang bzhin mchog// 'bras bu de nyid rtogs par shog//* (*Yogasapta*, D 75b.1-3; P 89b.6-8)

²³⁹ See, for example, the opening verse dedicated to the buddha, dharma, *saṅgha*, and gurus in his *Siddhisambhavanidhi*, which loosely emulates Buddhajñānapāda’s own opening verse, likewise dedicated to the three jewels and gurus, in the *Dvitiyakrama*. In his compositions Vaidyapāda likewise replicates much of the terminology that is especially characteristic of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings.

²⁴⁰ Vaidyapāda inscribes his own name into only one other of his ten extant compositions, his *Siddhisambhavanidhi*, but in one of the introductory verses, rather than the conclusion. This verse actually has some parallels with the

vernacular rendering of the name Vaidyapāda.²⁴¹ And though there is no single piece of definitive evidence, and thus the question still remains open, I feel there is sufficient reason to depart from the more common usage in the secondary literature and refer to this master as Vaidyapāda.

To return to the question of whether or not Vaidyapāda was a direct disciple of Buddhajñānapāda's, again there is no definitive piece of evidence one way or the other, but I believe it is likely that he was.²⁴² Three of his ten surviving works are commentaries on Buddhajñānapāda's compositions, and he directly mentions Buddhajñānapāda or his tradition in five of the remaining seven. In these references he makes statements such as having composed treatises, "in order to remember the stages of the pith instructions of my gurus who uphold the lineage, Buddhajñānapāda and so forth...",²⁴³ "in order to remind myself and others of the stages of the pith instructions of my gurus who uphold the lineage, Buddhajñānapāda and so forth...",²⁴⁴ and others which contain "the complete teachings that have come down in stages from Buddhajñāna,"²⁴⁵ or which are explained "in terms of the suchness of the instructions that have come down in stages from our great guru Buddhajñāna."²⁴⁶ In one dedicatory verse he notes, "Since the appearance of the kindness of the unsurpassed great compassion of Śrībuddhajñānapāda has been veiled, although I am a fool, I have uncovered it slightly."²⁴⁷ Admittedly none of these statements settles the case, but one does get the sense that Buddhajñānapāda was one among Vaidyapāda's gurus with whom he had some direct personal connection, though certainly not his only master.

This is upheld by Gö Lotsāwa²⁴⁸ and Tāranātha, who both clearly write that Vaidyapāda was Buddhajñānapāda's direct disciple. But the way that Tāranātha states this is more telling: he lists Vaidyapāda in the lineage as a student of Dīpaṃkarabhadrā, who he has already reported as Buddhajñānapāda's disciple, but adds that Vaidyapāda, "trained in the tantras after having heard [teachings], beginning with the Prajñāpāramitā and continuing up to the outer and inner [tantras of the] secret mantra, at Nālandā in Madhya from both Dīpaṃkarabhadrā and

concluding verse from the *Yogasapta*, but here Vaidyapāda was working with a maritime, rather than a medical, metaphor: "From the great ocean of the Glorious *Samāja*/ By means of the ship of the gurus' lineage/ [I] Vaidyapāda (*Sman pa'i zhabs*) have obtained/ The three wish-fulfilling gems! *dpal ldan gsang 'dus mtsho chen las/ bla ma'i brgyud rim gru gzings kyis/ yid bzhin nor bu rnam pa gsum/ sman pa'i zhabs kyis rnyed pa'o'* (*Siddhasambhavanidhi*, D 2a.1; P 2b.1-2).)

²⁴¹ Could it have been written Vaidyapāda, but colloquially pronounced Vitapāda?

²⁴² Modern scholars have asserted both positions. Tomabechi (2008, 172-3) and Klein-Schwind (2012, 17) hold Vaidyapāda to be Buddhajñānapāda's direct disciple, while J. Dalton (2004, 17) and Kikuya (2012, 1264) assert that he was a later commentator, and Davidson (2002, 311) also seems to suggest that he was *not* a direct disciple. Szántó (2015, 547) hedges his bets, reporting only that Vaidyapāda was "supposedly Jñānapāda's direct student." In a recent article written together with Péter Szántó, (C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming) we suggest that Vaidyapāda was probably *not* a direct student, a position I have since come to revise.

²⁴³ *rgyud don 'dzin bdag bla ma la 'ang/ sangs rgyas ye shes zhabs la sogs pa'i rim pa'i man ngag rang nyid kyis dran phyir/ (Ātmārthasiddhikara, D 84b.3-4; P 100b.2)*

²⁴⁴ *rgyud don 'dzin bdag bla ma la 'ang/ sangs rgyas ye shes zhabs sogs rim pa'i man ngag rang dang gzhan gyis dran pa'i phyir/ (Samyagvidyākara, D 180a.5")*

²⁴⁵ *sangs rgyas ye shes zhal snga'i rim 'ongs pa/ ma lus bstan pa (Mahābalividhi, D 75b.5-6; P 90a.3-4).*

²⁴⁶ *bdag cag gi bla ma chen po sangs rgyas ye shes kyi zhal snga nas kyi rim pa nas 'ongs pa'i rlung gi de nyid gyi sgo nas... (Ratnamati, D 81a.5; P 96a.8).*

²⁴⁷ This verse admittedly has some problems, and its transmission may be corrupt. *dpal ldan ye shes zhabs ni bla na med pa thugs rje chen po yis// drin gyi (gyi) P, gyis D) snang ba (ba] sugg. em., bas D P) khebs phyir bdag ni blun yang cung zad tsam du phye// (Ātmārthasiddhikara, D 94a.7; P112a.5)*

²⁴⁸ *Deb ther sngon po*, vol 1, 451; Roerich 1976, 271.

Dīpaṃkarabhadrā's guru Śrījñānapāda.²⁴⁹ Given that Vaidyapāda wrote a commentary on Dīpaṃkarabhadrā's *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, we know that he was certainly junior to this master.²⁵⁰ Moreover, in Vaidyapāda's commentary on Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadrā-sādhana* he gives a citation from Dīpaṃkarabhadrā's *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi* and identifies the author there simply as "the (my?) guru."²⁵¹ Tāranātha, elsewhere in the *Seven Transmissions*, lists Vaidyapāda as a disciple of Praśāntamitra, who was also a direct disciple of Buddhajñānapāda's.²⁵² Given all of these considerations, I believe it to be likely that Vaidyapāda was indeed a direct student of Buddhajñānapāda's, but that he met him when the latter was already quite aged, while Vaidyapāda was likely still quite young. Thus several among Buddhajñānapāda's disciples, including Dīpaṃkarabhadrā and possibly Praśāntamitra, also count among Vaidyapāda's gurus. This would place Vaidyapāda's life squarely in the early to mid 9th century, a date which is further supported by the works he does and does not cite in his oeuvre, and the content thereof.²⁵³

Unfortunately we know nothing of Vaidyapāda's life from Indic sources. Turning to the later Tibetan histories, Tāranātha gives a short biographical sketch in his *Seven Transmissions* in which he notes that Vaidyapāda was born a brahmin in a border region and was learned and accomplished in non-Buddhist practices before gaining faith in the Buddhist teachings. He is also said there to have been a practitioner of the wrathful deity Hūṃkāra, who receives mention in several of Buddhajñānapāda's short tantric writings.²⁵⁴ Tāranātha goes on to note that it is

²⁴⁹ *yul dbus nālandār slob dpon mar me mdzad bzang po dang/ mar me mdzad bzang po'i yang bla ma dpal sangs rgyas ye shes gnyis la pha rol tu phyin pa nas brtsam te/ gsang sngag phyi nang gi bar gyi thos pas rgyud sbyang/ (Bka' babs bdun, 112; Templeman 1983, 79).*

²⁵⁰ The text is his *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*.

²⁵¹ *bla ma'i zhal snga nas (Samantabhadrā-ṭīkā, D134b.7).* Samantabhadrā, another commentator on the *Caturaṅga* who seems to have been reading Vaidyapāda's commentary (I write more about the relationship between their commentaries in Chapter Five), cites the very same passage from Dīpaṃkarabhadrā at this point in his *Caturaṅga* commentary, but Samantabhadrā identifies the author of the citation as Bhadrāpāda, a commonly used name for Dīpaṃkarabhadrā (*Sāramañjarī*, D5b.4). This may be an indication that this master was not Samantabhadrā's personal guru, whereas Vaidyapāda may indeed have had such a personal relationship with Dīpaṃkarabhadrā.

²⁵² *Bka' babs bdun, 117; Templeman 1983, 66.*

²⁵³ Vaidyapāda knows several texts that Buddhajñānapāda does not, most crucially the *Samājottara*, the so-called eighteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, and Śākyamitra's *Anuttarasandhi*, which was incorporated into Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama* as its second stage, the *sarvasuddhivisuddhikrama*. I discuss the possibility of Śākyamitra's discipleship with Buddhajñānapāda below, and Buddhajñānapāda's and Vaidyapāda's relationship with the *Samājottara* in Chapter Eight.

²⁵⁴ Tāranātha's short (and charming!) biographical sketch reads: "The master Vaidyapāda was born into the brahmin caste in a border region. He became learned in the *tīrthika* doctrines and gained power through their practice, but later he gave rise to faith in the Buddha's teachings. He trained in the tantras after having heard [teachings] beginning with the Prajñāpāramitā and continuing up to the outer and inner [tantras of the] secret mantra at Nālandā in Madhya from both Dīpaṃkarabhadrā and Dīpaṃkarabhadrā's guru Śrījñānapāda, as well. [They] bestowed initiation on him and gave him the complete instructions. In particular, during initiation into the *maṇḍalas* of the *Samāja* and Heruka, his flower fell on wrathful Hūṃkāra. After meditating for a long time he gave rise to a unique *samādhi* of the two stages. He knew that after practicing for six months he would attain *siddhi*, but that he needed to rely as a practice support on a vajra-family consort, a *dombi* girl who was blue in color like an *utpala* flower, so he searched for her in all directions and [finally] found her. When requesting her from her parents they said, "Are you crazy, brahmin *ācārya*!? Since we are of the *dombi* caste, won't [this] bring punishment upon both of us?" He answered, "Since I need a practice support, the ordinary castigations of [my association with] lower castes and so forth will not apply." They said, "Well, then, we need gold and silver equal in weight to the girl's body," upon which the *ācārya* immediately brought forth a treasure from below the earth and gave it to them. Then the *ācārya* together with his consort practiced in a cave for six months upon which on the eighth day of the waxing moon at dawn a great sound *hūṃ* resounded from the sky and [he] directly saw all the *maṇḍalas* of Śrīheruka and so forth. [He] also attained the state of the *siddhi* of supreme *mahāmudrā*. He benefited many beings, primarily by means of the path of the *Samāja*, composed many treatises, and finally, in that very body, set off for Buddha Akṣobhya's pure

sometimes reported that Vaidyapāda is the same individual as the master Hūmkāra renowned in the Nyingma School.²⁵⁵

There are ten compositions attributed to Vaidyapāda (under a variety of names, see above) that survive in Tibetan in the Tengyur.²⁵⁶ While I have read only five of these in full, I have surveyed all of them and feel confident that on grounds of both style (some points related to which have also been noted above) and content, all of these works can be attributed to a single author whose main interest was clearly the elucidation and propagation of Buddhajñānapāda's *Guhyasamāja* tradition.²⁵⁷ I will address the contents of several of his works in the succeeding chapters.

Śākyamitra

The final disciple of Buddhajñānapāda's we will consider here is Śākyamitra. He receives no mention in the Tibetan histories in connection with Buddhajñānapāda, but rather is identified in several sources as a disciple of (the tantric) Nāgārjuna.²⁵⁸ Yet one Śākyamitra is the author of the *Mukhāgama* (Tōh. 1854, not to be confused with Buddhajñānapāda's *Dvītyākramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* (Tōh. 1853), which is often referred to as the *Mukhāgama* in the secondary literature!), which he claims in both its opening and closing verses to be a record of the oral instructions of Buddhajñānapāda. This text is identified by both traditional and modern scholars alike as Buddhajñānapāda's composition, presumably because the colophon reports it to be the "Oral Instructions (*mukhāgama*) on the *sādhana* of Buddhajñānapāda, [the master] who came from Glorious Uḍḍiyāna."²⁵⁹ But Śākyamitra clearly states within the text itself that it was he who composed the treatise,²⁶⁰ and in a passage that is admittedly difficult to interpret, he seems to claim to have met Buddhajñānapāda and received

land, taking off in flight like the king of Garuḍas" (*Bka' babs bdun*, 112-12). My translation here differs only slightly from that of Templeman (1983, 78-9).

²⁵⁵ *Bka' babs bdun*, 112; Templeman 1983, 79. If this is indeed the case, Tāranātha continues, it means he was born in Nepal and visited Tibet in the time of king Senalek.

²⁵⁶ The ten are the *Samyagvidyākara* (Tōh. 1850), *Sukusuma* (Tōh. 1866), *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* (Tōh. 1870), *Samantabhadrī-īkā* (Tōh. 1872), *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-īkā* (Tōh. 1873), *Siddhisambhavanidhi* (Tōh. 1874), *Yogasapta* (Tōh. 1875), *Mahābalividhi* (Tōh. 1876), *Ratnāmāti* (Tōh. 1877), and *Ātmārthasiddhikara* (Tōh. 1878).

²⁵⁷ A glance at the full titles of Vaidyapāda's works listed in the previous note may appear alarming to some, specifically given the presence of the *Yogasapta-nāma-caturabhiṣekaprakaraṇa*, *The Seven Yogas: An Explanation of the Four Initiations*. Certainly this is unexpected, given that the early Jñānapāda tradition as found in Dīpaṅkarabhadra's *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, and even up until the 11th-century commentary on that text by Ratnākaraśānti, is well known in modern scholarship to preserve a tradition of just three initiations, rather than four (See Isaacson 2010a, 269; Wedemeyer 2014, unpublished, and Wedemeyer forthcoming). Vaidyapāda's position in this treatise, and indeed its entire content, are worthy of serious further study, but for now it will suffice to say that I do feel confident that this text was authored by him. I address the *Yogasapta* in some detail in Chapter Seven.

²⁵⁸ Gö Lotsāwa holds Śākyamitra to be one of the four main disciples of Nāgārjuna (Roerich 1976, 359-60) and Tāranātha mentions that "Ācārya Śākyamitra the great was certainly a disciple of Ācārya Nāgārjuna, though [I] have not seen or heard his story." *slob dpon śākya bshes gnyen chen po yang slob dpon klu grub kyi slob ma yin par nges mod kyi lo rgyus ma mthong zhing ma thos so//* (*Rgya gar chos 'byung*, 114; Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, 128).

²⁵⁹ *Mukhāgama*, D 28b.6.

²⁶⁰ Unlike Tomabechi (2008, 174), who writes that Śākyamitra is the "compiler of the *Mukhāgama*," which he attributes to Buddhajñānapāda, I believe it is clear in the pledge to compose at the beginning of the text Śākyamitra holds himself to be the author, rather than simply having compiled Buddhajñānapāda's oral instructions. In the admittedly difficult verses at the beginning of the *Mukhāgama*, Śākyamitra writes that he will, in this text, explain with clear words and without rhetoric or philosophy the profound meaning of the *sādhana* of Buddhajñānapāda (*Mukhāgama*, D 27b.3-6). This claim by Śākyamitra, which seems to amount to a pledge to explain Buddhajñānapāda's complicated teachings in more common language, is very much in support of Tomabechi's argument in his 2008 article that Āryadeva in the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* is referring to the Jñānapāda School authors with his comments on the unsuitability of the rhetorical complexity of their compositions.

his oral instructions, and even to be his primary disciple.²⁶¹ In any case, there is no doubt that the contents of the *Mukhāgama* derive from Buddhajñānapāda’s teachings, as this text, like Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, contains a summary and rephrasing of a good portion of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*. Śākyamitra, however, departs from Buddhajñānapāda’s work significantly more than did Dīpaṃkarabhadra, in particular adding an extensive instruction on the protection circle that is absent in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra*.²⁶²

Other compositions attributed to Śākyamitra include the *Kośalālamkāra*, a commentary on the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* and the *Anuttarasandhi*, which was integrated into Nāgārjuna’s *Pañcakrama* as its second stage.²⁶³ Both of these works seem to show the influence of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. The *Kośalāmkāra* contains an autobiographical section extremely reminiscent of Buddhajñānapāda’s in the *Dvītyākrama* describing Śākyamitra’s travels and studies under gurus, including to the Koṅkan and Uḍḍiyāna, places where Buddhajñānapāda also reports traveling.²⁶⁴ This record makes no mention of Buddhajñānapāda,²⁶⁵ but several of the lines in the autobiographical section sound so strikingly similar to those in the *Dvītyākrama*, that it seems likely that one account has inspired the other. If the author of the *Mukhāgama* and the *Kośalālamkāra* are indeed the same individual, it would appear that in his autobiographical account Śākyamitra was emulating his guru,

²⁶¹ As Tomabechi (2008, 174) notes, the passage in question “presents some difficulty in interpretation,” to say the least. (In fact, unfortunately much of the *Mukhāgama* presents difficulty in interpretation, and my sense is that either the original manuscript that the translator was working with had problems or a number of difficulties arose in its translation. The colophon states that the *Mukhāgama* was translated by Rinchen Zangpo alone, without mention of the assistance of an Indian *paṇḍita*, which may have been part of the problem.) But I nonetheless agree with Tomabechi that these verses in question do suggest that the compiler of the *Mukhāgama* claims to have met Buddhajñānapāda and received instruction directly from him. Unlike Tomabechi, I will (perhaps unwisely!) hazard a tentative translation of the passage in question (I include here also the two verses that precede those cited by Tomabechi (2008)), “These instructions that I have composed/ I received with great faith from the lotus of my guru’s mouth/ Let scholars treat it as a spectacle [if they wish]/ [From my side] I wrote it in order to benefit all beings./ Just like [even] someone who has achieved something through lies/ Is [still] praised a bit by his [own] father/ Just like that, I have found a bit of merit—/ Through it may all the world become [like] Mañjuvajra!/ [He who was] born in glorious Uḍḍiyāna,/ Knower of the meaning of the countless tantras without exception,/ The glorious one, completely pacified and peaceful, spoke these words./ The supreme main disciple upon whom he bestowed initiation,/ Who was born [in a place located] in the direction of the Sindh from there [i.e. from Uḍḍiyāna],/ Who victoriously resided in the place called the abode of Vaiśravaṇa,/ I, Śākyamitra, myself, awakened and/ [Recorded] his (i.e. Buddhajñānapāda’s) perfectly liberating oral instructions.” *bdag gis man ngag brtsams ‘di rab dad pas// bla ma’i zhal gyi padma las rnyed de// mkhas pa rnams kyis ‘di la ltad mo* (ltad mo] D, brtag mod P) *gyis// ‘gro ba kun la phan phyir bdag gyis byas// ji ltar log pa’i rdzun* (rdzun] P, brdzun D) *gyis byas pa yis// pha yi drung nas cung zad rnyed pa ltar// de bzhin bdag gis bsod nams cung zad rnyed// de nas ‘jig rtan ‘jam pa’i rdo rjer shog// dpal ldan u rgyan yul du brten* (brten] D, bstan P) *skyes shing// dpag med rgyud don ma lus rab mkhyen pa// dpal ldan rnam par dul zhi’i zhal snga nas// de yis dbang bskur slob ma’i gtso bo mchog// de las sin dhū’i ngos su de skyes shing// rnam thos bsti gnas zhes bshad rgyal zhugs nas// shā kya’i bshes gnyen bdag nyid sangs rgyas shing// de yis yongs bkrol zhal gyi man ngag go//* (*Mukhāgama*, D 28b.3-5; P 33a.7-33b.2). A second passage earlier in the text also clearly references Buddhajñānapāda as the source of the instructions contained therein (*dpal ldan ye shes zhal bshad sgrub thabs kyi// man ngag...*) (*Mukhāgama*, D 17b.5-6).

²⁶² The *Mukhāgama* does appear to include what indeed may have been oral instructions on the practice of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, as it also parallels in some places comments that are made by Vaidyapāda in his commentary on the *Samantabhadra*.

²⁶³ The *Anuttarasandhi* is cited by Vaidyapāda in his *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, adding further evidence to the connection between Śākyamitra and Buddhajñānapāda’s tradition (Tomabechi 2008, 173).

²⁶⁴ *Kośalālamkāra*, D 1b.5-2a.5. This short passage is translated in Davidson 2002, 159-60.

²⁶⁵ It does, however, mention a master named Dharmākara as one of Śākyamitra’s teachers in the Koṅkan. One “Dharmākara of the Koṅkana” is also identified by Śrīphalavajra as Buddhajñānapāda’s co-disciple (*Samantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti*, D 141a.5-6).

Buddhajñānapāda.²⁶⁶ The *Anuttarasandhi* likewise appears to have been influenced by another of Buddhajñānapāda’s works, the *Muktilaka*. Here Śākyamitra recounts the story of Buddha Śākyamuni’s awakening by the river Nairāñjana, but his account seems to be based not on that in the *Lalitavistara* (which he mentions), nor even the so-called tantric retelling of this account in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, but on Buddhajñānapāda’s own version of this account, given in his *Muktilaka*.²⁶⁷ The account from the *Muktilaka* is central to understanding Buddhajñānapāda’s thought, and I will address it in detail in Chapter Three, but for our present purposes, it is enough to note that it is Buddhajñānapāda’s version of the account of Śākyamuni’s awakening that seems to serve as the basis for Śākyamitra’s in the *Anuttarasandhi*. The *Mukhāgama*, *Kośalālamkāra*, and *Anuttarasandhi* also all include dedicatory verses in which the author has inscribed his own name into the verse, a technique favored by Buddhajñānapāda.

Four other works in the Tibetan canon are attributed to Śākyamitra, though Wedemeyer has shown one of these, a commentary on the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* (Tōh. 1834) to be a Tibetan composition.²⁶⁸ Further study of the works attributed to Śākyamitra is certainly necessary to determine more about this influential²⁶⁹ but somewhat elusive author (or authors; indeed, the question of whether the remainder of these works can even be attributed to a single author needs to be addressed). However, given what is currently known of the writings attributed to him, I think we can suggest as likely that one Śākyamitra, author of at least the *Mukhāgama*, the *Kośalālamkāra*, and the *Anuttarasandhi*, was a disciple of Buddhajñānapāda’s.²⁷⁰

Death

We know little of Buddhajñānapāda’s later life, including his death, but in the *Dvītyākrama* Mañjuśrī makes a prediction that has been interpreted by commentators to mean that Buddhajñānapāda would not attain an awakening that involved the full transformation of his bodily aggregates in his lifetime, but only at the time of his passing. Mañjuśrī said:

²⁶⁶ Moreover, I will argue in Chapter Two that Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiographical narrative, which culminates in a vision of Mañjuśrī from whom he directly received the instructions that constitute the primary contents of the *Dvītyākrama*, serves an important legitimizing function for Buddhajñānapāda’s system of practice outlined therein. Śākyamitra’s account of his studies with human gurus in India does not serve such a function, and thus is more likely to have simply been added in emulation of Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiographical account. Such autobiographies are extremely uncommon in Indian texts of this period—these two are the only ones of which I am aware.

²⁶⁷ Tomabeche (2006, 139n157) notes this parallel and suggests that Śākyamitra’s passage is based upon Buddhajñānapāda’s. There is another half-verse in the *Anuttarasandhi* that parallels one in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Dvītyākrama*, but in that instance both verses appear to be based on a passage in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* (See note 123 in my *Dvītyākrama* translation.) Nonetheless, the fact that Śākyamitra paraphrases the same passage that Buddhajñānapāda has paraphrased remains telling.

²⁶⁸ These are the *Bhadracaryāprañidhānarājaṭīkā* (*‘Phags pa bzang po spyod pa’i smon lam gyi rgyal po’i rgya cher ‘grel pa*) (Tōh. 4013), the *Krodhamahābalasādhana* (*‘phags pa khro bo stobs po che’i sgrub thabs*) (Tōh. 3636), the *Mahāmudrāyogāvātārapiṇḍārtha* (*phyag rgya chen po’i rnal ‘byor la ‘jug pa’i man ngag tu bshad pa*), and the *Caryāsamuccayapradīpa-nāma-ṭīkā* (*Spyod pa bsdu pa’i sgron ma zhes bya ba’i rgya cher bshad pa*) (Tōh. 1834). The latter is the one demonstrated by Wedemeyer (2009) to be a Tibetan composition.

²⁶⁹ Both the *Kośalālamkāra* and the *Anuttarasandhi* are seminal texts in their own fields. The *Kośalālamkāra* is one of three major Indic commentaries on the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* and is important as its earliest word-by-word commentary (Hopkins 2005, 19); it influenced another important commentary on the tantra by Ānandagarbha (Kwon 2002, 26). The *Anuttarasandhi* is important in first introducing the theory of *prakṛti* and *āloka*, which serves as the “ontological and epistemological foundation of the yogic practice of the Ārya School in its entirety” (my translation from the French) (Tomabeche 2006, 49-50).

²⁷⁰ Tomabeche (2008) has already suggested as much as regards to the author of the *Anuttarasandhi* and what he refers to as the “compiler” of the *Mukhāgama* (he does not address the *Kośalālamkāra*) and places this Śākyamitra at a critical juncture between the Jñānapāda and Ārya traditions.

However, because of [your] conduct regarding food,
 And holding a slight delusion with respect to me
 You will not, in this very life,
 Bring about a complete transformation of the state of
 Your body—the aggregates including form. |365|
 However, you will accomplish consciousness,
 Which is indestructible, as the *mahāmudrā*.²⁷¹ |366|

As we have seen in Chögyal Phagpa’s account translated above, Vaidyapāda was followed by the later Tibetan historians in interpreting this prediction to mean that due to Buddhajñānapāda’s earlier lack of faith in the monk who emanated the *maṇḍala* of Mañjuśrī and his refusal of some foods that the monk’s female companion served to him he would attain the final result of the path only at death.²⁷² This position is stated most clearly in Tāranātha’s *Seven Transmissions*:

If he had previously not given rise to any lack of faith at all with regard to the emanation of Mañjuśrī, who was a practitioner of the *avadhūti*, he would have transformed in that very [body] into the vajra rainbow body. However, since he had some minor disrespectful thoughts [towards him], at the age of eighty he left behind the body [produced by karmic] ripening and attained the body of unity.²⁷³

Here we have the only mention of which I am aware of Buddhajñānapāda having lived such a long life, passing away only at the age of eighty, no small feat in 8th-century India.

Buddhajñānapāda’s Writings

You should compose with a genuine intention a *sādhana*, *homa*, *bali*, *gaṇacakra*, summary, commentary, *maṇḍala-vidhi*, and so forth for the first stage of the tantra that is the gathering of all the buddhas, which is greatly secret, secret, and supremely secret—this great scripture, surpassed by none—to be like a scalpel for sentient beings who are obscured by the darkness of ignorance.

- Mañjuśrī, addressing Buddhajñānapāda directly, *Dvitiyakrama*

Fortunately for our study of his thought, Buddhajñānapāda was a fairly prolific author. Unfortunately, few of his works survive in their original Sanskrit, and our only access to most of his oeuvre is through their Tibetan translations, made primarily in the 11th century.²⁷⁴ The earliest list we have of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings is in the *Sukusuma*, in which Vaidyapāda comments on Mañjuśrī’s command to Buddhajñānapāda to compose a number of texts (see the

²⁷¹ *khyod kyang zad kyi spyod pa dang// nga la cung zad ‘khrul rtogs pas// khyod kyis* (kyis] D C S, kyang P, kyi N) *tshe ‘di nyid la ni// gzugs bcas phung po rang lus ni// gnas ni yang dag mi ‘gyur te//* |365| *rnam par shes pa mi shigs pa// phyag rgya chen por rab tu ‘grub//* |366| (*Dvitiyakrama*, v 365-66).

²⁷² Vaidyapāda’s own comments on the point of not transforming the aggregates of the body in this life are somewhat confusing, but their interpretation by later authors is clearer. See note 504 in my translation of the *Dvitiyakrama* for more detail on Vaidyapāda’s comments on this passage.

²⁷³ *Bka’ babs bdun*, 108. Here my translation differs significantly from that of Templeman (1983, 76), who I believe has misunderstood the passage. *sngon ‘jam dbyangs sprul pa a ba dhū ti’i spyod pa can de la ma dad pa gtan nas ma skyes na/ de nyid du ‘ja’ lus rdo rje’i skur gnas ‘gyur ba yin pa las/ der ma gus pa’i rnam par rtog pa cung zad skyes pas dgungs lo brgyad cu lhan cig bzhes pa na rnam par smin pa’i sku lus bor te/ zung ‘jug gi sku brnyes pa yin no//*

²⁷⁴ The translation of Buddhajñānapāda’s *Saṅcayagāthā-pañjikā*, a Prajñāpāramitā commentary that is one of his early works, however, is attributed to the 8th-century Imperial Era translators Kawa Paltsek and Vidyākaraśiṃha.

quotation above), by listing the master’s compositions that fulfill this command. The *sādhana*, Vaidyapāda says, refers to the “three *Samantabhadrīs*” (*kun tu bzang mo gsum*); the *homa* is (for?) the generation stage, and he notes that there are two such *homa* rituals; the *bali* ritual is that of Unflinching Tārā (*mi nub pa’i sgrol ma*); the *gaṇacakra* text is the *Mahāgaṇacakra* (though it is unclear if this is meant to be the name of a text or simply stating that it is a ritual for the practice of the *mahāgaṇacakra*);²⁷⁵ the summary is the *Blazing Gem* (*rin po che ‘bar ba*); and the commentary “he did not compose.” As for the *maṇḍala-vidhi*, Vaidyapāda notes that this *vidhi* in two hundred and fifty verses was taken to Kaśmir and that he had not seen it. He explains that the “and so forth” includes the *Great Root Wisdom* (*rtsa ba’i ye shes chen po*) and the *Treasure of Verses* (*tshigs su bcad pa’i mdzod*),²⁷⁶ the *Muktivilaka* (*grol ba’i thig le*), and the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* (*bdag nyid grub par ‘byung ba*),²⁷⁷ the **Bodhicittabindu* (*byang chub sems kyi thig le*), the *Great Commentary on Glorious Auspiciousness* (*dpal bkra shis kyi rnam par bshad pa chen po*), *The Method for Engaging in the Fourth* (*bzhi pa la ‘jug pa’i thabs*),²⁷⁸ and three Jambhala *sādhana*s.²⁷⁹ Many of these texts cannot be identified among Buddhajñānapāda’s extant works,²⁸⁰ but some of them fortunately can: his *Samantabhadra-sādhana*,²⁸¹ *Muktivilaka*, *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, and the three Jambhala *sādhana*s all survive.

²⁷⁵ Although unfortunately this text is not extant, it does seem to have been translated into Tibetan, as a *gaṇacakra-vidhi* (*tshogs kyi ‘khor lo’i cho ga*) attributed to “Jñānapāda” is listed in the Black Hat Tanjur catalogue (p. 434): *tshogs kyi ‘khor lo’i cho ga ye shes zhabs kyi o rgyan gyi yul nas spyang drangs nas mdzad pa smri ti’i ‘gyur* (Martin 2011, 650). Smṛtijñānakīrti also translated Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturāṅgasādhana*, so it seems likely that this may indeed have been Buddhajñānapāda’s *gaṇacakra-vidhi* that he translated, as well.

²⁷⁶ There is at least the outside possibility that this could refer to Buddhajñānapāda’s *bsdud pa tshigs su bcad pa’i dka’ ‘grel*, the *Saṅcayagāthā-pañjikā*.

²⁷⁷ The title of this text is usually translated into Tibetan as *bdag nyid grub pa la ‘jug pa*, but presumably it refers to the same text here.

²⁷⁸ Among Buddhajñānapāda’s compositions mentioned by Vaidyapāda that are no longer extant, this title in particular is tantalizing. As noted above, the early Jñānapāda School is generally known to have preserved a system of three, rather than four, initiations, but Vaidyapāda composed the *Yogasapta*, a treatise on the “seven yogas” of the “the fourth.” We may guess that this *Method of Engaging in the Fourth* (if it did ever exist—but we have no good reason to doubt Vaidyapāda’s claim that it did) may have had something to do with Buddhajñānapāda’s own position regarding a fourth initiation. I discuss Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* in Chapter Seven.

²⁷⁹ *Sukusuma*, D 133b.7-134a.3. Vaidyapāda then notes that these “fourteen teachings” were composed in accordance with Mañjuśrī’s prediction. The only way I have been able to make this list total fourteen is by counting each of the texts listed in the root text as one (7; ignoring the fact that Vaidyapāda says that the *sādhana* actually refers to three texts, and the *homa* to two), subtracting the commentary that Vaidyapāda says was not composed (-1), and adding the texts Vaidyapāda lists in as part of the “etc.” (+8; again ignoring the fact that the “three Jambhala *sādhana*s” counts only as one of the eight). Gö Lotsāwa also gives the list of Buddhajñānapāda’s compositions, clearly drawn from Vaidyapāda, and engages in a similar (but not identical) mathematical endeavor regarding this list of “fourteen”! (*Deb ther sngon po*, Vol I, 550). In the *Blue Annals* Roerich has mistakenly identified several of the members of the list that Gö gives with texts that are not Buddhajñānapāda’s. Regarding Roerich’s misidentification of the third “Samantabhadra” text, see note 281. Roerich also mistakenly identifies the “commentary on the tantra” (which Vaidyapāda and Gö both report that Buddhajñānapāda did not compose(!)) as the *Candraprabhā* (Tōh. 1852), which was actually composed by Pramuditākaravarman. Roerich later reports that this was not Buddhajñānapāda’s work, but it seems that his translation is confused here because he was not aware of Vaidyapāda’s passage from the *Sukusuma*, which Gö was clearly paraphrasing in this section. Roerich also reports Buddhajñānapāda’s 250-verse *maṇḍala-vidhi* to be the *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi* (Tōh. 1865), which was actually composed by Dīpaṅkarabhadra and has closer to 450 verses. The list of “fourteen” is likewise reported (obviously relying on Vaidyapāda) in Chögyal Phagpa’s biography (*Gsang ‘dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa’i rim pa*, 615-16).

²⁸⁰ There are twelve texts listed by Vaidyapāda here that we do not know: 1. the third among the “three *Samantabhadrīs*,” (on which see note 279) 2. and 3. the two *homa* rituals, 4. the *bali* ritual of Unflinching Tārā, 5. the *gaṇacakra* rite, 6. the *Blazing Gem*, 7. the *maṇḍalavidhi* in 250 verses, 8. the *Great Root Wisdom*, 9. the *Treasure of Verses*, 10. the **Bodhicittabindu*, 11. the *Great Commentary on Glorious Auspiciousness*, and 12. the *Method for Engaging in the Fourth*.

It seems unlikely that Vaidyapāda intends for the list of fourteen works given in the *Sukusuma* to encompass the entirety of Buddhajñānapāda’s oeuvre, as he is merely commenting on the specific set of *Guhyasamāja*-related texts that Buddhajñānapāda composed to fulfill Mañjuśrī’s command. Indeed, in addition to the six works from Vaidyapāda’s list that do survive, a number of other compositions in the Tibetan canon (a few of which also survive in their entirety or in part in Sanskrit) are attributed to Buddhajñānapāda under a variety of names. Many of these compositions do indeed appear to be the works of the 8th-century master, though at least one is certainly not his, and the attribution of others remains in question. The following sixteen works in the Tibetan canon are attributed to authors named Buddhajñānapāda, Buddhaśrījñāna, or one of the other above-mentioned variants of the name; I will present a very brief summary and assess the attribution of each of them below: the *Dvīṭyākramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* (Tōh. 1853); *Mukhāgama* (Tōh. 1854); *Samantabhadra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1855); *Caturaṅgasāadhanopāyikā-samantabhadrī* (Tōh. 1856); *Śrīherukasādhana* (Tōh. 1857);²⁸² *Muktilaka* (Tōh. 1859); *Ātmasādhanāvātāra* (Tōh. 1860); *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1861); *Guhyajambhalasādhana* (Tōh. 1862); *Vistarajambhalasādhana* (Tōh. 1863);²⁸³ **Gativyūha* (Tōh. 1864); **Trikāyavākcittādhiṣṭhanoddeśa*. (Tōh. 2085); *Traisattvasamādhisamāpatti* (Tōh. 2086); *Mahāpratisarāraṅgā* (Tōh. 3124); *Saiṅcaya-gāthā-pañjikā* (Tōh. 3798); and the *Mahāyānalakṣaṇasamuccaya* (Tōh. 3905).²⁸⁴ In assessing the

²⁸¹ It is interesting that Vaidyapāda refers to this text(s) as the: “three *Samantabhadrīs*,” as two translations of the *sādhana* into Tibetan survive in the canon under two different names, the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* and the *Caturaṅga-sāadhanopāyikā-samantabhadrī*, which upon comparison are not actually distinct texts. There is also a third “Samantabhadra” text, the *Kun tu bzang po bsdus don* listed in the Peking Tengyur catalogue, but the text itself, however, is strangely absent from the place where it should be in that Tengyur, and receives no mention whatsoever in the catalogues of the other Tengyurs. Gö Lotsāwa (*Deb ther sngon po*, Vol 1, 450) mentions the *Kun tu bzang po bsdus don* as the third among the “three Samantabhadrīs,” and were the text to be found it would indeed be a good candidate, given its placement in the Peking Tengyur catalogue together with other Jñānapāda School works. Roerich (1976, 370), however, inexplicably identifies the *Kun tu bzang po bsdus don* as Buddhajñānapāda’s *Śrīherukasādhana* (Tōh. 1857). I address the issue of the two different extant translations/versions of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in Chapter Five.

²⁸² Also in *Sādhanamālā*, No. 243.

²⁸³ Also in *Sādhanamālā*, No, 285. This short *sādhana* contains no statement of authorship, but I have included it in the list because I believe we can attribute it to Buddhajñānapāda. I discuss this further below.

²⁸⁴ I have not included in this list three compositions from the canon (and a fourth that is a short prayer extracted from one of the other three) that are clearly attributed to the “Kaśmiri *pañḍita* Buddhaśrījñāna,” who lived around 1200 and worked with the Tibetan Lotsāwa Nub Jampai Pal (*Gnubs byams pa’i dpal*, 1173-1236) on a number of translations preserved in the Tibetan canon, including those of his own writings. Makransky (1997, 268) and C. Dalton and Szántó (forthcoming) mention this Buddhaśrījñāna as the author of an *Abhisamayālamkāra* commentary, the *Prajñāpradīpāvalī*, and as a namesake of Buddhajñānapāda’s, and warn against confusing the two. In addition to the *Prajñāpradīpāvalī* (Tōh. 3800), two other works in the Tengyur—the *Cittaratnaviśodhanamārgaphala* (Tōh. 2465), and the *Jinamārgāvatāra* (Tōh. 3964) are clearly attributed to this Kaśmiri *pañḍita*; indeed in the colophons of all three (and even in several of the colophons of the works he collaborated on as a translator) he is specifically referred to as “the Kaśmiri” Buddhaśrījñāna, presumably to distinguish him from Buddhajñānapāda who as we have seen was occasionally also called by that name. A fourth work, the *Jinamārgāvatārodbhavaprañidhāna* (Tōh. 4391), attributed in its colophon to one Buddhaśrījñāna (*Sangs rgyas dpal ye shes*) (but with no specification that he is the Kaśmiri *pañḍita* of that name, nor any translator’s colophon) is in fact a prayer that has simply been extracted from his *Jinamārgāvatāra* (See *Jinamārgāvatāra*, D 234a.3-235a.1), with a single introductory verse added at the beginning. Buddhaśrījñāna is said in the colophon of his *Citta-ratnaviśodhanamārgaphala* to be of Kaśmiri blood but to have been born in Nepal, where several of his translations with Nub Jampai Pal were carried out. Besides the Kaśmiri Buddhaśrījñāna’s own three compositions, the two collaborated on the translation of a somewhat eclectic collection of other works in the canon: Ratnākaraśānti’s *Vajratārāsādhana* (Tōh. 1324); Kālapāda’s *Śrīkālacakrasahasādhana* (Tōh. 1361); Maitrīpa’s *Śrīcakrasaṃvarasādhana-ratnadīpa* (Tōh. 1484); Śrīdhara’s *Krodhavārāhīvajrayoginīsādhana* (Tōh. 1586); Līlavajra’s *Śrīsahasajaguhyasamājasādhana* (Tōh. 1913) (That this short *sādhana* was composed by the later Līlavajra and not Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Vilāsavajra, whose names in

authorship of these works, I am taking into account a number of factors: their presence in Vaidyapāda’s list of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, their colophonic attribution, their style—including the presence of a dedicatory verse in which the author has inscribed his name, Buddhajñāna, in several of the works—and their content.²⁸⁵ In the course of my research I was able to read all of the sixteen works above in full, with the single exception of the *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*, Buddhajñānapāda’s long Prajñāpāramitā commentary.

Brief Summary and Assessment of Authorship of works Attributed to Buddhajñānapāda

Non-Tantric Works

Buddhajñānapāda’s *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* (Tōh. 3798), a commentary on the *Sañcayagāthā* Prajñāpāramitā *sutra*, seems to have been composed quite early in his career. In the *Dvītyākrama* Buddhajñānapāda mentions having composed some treatises at Nālandā in response to the request “the one of noble birth called *Guṇamitra/ā (*yon tan bshes gnyen*)”²⁸⁶ described by Vaidyapāda as a brahmin nun,²⁸⁷ prior to continuing his travels around the subcontinent studying with tantric gurus. The concluding verses of the *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*, in addition to including a dedicatory verse into which Buddhajñānapāda inscribes his own name, mention as its petitioner the very same *Guṇamitra/ā (here her name is transliterated as *gu ṇa mi tra*).²⁸⁸ In the *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* Buddhajñānapāda relates each section of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* to passages of the *Ratnaguṇasañcayagāthā*.²⁸⁹ Here he seems to be emulating his guru Haribhadra’s method of relating the *Abhisamayālamkāra* to one of the shorter *Prajñāpāramitā* texts; Haribhadra, in his well-known *Abhisamayālamkāralokā*, relates the *Abhisamayālamkāra* to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*.²⁹⁰ The *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* was translated into Tibetan during the early translation period, very likely before 824, making it possible that this work may even have been translated during Buddhajñānapāda’s own lifetime.²⁹¹

The *Mahāyānalakṣaṇa-samuccaya* (Tōh. 3905) was likewise composed early in Buddhajñānapāda’s career. As noted above, this text has the unusual distinction of having been cited by Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Vilāsavajra in his *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*.²⁹² However, the *Mahāyānalakṣaṇa-samuccaya* is attributed to Buddhajñānapāda in Samantabhadra’s mid-late 9th-century (?) *Sāramañjarī*,²⁹³ which cites portions of the text; thus we do have, besides the Tibetan

Tibetan are often rather interchangeable, is clear from a reference in the work to the four joys (*dga’ bzhi*). Buddhajñānapāda and even Vaidyapāda only spoke of three.); Niškalaṅka’s *Śrībandhavimukta-śāstra* (Tōh. 2463); Candrakumāra’s *Śrīvajrasarasvatīdevyupāyikā* (Tōh. 3699); and Vasudhara’s *Āryajambhālajalendraviśeṣastotra* (Tōh. 3747).

²⁸⁵ For another brief summary of Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving works see C. Dalton and Szántó forthcoming.

²⁸⁶ *Dvītyākrama*, verse 4.

²⁸⁷ *Sukusuma*, D 89b.2.

²⁸⁸ This verse clearly gives the impression that the *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* is one of Buddhajñānapāda’s juvenilia. It reads, “When someone else, her gaze on the result (i.e. awakening), / entrusts one [with a task], why not try?! [I] wrote this commentary on the difficult points/ for Guṇamitrā alone.” *bras bu la lta gzhan gyis kyang// bcol na ci phyir ‘bad mi bya// gu ṇa mi tra kho na’i ngor// dka’ ‘grel ‘di ni ‘dir byas so//* (*Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*, D 189a.4-5).

²⁸⁹ Makransky 1997, 259-60.

²⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 270. See Makransky 1997, 259-63 for a summary of Buddhajñānapāda’s position on the number of *kāyas* in the *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*, which suggests that here he did not follow the innovative four-*kāya* theory in his guru Haribhadra’s *Abhisamayālamkāralokā*.

²⁹¹ See Tomabechi 2008, 175.

²⁹² Tribe 1994, 16; Szántó 2015, 541; C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming.

²⁹³ Samantabhadra’s mid-late 9th-century dates are suggested by the fact that he mentions that he received the command to compose the *Sāramañjarī* by one Kīrtipāda, who is likely the same Śrīkīrti who was a disciple of

colophon attribution, an early attestation of its attribution to Buddhajñānapāda by an Indian author who upheld his tradition not long after Buddhajñānapāda's life.²⁹⁴ The text itself is a relatively short compilation of definitions of basic Buddhist terminology and important aspects of the Mahāyāna path like the aggregates, elements, links of dependent origination, *pāramitās*, bodhisattva *bhūmis*, sixteen emptinesses, and so forth.²⁹⁵ The format of the *Mahāyānalakṣaṇa-samuccaya*, in which Buddhajñānapāda begins with a short invocation, then simply lists the topics he will discuss and proceeds to address each in turn, is also found in his **Gativyūha*, a text that does bear a signature dedicatory verse. A fragment of the original Sanskrit of the *Mahāyānalakṣaṇa-samuccaya* survives and has been published, and more of the text can be reconstructed from its citations in the longest available recension of the aforementioned *Sāramañjarī*.²⁹⁶

Major Tantric Works

The *Dvītyakramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*²⁹⁷ (Tōh. 1853), edited in Appendix I and translated in Part II of this dissertation, is one of Buddhajñānapāda's most well-known compositions. It contains his autobiographical account, which serves as the text's narrative frame, details his vision of Mañjuśrī, and reports the entire contents of the instructions Mañjuśrī gave him in the vision. The instructions given by Mañjuśrī to Buddhajñānapāda reported in the *Dvītyakrama* are themselves quite eclectic and the text contains a diverse collection of doctrinal and ritual sections nestled within Buddhajñānapāda's unique narrative framework. Almost all of the ritual material in the text pertains to the practices of the perfection stage, the "second" stage of tantric practice, as well as the initiatory rituals that permit the practitioner to engage in those practices. This work shares strong similarities and an overlap in vocabulary and content with the *Muktilaka*, including a number of parallel passages, and to a lesser degree with the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, and the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*. The *Dvītyakrama* is Buddhajñānapāda's only major extant work that lacks a dedicatory verse with his name inscribed into it. I presume that in the case of the *Dvītyakrama*, Buddhajñānapāda found this unnecessary given that the work itself contains his autobiographical details, and that in fact ninety percent of the content is, technically speaking, not actually Buddhajñānapāda's own composition, but simply his report of Mañjuśrī's direct instructions, recorded in Mañjuśrī's own first-person speech. Chapter Two examines its structure and provides a summary of this unique composition, while different aspects of the *Dvītyakrama*'s content—its doctrine, generation-stage ritual, perfection-stage ritual, and initiatory sequences—are explored in more detail in each of the remaining chapters.

The *Muktilaka* (Tōh. 1859) is another important work of Buddhajñānapāda's, which is known, along with the *Dvītyakrama* with which it shares much vocabulary and content and multiple parallel passages, as presenting the perfection stage practices according to Buddhajñānapāda's Guhyasamāja tradition. While the *Muktilaka* certainly does contain some perfection stage instructions—specifically, on the three *bindu* yoga and vajra recitation—those same practices are presented much more extensively in the *Dvītyakrama*. Moreover, perfection

Buddhajñānapāda's guru Pālitipāda, and possibly a co-disciple of Buddhajñānapāda's. He thus seems to have been one-and-a-half or two generations later than Buddhajñānapāda (See Szántó 2015a, 554).

²⁹⁴ Szántó 2015, 541; C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming.

²⁹⁵ Yonezawa 1998 summarizes its contents.

²⁹⁶ Yonezawa 1998; Szántó 2015a, 545. Szántó has generously shared with me his draft edition of the long recension of the *Sāramañjarī*.

²⁹⁷ I explain my departure from the title usually given for this work, the *Dvikramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*, in Chapter Two, and also in note 3 of my translation of the *Dvītyakrama* in Part II of the dissertation.

stage instructions make up only a small portion, maybe fifteen percent, of the *Muktilaka*'s content. In fact, the text contains much more doctrinal than ritual material, some of which is presented in innovative narrative ways. The *Muktilaka* places a special emphasis on nondual nonconceptual suchness, which can be known instantaneously through relying upon a realized lineage guru, and which subsumes all other outer Vajrayāna practices. Buddhajñānapāda has inscribed his name here in the concluding verses. Chapter Three examines the doctrinal content of the *Muktilaka* in more detail, while Chapter Six focuses on the perfection stage practices found here and in the *Dvītyākrama*.

The *Samantabhadra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1855) and the *Caturaṅgasādhana* (Tōh. 1856) are in fact two translations of the same *sādhana*, which is undoubtedly Buddhajñānapāda's composition.²⁹⁸ This important work details the rituals of the generation stage practice according to Buddhajñānapāda's tradition, a nineteen-deity *maṇḍala* centered on Mañjuvajra, which became distinctive of his Jñānapāda School of *Guhyasamāja* practice. The *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* shares significant parallels, including several parallel passages, with Buddhajñānapāda's *Ātmasādhanāvātāra*, particularly in the philosophical section towards the end of the *sādhana*. It also bears one of his signature dedicatory verses. The *sādhana* was obviously popular, as it is the subject of five extant commentaries, one of which survives in three different recensions.²⁹⁹ Moreover, almost the entire *sādhana* was rephrased in his disciple Dīpaṃkarabhadra's influential *Guhyasamajamaṇḍalavidhi*. The *Samantabhadra* survives in its entirety in Sanskrit, but is unfortunately not available for study.³⁰⁰ However, a short portion of the Sanskrit has been photographed and edited, and some has been reconstructed and published on the basis of the *Sāramañjarī*, an extant Sanskrit commentary on the *sādhana*.³⁰¹ This *sādhana*, including the rituals of Buddhajñānapāda's generation stage practice, the details of its two different surviving translations into Tibetan, and an overview of the extant commentaries and their relationships, is discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

The *Ātmasādhanāvātāra* (Tōh. 1860) is Buddhajñānapāda's only surviving tantric work written in prose, rather than verse. It is a complex treatise in which he sets a Yogācāra-Madhyamaka philosophical foundation for arguments that support and defend the tantric path, notably a defense of the practice of deity yoga. The treatise goes so far as to make the claim that full awakening is *only* possible through the tantric path of deity yoga. The work also deals, however, with a number of Mahāyāna topics approached without a tantric lens. It additionally seeks, as do several of Buddhajñānapāda's other works, to homologize several important Mahāyāna concepts with tantric concepts or practices, and to identify all of these with, or subsume them within, suchness, which is also described here as the nature of the mind. This text is particularly important as it contains a number of citations of other Buddhist works, giving us

²⁹⁸ Some scholars have sometimes considered these two to be two different works, but more recent scholarly consensus (including Kikuya 2012a, Szántó 2015, and C. Dalton and Szántó forthcoming), which my own reading of the *sādhana* strongly supports, is that they are indeed two translations of the same work.

²⁹⁹ C. Dalton and Szántó (forthcoming). The commentaries are Vaidyapāda's *Samantabhadrī-īkā*, Śrīphalavajra's *Samantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti*, Thagana's *Śrīsamantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti*, Samantabhadra's *Sāramañjarī*, and an unidentified commentary in Sanskrit mentioned in Kawasaki, 2004. The *Sāramañjarī* survives in three recensions, two in Sanskrit and one in Tibetan.

³⁰⁰ Kawasaki 2004 describes the manuscript that contains the *Samantabhadra*, but which remains unavailable to scholars to study.

³⁰¹ Kanō (2014) has published an edition of the verses from a short section of this manuscript which was photographed. The manuscript is on display in the Tibet Museum at the Norbulingka in Lhasa. Other verses survive in several Nepalese ritual manuals (one at the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, IASWR MBB-I-11; one in the Nepal National archives, NAK 1/1697 = NGMPP A 936/1; and one at the Cambridge University Library Add. 1708.III, f. 2r4-5), and are edited in Tanaka 1996. Szántó (2015, 543n14) has published a revision of Tanaka's edition of these verses.

an idea of the scriptural resources Buddhajñānapāda drew on in his thought. These include the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* and the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, but the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* is unusual in lacking any reference to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, which serves as the central reference for most of his other tantric writings. This absence raises the question of whether the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* may have been composed prior to Buddhajñānapāda’s *Guhyasamāja*-focused tantric works. Moreover, while the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*’s only specific reference to Mañjuśrī is in the work’s homage “to the bodhisattva Mañjuḥṣa,” as I noted above Buddhajñānapāda has reproduced a lengthy part of his guru Vilāsavajra’s *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* towards the end of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*.³⁰² The section in question equates the deities of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti maṇḍala* described in Vilāsavajra’s commentary with a number of Mahāyāna principles. So while the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* on the whole cannot be said to be a *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*-centered work, the presence—albeit without any introduction or explanation—of the *maṇḍala* from that tantra in this work confirms Buddhajñānapāda’s familiarity with the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, as well as suggesting that the work was indeed likely composed before the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* became the focus of his writings. In any case, the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* is undoubtedly Buddhajñānapāda’s work, given both the presence of his “signature” in the dedicatory verse, as well as the parallels with his *Caturaṅga/samantabhadra-sādhana*. Like the *Caturaṅga/samantabhadra*, the Sanskrit of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* also survives in full but is likewise unavailable for study,³⁰³ but quite a large portion of the Sanskrit text can be reconstructed from the long recension of the *Sāramañjarī* where it is cited at length.³⁰⁴ The presence of the passage from the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, which is extant in Sanskrit, now provides us further access to another portion of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* in its original Sanskrit. The availability of a large portion of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* in Sanskrit is most fortunate, especially given that the Tibetan translation of the text is incomprehensible in a number of places.³⁰⁵ Chapter Three addresses some of the doctrinal points found in the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*.

Minor Tantric Works

In addition to these important tantric compositions, Buddhajñānapāda wrote a few shorter works dealing with tantric practice, mostly *sādhana*s. The **Gativyūha* (*Stang stabs kyi bkod pa*, Tōh. 1864) is the most unique among these works, as it is not a *sādhana*, but rather a short text detailing the postures and *mudrās* of deities, as well as postures and *mudrās* to be assumed in certain tantric ritual contexts. The first and last sections of the text are in verse, with a prose

³⁰² A number of disparate short sections are taken directly from Chapter Five of the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, and incorporated into an almost continuous segment of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, with very little interjection on Buddhajñānapāda’s own part. The Sanskrit edition of this section of the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* is found in Tribe 2016 pp. 268-281 and corresponds with the Tibetan of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* found in the Derge recension of that text, D 57a.3-58b.6. The segments of the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* incorporated into the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* are: *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, Chapter 5, lines 14-20, 36-43 71-76, 81-87, 104-113, 131-139, 156-159, 161-152, 178-179, 194-195, and 200-203 (following Tribe’s Sanskrit edition, pp. 268-281).

³⁰³ See Kawasaki 2004, 51.

³⁰⁴ Szántó 2015, 545-46. Szántó has generously shared with me his draft edition of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* based on its citations in the *Sāramañjarī*.

³⁰⁵ The colophon states that the translation was done by Śāntibhadra (*shānti bha dra*) and Gö Khukpa Lhetse (*‘go lhas btsas*). The Sanskrit text is also difficult, so it is possible that the translators had some trouble with the text, or that they were working with a corrupt manuscript. In any case, the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* as it stands in Tibetan translation alone is quite unapproachable in more than one place.

section in the middle. While the text lacks the traditional translator’s opening with a Sanskrit title and translator’s homage, as well as a translator’s colophon, it does have a dedicatory verse in which Buddhajñānapāda has inscribed his own name. The **Gativyūha* also begins with an homage to Vajra Hūmkāra, who is mentioned twice in Buddhajñānapāda’s Jambhala *sādhana*s as the self-visualization for the more wrathful methods of accomplishment.³⁰⁶ As noted above, a composition by Śrīkīrti, who seems to have been a fellow disciple of Buddhajñānapāda’s under their master Pālitapāda likewise focuses on postures among the other details of the initiatory ritual, so it is possible that this was something emphasized by their common guru.³⁰⁷

The *Śrīherukasādhana* (Tōh. 1857) is a short work which is, as its name suggests, focused on the figure of the wrathful Heruka. The general structure of the *sādhana*, albeit in an extremely condensed form, is the same as that of Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, and the causal deity (described here in the *Śrīherukasādhana* as the *vajrasattva* and in the *Samantabhadra* as Vajrabhadra³⁰⁸), is identical in terms of form, color, and implements, to the causal deity as described in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra*. These shared features suggest that the attribution to Buddhajñānapāda (his name is given as the Ācārya Buddhajñāna (*slob dpon sangs rgyas ye shes*) in the colophon) may indeed be correct.³⁰⁹ Moreover, the *sādhana* is grouped with others of his works in the Tibetan canon, suggesting that the redactors of the canon may also have accepted the attribution.³¹⁰ Although the gate guardians depicted in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* are certainly wrathful in aspect, the specifically cremation ground aesthetic of the Heruka in the *Śrīheruka-sādhana*—holding a skull garland, his body smeared with ash, garlanded by bones—is not reflected in Buddhajñānapāda’s other writings, and is more often associated with the later Yoginī tantras.³¹¹ The short commentary (Tōh. 1858) that follows this *sādhana* in the Tengyur clearly associates this work with the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, and, as seen in the 9th-century *Guhyasiddhi* (a text that is probably slightly later than Buddhajñānapāda) that aesthetic was already associated with *Guhyasamāja* practitioners engaging in *vrata* practices, even if it was not represented in the aesthetic of the primary deities of the *Guhyasamāja-maṇḍala* itself.³¹² What is more, the idea of and the term *heruka* were certainly in use in Buddhajñānapāda’s time, even in conjunction with the *Guhyasamāja* cycle, as both Vaidyapāda and Samantabhadra’s commentaries specify the *herukas* among the “others” in whose accumulations of merit Buddhajñānapāda rejoices in a verse from the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.³¹³ If the *Śrīheruka-sādhana* is indeed a composition of Buddhajñānapāda’s, it would thus seem to be an early example of the genre of a Heruka *sādhana* with a cremation ground aesthetic. Most of the *sādhana*, with the exception of four and a half

³⁰⁶ This practice is mentioned in both the *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana* and the *Vistarajambhala-sādhana*.

³⁰⁷ See Szántó 2015a, 552-3.

³⁰⁸ *rdo rje bzang*. A combination of the terms Vajradhara and Samantabhadra? The *Caturaṅga* reads *rdo rje dam pa*.

³⁰⁹ The *Śrīherukasādhana* is followed in the Tengyur by a short commentary (Tōh. 1858) on the work that is anonymous. The commentary clearly identifies the *sādhana* as pertaining to the *Guhyasamāja* tradition, and comments on the full *sādhana* as contained in the Tibetan canon, including the final four and a half verses on the Heruka *vrata* missing in the Sanskrit. There is nothing in the content of the commentary that would absolutely preclude its having been composed by Buddhajñānapāda, nor is there anything that strongly suggests that it was.

³¹⁰ However, this was not always the case when works were included in the Tibetan canon as Wedemeyer 2009 has shown.

³¹¹ The wrathful deities of the protection *cakra* surrounding the *maṇḍala* in Śākyamitra’s *Mukhāgama*, which he says is based on oral instructions from Buddhajñānapāda, come closer to this aesthetic, garlanded by bones and snakes, but still there is no mention of cremation ground ash or skulls in that imagery.

³¹² See Krug 2018, 266.

³¹³ *Caturaṅga-sādhana-ṭīkā*, D 135b.4; *Sāramañjarī*, D 6b.6.

verses at the end of the Tibetan translation, survives in Sanskrit, as No. 243 in the *Sādhnamālā*.³¹⁴ The final verses that are absent in the Sanskrit are not part of the *samādhi* of the deity but rather briefly describe the Heruka *vratas* that the practitioner is enjoined to undertake.

The *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1861), *Guhyajambhala-sādhana* (Tōh. 1862), and *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* (Tōh. 1863), are three short Jambhala *sādhanas*, the first two of which are attributed to Buddhajñānapāda, and all three of which share a common final colophon with the injunction that the three *sādhanas* may not be given to disciples who have not received initiation.³¹⁵ While the *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* has no authorial attribution, nor a translator's colophon, there are a number of factors that suggest it to be Buddhajñānapāda's composition: Vaidyapāda mentions in the *Sukusuma* that Buddhajñānapāda composed *three* Jambhala *sādhanas*, the two Jambhala *sādhanas* immediately preceding the *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* in the Tengyur are attributed to Buddhajñānapāda, and the three *sādhanas*, despite the first two having been translated by different teams of translators, all share a common colophon, as mentioned above. Moreover, the *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* shares some features with each of the two preceding *sādhanas*, and the translator's colophon of the *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana* suggests following the *Guhyajambhala-sādhana* and the *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* on some details regarding the visualization of the forms of the retinue deities. As noted above, *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana* and the *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* both advocate the practice of Vajra Hūmkāra, to whom homage is paid in the initial verses of Buddhajñānapāda's **Gativyūha*. Jambhala and Vasudharā, god and goddess of wealth, respectively, played important roles in Buddhajñānapāda's life story: as noted above Buddhajñānapāda reports that Jambhala himself provided a daily stipend of sorts to Buddhajñānapāda and his disciples when he was living at the Parvata cave behind Vajrāsana, and Vaidyapāda explains that the daily provisions for Pālitapāda's disciples were provided by the goddess Vasudharā. Vaidyapāda also notes that it was during his discipleship under the *yoginī* Guṇeru in Oḍḍiyāna that Buddhajñānapāda achieved the accomplishment of Jambhala. The *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* also survives in Sanskrit, as *Sādhnamālā* No. 285,³¹⁶ though there are a number of places where the Tibetan translation includes passages not present in the Sanskrit, a few instances of the opposite, and one place where the two include divergent versions of the same passage.³¹⁷

Works of Questionable Attribution, Unlikely to be Buddhajñānapāda's

Among the sixteen extant works attributed to Buddhajñānapāda under the variety of his names in the Tibetan canon, there are four that remain of questionable attribution, and one that we can definitively rule out as being his composition. Among the works whose attribution to Buddhajñānapāda it is difficult to be certain about is the *Mahāpratisarārakṣā* (Tōh. 3124). This is a short protective ritual centered around the goddess Mahāpratisarā, one of the figures in the well-known pan-Asian *Pañcarakṣā* tradition. While there is nothing in the ritual that would preclude its composition by Buddhajñānapāda, there is no suggestion that he composed such a work in any of the sources describing his life and his writings. What is more, the composition, which is written primarily in prose combined with short verses that the ritual officiant

³¹⁴ Bajracharya 1928, No. 243.

³¹⁵ *Vistarajambhala-sādhana*, D 66b.2.

³¹⁶ Bajracharya 1928, No. 285.

³¹⁷ The Tibetan translation of the text is also generally problematic, including instances where, for example, the Sanskrit phonetics for a word are included right in the middle of the two syllables of the word that is its Tibetan translation! For example, the Tibetan at one point reads *sa bon bī ja pū ra gang ba*, when in fact “*sa bon gang ba*” is itself the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit word *bījapūra*!

presumably is to recite, along with a number of mantras, does end with dedicatory verses—precisely the kind of verses into which Buddhajñānapāda was wont to inscribe his name—but the author of the *Mahāpratisarāraṅṣā* has not done so. Of course Buddhajñānapāda did not *always* write such dedicatory verses, but in his extant works that do contain such dedicatory verses, he did always include his name.³¹⁸

The *Śrīraktayamārisādhana* (Tōh. 2084), **Trikāyavākcittādhiṣṭhanoddeśa* (Tōh. 2085), and *Trisattvasamādhisamāpatti* (Tōh. 2086) are three short *Yamāri*-related works ascribed in their colophons to Buddhajñānapāda.³¹⁹ The colophon of the first of these is followed by a list of its lineage masters which begins: Yamāri, Vajrayoginī, Buddhajñānapāda, Śrīdhara,³²⁰ Līlāvajra, and continues through a number of further masters up to “myself,” presumably one of the translators.³²¹ In the authorial colophon of two of these short works Buddhajñānapāda is associated with Vajrayoginī or Vajravārāhī, and said to have had her vision or to have directly received her blessings, which is never reported in any of the life accounts of the 8th/9th century master. Two of the works also have short dedicatory verses at the end, but neither has Buddhajñānapāda’s characteristic signature within them. The vocabulary and style of the works (which is common among the three) is not reminiscent of that in Buddhajñānapāda’s other writings, and particularly the very casual use of the terms “generation stage” and “perfection stage”³²² in the *Trisattvasamādhisamāpatti* gives the sense of terms that were in common usage, whereas we know that Buddhajñānapāda was one of the early masters to employ these terms and we find them introduced and used very deliberately, rather than casually, in his other writings. As mentioned above, though, Buddhajñānapāda *is* very clearly associated with Yamāri practices in the later Tibetan tradition, especially within the Ngor tradition of the Sakyapas, who also uphold his Guhyasamāja lineage, so it is not unexpected to find Yamāri-related texts attributed to Buddhajñānapāda. However, the Buddhajñānapāda who is the author of these particular Yamāri texts is, in my estimation and for the reasons noted above, unlikely to be the same as the Buddhajñānapāda who is the author of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and the other works mentioned above.

³¹⁸ The single exception to this rule is the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, discussed above. In possible support of the attribution of the *Mahāpratisarāraṅṣā* to Buddhajñānapāda, the *paṇḍita* Sumatikīrti, who was involved in the translation of the *Mahāpratisarāraṅṣā*, also translated Samantabhadra’s Jñānapāda School *Mañjuśrī-sādhana* (Tōh. 1880), and we know that canonical translators often worked on multiple works by a particular author or that were connected to a particular tradition. The works that Sumatikīrti translated, however, appear to be a rather eclectic collection, so his involvement in these two works may not be related.

³¹⁹ His name in the colophon reads *bu ddha jñā na pā da* in Tōh. 2084 and *sangs rgyas ye shes zhabs* in Tōh. 2085 and Tōh. 2086.

³²⁰ As noted above, in Amye Zhab’s *Gshin rje chos ‘byung*, Śrīdhara is the master listed after Buddhajñānapāda in one of the Yamāri lineages given there, but Amye Zhab’s lineage sequence begins with Mañjuvajra, rather than Yamāri and Vajrayoginī, and passes from Śrīdhara to Nāropa, not to Līlāvajra (*Gshin rje chos ‘byung*, 16a.3-4). But the lineage Amye Zhab writes about is a *Kṛṣṇayamāri* lineage, rather than a *Raktayāmari* lineage. In another lineage description in the same work Amye Zhab explains that Mañjuśrī passed the teachings on Vajrabhairava to Buddhajñānapāda, who gave them to Dīpaṅkarabhadra, who passed them to Śrīdhara, who then composed many Yamāri-related treatises (*Gshin rje chos ‘byung*, 48a.4-5). Śrīdhara does mention Buddhajñānapāda in at least three of his Yamāri-related works, but in all of these cases he cites Buddhajñānapāda specifically in his association with the Guhyasamāja tradition, rather than the Yamāri tradition. In one case the reference is to an iconographical issue, an in two others to a doctrinal point (See *Sahajāloka*, D 86b.6-7, *Kṛṣṇayamārisādhana*, D 6b.5, and *Śrīraktayamārisādhana*, D 93b.6, respectively).

³²¹ According to the translator’s colophon of all three of these short works—the initial translators were the *paṇḍita* from Madhyadeśa Ānandabhadra and the Tibetan lotsāwa Sonam Gyaltsen (*bsod rnam rgyal mtshan*), but the texts were later revised or retranslated at Nālandā by the Siddha Kaṛṇaśrī and Neten Nyima Gyaltsen (*gnas brten nyi ma rgyal mtshan*). The three colophons are not entirely identical, but all convey the same information.

³²² For example, the text is described in the colophon as *skye rdzog zung du ‘jug pa ‘i man ngag*.

Works not by Buddhajñānapāda

While the *Mukhāgama* (Tōh. 1854), as mentioned above, is attributed to Buddhajñānapāda in both traditional histories and modern scholarship due probably to the presence of his name and the absence of Śākyamitra's in the work's colophon, the dedicatory verses of text itself clearly state that it was written by Śākyamitra, and I therefore do not consider it to be Buddhajñānapāda's work. Moreover, in the initial verses of the text Śākyamitra goes so far as to distinguish his own style from Buddhajñānapāda's. The *Mukhāgama* is, however, obviously based on Buddhajñānapāda's *Samantabhadra-sādhana* and may very well be based on his oral instructions, as its title—and perhaps even its contents—indicate.³²³ Clearly Śākyamitra was referencing the *Dvīṭyākrama-tattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* when he selected the title of the *Mukhāgama*, and obviously wanted his own composition to be associated with Buddhajñānapāda and his tradition, despite stating in the concluding verses that he (Śākyamitra) himself composed it.

Concluding Summary: Extant Works Reasonably Attributable to Buddhajñānapāda

Out of the sixteen surviving works in the Tibetan canon attributed to Buddhajñānapāda under the variety of his names, I believe we can conclude with a reasonable degree of certainty that eleven are the writings of a single author. While five of these works also survive fully or in part in Sanskrit, as described in their summaries above, I know of no work attributed to Buddhajñānapāda that is extant in Sanskrit but not in Tibetan translation.³²⁴ The extant works we can confidently attribute to our 8th/9th-century author Buddhajñānapāda are:

1. *Dvīṭyākramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* (Tōh. 1853)
- 2a. *Samantabhadra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1855)
- 2b. *Caturaṅgasāadhanopāyikā-samantabhadrī* (Tōh. 1856)
3. *Śrīheruka-sādhana* (*Sāadhanamālā* No. 243, Tōh. 1857)³²⁵
4. *Muktilaka* (Tōh. 1859)
5. *Ātmasādhanāvatāra* (Tōh. 1860)
6. *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1861)
7. *Guhyajambhala-sādhana* (Tōh. 186)
8. *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* (*Sāadhanamālā* No. 285, Tōh. 1863)
9. **Gativyūha* (Tōh. 1864)
10. *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* (Tōh. 3798)
11. *Mahāyānalakṣaṇa-samuccaya* (Tōh. 3905)

A Life Remarkably Lived

Buddhajñānapāda was a remarkable figure about whom we are able to glean a surprising amount of information for an individual who lived in early medieval India. In particular, his autobiographical narration in the *Dvīṭyākrama* gives us a sense of the life of a well-educated yogin whose determination to attain awakening through tantric methods drove him to travel vast distances and serve many teachers in what appear to have been thriving tantric communities

³²³ See note 260.

³²⁴ If there were such an extant work, however, a very likely place for it to be found would be in the manuscript described in Kawasaki 2004.

³²⁵ Among the works in this list, this is the one about which I feel the most hesitation in making the attribution to Buddhajñānapāda, for the reasons outlined above.

across the breadth of the subcontinent. In many ways Buddhajñānapāda's life was extraordinary—his transformative vision of Mañjuśrī, composition of popular and lasting tantric works, and possible connections with Pāla royalty and position of note in one of the large monasteries of his time. Yet his own account of his life also somehow gives a flavor of the ordinary lived experience of a Buddhist tantric practitioner in his time—studying with many different gurus, acknowledging his own lack of understanding early in his career, and persevering in his study and practice until he encountered what he felt to be genuine truth, which he then felt compelled to share with others. In the next chapter I will examine in more detail the work that contains this remarkable account, Buddhajñānapāda's *Dvītyākrama*, addressing the unusual structure of the text and how Buddhajñānapāda used that as a way to convey its equally unique contents. The great variety of topics addressed in the *Dvītyākrama* will give us a helpful overview of Buddhajñānapāda's thought before moving on, in the subsequent chapters, to an in-depth assessment of some of its aspects.

Chapter Two Narrating Revelation: The *Dvīṭīyakrama*'s Unique Framing of Doctrine and Ritual

On the eighth day of the seventh month, during the constellation Puṣya at the time when Mṛgaśīrṣa and Hasta are fading, in the early morning, right at dawn, towards the emanated *maṇḍala-cakra* of Mañjuśrī, I made a fervent supplication to understand the meaning.

-Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvīṭīyakrama*

The *Dvīṭīyakrama* is certainly the most unique of Buddhajñānapāda's compositions, but it also stands out among Indian Buddhist writings as a whole. While descriptions of visionary encounters are not at all uncommon in Indian Buddhist literature, especially from the rise of the Mahāyāna onward, *autobiographical* descriptions of visionary encounters—and indeed any type of autobiographical writings at all—are. Buddhajñānapāda's claims to visionary inspiration positioned him among important earlier Buddhist figures like Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga whose visionary experiences are regarded by the tradition as the source of new—or, more precisely, newly revealed—Buddhist doctrinal and practice systems. The accounts of the visionary experiences of these earlier authors, however, were recorded and passed down by subsequent members of their traditions, whereas Buddhajñānapāda documented his own, along with other details of his life. Such autobiographical writings are extremely rare; apart from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and Buddhajñānapāda's disciple Sākyamitra's short autobiographical account in his *Kośalālaṃkāra*, which the *Dvīṭīyakrama* seems to have inspired, I know of no other autobiographical narratives in early Indian Buddhist literature.¹

In the *Dvīṭīyakrama* Buddhajñānapāda crafts a narrative frame for the work's sometimes innovative contents that puts him in a role that is both central and peripheral. That is, on the one hand, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is Buddhajñānapāda's account of his own life story, but on the other hand the primary content of the work is not his at all: a full ninety percent of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is simply a record of Mañjuśrī's direct (sometimes even first-person) speech, so it is *he* who is in some sense the author of—and perhaps more importantly the *authority* behind—that content. Buddhajñānapāda's opening reference to the contents of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as “the words of the guru Mañjuśrī,” Vaidyapāda explains, is meant to refute the idea that Buddhajñānapāda himself had composed the instructions.² Throughout the history of Buddhist literature Buddhist authors—following a general trend in Indian traditions at large—have upheld this trope of “not having made up anything new,” explaining innovation as nothing more than the correct interpretation of what was already presented in the original scriptural sources, or in the compositions of lauded philosophers like Nāgārjuna (who themselves claimed simply to be correctly interpreting scripture). The production of new scriptures has thus been an important way in which Buddhist traditions have grown and developed over time.

Paul Harrison's work on the development of the early Mahāyāna scriptural corpus describes the *pratyutpannasamādhi*, advocated in the *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*, in which the practitioner engages in prolonged visualization of a buddha and his buddhafield in order to gain a visionary encounter in which he receives teachings from that buddha, that the practitioner

¹ Janet Gyatso has written that “First-person discourse about one's life is virtually nonexistent in Indian Buddhist literature; we can only mention the *Therī-* and *Tharagāthā*, which contain a few poems that *may*, be autobiographical, and occasional statements attributed to the Buddha.” (Gyatso 1998, 115).

² *rang bzo dgag pa* (*Sukusuma*, D 89a.3).

subsequently remembers and shares with others.³ The *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, which Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Vilāsavajra wrote a commentary on, and which seems to have had some influence on Buddhajñānapāda and his work, likewise prescribes a similar, but tantricised *buddhānusmṛti* type of practice focused on Mañjuśrī: “He who...recites [from memory] this crest jewel called the *Nāmasaṃgīti* three times each day, or who recites it from a book [and] who, taking the form of the Fortunate One, Mañjuśrījñānasattva, reflects and meditates on that form...will before very long see him [i.e. Mañjuśrī] in his Form Body (*rūpakāya*).”⁴ The practice of revelation through visionary encounter was thus already well established in Buddhajñānapāda’s time, and, in fact, at the close of his teaching in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, Mañjuśrī explicitly commands Buddhajñānapāda to compile his instructions and pass them on. Buddhajñānapāda was unique, however, in so directly narrating this personal encounter in his own writings. The title of the *Dvīṭīyakramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*, *Oral Instructions on the Meditation on the Reality of the Second Stage*, already implies that its instructions were received from a source other than the author/compiler of the text—here, of course, Mañjuśrī. The term *mukhāgama* functions in the title as a sort of *genre* marker, in the place where one often sees such genre markers as *sādhana*, *vidhi*, *ṭīkā*, or *vr̥tti*. It is not a popular genre in Buddhist literature; one finds just a few instances in the titles of Buddhist texts, where it seems to indicate instructions that have been received from an authority other than the author.⁵ As we saw above, Śākyamitra uses the term as the title of his own *Mukhāgama*, which purports to record Buddhajñānapāda’s oral instructions on the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.⁶ In any case, the *mukhāgama* genre is an uncommon one, and Buddhajñānapāda seems to have been particularly unusual in using it to label instructions received directly from a buddha/bodhisattva teacher such as Mañjuśrī.

The precise identity or nature of Mañjuśrī as the source of revelation in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is not as straightforward as it might seem. In Chapter One I discussed the claims of some later Tibetan authors that the monk who emanated the *maṅḍala* of Mañjuśrī for Buddhajñānapāda in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* was the master Mañjuśrīmitra, a claim not found in any of the Indic texts (nor in many of the Tibetan works) relating to Buddhajñānapāda, nor in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda seem to understand this “emanated monk” simply as an emanation of the bodhisattva/deity who was the true source of Buddhajñānapāda’s revelation. But this still leaves the question of how to understand the identity of the visionary form of Mañjuśrī who taught Buddhajñānapāda directly. Buddhajñānapāda himself refers to him in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as the “guru Mañjuśrī”⁷ and the “great bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.”⁸ Vaidyapāda, however, takes pains to clarify that Mañjuśrī is called a bodhisattva “because he is integrated

³ Harrison 1978, 54-5; 2003, 120.

⁴ Tribe 1997, 124.

⁵ These include the *Nandyāvartatrayamukhāgama* (Tōh. 2415) of Kaṅkāla and Mekalā, which states at the outset that it is based on “the guru’s oral instructions;” the *Grub pa’i dbang phyug paṅḍita chen po shrī ba na ratna’i zhal lung rin po che’i snying po’i phreng ba* (P 5096), and *Zhal lung rin po che’i phreng ba* (P 5099), which are two nearly identical short compilations of citations from Indic texts that the 15th-century Indian yogin Vāṇaratna often cited in his teachings (thanks to Ryan Damron for sharing with me his understanding of the content and function of the latter two works); and the *Mgon po dmar po’i tshē bsgrub kyi zhal gdams* (P 4927) of Śavaripa is a short long-life practice associated with red Mahākāla. The authorial attribution to Śavaripa is followed by a list of the instruction’s lineage, which begins with Vajradhara, and has its “author” Śavaripa next in the lineage.

⁶ In that text Śākyamitra does claim some agency, suggesting that he will deliver these instructions with more clarity and simplicity than Buddhajñānapāda did in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra*. See Chapter One, note 258.

⁷ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 2.

⁸ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 19.

with awakening (*bodhi*), not because awakening is his goal.”⁹ This suggests that Vaidyapāda understands, and wants his readers to understand, Mañjuśrī as elevated above the level of an “ordinary” bodhisattva abiding on the *bhūmis*, and instead as representing a form of full awakening.¹⁰ Similarly, in his *Muktilaka-vyakhyāna* Vaidyapāda identifies Mañjuśrī as the “foundation” of the unique qualities of the Bhagavan, both in terms of their cause and their effect.¹¹

Such a portrayal is not at all outside of the range of Buddhist conceptions of the figure of Mañjuśrī in the 8th and 9th centuries. Early Mahāyāna *sūtras* associate him with wisdom, and often portray him as a tenth-*bhūmi* bodhisattva, but sometimes even as a fully awakened buddha or a teacher of buddhas.¹² In the 8th-century *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, however, Mañjuśrī is named as the Ādibuddha.¹³ The *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, a commentary on the *Nāmasaṃgīti* composed by Buddhajñānapāda’s guru, Vilāsavajra, likewise equates Mañjuśrī, here as Mañjuśrījñānasattva, with nondual wisdom itself, and thus the source of the buddhas’ awakening.¹⁴ Indeed, Vaidyapāda’s statement mentioned above distinguishing Mañjuśrī from a mere bodhisattva on the *bhūmis* echoes a similar statement made by Vilāsavajra about Mañjuśrījñānasattva in his commentary to the *Nāmasaṃgīti*: “The gnosis-being Mañjuśrī is not the bodhisattva who is the master of the ten stages (*bhūmi*). Rather, he is non-dual gnosis (*advayajñāna*), the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) itself.”¹⁵

Such a perspective seems to underlie Buddhajñānapāda’s understanding of Mañjuśrī in the *Dvītyākrama*. Though referring to him as a “bodhisattva,” when Buddhajñānapāda supplicates the visionary Mañjuśrī for instructions, he addresses him in quite elevated terms as “the father and the mother of all beings,” the “emptier of the three realms, greatest of the great,” as “beginningless, unvoiced, lacking the upper part of the *bindu*, the revered, the letterless, producer of nectar, the empty bliss of great joy,” and the “great protector.”¹⁶ These exalted epithets suggest that Buddhajñānapāda likewise identifies Mañjuśrī here as a fully awakened buddha, the ultimate source of the ultimate truth. In the homage at the beginning of his *Muktilaka*, Buddhajñānapāda describes Mañjuśrī as the “emanation of boundless [buddha] families.”¹⁷ It is no wonder, then, that Mañjuśrī, in the form of Mañjuvajra, is the central figure in Buddhajñānapāda’s generation stage Guhyasamāja *sādhana*, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra*, despite Mañjuśrī/Mañjuvajra’s peripheral role in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* itself.¹⁸ In the *Dvītyākrama* Buddhajñānapāda makes supplications “towards the emanated *maṇḍala-cakra* of Mañjuśrī,” thus implying he saw Mañjuśrī as the central figure in a *maṇḍala* of deities. Presumably this was the nineteen-deity *maṇḍala* of Mañjuvajra that Buddhajñānapāda describes

⁹ *de nyid byang chub dang ‘dres pa’i phyir byang chub sems dpa’ ste/ byang chub la dmigs pa ni ma yin no/ (Sukusuma, D 93a.2).*

¹⁰ In his *Muktilaka-vyakhyāna*, when citing a passage from the *Dvītyākrama* Vaidyapāda refers to the speaker of the instructions in the *Dvītyākrama* simply as “the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī” (*Muktilaka-vyakhyāna*, 46b.5). It is interesting, though, that when citing the passage he specifies Mañjuśrī rather than Buddhajñānapāda as the source of the quotation.

¹¹ *Muktilaka-vyakhyāna*, D 46b.6-7.

¹² Tribe 2016, 15n27. Here Tribe, referencing the work of Lamotte and others, gives a useful short overview of Mañjuśrī’s role in the Mahāyāna *sūtras*.

¹³ *ibid.*; Tribe 1997, 109.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Tribe 2016, 8.

¹⁶ In *Dvītyākrama*, verses 12 and 13.

¹⁷ *Muktilaka*, D 47a.1-2. This identification of Mañjuśrī with all five of the buddha families is found in a converse (but presumably complimentary) form in Vilāsavajra’s *Nāmamantrāvalokinī*.

¹⁸ Mañjuśrī receives two brief mentions in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, in Chapters 13 and 15, and Mañjuvajra likewise has two brief mentions in Chapters 12 and 16.

in his *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, and Mañjuśrī in the vision was Mañjuvajra, though neither Buddhajñānapāda nor Vaidyapāda makes that explicit.¹⁹ That it was Mañjuśrī, and not some other divinity, who appeared to Buddhajñānapāda and taught him reflects Buddhajñānapāda’s unique personal connection with that deity. Several factors may have helped forge that connection, including Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Vilāsavajra’s important role in the propagation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, and the *sādhana* of Mañjuśrījñānasattva that is set forth in Vilāsavajra’s commentary on the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, a work that we know Buddhajñānapāda was familiar with because he reproduces a lengthy section from it in his *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*. As discussed in Chapter One, there are likewise a number of indicators that Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Pālitapāda may also have had a connection with Mañjuśrī, and perhaps even with the *Nāmasaṃgīti* as well.

The *Dvītyākrama*’s narrative structure quite literally frames the content of Mañjuśrī’s teachings therein. It includes both the autobiographical introduction to Buddhajñānapāda’s life leading up to his visionary encounter with Mañjuśrī, as well as an autobiographical conclusion subsequent to the vision. While such a framing narrative is rare among *authored* Indian Buddhist texts, it is structurally reminiscent of another important genre of Buddhist literature: the *sūtras* and the *tantras*.²⁰ Buddhist scriptures, starting with the earliest *sūtras* and continuing up to the *tantras*, almost always have a narrative framework. The introductory *nīdāna* gives the setting in which the teachings occurred, identifying the teacher, students, and location where the teaching was given, and often includes a request by the retinue for the teacher to teach. This is followed by the main content of the scripture—the acceptance of the request by the teacher and the teaching itself, which is usually then brought to a conclusion with a closing frame narrative. *Sūtras* and *tantras* are less authored texts than records of events written down by compilers who usually do not even receive mention within the scriptures themselves. Often the compiler is identified only in the exegetical tradition—typically Ānanda in the case of the *sūtras*, and Vajrapāṇi in the case of the *tantras*. Despite the anonymity of many compilers, however, Buddhist scriptures do traditionally begin with a first-person statement, “Thus have I heard...” (*evaṃ mayā śrutam...*), before switching into the third-person narrative voice.²¹

The *Dvītyākrama* does not fit this model exactly. Its frame narrative begins not with a focus on the main teacher and his surrounding setting, here Mañjuśrī (who appears only at the end of the opening narrative), but instead with the story of the student who is the recipient of his teachings, Buddhajñānapāda. The narrative then leads up to the encounter with Mañjuśrī in which the teachings were conveyed. The *Dvītyākrama* makes use of the first-person voice at a number of points throughout the text, though the speaker does sometimes change; first it is Buddhajñānapāda, then Mañjuśrī,²² and finally Buddhajñānapāda again. Buddhajñānapāda’s first-person statements in both the first and later parts of the *Dvītyākrama* are always autobiographical, apart from his supplication and request to Mañjuśrī to teach, which Mañjuśrī accepts. While most of Mañjuśrī’s teachings are delivered in a loose descriptive or imperative voice (“the practitioner does...” or “he should do ...”), at two points towards the end of the instructions he speaks in the first person, twice repeating the unusual declaration that “I abide in the bodies of practitioners” and thus receive offerings.²³ Mañjuśrī also addresses

¹⁹ Some of the later Tibetan accounts do specify this.

²⁰ I’m grateful to James Gentry for a conversation that sparked my investigation into the parallels between the *Dvītyākrama* and Buddhist scriptural works.

²¹ Some of the later Yoginī *tantras* lack this traditional beginning.

²² Mañjuśrī’s first-person speech, and his direct address of Buddhajñānapāda in the second person, are striking attributes of the *Dvītyākrama*.

²³ *Dvītyākrama*, verses 323-24 and 361.

Buddhajñānapāda in the second person as “you” both at the beginning and the end of his instructions. The concluding narrative of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* likewise returns its focus to Buddhajñānapāda’s continued autobiographical narrative, describing his life subsequent to the visionary encounter, rather than concerning itself further with Mañjuśrī. There are thus a number of differences between the narrative framework of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and that found in the Buddhist scriptures. But the very presence of such a narrative frame enclosing ritual and doctrinal content in a *śāstric* work is so unusual that it is difficult not to see the structural parallels with a *sūtra* or a tantra.

Buddhajñānapāda may or may not have been consciously evoking the model of Buddhist scripture in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, but there is some evidence that suggests it may indeed have been intentional. The opening line of Mañjuśrī’s direct speech in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is a series of Sanskrit syllables, which Vaidyapāda interprets as a summary of a cosmogonic narrative that is elaborated later in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.²⁴ The opening line of Śākyamuni’s instruction in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, which although it was spoken by Śākyamuni is nonetheless understood by commentators to be a verse related to Mañjuśrī, likewise begins with a set of Sanskrit syllables—the twelve vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet.²⁵ The syllables in that verse are described by the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* itself, and clarified in Vilāsavajra’s commentary, as being the “coming forth of the non-dual.”²⁶ The syllables in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are also understood to reflect a coming forth or an emergence: the process by which duality emerges from the nonduality that is the inherent nature of all things. Though they admittedly have a different function in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* than they do in the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, presence of a set of such syllables at the outset of Mañjuśrī’s speech in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* may thus be meant to loosely evoke the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, an important scriptural work that, like the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, focuses on Mañjuśrī, and with which it shares a number of doctrinal resonances.²⁷ Whether or not the evocation of scripture was intentional, his decision to use a first-person narrative framework for reporting the content of Mañjuśrī’s teachings, and the fact that this allowed the content of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* to be clearly attributed to Mañjuśrī (rather than by, for example, adding a note in a colophon about its having been revealed to Buddhajñānapāda by Mañjuśrī), represents a skillful legitimizing tool for the work, and by extension the entirety of Buddhajñānapāda’s oeuvre, particularly his other Guhyasamāja-related works.

While it certainly contains references to sexual yogas and brief descriptions of practices like the *sūkṣma-yoga*, which had received mention already in the *Sarvatathagatatattvasaṃgraha*, the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra itself does not contain detailed instructions on perfection stage practices, nor does it even mention there being two separate stages of tantric practice.²⁸ The

²⁴ The syllables are *a vi yaṃ raṃ vaṃ laṃ hūṃ*. I discuss the cosmogonic narrative found in Buddhajñānapāda’s works in Chapter Three.

²⁵ The syllables occur in verse 26 of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*. See Davidson 1982 for a Sanskrit edition and English translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*. See Tribe 1997, 118 for a discussion of the speaker of verse 26 of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*. Tribe 2016 gives a translation of Chapters 1-5 of Vilāsavajra’s commentary, including a translation of the root verses commented upon.

²⁶ See Tribe 2016, 135.

²⁷ The *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, though it does not carry the word tantra in its title, follows a traditional scriptural model and has been treated by commentators from the very earliest times (including Vilāsavajra), as well as the redactors of the Tibetan canon, as a tantric scripture. Indeed the text presents itself as a part of the *Māyājāla-tantra*. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for bringing the latter point to my attention.

²⁸ The two stages are famously mentioned, along with more detailed perfection stage practices, in the *Samājottara*, a commentarial tantra on the *Guhyasamāja* that was first circulated separately and then appended to the *Guhyasamāja* as its eighteenth chapter. I discuss this text and Buddhajñānapāda’s relationship to it in more detail below in Chapter Eight, but it appears that Buddhajñānapāda did not know the *Samājottara* and its circulation seems to post-date his writings.

Dvīṭyākrama—along with Buddhajñānapāda’s *Muktilaka*, which describes many of the same practices, though in much less detail—thus serves as the primary source, and authority, for the perfection stage practices of the Jñānapāda School of Guhyasamāja practice. The Ārya School, which developed later, derives the authority for its perfection stage practices, outlined in texts such as the *Pañcakrama* and the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, from *scriptural* sources, in particular the later explanatory tantras (*vyākhyānatantra*) of the *Guhyasamāja*, such as the *Vajramālā*. Since the Jñānapāda School works do not look to such scriptural sources, it was important that the practices described in the *Dvīṭyākrama* have some kind of legitimate source and authority. The *Dvīṭyākrama*’s use of the *mukhāgama* genre, with the bodhisattva/buddha Mañjuśrī as the narrator of most of the work’s content, places the *Dvīṭyākrama* at an unusual juncture between scripture and treatise, and provides precisely the kind of authority necessary to support the presentation of such a set of practices.²⁹

Viewing the *Dvīṭyākrama* as a work that sits at the juncture between scripture and treatise is one helpful way to understand the text and its function in Buddhajñānapāda’s *oeuvre*, and indeed its function in his tradition on the whole. Another is to look more closely at the *Dvīṭyākrama*’s use of autobiography. Janet Gyatso’s writings on Tibetan autobiography, though they examine autobiography in a different Buddhist culture—one in which autobiography, unlike in India, is quite common—and in a later period than Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, nonetheless provide some insights that are useful in helping us to further understand Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiographical frame narrative in the *Dvīṭyākrama*.³⁰ Among the autobiographical writings that Gyatso considers, those that are most similar to what we find in the *Dvīṭyākrama* are the autobiographical narrations of the events of a treasure (*gter ma*) revelation, the (sometimes) visionary revelation of (usually, but not always) scriptures that were said to have been hidden by earlier masters, and which are later discovered by destined treasure revealers for the benefit of modern disciples.³¹ Treasure texts in Tibet function as important sources of newly-revealed doctrines and practices, and it is therefore not surprising that we should find some similarities in the narratives that surround these texts and the narrative surrounding Mañjuśrī’s instructions as recorded in the *Dvīṭyākrama*. Tibetan treasure revealers were also, perhaps not incidentally, among the most prolific autobiographers in Tibet.³² With respect to the autobiographical narratives surrounding treasure revelation, Gyatso writes,

The point of narrating the events of a Treasure revelation is to demonstrate its authenticity. Since these scriptures were accused of being apocryphal, the “story” of a Treasure, which argues to the contrary, had long been a standard section of the published Treasure corpora. The discoverers frequently position such a narrative as a prolegomenon to the rest of the Treasure...Often explicitly labeled “story that engenders

²⁹ Szántó (2012a, 456), has also briefly noted the *Dvīṭyākrama*’s unusual position between scripture and treatise, and suggested that this was an ideal choice for introducing innovative material, such as the technique of *utkrānti*.

³⁰ Gyatso 1998.

³¹ The topic of revealed treasures is a very large one that is very much beyond the scope of what I can address here. Not all treasure revelations are visionary, and not all treasures are scriptural—some are revealed in the presence of a crowd of viewers (“public treasures,” *khrom gter*), and some are revealed as physical objects (“earth treasures,” *sa gter*), a category that can include objects like statues as well as physical manuscripts of texts. The process of the visionary revelation of the contents of the *Dvīṭyākrama* is of course different in many ways from a treasure revelation (it would perhaps be most similar to what is, in the treasure traditions, called a “pure vision” (*dag snang*), which is sometimes distinguished from the revelation of a treasure proper, though a pure vision can also be considered a type of treasure revelation); nonetheless, I do think we can benefit from considering Gyatso’s comments on the function of autobiographical writing in the context of the treasure tradition. I happily direct the interested reader to Janet Gyatso’s (1986, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996) and Andreas Doctor’s (2005) excellent work on Tibetan treasure traditions.

³² Gyatso 1998, 104.

confidence” (*nges-shes-skyes-pa’i lo-rgyus*), accounts of this kind consist in a narrative either of the Treasure’s ultimate origin, from its original preaching by a buddha down to its transmission by Padmasambhava, or of how the Treasure was later revealed by the Tibetan discoverer.³³

The autobiographical narrative in the *Dvitiyakrama* is precisely a prolegomenon—as well as a conclusion, we might add—to the instruction conveyed by Mañjuśrī during the visionary encounter that makes up the majority of the *Dvitiyakrama*’s content. We may recall here, as well, Vaidyapāda’s comments on the autobiographical narrative in the *Dvitiyakrama*. He introduces the autobiographical section of the text with the statement, “Then, in order to inspire faith in beings, the revered master speaks about the story of his own encounter with suchness with the verse beginning with, **In a town called...**”³⁴ Vaidyapāda is explicit here about the function of the autobiographical account in bringing about faith, or confidence, in the reader. I think that we can understand the faith or confidence that Vaidyapāda suggests is brought about through Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiographical narrative in multiple ways, two of which are also mentioned by Gyatso in her writings on treasure revealers’ autobiographical narratives. Gyatso continues,

The discoverer’s personal account engenders confidence in several ways. Most obviously, the story of the Treasure’s revelation is meant to demonstrate that the revelation actually happened at a particular time and place. The more detailed accounts add a sense of awesomeness to this historicity, giving the revelation’s precise circumstances and showing that it occurred in a marvelous way...³⁵

We again see a very strong resonance here with Buddhajñānapāda’s account in the *Dvitiyakrama*: he gives not only the location of the vision, in “a forest called Kuvaca” behind Vajrāsana, but also provides an extremely precise date and time for the moment of his visionary experience—“On the eighth day of the seventh month, during [the constellation] Puṣya/ At the time when Mṛgaśīrṣa and Hasta are fading,³⁶ in the early morning, right at dawn”³⁷—giving the reader a very specific sense of the historicity, as it were, of his experience. And Buddhajñānapāda’s description of Mañjuśrī’s response to Buddhajñānapāda’s supplication for teachings certainly conveys a sense of amazement and awe:

Then, the great bodhisattva Mañjuśrī
Looked upon me with a smiling face and said, “Excellent” three times.
With this vajra song, like an echo, he taught to me
The playful dance and the suchness of all phenomena. |19|³⁸

Gyatso continues:

But even an autobiographical account that exceeds the particular event of the revelation...still has everything to do with the legitimation of the Treasure cycle. This is because it is finally an ad hominem argument regarding the discoverer that is the most important sign of a Treasure’s authenticity.³⁹

³³ *ibid.*, 9.

³⁴ *da ni ‘gro ba rnams dad par bya ba’i phyir/ rje btsun bdag nyid kyis de kho na nyid mnyes pa’i lo rgyus gsungs pa/ dbus kyi yul chen zhes pa la sogs pa’o// (Sukusuma, D 89a.7; P 107a.3).*

³⁵ Gyatso 1998, 9.

³⁶ Puṣya is the eighth lunar mansion in Indian astrology; Mṛgaśīrṣa is the fifth; Hasta is the thirteenth.

³⁷ *mgo dang lag gnyis yol dang tshes brgyad rgyal la bab// ston zla ra ba’i tho rangs skya rengs shar dus su// (Dvitiyakrama, verse 11ab).*

³⁸ *de nas ‘jam dbyangs byang chub sems dpa’ chen po yis// bdag la ‘dzum pa’i bzhin bltas legs zhes lan gsum gsungs// rol pa’i gar dang chos kun de bzhin nyid// sgra brnyan lta bur rdo rje glu yis bdag la bstan// |19| (Dvitiyakrama, verse 19).*

³⁹ Gyatso 1998, 9.

Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiographical account, though not lengthy, does indeed go beyond the particular events of his visionary experience to include both his early life as a student and his later life as a teacher. Here we may again return to Vaidyapāda’s comments on the autobiographical narrative, cited above, in which he explains that the purpose of the autobiographical account was to inspire faith in disciples with regard to Buddhajñānapāda’s “own experience of suchness.” In showing that Buddhajñānapāda himself encountered suchness through Mañjuśrī’s instructions, the reader is made to feel confident not only in Mañjuśrī’s words—which certainly are a valid source of truth—but also in Buddhajñānapāda as their messenger, since he, himself, directly encountered suchness on the basis of these instructions, making him a reliable source for conveying the instructions on that teaching to others. Buddhajñānapāda’s account of his later life likewise includes further confidence-engendering details, like the fact that at the conclusion of the vision Mañjuśrī “sang and praised” Buddhajñānapāda, and that in his later life Buddhajñānapāda and his students received patronage directly from the wealth-deity Jambhala. At the conclusion of the autobiographical account, Buddhajñānapāda writes, “Thus, in this way everyone, having come to know the detailed accounts [of my life]...”⁴⁰ and Vaidyapāda comments,

Thus, having generated faith in that way (i.e. by means of telling the story of his own encounter with suchness), he teaches about the training in nondual wisdom and its result with the verse beginning, **Thus... Having come to know the detailed accounts** means the **detailed accounts** about the great master: the taming of Nālandā, making offerings at Vajrāsana, the [account of] the consecration and the others. Through these accounts the faith of those who have fortune is further increased.⁴¹

Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda both appear here to be making reference to further accounts from Buddhajñānapāda’s life, upon which Buddhajñānapāda himself does not elaborate, and which Vaidyapāda mentions only in brief, as if these would have been well-known lore within the community of disciples whom Vaidyapāda expected to be reading the *Dvītyākrama* and his commentary on it.⁴² But, yet again, the function of sharing or knowing these life accounts is explicitly mentioned as inspiring faith in the fortunate.

As noted above, Gyatso’s comments on the autobiographical narratives of treasure revealers pertain to a different Buddhist culture and to a time period many centuries removed from Buddhajñānapāda’s account in the *Dvītyākrama*. Yet we can see that many of the features of Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiographical account, and especially its function as a confidence- or faith-inspiring narrative—even self-consciously so, within the tradition itself—very closely parallel many of the features and functions of the autobiographical narratives of treasure revealers—and particularly the accounts of the revelation of a treasure—that we find several centuries later in Tibet. This is especially interesting given the fact that, since it occurs in an Indian Buddhist text, Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiographical account is extremely unusual, whereas autobiography is a very common *genre* in Tibetan literature. It seems, then, that this

⁴⁰ *de bas de ltar kun gyis gtam rgyud rgyas par shes byas te// (Dvītyākrama, verse 378a).*

⁴¹ *da ni de lta bus dad pas byas te/ gnyis su med pa’i ye shes bsgom pa ‘bras bu dang bcas pa gsungs pa/ de bas zhes pa la sogs pa’o// gtam rgyud rgyas par shes byas nas/ zhes pa ni bla ma chen po’i gtam rgyud rgyas pa na landa ([landa] P, lendra D) ‘dul ba dang/ rdo rje gdan gyi mchod pa byas pa dang/ rab tu gnas pa byas pa la sogs pa’i lo rgyus kyis skal ba dang ldan pa cher dad par byas nas/ (Sukusuma, D 135b.3-4; P 163a.6-8).*

⁴² These same accounts are described in the later Tibetan histories in much more detail, though unfortunately only one such supportive detail is, to my knowledge, found in an extant Indian source, Atīśa’s **Bodhipathapradīpapañjikā*, which I discussed in Chapter One. As I noted in Chapter One, some of the Tibetan historians who provide the more detailed accounts of Buddhajñānapāda’s life, like Tāranātha, do list Indian sources that are no longer known to us.

confidence-inspiring or legitimizing function of Buddhist autobiography in relation to works that reveal new doctrines and practices is a feature that spans Buddhist cultures and traditions.

The *Dvītyākrama*'s Contents

The sphere of the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, the unborn vajra, manifest awakening, the supreme essence of all *sugatas*—this great nondual nonconceptual reality is explained as the second stage.

-Mañjuśrī instructing Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

The *Dvītyākrama*'s formal use of a narrative frame that is structurally reminiscent of Buddhist scripture, and the *mukhāgama* genre are not its only features that call to mind Buddhist scripture; its contents are likewise structured similarly to those of the tantras, in the sense that they cover a broad and eclectic range of topics both doctrinal and ritual. Because of their sheer breadth, the topics covered in the *Dvītyākrama* provide an excellent overview of Buddhajñānapāda's thought. Though most of the topics covered in the text deserve a full treatment in and of themselves, I constrain myself here to a brief summary of the *Dvītyākrama*'s contents, to give a general sense of how they are arranged and related to one another. In the subsequent chapters I will tease out further details of the doctrinal and ritual content in both the *Dvītyākrama* and Buddhajñānapāda's other works.

Before addressing the contents of the work, however, a discussion of its title is in order. The Sanskrit title is given in the Tibetan translations as the **Dvikramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*.⁴³ The Tibetan translation of the title is *Rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid sgom pa zhes bya ba'i zhal gyi lung*.⁴⁴ The primary discrepancy between the two is that the Sanskrit title, as given in the Peking, Narthang, and Sertrima Tengyurs, reads *dvikrama*, the "two stages" (the Derge and Cone give the nonsensical *dvakrama*), whereas the Tibetan translation consistently reads *rim pa gnyis pa*, the "second stage." In modern scholarship the title of this text is usually left untranslated, and the Sanskrit title is given as *Dvikramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*, following its rendering in the Tibetan canonical translations. Where it is translated into English, the title is often rendered in the shortened form sometimes seen in the commentarial literature, as the *Oral Instructions of Mañjuśrī* (Skt. *Mañjuśrī-mukhāgama*, Tib. *'jam dpal gyi zhal gyi lung*).⁴⁵ In the instances in modern scholarship where the title has been translated in full, it has, so far as I am aware, always been taken to mean the training in both of the two stages, rather than just the second stage.⁴⁶ However, both the Tibetan translation of the title, as well as the work's contents, suggest that it is just the "second stage" that is intended in the title; the text is almost exclusively focused on instructions and practices relating to the perfection stage, with just three brief mentions of the "first stage," as well as two very short summaries of generation stage practices, the latter comprising a total of just six of the work's three hundred ninety-nine verses. Moreover,

⁴³ *dvi* (dvi] P N C S, dva D C) *kra ma ta ttva bhā* (bhā] D C, bha S P N) *wa* (wa] D C, ba S P N) *na* (na] D C, sa S P N) *nā ma mu khā* (khā] D C S, khī P N) *ga* (ga] D C, saddhya S P N) *ma* (ma] D C, nya S P N)

⁴⁴ *Rim pa gnyis pa'i* (pa'i] S P N, ba'i D C) *kho na nyid sgom* (sgom] D C, bsgom S P N) *pa zhes bya ba'i zhal gyi lung*

⁴⁵ See, for example Kongtrül 1994, 126; Thurman 2010 689; Kongtrül 2005, 205; Kilty 2012.

⁴⁶ Davidson (2002, 313) translates the title as *Direct Revelation of the Cultivation of the Reality of the Two Processes*. Guarisco (Kongtrül 2005, 535) translates it as *Oral teachings of Manjushri/ Meditation on the Reality of the Two Stages*. Richard Barron (Kongtrül 2011) translates it as *Oral Transmission of Mañjuśrī: Meditation on Suchness according to the Two Stages*. Roberts (2010) translates it as *Oral Transmission Entitled Meditation on the True Nature of the Two Stages*.

in verse 34 of the text, suchness/reality is directly equated with the second stage: “This great nondual nonconceptual reality/ Is explained as the second stage.”⁴⁷ In several other passages the use of the phrase “the suchness of the second stage,” (*rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid*) suggests that suchness is understood to pertain specifically to the second stage of practice. For instance, verse 283 reads,

Therefore, with the mind that has already [generated] faith,
Genuinely maintain the nature of all phenomena,
The profound, luminous, nondual great reality,
The suchness of the second stage, [283]
Which has been taught by the guru.⁴⁸

Similarly, verse 315 reads, “In this way, as for the suchness/ Of the second stage...”⁴⁹ Vaidyapāda even uses the full phrase “the training in the suchness of the second stage” (*rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid sgom pa*) several times in his commentary on Buddhajñānapāda’s *Muktilaka*. In one instance he writes, “Upholding, in this way, the *samayas* and vows, in order to [be able to] train in the reality of the second stage, [the text first] teaches, by means of example, the aspects of the first stage that are the basis for this...”⁵⁰ At the end of that section of his commentary Vaidyapāda again repeats the phrase: “Having [first] remained in the generation stage, [now] in order to teach the training in the reality of the second stage...”⁵¹ Given the Tibetan translation of the title; the contents of the *Dvītyākrama*, including the use of the term “the suchness of the second stage” within the work itself; and Vaidyapāda’s use of the term “training in the suchness of the second stage” in his commentary on Buddhajñānapāda’s other writings, it seems indeed quite likely that the Sanskrit title of the work is given incorrectly in the Tibetan translations, and that the correct title Sanskrit of the text is not the **Dvikrama*-, but the **Dvītyākramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*. There are many cases in the Tibetan canon where the titles of Sanskrit works have been given incorrectly—likely on the basis of a later and mistaken back-translation from the Tibetan title—so such a confusion of the ordinal (*dvītya*) and cardinal (*dvi*) numbers in the Sanskrit title as given in the Tibetan translation is not terribly unusual or even unexpected. (And indeed, the appearance of the nonsensical “*dvakrama*” in D and C may perhaps suggest something in the direction of *dvītya*, rather than just *dvi*, and at least points to there being some confusion with the issue.) Since the preponderance of the evidence, then, suggests that the title **Dvikramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* is simply based on a mistake in the rendering of the Sanskrit title in the Tibetan canonical translations, I depart here from the convention of referring to the work as such, and instead refer to it as the **Dvītyākramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*, which I translate into English as *Oral Instructions on Training in the Suchness of the Second Stage*.

The *Dvītyākrama* begins with the traditional *sāstric* homage and commitment to compose the treatise, though already in this pledge Buddhajñānapāda writes that he will explain suchness, “so that beings can realize it through the words of guru Mañjuśrī,” displacing his own

⁴⁷ *gnyis med rtog bral don chen te// rim pa gnyis par rab tu bshad// (Dvītyākrama, verse 34de)* This verse could equally well be translated “This great nondual nonconceptual reality / Is explained **in** the second stage,” in which case this verse would fit into the category of the next two verses (283 and 315) I will discuss, which describe suchness as pertaining to the second stage. In either case, my argument here remains the same.

⁴⁸ *de bas dad pa sngon 'gro ba'i// sems kyis chos kun de bzhin nyid// zab gsal gnyis med don chen po// rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na// [283] bla ma'i gsung ni yang dag gzung// (Dvītyākrama, verse 283-284a).*

⁴⁹ *de ltar rim pa gnyis pa yi/ de bzhin nyid ni... (Dvītyākrama, verse 315a-first half of pāda b).*

⁵⁰ *de ltar dam tshig dang sdong pa la rnam par gnas pas rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa'i phyir de'i gzhi'i rim pa dang po rnam dpe'i sgo nas bstan pa... (Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 51b.1-2; P 337b.3).*

⁵¹ *da ni de ltar bskyed pa'i rim pa la gnas pas rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na [kho na] D, P om.) nyid bsgom pa bstan pa'i phyir... (Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 52b.3-4; P 339a.1-2).*

agency in favor of Mañjuśrī's.⁵² This is followed by the autobiographical narrative detailed above that describes Buddhajñānapāda's travels throughout the subcontinent, studying and practicing with different gurus, and culminating in his visionary encounter with Mañjuśrī, to whom he makes a supplication for teachings on "the supreme suchness of all phenomena."⁵³ The supplication is specific to the tantric nature of the instructions requested and, even without naming it specifically, to the perfection stage; it amounts to a request for instruction on sexual yogic practices and the realization of suchness that is their outcome. In his supplication to Mañjuśrī for teachings, Buddhajñānapāda equates suchness with the "moon (i.e. *bodhicitta*) which is born from the vajra and petals," as a result of "playfully dancing the great dance" and "open[ing] the eight soft lotus petals and insert[ing] the vajra, the cause of nondual bliss."⁵⁴ Mañjuśrī expresses his pleasure at the request and agrees to give Buddhajñānapāda a teaching that is taught by the vajra holders of the past, present, and future, but only to some disciples, in order that they might realize the genuine truth.⁵⁵

The instructions begin on a doctrinal note. The first topic that Mañjuśrī addresses is the nature of all phenomena, which he equates with the wisdom that knows the nonduality of "the profound and the luminous," which he also refers to as great Vajradhara. The text explains that the identity of everything—the three worlds, the elements, literally everything—is the essence of the mind, and that realizing this amounts to awakening to perfect buddhahood. This nondual, nonconceptual reality is here explicitly identified with the "second stage" of tantric practice.⁵⁶ The next major topic in the text is a cosmogonic narrative, describing the way in which *saṃsāra* arose out of nondual wisdom. This narrative, which is paralleled in the *Muktilaka*,⁵⁷ describes the "arising in the manner of the great thought" from the pure reality of suchness, which has been taking place since beginningless time. It is from this that the elements arise, and thus the world and all beings. The presence of all of these phenomena obscures, in the perception of beings, the nondual nonconceptuality that is their nature, and it is due to this lack of recognition of the nature of reality that beings cycle in *saṃsāra*.⁵⁸

Next the *Dvītyākrama* describes the qualities of the ideal disciple who will come to realize the nature of this reality and the guru who has the capacity to show it to him. The disciple should have merit, joy, respect, honor, proper intention, and be stable, generous, compliant, and free from doubts. The guru must hold the lineage of the oral instructions, be intent upon the Mahāyāna path, know the secrets of the ten suchnesses (*daśatattva*), and be willing to teach. A description of what the student should offer the guru follows, and includes a wide variety of precious items ranging from lands, houses, elephants, gold and rubies, to one's wife, sons, daughters, sisters, and nieces.⁵⁹

The text then moves on to present a typology of women. Here, following a verse that strongly parallels one in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* on women as the superior illusion among all illusions,⁶⁰ it is explained that women are of four families or types, corresponding with the four buddha consorts from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*: Locanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍaravāsiṇī, and

⁵² These traditional *śāstric* introductory verses are found in the *Dvītyākrama*, verses 1-2.

⁵³ The opening autobiographical narrative is presented in the *Dvītyākrama*, verses 3-11.

⁵⁴ The supplication to Mañjuśrī is presented in *Dvītyākrama*, verses 12-18.

⁵⁵ Mañjuśrī accepts the request and makes his own pledge to teach to Buddhajñānapāda in the *Dvītyākrama*, verses 19-22.

⁵⁶ The topic of the nature of suchness/reality is presented in the *Dvītyākrama*, verses 23-34.

⁵⁷ *Muktilaka*, D 50b.

⁵⁸ The cosmogonic narrative is presented in *Dvītyākrama* verses 35-42.

⁵⁹ The description of the disciple, guru, and offerings is presented in *Dvītyākrama* verses 43-49.

⁶⁰ *Dvītyākrama*, verse 50. See also note 123 in my translation of the *Dvītyākrama*.

Tārā. The characteristics of each “type” of woman—the four types are called *kamalī*,⁶¹ *śaṅkhiṇī*, *citrinī*, and *hastinī*—are described in some detail, including both the physical features and the character of women who belong to each type, and each is then equated in terms of her “pure form” (*viśuddhi*) with one of the four buddha consorts.⁶² The appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for a female consort are discussed, followed by a description of the desirable and undesirable characteristics of her “secret place.” The text then advocates a yogin’s finding an appropriate female partner, since it is by means of relying upon her that accomplishment is possible.⁶³

Here the *Dvīṭīyakrama* switches to ritual content, describing a series of initiatory sequences for the sexualized second and third tantric initiations—the *guhya* and *prajñājñāna* initiations.⁶⁴ This section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* includes several verses that are to be recited by the guru bestowing the initiation, as well as a dialogue between the yogin and his partner. Parallel passages of several of the verses in this section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* appear in quite a number of later texts, both scriptural and authored (but in no earlier works of either type of which I am aware).⁶⁵ The section on the third initiation includes several sequences of practices that Vaidyapāda identifies as meant to arouse mental, verbal, and finally physical passion in the initiate couple, culminating in their ritual sexual union. The passage on arousing passion physically includes a description of several postures and sexual acts and reads very much like a work of *kāmaśāstra*. This passage is followed by the “delighted” consort instructing the yogin to search for the *cakra* inside her secret place, which the text states that he must find with his fingers “by means of the oral instructions from the guru.” The yogin is instructed to thus discern the location of the three main subtle channels in his partner’s body, and only then to join with her in sexual union. The stages of union are here equated with the processes of *sevā*, *upasādhana*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana*—the so-called “four branches” (*caturāṅga*) that are commonly associated with generation stage practice. In the sexual act itself the yogin is instructed to control the inner winds to bring about “blazing” and “dripping” in what seems to be a very early instance of what later comes to be described as the *caṇḍālī* yoga, and is found commonly in the later Yoginī tantras.⁶⁶ The culmination of the third initiation, which involves the practitioner(s)⁶⁷ observing suchness directly while in sexual union, results in emission of sexual fluids, and the

⁶¹ This is an unexpected form for the type that is normally called *padminī*. See note 127 in my translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

⁶² The four types of women described here are the classical four types from *kāmaśāstra*, and Buddhajñānapāda’s use of this classificatory schema is a very early one, in fact the earliest of which I am aware, not just in Buddhist literature but in extant Indian literature on the whole. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Six in the context of perfection stage practices.

⁶³ The topic of an appropriate consort is presented in *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 50-82.

⁶⁴ The rituals for the *guhya* and *prajñājñāna* initiations are described in *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 83-125.

⁶⁵ I discuss these initiatory sequences in Chapter Seven. Parallel verses from this section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* appear in a number of later sources including the *Samājottara*, the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*, Vaidyapāda’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, Dīpaṅkarabhadra’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, Nāgabodhi’s *Maṇimālā*, Advayavajra’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekaparakriyā*, Kṛṣṇācārya’s *Śrīguhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā*, Prajñāgupta’s *Abhīṣekaratnāloka*, Prajñāśrī’s *Abhīṣekavidhi*, Vagīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, Kṣitigarbha’s *Daśatattvasaṃgraha*, Ratnākaraśānti’s *Ratnāvalī*, Abhayākara Gupta’s *Vajrāvalī*, and Kuladatta’s *Kriyāsaṃgraha*. See also notes to verse 87-95 in my translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

⁶⁶ The practice is described only very briefly in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, and the term *caṇḍālī* is not applied to it here. Tsongkhapa, in his much later Tibetan commentary on the practice of the “five stages” of Ārya School Guhyasamāja practice does identify this passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as referring to the practice of *caṇḍālī* (Kilty 2015, 324).

⁶⁷ The sexual practices in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are, as is predominately (always?) the case in Indic tantric Buddhist writings, described from the perspective of the male partner. There are a number of instances, though, in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings, that suggest the female partners were not supposed to be just passive participants but also to be educated and trained in these yogas.

yogin is subsequently instructed to “take up the liquid nectar that abides in the lotus with his mouth and drink it.”

Here the *Dvīṭīyakrama* returns to doctrinal topics, describing briefly the “final identity of all things” as “profundity and clarity.” What follows is a doxography of philosophical views, which presents the various ways in which different groups of beings mistakenly fixate on reality due to their ego clinging. The list begins with descriptions of the mistaken views held by unspecified “non-Buddhists,” with Vaidyapāda noting in his commentary the identity of the groups who hold each of the specific views listed (Sāṃkhyas, Vaiśeṣikas, etc.). Then the mistaken views of specified Buddhist groups—the Kāśmiri Vaibhāṣikas, Sautrāntikas, Yogācārin, and Mādhyamikas—are listed, with the clear indication that the views of each group listed are more accurate than those of the group before. These are all subordinated to the view of one who has realized the **adhideva*, which is later in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* equated with the result of tantric practice, and which is here said to be realized “through spontaneously arisen wisdom in reliance on the words of the guru.”⁶⁸

The *Dvīṭīyakrama* briefly praises nondual wisdom as the purview of the *vidyādharas* alone—beyond the realization of the *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, Yogācārin, Mādhyamikas, bodhisattvas, and even the “non-superior buddhas”⁶⁹—and emphasizes that it can be transferred to the qualified disciple “[even] without words.” This is followed by a condemnation, paralleled in the *Muktītilaka*, of the yogin’s being too focused on practices involving action since they “are in contradiction to the unelaborate.” Most of the practices listed here—the *maṇḍala*, *homa*, *bali*, recitation, and so forth—are generally connected to the generation stage of tantric practice, though this fact is not explicitly mentioned. The text does, however, give an injunction to engage instead in “the second stage” of tantric practice.⁷⁰

Detailed instructions on perfection stage practices fill the next more than one hundred verses, making up over a quarter of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*’s total length. The practices in this section are also described in the *Muktītilaka*, though their presentation there is significantly less detailed. The *Dvīṭīyakrama*’s presentation begins with what amounts to a very short overview of generation stage practice—just five verses—and the injunction to accustom oneself to these practices through training, which makes it clear that the perfection stage practices are meant to take place within the framework of the generation stage. The perfection stage practices that are given here are three different *bindu* yogas: the yoga of the indestructible *bindu*, the secret *bindu*, and the emanated *bindu*. The first two yogas are versions of the practice often called *sūkṣma-yoga*, and the latter is essentially a form of the practice of *vajrajāpa*, a term also used to describe this practice within the *Dvīṭīyakrama* itself. At the conclusion of the instructions on the three *bindu* yogas comes a short explanation of the fact that the indestructible *bindu* is the only thing that will remain at the end of an aeon, and that from which all other phenomena subsequently arise. This is followed by a short summary of the previously described perfection stage practices with a focus on the dissolution of the visualization within which the practices are performed. Then, the process of the dissolution of the psychophysical elements into one another along with the accompanying five signs are described. These are processes that are generally taught to take place naturally at death, or in an intentional and controlled way through perfection stage practice. The *Dvīṭīyakrama* states that having “genuinely trained in this, one attains great non-abiding *nirvāṇa*.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ The doxographical section is in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 126-143.

⁶⁹ I address this unusual term in Chapter Three.

⁷⁰ This short section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* encompasses verses 144-155.

⁷¹ The perfection stage practices are detailed in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 156-271.

The next section of the *Dvitiyākrama* gives a rather extensive list of the various names of suchness which, under countless names, is said to be the single intention of all *sūtras* and *tantras*.⁷² Subsequently the benefits and results of the practice of the second stage are mentioned. The *Dvitiyākrama* also here mentions the attainment of the three blisses—bliss, middling bliss, and the bliss of cessation—that are the progressive attainments of the perfection stage practice in this system. In addition to practicing with a female partner (human or otherwise), it advocates the undertaking of the *unmatta-vrata*, a practice in which the yogin feigns madness as a test of the stability of his yogic practice, and other time-constrained practices (the period prescribed here is six months).⁷³

What follows is essentially an equating of the stages of tantric sexual practice with the ten bodhisattva *bhūmis*, with the text suggesting that it is through relying upon a female partner while “endowed with the ten *bhūmis*,” that the practitioner attains the supreme result. Here a series of sexual acts that bring forth various stages of bliss are described, one-by-one, as constituting each of the ten *bhūmis*. The *Dvitiyākrama* goes on to explain that the very same thing has been taught as the traditional bodhisattva *bhūmis*, “Perfect Joy” (the first *bhūmi*) and the rest, for “those disciples who are unable to authentically engage in this great truth.” Such a subordination of the traditional bodhisattva path to tantric sexual practices is made even more explicit with the statement that those who train in the former path “gain realization—though there is still something higher.” The final result of the tantric path is here called the **adhideva*, and identified with the thirteenth *bhūmi*.⁷⁴

The *Dvitiyākrama* goes on to describe the greatness of the yogin who engages in these practices; he is even worshipped by the pure deities of the ten directions. This section contains two unusual verses in which Mañjuśrī speaks in the first person and appears to say that he will abandon anyone who deprecates a practitioner of these practices, while someone who praises and worships such a yogin, because Mañjuśrī “abides in his body,” will have his physical obscurations cleared away. The text then insists that the practitioner who trains in the second stage “with the goddess acting as the condition”—thus implying the practice of sexual yogas—will undoubtedly attain the *mahāmudrā* in this very life.⁷⁵

If, the *Dvitiyākrama* explains, a disciple has pleased the guru and received initiation, *samayas*, and vows, “obtained suchness...through the guru’s words,” and realized the “secret and the supreme secret,” but he has been unable to train in the way explained above, he should practice the yoga of *utkrānti*, the ejection of consciousness from the body, at the time of death. The text goes on to give instructions on how to practice this yoga, including descriptions of the resulting rebirths that ensue from consciousness departing from the body’s various orifices at death. All of these apertures are therefore blocked with visualized syllables during the practice. It is asserted that through this practice the yogin will realize “that which is luminous and perfectly joyful, like the sky,” which Vaidyapāda clarifies is the *dharmakāya*. The subsequent attainment of the two form *kāyas* is also referenced. The ritual of *utkrānti* is praised as being able to bring accomplishment to “even one who has committed the gravest sin, a deluded being, or a brahmin-slayer.”⁷⁶

⁷² The names of suchness are set forth in the *Dvitiyākrama*, verses 272-284.

⁷³ The benefits and results of practice, and the injunction to take up various *vratas* are described in the *Dvitiyākrama*, verses 285-297.

⁷⁴ The equating of tantric sexual practice with the bodhisattva *bhūmis* is described in the *Dvitiyākrama*, verses 298-315.

⁷⁵ These verses on the benefits and result of the practice of the sexual yogas of the second stage are in *Dvitiyākrama*, verses 316-326.

⁷⁶ The instructions on *utkrānti* are found in *Dvitiyākrama*, verses 327-359.

The instructions on *utkrānti* are followed by another curious passage in which Mañjuśrī again assumes the first-person voice. Here Mañjuśrī cautions that he and the *tathāgatas* will not join with or bless an individual who teaches these secret practices without having realized them. Mañjuśrī then repeats his previous statement about abiding within the bodies of certain practitioners and in that way receiving offerings, by means of which those who make the offerings are able to purify their obscurations. He then explains that as long as these particular teachings remain in the world, the Buddha’s teaching will remain; when this lineage is broken, the *Dvitiyakrama* contends, that will signal the disappearance of the Buddha’s teaching.⁷⁷ Mañjuśrī then instructs Buddhajñānapāda directly to compile and pass on the instructions.

This is followed by a prediction given by Mañjuśrī to Buddhajñānapāda, discussed above in Chapter One. Here Mañjuśrī states that because of several mistakes that Buddhajñānapāda made with respect to him—holding delusion about his identity upon first meeting the emanated monk in the forest, and his “conduct regarding food,” which Vaidyapāda explains as Buddhajñānapāda’s refusal of foods offered to him by that monk’s female companion, he will not attain a complete transformation of his aggregates within this very life. Buddhajñānapāda will, however, Mañjuśrī assures, “accomplish consciousness, which is indestructible, as the *mahāmudrā*,” a statement interpreted by later commentators to mean that Buddhajñānapāda would attain full accomplishment only in the intermediate state following death (*antarābhava*, *bar do*). Mañjuśrī then commands Buddhajñānapāda to compose a number of specific texts pertaining to the generation stage practice of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, presumably as a complement to the perfection stage instructions that Mañjuśrī had just given, which Buddhajñānapāda had already been instructed to compile and pass on. Mañjuśrī completes his instructions with an injunction for yogins of the future to please a guru who knows the truth, and having received instruction, to train in these practices. He notes that when their minds have completely abandoned conceptuality, practitioners accomplish the state of the vajra holder, “due to which they will then genuinely accomplish buddhahood.” His final words of instruction are an injunction to endeavor fervently towards the accomplishment of supreme suchness, or at the very least to make aspirations toward accomplishing it.⁷⁸

The *Dvitiyakrama* here returns to Buddhajñānapāda’s first-person recounting of the episode, noting that Mañjuśrī “sang and praised me,” and then disappeared “like a cloud into the sky,” at which point the monk and two gurus, whom he had met in the forest at the outset of the visionary experience, likewise disappeared. Buddhajñānapāda then details, in a few verses, some of the events of his life subsequent to the vision: he lived, wrote, and taught at the Parvata cave behind Vajrāsana together with his disciples, and was supported by the patronage of the wealth deity Jambhala himself. Buddhajñānapāda also reports traveling to meet his former guru Pālitapāda and writing a *sādhana* at his request, a meeting which Vaidyapāda says took place at that master’s residence in the Koṅkan.⁷⁹

Following his autobiographical account, Buddhajñānapāda encourages listening to and contemplating these special teachings on the second stage of tantric practice, as well as putting them into practice in order to attain awakening. This section of the text contains a number of particularly poetic and evocative verses in which Buddhajñānapāda cautions against wasting the

⁷⁷ Some later commentators, such as the 14th-century Tibetan master Tsongkhapa (Kilty 2012, 56), have interpreted this passage to be referencing the *Guhyasamāja* teachings, while others such as the 16th-century Tibetan master Dakpo Tashi Namgyal (*Dwags po bkra shis rnam rgyal*), have interpreted the passage to be referencing the tantric teachings more generally (See Roberts 2010, 484).

⁷⁸ The prediction, command to Buddhajñānapāda to compose texts, and Mañjuśrī’s final instructions are in the *Dvitiyakrama*, verses 360-374.

⁷⁹ The concluding short autobiographical narrative is in the *Dvitiyakrama*, verses 375-378.

precious opportunity to practice and gain accomplishment in this life, declares that through training repeatedly in these practices there is no doubt that wisdom will arise, and again clearly indicates the superiority of the tantric path to that of the traditional Mahāyāna. It is in one of these verses that Buddhajñānapāda uses the term “the great perfection” (*rdzogs pa chen po*) to describe the final result of the practice of the second stage, which he also describes as “the universal form of wisdom” and equates with Great Vajradhara. The final five verses of the *Dvītyākrama* are Buddhajñānapāda’s dedication of the merit from his “compiling these oral instructions,” and his aspiration that yogins will take up this practice and attain the *dharmakāya*, and then fill the three realms “with awakened body, speech, and mind, and uncountable emanations, liberating all beings from existence!”⁸⁰ In the authorial colophon the *Dvītyākrama* is described as “the oral instructions of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, a lineage passed from mouth to mouth, which were compiled by the great *maṇḍalācārya*, Buddhaśrījñānapāda.”

The Place and Role of the Dvītyākrama in Buddhajñānapāda’s Oeuvre

Buddhajñānapāda had already composed several non-tantric works in his youth—notably the *Saṅcayagāthā-pañjika* and the *Mahāyānalakṣaṇa-samuccaya*. He may also have written some of his other tantric works not specifically related to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* prior to the encounter with Mañjuśrī described in the *Dvītyākrama*.⁸¹ But it is this visionary encounter, the practice instructions he received from Mañjuśrī therein, and the command from Mañjuśrī to compile those instructions and compose additional related literature that seem to have defined and guided the remainder of Buddhajñānapāda’s career. However, the precise temporal relationship between the compilation of the *Dvītyākrama* and the composition of Buddhajñānapāda’s other *Guhyasamāja*-related tantric writings remains unclear. Given that the composition of a *sādhana*, identified by commentators as the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, on the occasion of a visit to his guru Pālitapāda, is mentioned by Buddhajñānapāda in the second part of his autobiographical narrative at the end of the *Dvītyākrama*, it would seem that the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra* was composed prior to the compilation of the *Dvītyākrama*. The question of the temporal relationship between the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka*, which share quite a significant amount of material, is less clear. The fact that the *Muktilaka* introduces and sets forth the two categories of the generation and perfection stages, while the *Dvītyākrama* essentially assumes them, suggests the possibility that the *Muktilaka* may have been the earlier composition.⁸² This would mean that the more detailed perfection stage instructions in the *Dvītyākrama*, together with their narrative frame, may have been written later in

⁸⁰ Buddhajñānapāda’s dedication and aspiration are in the *Dvītyākrama*, verses 395-399.

⁸¹ As noted in Chapter One, I wonder if the *Ātmasādhana-vatāra* may have been composed prior to the visionary encounter with Mañjuśrī (perhaps even prior to Buddhajñānapāda’s discipleship under Pālitapāda?) given its complete absence of any reference to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. The three Jambhala *sādhana*s likewise lack any such reference, as does the **Gativyūha*. In Buddhajñānapāda’s other tantric writings—the *Dvītyākrama*, the *Muktilaka*, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and the *Śrīheruka-sādhana*, the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* plays a central role.

⁸² I have argued in an earlier conference paper (C. Dalton 2014), and will address further in Chapter Eight, that Buddhajñānapāda’s verse in the *Muktilaka* that sets forth the two stages of tantric practice appears to have been the source for its parallel—and much better known—verse in the *Samājottara* that became the scriptural *locus classicus* for the two stages, referenced throughout later tantric Buddhist literature. I am certainly not suggesting that Buddhajñānapāda invented this distinction between the two stages of tantric practice—the two stages are referenced in other works from this period, including Padmasambhava’s *Man ngag lta ba’i ‘phreng ba* and Padmavajra’s *Guhyasiddhi*—just that the verse in which he articulates it in the *Muktilaka* was the source for that in the *Samājottara*, rather than the other way around. There are likewise two *pādas* found in both *Dvītyākrama* and the *Samājottara*, where again the *Dvītyākrama*’s appear to be the earlier of the two. I discuss this in Chapter Eight.

Buddhajñānapāda’s career as a method of encapsulating his life and teachings into a single coherent narrative and providing a strong and clear legitimation of the source of his teachings.⁸³ At this point, though, it is impossible to determine this with any certainty.

What we can say with certainty is that the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, including the narrative of Buddhajñānapāda’s encounter with Mañjuśrī described in the text and its perfection stage practice instructions, became definitive of his Guhyasamāja practice tradition. And while it is not his most commented-upon work—the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* holds that honor—the *Dvīṭīyakrama* still stands out as Buddhajñānapāda’s most unique. What is more, much of the doctrinal and ritual content therein is reflected in his other works, making the *Dvīṭīyakrama* both central to, and an excellent anchor for, understanding Buddhajñānapāda’s thought on the whole. But despite its uniqueness, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is not Buddhajñānapāda’s only work in which we find narrative used to doctrinal ends. The *Muktītilaka*, as well, contains a short and unusual narrative passage, modeled on Buddhist scripture, that is used to make a pointed doctrinal statement. It is to the topic of the doctrinal aspects of Buddhajñānapāda’s thought, found across the range of his writings including the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, that we now turn.

⁸³ This theory would seem to go against Vaidyapāda’s understanding, however, as he asserts both in *Sukusuma* and his *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* that the *Muktītilaka* is included in the texts that Mañjuśrī, in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, commands Buddhajñānapāda to compose. That would not, however, necessarily preclude the *Muktītilaka*’s being composed first, in response to the command to compile the perfection stage instructions given by Mañjuśrī, and then detailed later and following Mañjuśrī’s own words in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. In fact, the passage from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that Vaidyapāda cites in the *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* as the reason for the *Muktītilaka*’s composition, begins with Mañjuśrī’s command to Buddhajñānapāda to “compile [these instructions]” (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 48b.1)

Doctrine

Chapter Three

Following the Tantric Path to the Reality of Nondual Wisdom: Buddhajñānapāda's Doctrinal Positions

The nature of phenomena, from form and the rest up to omniscience, is the perfectly pure wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous, which is like the center of space...That itself is the Victors, their offspring, and their fields of influence, the three existences comprised of everything animate and inanimate. That, the identity of everything, is the very essence of one's mind, supreme among all things.

-Mañjuśrī instructing Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

We saw in the *Dvītyākrama* evidence of Buddhajñānapāda's great creativity in formulating the unique narrative structure of that work. Looking to the doctrinal content of his writings we likewise see the creativity with which he, like other early tantric Buddhist authors, presented doctrinal positions that contextualized and supported the innovative ritual structures of the tantric soteriological traditions whose practices they advocated and personally upheld. As Anthony Tribe has noted with reference to Vilāsavajra's *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, tantric Buddhist writings of the 8th and early 9th centuries show both a tendency to encode tantric structures within Mahāyāna doctrinal categories, as well as a tendency to modify those doctrinal categories to accommodate the structures of tantric practice.¹ Buddhajñānapāda's work shows evidence of both of these trajectories. Widely framed within the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition as it stood in the late 8th century—in particular the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka philosophical synthesis advocated by masters like his teacher Haribhadra—Buddhajñānapāda's writings display resonance and confluence with doctrinal trends in several different tantric Buddhist textual communities of the period, including those springing from the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* and the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, as well as contemporary early (or proto-) Great Perfection literature. His work was also influenced by other early tantric systems, including those of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* and the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, both of which he cites in his *Ātmasādhanāvatāra*, and his writings additionally reflect familiarity and engagement with non-Buddhist systems. In reading widely across Buddhajñānapāda's work, and in particular the tantric writings that have been the focus of my study, we *do* get the sense that he was articulating a unified and coherent system of tantric Buddhism. Buddhajñānapāda's vision of reality and Buddhist practice brings together an overarching emphasis on nondual wisdom as both the nature and the source of the phenomenal world; the idea that this reality of nondual wisdom can be directly indicated to a disciple by his guru; a prioritizing of the tantric path, including the deity-yoga-oriented, transgressive, and especially the sexual elements of Mahāyoga tantra; and a rhetoric of non-action standing in contrast to the elaborate ritual structures of the very tantric path he so strongly advocates. In this chapter I will explore a number of the doctrinal positions that stand out across Buddhajñānapāda's tantric oeuvre, and note, where possible, some places of influence or confluence between his thought and those of other authors and systems, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

But before we begin, I must make clear that what follows is just a preliminary exploration of Buddhajñānapāda's thought. First, the focus of my study of his doctrinal positions has been on his tantric writings. A full study of Buddhajñānapāda's doctrinal and philosophical positions

¹ Tribe 2016, 6.

would necessarily also include a detailed analysis of his *Mahāyānalakṣaṇa-samuccaya*, and especially his *Samcayagāthā-pañjikā*, the Prajñāpāramitā commentary written towards the beginning of his career prior to his studies with tantric teachers, which I have not done.² In what follows, I attend to and examine some of the doctrinal positions that are either stated directly or implied by statements made in his mature tantric writings, primarily the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka*, which are composed in verse and also include ritual content, and the *Ātmasādhanāvātāra*, Buddhajñānapāda's only surviving prose work that includes tantric material. I also make reference to several philosophical and doctrinal passages in his *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.

But it is not only the limited scope of my inquiry that makes this study into Buddhajñānapāda's doctrinal positions preliminary; it is also quite simply the first such study. With the single exception of the *Dvītyākrama*, which I have edited and translated in this dissertation, not one of Buddhajñānapāda's works has been fully edited (in either its Sanskrit original or Tibetan translation) or translated into any modern language, and no attempt has been made in modern scholarship to present a full overview of any single one of his writings, let alone his thought on the whole. Indeed the most in-depth modern scholarship on Buddhajñānapāda's works are short pieces that have focused not on doctrine, but on his ritual systems.³ Most of the brief references to Buddhajñānapāda's doctrinal positions in secondary scholarship are either gleaned from sources other than Buddhajñānapāda's writings themselves (i.e. they are based on other traditional authors' assessments of his thought), or they have been made with reference to just a brief passage from one of his compositions.⁴ Thus while I have endeavored here to draw attention to the doctrinal features of his writings that I have found most prominent or remarkable, my presentation here is just a preliminary sketch, and I hope that this introduction will act as a gateway for more research that further illuminates Buddhajñānapāda's thought.

I. Nondual Wisdom as The Nature of the Mind and of all Phenomena

Defining Nondual Wisdom

The nature of phenomena, from form and the rest up to omniscience, is the perfectly pure wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous, which is like the center of space.

-Mañjuśrī instructing Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

² Buddhajñānapāda himself tells us that the *Saṅcayagāthā-pañjika* was composed at Nālandā, prior to his travels over the subcontinent during which he studied with his tantric gurus.

³ These studies are Ryuta Kikuya's short article (in Japanese) on the three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage in Buddhajñānapāda's works (Kikuya 2008), and Kimiaki Tanaka's brief descriptions of the structure of the generation stage practice in the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*: (Tanaka 1996, 176-194 (in Japanese) and 257-271 (in English); Tanaka 2007b (in Japanese); Tanaka 2010 (in Japanese); Tanaka 2017 (in English); Tanaka 2018 (in English).

⁴ The single exception I am aware of is a few paragraphs in John Makransky's book, *Buddhahood Embodied*, that examine Buddhajñānapāda's position on the doctrine of the *kāyas* as expressed in his *Saṅcayagāthā-pañjika* in relation to his teacher Haribhadra's position on that topic. Again, the *Saṅcayagāthā-pañjika* is one of Buddhajñānapāda's two non-tantric works that I have chosen not to address in the present study. Given that there is more scholarship on Buddhajñānapāda in Japanese than in Western languages, it is possible that some of his doctrinal positions have received brief attention there, as well, but in familiarizing myself with that scholarship to the best of my ability with the assistance of several Japanese friends and colleagues, I have not become aware of any extensive treatments of his doctrinal positions. As I noted in the Introduction, Tanaka (2018, 29) mentions a three-page 1985 article by Chizuko Yoshimizu that "argues the Jñānapāda school from the side of philosophy for the first time." According to Tanaka's bibliography, the article is titled "On the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika Theory in the Jñānapāda School," but as the article is in Japanese I have been unable to consult it, and I am unsure whether it focuses on Buddhajñānapāda's own writings or those of later authors in his tradition.

Probably the most pervasive and overarching aspect of Buddhajñānapāda’s thought is his emphasis on nondual wisdom (*advayajñāna*, *gnyis med ye shes*), which he identifies as the nature of mind and of all phenomena. While the use and development of the term “nondual wisdom” in Buddhist systems deserves a full study in and of itself, very broadly speaking the term is found sparingly in exoteric Mahāyāna texts, including some *sūtras* and the *śāstric* writings of both Madhyamaka- and Yogācāra-oriented authors, but it achieved much greater currency in tantric literature—both the tantras themselves and their commentaries—especially from the late 8th century onwards. However, even within the tantric tradition, the earlier tantras—all the way up through the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra itself, which was probably completed some time in the mid-to-late 8th century, make almost no use of the term nondual wisdom. A very brief survey of its use in the early tantras reveals that the term “nondual wisdom” (*advayajñāna*, *gnyis med ye shes*) does not appear in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi*, the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana*, nor even in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* or the *Guhyasamāja* root *tantra*. It does appear once in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* (as *jñānam advayarūpadhṛk*, “wisdom that holds the form of nonduality”), and one time in the *Samājottara*. From the turn of the 9th century—precisely in the time Buddhajñānapāda was writing—and onwards, the term nondual wisdom begins to find more currency in the tantras, and especially in tantric commentarial literature. The general term “nondual” or “nonduality” (*advaya*, *gnyis med/gnyis su med pa*) does appear in the earlier tantras, but again not with the kind of frequency that it is found in the later tantric tradition.⁵

Ronald Davidson has written that, “Buddhism has traditionally defined reality in terms of multiplicity and its resolution into nonduality,”⁶ and indeed we see this tendency reflected in Buddhist texts from many different historical periods and traditions. However, unsurprisingly, what is intended by “nondual wisdom,” where we do find this term used, is not uniform throughout Buddhist literature, neither with regard to the type of nonduality expressed—that is, what specific two things any given work claims to be ultimately “nondual”—nor in terms of its scope. Many times the term is given without further elaboration, and it is thus possible to understand the term “nondual wisdom” in Buddhist writings to refer to wisdom that goes beyond any and *all* types of duality. Some authors do, however, elaborate the point, specifying the particular aspect of nonduality they intend.⁷ Among earlier usages of the term nondual wisdom in systems of thought with which Buddhajñānapāda was certainly familiar, one such elaboration

⁵ The term “nondual” (*gnyis med/gnyis su med pa*) unattached to the word wisdom appears thirteen times in the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi*, including as a description of awakening and in the compounds “nondual mind” (*vid gnyis med*) and “nondual yoga” (*gnyis su med pa’i rnal ’byor*). It does not appear at all in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* nor in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra*, and is found just twice in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, both times as part of the term “nondual vehicle” (*advayaṃ yānaṃ*). The term “nondual” alone appears five times in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, including two uses of the term “nondual *dharmatā*” (*advayadharmatā*). It appears six times in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, several times in the compound “nondual *dharmadhātu*” (*gnyis med chos kyi dbyings*), and twice in the compound “nondual mind” (*gnyis med blo/ yid gnyis med pa*). In the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra the term appears seven times including in the compound “nondual vajra” (*advayavajra*, *gnyis su med pa’i rdo rje*); the phrase “neither dual nor nondual, like space,” which forms part of the instructions on how to meditate upon nonorigination; and the compound “the ultimate nondual suchness” (*paramārthādvayatattva*), which is part of the title of Chapter 17. The *Samājottara* also includes one use of the term “nondual” (*advaya*) apart from the term nondual wisdom in the phrase, “phenomena are nondual, but they are marked by duality” (*advayāḥ sarvadharmās tu dvayabhāvena lakṣitāḥ*), *Samājottara*, 126ab).

⁶ Davidson 1995, 104.

⁷ Perhaps it is more precise to say the aspect of nonduality that they intend to *emphasize*. That is, in the instances when one specific aspect or type of nonduality is directly mentioned, it is often the case that other aspects of nonduality seem to be implied.

specifies nondual wisdom to be the wisdom of subject-object nonduality, or as it is more frequently described in Yogācāra writings, of the absence of the duality of the perceiver (*grāhaka*, ‘*dzin pa*) and perceived (*grāhya*, *gzung ba*).⁸ In some Madhyamaka writings we find references to nondual wisdom that emphasize other aspects of nonduality, including the nonduality of appearance and emptiness; that is, of the relative and ultimate perspectives.⁹ In that context, nondual wisdom refers to the knowledge that while phenomena appear, they are by nature empty, and that the appearance of these phenomena is not different from their emptiness. The nondual wisdom that Buddhajñānapāda asserts to be the nature of the mind and of all phenomena is not exactly identical to either of these presentations, but seems to be informed by, and draw from, both. Moreover, unlike these exoteric presentations of nondual wisdom, Buddhajñānapāda’s includes elements that are decidedly tantric.

We are most fortunate that while Buddhajñānapāda does at times simply use the term “nondual wisdom” (*gnyis med ye shes*) without further elaboration, he also employs the more descriptive phrase “the wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous” (*zab gsal gnyis med ye shes*)¹⁰ in both the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktīlaka*. It is through this phrase, which specifies “the profound” and “the luminous” as the two aspects that are realized as nondual, that we are able to gain a clearer sense of precisely what he means by nondual wisdom. Buddhajñānapāda elaborates upon these two terms at several places in his writings. In a passage on the supremacy of the view of the nondual nature, the *Muktīlaka* describes “the profound” and “the luminous” as follows:

Completely free of conceptuality,
It is far beyond the reach of thought or speech,
Stainless like the sky, it is the source of everything,
Beyond imputation: thus, it is called the profound.
Because it is the purification of the mind of oneself and others
As illusory and rainbow-like
In the form of the *mahāmudrā*

⁸ For example Sthiramati, in his *Sūtrālamkāravṛttibhāṣya* references the “wisdom of the nonduality of subject and object” (*gzung ‘dzin gnyis su med pa’i ye shes*) (*Sūtrālamkāravṛttibhāṣya*, D 140a.6), and Haribhadra, in his *Abhisamayālamkāralokā* writes of “nondual wisdom, free from subject and object” (*gzung ba dang ‘dzin pa dang bral pa’i gnyis su med pa’i ye shes*), though as a Yogācāra-Mādhyamika author, he takes care not to ascribe any ultimate nature to such a nondual wisdom (*Abhisamayālamkāralokā*, D 256b.5).

⁹ For example Candrakīrti’s *Triśaraṇasaptati* uses the term “nondual wisdom” to refer to the knowing of the nonduality of the appearance and emptiness of objects, or of their relative and ultimate natures, using the traditional metaphor of a reflection. He writes, “The Victors, knowing these entities/ To be like reflections/ [With] nondual wisdom bring ignorance to an end.” *rgyal bas dngos po de rnam ni// gzugs brnyan dang yang ‘dra mkhyen pas// gnyis med ye shes ma rig zad//*. (*Triśaraṇasaptati*, D 251b.2-3). While, as Kevin Vose has shown, Candrakīrti’s writings and his Prasāngika Madhyamaka position became more popular in Tibet than was the case in India, it seems that his work was known in Buddhajñānapāda’s circles, given Vilāsavajra’s citation of Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamakāvātāra* in his *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* (Vose 2009; Tribe 2016, 376).

¹⁰ The term *zab gsal gnyis med ye shes* could certainly be translated more concisely as “profound, luminous nondual wisdom.” Yet that phrase, in English, suggests the terms “profound” and “luminous” to be adjectives describing nondual wisdom, which I do not believe to be Buddhajñānapāda’s intent. I have therefore opted for the more lengthy and awkward translation, “the wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous,” because I feel it reflects the nuance of Buddhajñānapāda’s understanding of the terms *zab [mo]* and *gsal [ba]* nominally rather than adjectivally. This is borne out both in his own clarifications on these terms (on which I elaborate below), and in Vaidyapāda’s gloss of the phrase, which parses the compound exactly as I have translated it: “the wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous” (*zab mo dang gsal ba gnyis su med pa’i ye shes*) (*Sukusuma*, D 94b.2-3).

It is called genuine luminosity.¹¹

A shorter but very similar presentation is found in a section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that elaborates on nondual wisdom as the nature of all phenomena:

[It] is totally free from all constructs
The cause of excellence, difficult to fathom.
[And yet] appears as the *mahāmudrā*,
Whose light rays ripen oneself and others. |29|
That is the supreme nondual nature...¹²

Vaidyapāda's commentary explains that the first two of the lines cited here from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* express “the profound,” while the second two express “the luminous,” which, given the great similarity between this passage and the one from the *Muktilaka*, is a compelling analysis.¹³ The references to “freedom from conceptuality” and the “purification of the mind” suggest that, just as specified in the Yogācāra presentation of nondual wisdom, Buddhajñānapāda intends a state free from the subject-object duality that involves the conceptual mind. In addition, the descriptions of “the profound” share much in common with exoteric Mahāyāna descriptions of the aspect of emptiness, or the ultimate nature: it is beyond conceptuality or constructs, beyond speech or thought, free from imputation, difficult to fathom. Perhaps drawing on the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, this profundity is additionally described as “stainless.” But the reference to “the profound” as the “source of everything” uses positive language emphasizing its generative aspect, which is much less typical of the deconstructive Madhyamaka rhetoric surrounding emptiness, like Nāgārjuna's arguments in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* that specifically refute origination by any means,¹⁴ and begins to give the description its tantric flavor. “Luminosity” as described in the *Muktilaka* can be understood to correspond loosely with the aspect of “appearance” or the “relative” described above in the Madhyamaka analysis of nonduality. However, here luminosity is not the relative or apparent aspect of an outer object, but of the purified mind itself (beyond subject and object), similar to the Yogācāra concept of the “transformation of the basis” (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*), the notion that various aspects of consciousness are transformed into aspects of wisdom at the time of awakening. But it is with what follows that the description becomes undeniably tantric: the luminous aspect is the mind purified “in the form of the *mahāmudrā*,” a term that in the common 8th- and 9th-century usage refers to the form of the deity.¹⁵ Thus for Buddhajñānapāda “the profound” is the empty aspect of the mind—an

¹¹ *rnam par rtog pa kun bral bas// bsam brjod yul las shin tu 'das// mkha' bzhin dri med kun 'byung ba* (ba] D, bas P)// *brtags bral zab mo nyid ces bya// phyag rgya chen po'i gzugs 'chang ba// sgyu ma 'ja' tshon lta bu ru// rang dang gzhan gyi rgyud sbyong bas// yang dag gsal ba zhes bya'o//* (*Muktilaka*, D 47b.2-4).

¹² *brtag pa kun las rab dben pa// phun sum tshogs rgyu dpag dka' ba// phyag rgya chen por rab snang ba'i// zer gyis rang gzhan smin byed pa//* |29| *de gnyis med pa'i rang bzhin mchog//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 29a-30a.) NB: In this and all subsequent citations from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in the footnotes, I have cited the edited Tibetan from my own edition, and have not provided all of the variant readings. To see the details of the variant readings in these passages, please refer to the appropriate passage in the edition itself.

¹³ *Sukusuma*, D 95b.3-5.

¹⁴ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, I.1.

¹⁵ In his commentary on the passage of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* just cited Vaidyapāda clearly identifies the *mahāmudrā* in terms of its usual 8th and 9th century usage: as the form of the deity “with a face, hands, and so forth.” *phyag rgya chen por* (por] P, po D) *rab snang ba/ zhes te/ zhal dang phyag la sogs pa dang ldan pa ni phyag rgya chen po'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 95b.6; P 114b.7-8). In the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* Vaidyapāda expresses more closely the relationship of “the profound” and “the luminous.” He states that “the luminous” refers to “Śāsvata (i.e. Vairocana) and the rest, who hold the form of the *mahāmudrā*, [and] who emerge from within that state [of the profound]...” (*de'i ngang* (ngang] P, dang D) *las byung ba'i rtag pa* (rtag pa] P, rtags D) *la sogs pa'i phyag rgya chen po'i gzugs 'chang bal* (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* D 49b.6; P 335a.1-2). (Vaidyapāda frequently uses the epithet Śāsvata (*rtag pa*) to refer to Vairocana.)

emptiness that is the source of everything; luminosity is the expression or manifestation of that emptiness in the “illusory and rainbow-like” form of the deity that has the capacity to “ripen oneself and others;”¹⁶ and nondual wisdom is a nonconceptual state that knows or *is* the nonduality of these two aspects.

The Scope of Nondual Wisdom

It is not only in terms of identifying “nondual wisdom” as the nonduality of the mind’s generative emptiness and its manifest expression as deity that Buddhajñānapāda departs from earlier usage of the term. He also broadens its scope significantly by declaring this nondual wisdom to be the very nature of the mind and of all phenomena. In both the scriptural and *śāstric* writings of the earlier Mahāyāna traditions that informed the thought of Buddhajñānapāda and his contemporaries, the term “nondual wisdom” was often employed to describe one among the causes for awakening, such as the mind-states of realized beings like bodhisattvas, and in occasional instances to describe the goal of the Buddhist path itself, the awakened state of a buddha.¹⁷ Like the term “the perfection of wisdom” (*prajñāpāramitā*), with which it was sometimes equated,¹⁸ the term nondual wisdom thus indicated either a state on the path leading to awakening or the final state of awakening itself. In the writings of so-called Yogācāra-Mādhyamaka authors like Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Haribhadra and Haribhadra’s elder co-disciple, Kamalaśīla, with which Buddhajñānapāda was surely familiar,¹⁹ nondual wisdom—there specified as the wisdom of subject-object nonduality—is described as an important aspect of wisdom on the path, but a state that must still be transcended. Both authors take care to avoid identifying a reified nondual wisdom with the ultimate result.²⁰ While in certain more

¹⁶ These two aspects of the profound and the luminous parallel to what, in later traditions, is frequently termed “emptiness and clear light” (*śūnyatā* and *prabhāsvara*).

¹⁷ For example, in the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* the term “one whose experiential sphere is that of nondual wisdom” (*advayajñānagocara*) is one among a long list of adjectival compounds used to qualify the bodhisattvas (*Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, 31). In the *Akṣayamatiniṛdeśa-sūtra* knowing the truths of suffering, the origin of suffering and the cessation of suffering, along with “entering into nondual wisdom” (*gnyis su med pa’i ye shes su ‘jug pa*) are what define the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering; that is, engaging in nondual wisdom is described as a necessary cause of awakening (*Akṣayamatiniṛdeśa-sūtra*, D 191b.6-7). Bhāviveka identifies nondual wisdom as the mind that knows the ultimate, writing that “the ultimate is the experiential sphere of nondual wisdom” (*don dam pa ni gnyis su med pa’i ye shes kyi spyod yul yin...*) (*Prañjāpradīpamūlamadhyamakavṛtti*, D 240b.7). Sthiramati writes that on the first bodhisattva *bhūmi* when the bodhisattva realizes the all pervasiveness of the *dharmadhātu* he abandons subject-object grasping and “obtains nondual wisdom” (*gnyis su med pa’i ye shes thob*) (*Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya*, D 168b.5-6). Dignāga, in the first verse of his *Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārtha*, which is cited in Vilāsavajra’s *Nāmanantrārthāvalokinī*, identifies nondual wisdom with the state of awakening, writing that “The perfection of wisdom is nondual wisdom (*jñānam advayam*); it [the perfection of wisdom] is [also] the Tathāgata.” (*Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārtha*, D 292b.1-2; Engle 2009, 456n831 cites the Sanskrit of the passage).

¹⁸ Such as in the quote from Dignāga cited in the previous note. Lopez describes how the term *prajñāpāramitā* was used by different authors to indicate both “the wisdom, possessed only by a Buddha, which has gone beyond all forms of *samsāra* and as the wisdom that goes beyond, which occurs on the path to enlightenment” (Lopez 1988, 24).

¹⁹ We know from his autobiography that Buddhajñānapāda studied under Haribhadra, and Haribhadra quotes and paraphrases from Kamalaśīla’s writings in his major *Prajñāpāramitā* work, the *Abhisamāyālaṃkāralokā* (Sparham 1989, 2).

²⁰ This is generally the case with Mādhyamika authors who use the term, and specifically with Yogācāra-Mādhyamika authors with reference to nondual wisdom, understood as the wisdom that is free from subject-object duality. When he cites Dignāga’s statement mentioned in note 17 that equates the perfection of wisdom with nondual wisdom and the Tathāgata, Haribhadra carefully notes that the perfection of wisdom is the Buddha, which he equates with “the non-dual wisdom *which is like an illusion*” (Sparham 1989, 277; emphasis mine). Haribhadra also makes an objection to the position of holding the *dharmadhātu*, which he equates with pure nondual wisdom, to be the ultimate on the grounds that this would entail holding to, or settling upon, a dharma (Sparham 1989, 75).

philosophical passages of his writings Buddhajñānapāda likewise appears to uphold a similar Yogācāra-Madhyamaka stance,²¹ in other contexts he clearly places such a view in a subsidiary position, and prioritizes nondual wisdom, which he both relates specifically to the tantric path and characterizes with decidedly positive language.

In the works of Buddhajñānapāda's guru Vilāsavajra we see a more all-encompassing emphasis on nondual wisdom similar to that expressed in Buddhajñānapāda's writings, and which may have served as an inspiration for Buddhajñānapāda's own position. Vilāsavajra, in his *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* commentary, the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, states nondual wisdom (*advayañāna*) to be the main subject matter (*abhidheya*) of the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, and in fact nondual wisdom functions as the “conceptual anchor” of Vilāsavajra's whole work.²² Moreover, he explains the “names” of the *Nāmasaṃgīti* to be both the names of all objects of experience, mundane and supramundane, as well as the names of Mañjuśrīñānasattva, whom he identifies with the nondual wisdom abiding in the heart of the *tathāgatas*.²³ Thus, although he does not express it directly, Vilāsavajra essentially identifies all mundane and supramundane objects of experience with nondual wisdom. Buddhajñānapāda, in both the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka*, states this explicitly: he declares nondual wisdom to be the nature of all phenomena and the nature of mind, “suchness”²⁴ itself.

In fact, this is the very first topic addressed in Mañjuśrī's instructions to Buddhajñānapāda in the *Dvītyākrama*. He explains that,

The nature of phenomena,
From form and the rest up to omniscience,
Is the perfectly pure wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous,
Which is like the center of space. |23|²⁵

The *Dvītyākrama* clarifies further that “The identity of everything/ Is the very essence of one's mind,/ Supreme among all things,”²⁶ and that simply realizing this nature is the awakening of buddhahood itself. What is meant by “all phenomena” and “everything” is explored only briefly in the *Dvītyākrama*, where it is described with the traditional all-encompassing phrase “all phenomena from form up to omniscience,” explicitly including the “three worlds” and the “great

Kamalaśīla similarly insists that meditators must eventually go beyond holding nondual wisdom as existent, noting that “when the yogins abide in the cognition where [even] nondual cognition (*advayañāna*) [itself] does not appear, then due to [their] abiding in the ultimate suchness, they see the Mahāyāna. [The seeing of] the Mahāyāna means just the seeing of the ultimate thusness” (Keira 2004, 76).

²¹ For example, in the *Ātmasādhanaṅvātāra* after showing, in a Yogācāra-style fashion, that both the perceiver and the perceived are mind alone, Buddhajñānapāda then makes a more Madhyamaka-style move, declaring that this very mind is neither one nor many, and thus emphasizing the emptiness of even that nondual mind. I explore Buddhajñānapāda's apparent Yogācāra-Madhyamaka tendencies further below in the section on his prioritizing of tantra over non-tantric paths.

²² Tribe 2016, 44. Moreover, if Vilāsavajra is indeed also the author of the *Spar khab* commentary on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, a similar emphasis on nondual wisdom is found in that work, where, when commenting on the word *guhya* in the title, Wayman reports that the author describes the “utmost secret” to be “non-dual, self-originated wisdom” (Tribe 2016, 31n36).

²³ Tribe 2016, 50; 47.

²⁴ The term “suchness,” here is my translation of both the Tibetan *de kho na nyid* and *de bzhin nyid* (as well as their shorter forms *de kho na* and *de nyid*) in Buddhajñānapāda's writings—terms that presumably render the Sanskrit terms *tattva* and *tathatā*, respectively. Like in many places in Buddhist literature, these terms are used synonymously in Buddhajñānapāda's work. In general, the term “suchness” is used in Buddhist literature to be synonymous with whatever a given work takes to be the ultimate nature of things. In Buddhajñānapāda's case, that is nondual wisdom.

²⁵ *chos rnam gzugs la sogs pa rnam// kun mkhyen bar gyi rang bzhin ni// nam mkha' dkyil ltar rnam dag pa 'i// zab gsal gnyis med ye shes te// |23|* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 23).

²⁶ *thams cad kun gyi bdag nyid de// dngos kun gtso bo rang sems kyi// ngo bo nyid de....* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 31).

elements,” and, in another traditional phrase used also by Vilāsavajra, as “[all things] animate and inanimate.” The *Muktītilaka*—also in the very first topic addressed in that work, directly following the author’s preliminary homage and pledge to compose the treatise—endeavors to make this same point but does so with much more detail as to what constitutes “all phenomena.” In the *Muktītilaka* Buddhajñānapāda does not merely give a few stock phrases meant to indicate the entirety of phenomena. Instead, as if to allay any possible doubts as to his intentions, he provides an extensive list of all it includes: he lists each of the traditional Abhidharmic Buddhist existences within the Desire, Form, and Formless realms, starting at the very bottom with the hell realms of the Desire Realm, continuing up through each of the Desire and then the Form realms, and culminating with the realm of Neither Perception nor Non-perception, the highest abode within the Formless Realm. Then he mentions the Five Paths that constitute the Mahāyāna journey to awakening. Given that the fifth path, which he here calls the Path of Uninterrupted Complete Liberation (*bar mi chod rnam grol chen po’i lam*), encompasses the result of awakening itself, Buddhajñānapāda has effectively provided an all-encompassing list of the categories of phenomena included within *saṃsāra*, *nirvāṇa*, and the path leading to awakening—the full scope of phenomena within the traditional Buddhist worldview.²⁷ After providing this all-encompassing list, Buddhajñānapāda then declares that

The nature of all of these
Is the wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous,
Which is perfectly pure like space,
And free from all conceptual fabrication.²⁸

In this way, Buddhajñānapāda goes beyond holding nondual wisdom to be simply a mind-state on the path or the state of awakening—although for him it is *also* both of these things. But beyond just this, Buddhajñānapāda identifies nondual wisdom as the very nature of all the phenomena of *saṃsāra*, *nirvāṇa*, and the path.

Stepping Beyond Yogācāra

In a passage frequently cited by many Yogācāra (and Yogācāra-Mādhyamika) authors—in fact Buddhajñānapāda himself cites the passage in his *Ātmasādhanaṅvātāra*—the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* states, “These three worlds are mind alone.”²⁹ Buddhajñānapāda’s assertion that the nature of all phenomena and the mind is nondual wisdom comes very close to the Yogācāra position that the three worlds (i.e. the whole of phenomenal existence) are mind, and that this very mind, when transformed through practice, becomes a wisdom transcending subject-object duality, which has always been the mind’s true nature. However, in stating not just that *the three worlds are mind*, but that *all the phenomena of saṃsāra, nirvāṇa and the path* have the nature of *nondual wisdom*, Buddhajñānapāda at the very least goes rhetorically beyond the Yogācāra position, which is in itself not insignificant. What is more, by identifying the nondual wisdom that is the nature of all phenomena and the mind not just as a wisdom of subject-object nonduality (though it is also that), but as a wisdom of the nonduality of the mind’s generative emptiness and its manifest expression as deity, he makes a clear step beyond the Yogācāra position.

In fact, with some of the language that Buddhajñānapāda uses to describe this ultimate nature or “suchness,” the nondual wisdom that is the nature of all phenomena and of the mind, he makes steps that could be construed as going beyond Buddhist doctrine entirely. Immediately

²⁷ *Muktītilaka*, D 47a.4-7.

²⁸ *de dag kun gyi rang bzhin ni// nam mkha’ dbyings ltar rnam dag pa’i// spros pa’i rnam pa kun bral ba* (ba] P, pa D)// *zab gsal gnyis med yes shes so*// (*Muktītilaka*, D 47a.6-7).

²⁹ *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, D 220b.

following the two verses from the *Muktilaka* on “the profound” and “the luminous” cited above, he writes,

This supreme nondual nature,
The self that pervades all things
Is beyond the purview of *samsāra*—
It is called the *dharmadhātu*.³⁰

To be sure, we do not have the original Sanskrit for this passage, but the word “self” is generally not used lightly in Buddhist literature, and one might assume the translators would probably have chosen a Tibetan term besides *bdag* if they were not reading *ātman* in the Sanskrit.³¹ What is more, the very same phrase, the “self that pervades all things” (*dnegos po kun la khyab pa’i bdag*), is used in the *Dvitiyakrama* to describe the “indestructible *bindu*” (*mi shig pa’i thig le*) of the perfection stage.³² If “self” (*ātman*) is indeed the term that Buddhajñānapāda used here, which does seem to be the case, it certainly suggests the influence of non-Buddhist ideas on his thought.³³ As we will see below, this is not the only instance in his *oeuvre* where evidence of such influence appears. However, as regards the concept of self in particular, there is no question that Buddhajñānapāda maintains the traditional Buddhist denunciation of the false conception of a personal self. The *Dvitiyakrama* states,

Thus, the final identity of all things
Is profundity and luminosity,
[But] since beginningless time ordinary beings
Have fixated upon it as “me” and “mine,”
Thus, without examining, they grasp to the self. |126|³⁴

³⁰ *de gnyis med pa’i rang bzhin mchog// dnegos po kun la khyab pa’i bdag// ‘khor bas rab tu ma zin pa// chos kyi dbyings zhes bshad pa’o* (zhes bshad pa’o) D, V (D and P), kyi shes pa’o P) // (*Muktilaka*, D 47b.4).

³¹ The translation of Vaidyapāda’s commentary uses the term *bdag nyid* rather than *bdag* in his paraphrase of the verse, but both *bdag* and *bdag nyid* seem to have been regularly used to translate the Sanskrit *ātman* (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 49b.7). For example, the translators of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* consistently translated *ātman* as *bdag nyid*.

³² This itself [becomes] the precious jewel/ That produces the qualities of all buddhas,/ The self that pervades all things, / The great indestructible *bindu*.” *de nyid sangs rgyas thams cad kyi// yon tan kun bskyed rin po che// dnegos po kun la khyab pa’i bdag// mi shigs pa’i thig le che//* |167| (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 167). The term self (*ātman*) is also used in the name of Buddhajñānapāda’s unusually titled work, the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, literally “Entering into the Practice of the Self,” which is attested in Sanskrit in the extensive manuscript of Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī*. Szántó has translated this title as “An Introduction into Accomplishment in the Body,” perhaps inspired by the fact that in that text Buddhajñānapāda denies the existence of a personal self and strongly advocates the tantric path, especially the practice of deity yoga (Szántó 2015b, 756). But I would suggest that we need to take Buddhajñānapāda’s use (and that of other tantric authors) of the term *ātman* seriously, especially given the resistance to its usage throughout much of earlier Buddhist literature. See also notes 31 and 33.

³³ This is, however, far from the first or the only instance of the word “self” used in a positive sense in Buddhist tantric literature. For example, the term *ātman* occurs in multiple places in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, including its first verse, where, like in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, it is used to describe a universal or all-pervasive self. In fact, the use of the term *ātman* in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* may have inspired Buddhajñānapāda’s own use of the term; we know he was familiar with this tantra since he cites it in his *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* and incorporates several *pādas* from its first chapter into at least three different passages in the *Dvitiyakrama*. The use of the term *ātman* in tantric Buddhist literature at large is a topic deserving of further study.

³⁴ *de ‘dra’i dnegos pos thams cad kyi// mtha’ yi de nyid zab gsal ba// thog med dus nas so so yi// skye bo nga dang ngar ‘dzin pas// ma brtags par ni bdag tu bzung//* (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 126). It is worth noting that the single reference to nondual wisdom in the *Samājottara* appears quite similar to Buddhajñānapāda’s use of the term to describe the nature of phenomena, and also specifically references the problem of ego-clinging in relation to that nature. The two *pādas* read, “Holding a sense of ‘I’ with reference to the phenomena of nondual wisdom/ Is called “confusion.” *advayajñānadharmeṣu ‘haṃkāro moha ucyate/* (*Samājottara*, 50ab). I was unable to make sense of Matsunaga’s reading here (*advayajñānadharmesya*), and thus re-edited the line in accordance with one of

The subsequent verses go on to give a doxographical presentation of a variety of non-Buddhist and Buddhist systems of thought that spring from such an incorrect perception of reality, all of which are thus ultimately declared to be mistaken systems. In the verse cited above, though, Buddhajñānapāda references nondual profundity and luminosity as the ultimate identity of all things and asserts that it is *this* ultimate nature upon which beings mistakenly fixate (i.e. not (just) upon the five psychophysical aggregates, as is traditionally stated in Buddhist writings³⁵), and which becomes the basis for their false idea of a self. Thus, for Buddhajñānapāda, nondual wisdom—the nonduality of profundity and luminosity—is the true nature of all that there is. Yet despite having this nondual wisdom as their ultimate identity, beings find themselves in the confused state of *samsāric* existence. The process by which such confusion with regard to this nature—the “fixat[ion] upon it as “me” and “mine”—unfolds is also explained in his writings.

II. The World Arises out of Nondual Wisdom: A Gnostic Cosmogony

The reality, which is like that, is present pervading all things. Yet, from beginningless time, even from this there was arising in the manner of the great thought.

-Mañjuśrī instructing Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvitiyakrama*

Cosmogony Narrated

Another doctrinal position articulated at multiple places in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings is the idea that the illusory, dualistic phenomenal world not only has the nature of nondual wisdom, but that it *emerges out of* nondual wisdom; nondual wisdom is its source. In the *Dvitiyakrama*, Mañjuśrī’s presentation of nondual wisdom as the nature of all things is immediately followed by a description of this emergence. The process is presented in the form of a cosmogonic narrative. Vaidyapāda introduces these verses: “Now, in order to indicate the way in which *samsāra* arises out of nondual wisdom [the text] begins with **The reality...**”³⁶

The reality which is like that
Is present pervading all things.
Yet,³⁷ from beginningless time, even from this
There was arising in the manner of the great thought. [35]
And from that also the great elements [arose]:
The *maṇḍala* of wind arose,
And from that also, the great element of fire
Arose and spread. [36]
From that, the great element of water also
Arose and spread, and from that also earth.
From the essence of the gathering of the four [elements]

Matsunaga’s Sanskrit manuscripts that reads *advayajñānadharmesu*, which corresponds with the Tibetan translation, and, according to Matsunaga’s notes, also with the Chinese and Bhattacharya’s edition.

³⁵ Of course the five aggregates themselves, like all phenomena, have this same nondual nature in Buddhajñānapāda’s analysis. But again, the rhetorical difference between identifying the aggregates to be the basis of the false clinging to self and identifying the nondual nature to be that basis constitutes, I believe, an important distinction.

³⁶ *da ni gnyis su med pa’i ye shes las ‘khor ba ji ltar ‘byung ba bstan pa de ‘dra’i zhes pa la sogs pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97a.2-3; P 116b.1-2).

³⁷ Vaidyapāda explains further, “Although that kind of nonduality pervades and remains [as the nature of] all things, the reason that this is not apparent is explained with the lines beginning, **Yet, from beginningless time...**” *de yang gnyis su med pa de lta bus dngos po kun rnam par khyab ste gnas kyang de mi gsal ba’i rgyu ni thog med dus nus zhes te/* (*Sukusuma*, D 97a. 4; P 116b.2).

Mountains, and so forth, and all sentient beings also [arose] |37|
 In all their variety: subtle and gross:
 Men, women, and hermaphrodites,
 The young and old,
 Gods, *nāgas*, and *yakṣas*, |38|
 Evil spirits, planets, Yāma,
 The Lord of Water, Indra, hell beings,
Pretas, animals, and those who abandon all of this,³⁸
 Beings who rely upon consciousness alone,³⁹
 Such beings remain, spread far and wide.⁴⁰ |39|
 Therefore, the nondual nonconceptuality
 That is higher than that is completely obscured.
 Because of not realizing it, all beings
 Cycle around in *saṃsāra*. |40|⁴¹

This narrative, which is paralleled in the *Muktītilaka*,⁴² proceeds from declaring reality to be nothing other than the nondual wisdom that “pervade[s] all things,” precisely as it had been described in the passages discussed above, and then sets forth a cosmogonic narrative of the world’s emergence out of nondual wisdom that is timeless, both internal and external, and therefore simultaneously microcosmic and macrocosmic, personal and universal.

First, the arising of conceptuality (and therefore duality) out of “nondual nonconceptuality” is declared to be timeless: it has been happening “from beginningless time,” a phrase which allows the narrative to be both historical as well as applicable to the present moment. That is, following Buddhajñānapāda’s presentation, it can be understood that beings continually participate in this devolution, as it were, from the innate state of nondual nonconceptuality to a state in which there is “arising in the manner of the great thought.” This somewhat opaque phrase—“arising in the manner of the great thought”—receives clarification from Vaidyapāda: “From that time, just as clouds arise within space, “the great thought,” the

³⁸ Vaidyapāda identifies these as the *śrāvakas* and so forth. *de kun spangs pa ni nyan thos la sogs pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.1; P 117a.1-2).

³⁹ Vaidyapāda identifies these as those beings of the realm of Limitless Space, and so forth—inhabitants of the Formless Realm—since they have abandoned form. *nam mkha' tha' yas la sogs pa ste/ gzugs spangs pa'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.1-2; P 117a.2).

⁴⁰ Vaidyapāda comments that the statement that these beings live far and wide means that, “having been produced by conceptuality, they appear in the ten directions.” *de kun rgyas par gnas zhes pa ni rtog pas bzo byas nas phyogs bcu kun du snang ba'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.2; P 117a.2-3).

⁴¹ *de 'dra'i don des dngos po kun// rnam par khyab ste rnam gnas kyang// thog med dus nas de las kyang// rnam rtog chen po tshul byung ste//* |35| *de las yang ni 'byung ba che// rlung gi dkyil 'khor nyid byung ste// de las kyang ni me yi khams// chen po byung nas khyab mdzad de//* |36| *de las chu khams chen po yang// byung ste khyab mdzad de las kyang// sa byung bzhi bsdus ngo bo las// ri sogs sems can thams cad kyang//* |37| *sna tshogs phra ba sbom po dang// skyes pa bud med ma ning dang// gzhon nu dang ni rgan po dang// lha dang klu dang gnod sbyin dang//* |38| *gdon dang skar ma gshin rje dang/ chu bdag rgya byin dmyal ba dang/ yi dags dud 'gro dang de kun/ spang dang shes tsam rab brten pa'i// 'gro ba kun du rgyas par gnas//* |39| *de bas de yi gong ma yi// gnyis med rtog bral rab bsgribs te// ma rtogs pas na 'gro ba kun// 'khor bar rab tu 'khor bar 'gyur//* |40| (*Dvitiyakrama*, verses 35-40).

⁴² The *Muktītilaka*’s narrative is much shorter, a single verse. There reality is described not with the term nondual wisdom, but as a “*maṇḍala* of self-awareness.” “From such a *maṇḍala* of self-awareness/ Emerged concept, and from that wind, and then fire,/ Water, and earth, and from these/ Mistaken [things like] the aggregates, and so forth were established./ Thus obscuring this *maṇḍala*.” *de 'dra'i rang rig dkyil 'khor las// rtog las rlung byung me dang ni// chu dang sa ste de dag las// phyin* (phyin) P, phyir D) *log phung sogs rab grub pas// de 'dra'i dkyil 'khor bsgribs par 'gyur//* (*Muktītilaka*, D 50b.4-5).

mind alone, arises in a manner [in which it appears] as if it were endowed with conceptuality.”⁴³ At least in Vaidyapāda’s reading of Buddhajñānapāda’s text, the mind arises from nondual wisdom in a way that only makes it *appear* as if conceptuality is present, with the implication that conceptuality itself is just an illusory manifestation of what is in fact still nondual wisdom. We will revisit this point below.

Up until this point in the narrative, the process of devolution from nondual wisdom is an internal, microcosmic, or personal one, concerned with the arising of the conceptual mind from the state of nondual wisdom. But then, perhaps within the context of the Yogācāra assertion that “the three worlds are mind alone,” the narrative goes on to describe the arising of the external world from this mind: from “the great thought” the four elements are produced—first wind, then fire, then water, then earth—and from their combination gross objects like mountains and sentient beings. All of this, it is then said, obscures the “nondual nonconceptuality” that is its true nature. This narrative effectively describes a cosmogonic process by which both sentient beings and their world emerge—or devolve—from the true nature of nondual wisdom into a confused and dualistic state of *samsāric* existence. The remainder of Mañjuśrī’s instructions to Buddhajñānapāda in the *Dvīṭyākrama* focus on methods for reversing this process in order to bring about awakening, which is at times defined as the simple recognition of nondual wisdom as the nature of the mind and all phenomena,⁴⁴ but is also described as occurring via a process that is precisely the opposite of the devolution that brought about *samsāra* in the first place.⁴⁵

A “Syllabic Cosmogony”

According to Vaidyapāda’s interpretation of the *Dvīṭyākrama*, this same narrative was already expressed earlier in the text, in the very first syllables that Mañjuśrī uttered to Buddhajñānapāda following the latter’s request for teachings: “*a vi yaṃ raṃ vaṃ laṃ hūṃ a la la la ho*.” Vaidyapāda interprets these syllables as constituting in brief the entirety of Mañjuśrī’s instructions in the *Dvīṭyākrama*. He reads the syllables *a vi yaṃ raṃ vaṃ laṃ hūṃ* as referring to the cosmogonic process just described above, and *a la la la ho* as referring to the path that leads to awakening, in particular the path of the perfection stage.⁴⁶ Vaidyapāda’s analysis of the

⁴³ *de’i dus nas nam mkha’ la sprin ‘byung pa bzhin du rnam rtog chen po zhes te sems tsam rtog (rtog] P, rtogs D) pa dang ‘brel pa lta bu’i tshul du byung ste zhes bya ‘o// (Sukusuma, D 97a.4; P 116b.3-4). Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the parallel passage in the *Muktītilaka* uses the same metaphor of clouds emerging within space to describe the way that conceptuality arises out of nondual wisdom (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 59a.7-59b.1).*

⁴⁴ “When that is realized, this is the awakening of buddhahood.” ...*de rtogs na// sangs rgyas byang chub de nyid do// (Dvīṭyākrama, verse 31d-32a).*

⁴⁵ The process paralleling that of death that is intentionally re-enacted as the culmination of the perfection stage is described as the gradual dissolving of the great elements back into one another: “And the mind should be placed upon the *bindu*./ When one’s faculty is held there,/ The earth *maṇḍala* enters into water,/ That water likewise enters into fire,/ [266] The fire then enters into wind,/ And the wind enters into mind./ As an indication that the mind has to some degree/ Entered nondual wisdom/ [267] There are five signs that will appear....” *sems ni thig ler gzhas par bya// rang gi dbang po der bzung nas// sa yi dkyil ‘khor chu la zhugs// chu de me la de bzhin zhugs// [266] me yang rlung la rab tu zhugs// rlung yang sems la zhugs par gyur// sems ni gnyis med ye shes su// cung zad zhugs pas rtags gnas pa// [267] (Dvīṭyākrama, verses 266-67).* I discuss this point further in Chapter Six.

⁴⁶ *Sukusuma*, D 93a.5-94a.4. An interesting feature of Vaidyapāda’s commentary on this section is that throughout the description of the process of devolution he makes statements indicating that each of the aspects of the world that emerges in this process is nothing other than the essential nature itself, and that simply coming to realize this—at any point in the process—constitutes awakening. For instance, after the description of the syllable *vi*, the first “mere knowing” that appeared from the essence of the nondual state (prior to the emergence of the elements) he remarks, “Some, starting only from there, come to realization,” which suggests that in that case the subsequent processes would not unfold (*kha cig de ‘ba’ zhig las brisams te rtogs par byed de*) (*Sukusuma*, D 93a.7). Such an analysis has strong parallels in Great Perfection narratives of cosmogonic emergence. I discuss some parallels and differences between Buddhajñānapāda’s cosmogonic narrative and those found in Great Perfection works in Chapter Four.

syllables *a vi yaṃ raṃ vaṃ laṃ hūṃ* as indicating the same cosmogonic process described in verse the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is particularly compelling given the way that these particular Sanskrit syllables are commonly employed and understood in tantric Buddhist literature. He explains the first two syllables as follows:

A is the nature of all things because they are unarisen. It is said that “*a* is the gateway to all phenomena.” If we examine that statement, [we can understand that *a* is] the gateway through which all [phenomena] emerge. Moreover, it should be known as the nature of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous, which is like the *maṇḍala* of space—not arisen from any sort of conceptual imputations, [but] primordially and spontaneously present. That which appeared from its essence as mere knowing is *vi*, the first named syllable, which is called “awareness.”⁴⁷

The syllable *a* is the first syllable of the Sanskrit alphabet and the vowel inherent in all Sanskrit consonants, and thus began to be linked in tantric Buddhist texts with the idea of source or origin.⁴⁸ Here that syllable is identified with the “nonduality of the profound and the luminous,” the source of all phenomena according to Buddhajñānapāda’s system. The next step in the cosmogonic process, the devolution from this “primordially and spontaneously present” state that is “free from any sort of conceptual imputations,” into a state of conceptuality is expressed here with the syllable *vi*, described by Vaidyapāda as “that which appeared from its essence as mere knowing (*shes pa tsam*).” Though Vaidyapāda does not comment upon this point, the syllable *vi* functions as a Sanskrit prefix that is commonly used to express distinction or division—in short, duality. *Vi* here represents the first moment of knowing, which involves dualistic conceptual distinctions. Thus, the Sanskrit syllables *a vi*, the first two pronounced by Mañjuśrī in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, do indeed succinctly but clearly symbolically express the process of duality emerging from a nondual state. The subsequent syllables *yaṃ*, *raṃ*, *vaṃ*, and *laṃ* are used throughout tantric Buddhist literature, including at a later point in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* itself, to symbolize the great elements, and they appear here in precisely the order in which their (d)evolution is described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*’s verses of cosmogonic narrative: *yaṃ* represents wind, *raṃ* fire, *vaṃ* water, and *laṃ* earth.⁴⁹ Vaidyapāda’s commentary describes the process by which each of these elements unfolds.⁵⁰ Finally, Vaidyapāda explains that *hūṃ* is the seed-syllable of the five aggregates, which emerge through the coming together of the four great elements and mind, the final parallel between this “syllabic cosmogony” and the cosmogonic

⁴⁷ *de la a zhes pa ni dngos po thams cad kyi rang bzhin te/ ma skyes pa’i phyir a ni chos thams cad kyi sgo’o zhes pa’i gsung la dpyad na/ thams cad ’byung ba’i sgo ste/ de yang gsal zab gnyis su med pa’i rang bzhin nam mkha’ dkyil ’khor lta bu brtags pa thams cad kyi ma skyes pa dang po nas lhun gyis grub pa nyid du shes par bya ba’o// de yi ngo bo las shes pa tsam lta bur snang ba ni bi ste/ rig pa zhes pa’i ming gi yi ge dang po’o// (Sukusuma, D 93a.5-7; P 111b.7-112a.2).*

⁴⁸ Though this function of the syllable *a* to symbolize origin is found in tantric Buddhist literature more widely, it is specifically employed in this way in Vilāsavajra’s *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, which we know to have influenced Buddhajñānapāda’s work, as he reproduces quite a few passages from it in his *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* (See Tribe 2017, 62-66 on the use of the syllable *a* in the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*). Tribe points to the value of the syllable *a* in the earlier Prajñāpāramitā literature as a symbol of ultimate truth as expressed through negation, given the syllable *a*’s function as a negating prefix in Sanskrit. He also notes that the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* specifically emphasizes the syllable *a*’s function as source or origin, as the first syllable in the Sanskrit alphabet (Tribe 2017, 65). The *Nāmasaṃgīti* itself announces the syllable *a* to be “the foremost of all syllables, the great good, the supreme sound” and indicates that Mañjuśrījñānasattva himself is “born from the syllable *a*” (Tribe 2017, 404).

⁴⁹ Slight variants of these same syllables (*ślām*, *śvām*, *hyām* etc.) are used to represent the great elements in the *bhūtaśuddhi* practices in some Śaiva texts, as well, so it appears that their use is common to multiple tantric systems (See Flood 2002, 30).

⁵⁰ *Sukusuma*, D 93b.1-3.

narrative elaborated in verse later in the text.⁵¹ Thus the initial syllables of Mañjuśrī’s teaching in the *Dvitiyakrama* are cogently explained to convey precisely this same cosmogony.⁵²

Cosmogony Enacted

While I am unaware of other *narrative* presentations in Indian tantric Buddhist literature of the particular cosmogonic account presented in the *Dvitiyakrama*, aspects of the account do appear as a standard feature of quite a number of tantric *ritual* texts, specifically *sādhana*s pertaining to the generation stage. In generation stage *sādhana* both the practitioner’s world and personal identity are recreated or generated through meditative visualization via a process explained in commentarial literature as mimicking the features of *samsāra*, but reimagined in a purified form. The process of producing such a pure universe begins with a recollection of the emptiness that is its nature, and which functions in the ritual as its source. This recollection is accomplished variously in different generation stage *sādhana*s. In Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* it is done in two ways: first by the recollection of the so-called “three gates of liberation,” by means of which the practitioner calls to mind the fact that phenomena are emptiness “because of lacking essence” (*ngo bo nyid dang ‘bral phyir*), without characteristics “because they are naturally causeless” (*rang bzhin rgyud dang bral bas*), and beyond aspiration “because they are free from conceptualization” (*rtog pa rnams dang bral phyir*).⁵³ This recollection is followed by a second affirmation, not just of emptiness, but of the empty wisdom that is the practitioner’s nature: she recites the mantra *om śunyatāvajrajñānasvabhāvātmake ‘ham*, “*om*, I have the nature of emptiness, vajra wisdom.”⁵⁴ In what has become a standard feature of generation stage *sādhana*s, shortly after this point in the ritual, during the process of generating the pure universe that becomes a support for the celestial palace of the practitioner-as-deity, the great elements are gradually produced precisely in the very same order in which they emerge in the *Dvitiyakrama*’s cosmogonic narrative. This syllabic generation of the elements is *not* found in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* (nor his three very short Jambhala *sādhana*s), but we have reason to believe Buddhajñānapāda was familiar with the process (which I discuss below); indeed it may have formed a part of the visualization that the practitioner was instructed to follow, although not mentioned directly in the text.⁵⁵ In this process the syllable *yaṃ* is used first to generate a *maṇḍala* of wind, *raṃ* to generate fire, *vaṃ* to generate water, and finally *laṃ* to produce earth, as the practitioner

⁵¹ *ibid.*, D 93b.2-3.

⁵² As mentioned above, the remainder of Mañjuśrī’s initial syllabic address, “*a la la la ho*,” is taken by Vaidyapāda to refer to the method through which one comes to realization, perfection stage practice with a consort (indicated by *a*), and the realization that emerges from that practice (indicated by *la la la ho*) (*Sukusuma*, D 93b.5-94a.4; P 112b.1-113a.1). Indeed, we find the set of syllables *a la la ho* (sometimes with just two repetitions of *la*, other times with three) in other texts as well, often corresponding to the emission and offering of *bodhicitta* in perfection stage practices. See, for example, PT841, 2v.2-3: *byang chub kyi sems babs na/ a la la ho zhes brjod de/ lha mo mnyes par bsam...*; Chapter Eight of the *Thabs kyi zhags pa* (ITJ321, 30r.2-3): *byang chub kyi sems bab na a la la la ho zhes dkyil ‘khor thams cad la dgyes par mchod nas...*; Chapter 15 of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* may likewise show a connection between the syllables *a la la ho* and the emission of *bodhicitta* (D 126b.7-127a.1) *de dag kun dgyes par rol pa’i dkyil gyi ‘khor sprin ‘byung ba zhes bya ba’i ting nge ‘dzin la snyoms par zhugs nas sku dang gsung dang thugs rdo rje las ‘di dag phyung ngo// om āḥ (āḥ] sugg. em., āḥ D) hūṃ vajra pra be sha a la la hoḥ zhes brjod pas ‘byung mo’i rgyal mo rnams shin tu chags pa’i yid g.yos nas padma’i dkyil ‘khor sdud cing rgyas par gyur nas....* Thanks to Jacob Dalton for bringing these additional references to the syllables *a la la ho* to my attention.

⁵³ *Samantabhadra-sādhana*, verse 18, D 29b.4 (= *Caturaṅga-sādhana*, D 36b.7-37a.1).

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, D 29b.4 (= *Caturaṅga-sādhana*, D 37a.1).

⁵⁵ In fact, it is quite common in modern Tibetan generation stage *sādhana*s for this process to go unmentioned in the *sādhana* itself but still be indicated by the commentaries as part of the visualization for practicing the *sādhana*.

meditatively brings forth the deity’s pure world. The syllable *hūṃ* can have a number of functions, but one of them is as a generative syllable, or “seed-syllable” that symbolizes the awakened mind of all buddhas; in generation stage *sādhana* such a seed-syllable is used to bring forth the form of the deity.⁵⁶ In this way, then, the standard process of generation stage *sādhana* practice involves a ritual re-enacting of the very same cosmogonic process narrated in the *Dvītyākrama*.

This gradual generation of the great elements *does* appear in Śākyamitra’s *Mukhāgama*, which, Śākyamitra tells us, was based on Buddhajñānapāda’s oral instructions. The *Mukhāgama* is essentially a rewriting of the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* with some additional features, including details on generating the protection circle that are absent in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra*; it is in that section of the *Mukhāgama* that the gradual generation of the elements appears in its standard progression, precisely as described above.⁵⁷ The standard process of the unfolding of the elements is also found in other generation stage *sādhana*s from around this period or slightly later, including the Ārya School’s *Piṇḍīkṛta-sādhana*. It does not, however, appear in the *sādhana*-like sequence in chapter four of Vilāsavajra’s commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*.⁵⁸ The absence of this sequence in Vilāsavajra’s work, and its presence in Śākyamitra’s, which was supposedly based on Buddhajñānapāda’s oral instructions, along with its presence in *sādhana*s from Dunhuang,⁵⁹ and in the slightly later *Piṇḍīkṛta-sādhana*, and its proliferation in later *sādhana*s suggests that as a generation stage ritual procedure, the visualized gradual unfolding of the elements may have been a relatively recent development in Buddhajñānapāda’s time, but one of which he was almost certainly aware. In its narrative describing the same cosmogonic process, the *Dvītyākrama* even uses precisely the language found in many generation stage *sādhana*s to describe the production of the elements: the arising of a “*maṇḍala*” of wind, fire, water, and earth. It seems, then, that the passages from the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka* put into narrative form precisely the same cosmogonic sequence that was beginning to be employed in generation stage ritual practice around this same period. While its ritual form became a standard feature of generation stage *sādhana*, however, the corresponding narrative presentation does not seem to have become such a popular feature of later tantric literature. Given the relative proliferation of this cosmogonic sequence in generation stage *sādhana*s and its singular narrative representation in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, we can suspect that in the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka* Buddhajñānapāda was likely articulating in narrative form—in effect, doctrinalizing—a more widely known ritual sequence.

⁵⁶ The particular seed-syllable or generative syllable used varies depending on the deity, but as the general seed-syllable of awakened mind, *hūṃ* can function as representative of any and all such seed-syllables that would give rise to the deity. Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the “syllabic cosmogony” in the *Dvītyākrama* describes *hūṃ* as representative of the five aggregates, but also explains that the five buddhas are the purified form of those aggregates, thus linking the cosmogonic devolution with the possibility of its purification through recognizing or recreating it in a pure form (*Sukusuma*, D 93b.3-4).

⁵⁷ Vaidyapāda, in his commentary on the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* also notes that there are more details to the protection circle than found in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* itself. Rather than adding those details in his commentary, though, Vaidyapāda states that they should be learned from the oral tradition (*de’i cho ga ni man ngag gis shes par bya’o*) (*Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 139b.3). Other features of Śākyamitra’s *Mukhāgama* that are absent from the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* do appear in Vaidyapāda’s *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, suggesting that both Vaidyapāda and Śākyamitra were indeed basing their respective works on oral explanations of the practice, even if they differed (which they apparently did!) on what points should or should not be committed to writing.

⁵⁸ Tribe (2017, 55-60) gives a brief outline of the *sādhana*-like ritual from the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*. The same volume also includes Tribe’s Sanskrit edition and English translation of the first five chapters of that work. The *sādhana* material occurs primarily in Chapter Four.

⁵⁹ e.g. ITJ 331/2. Thanks to Jacob Dalton for bringing this to my attention.

A Buddhist Cosmogony?

Since the Buddhist tradition holds that there is no omnipotent creator God, Buddhist literature on the whole displays a dearth of cosmogonic narratives when compared to theistic traditions. The standard Buddhist cosmology, outlined in classical works like the *Abhidharmakośa* and *Abhidharmasammucaya*, essentially follows that of the broader Indic worldview of the time. It seems that elements of the cosmogony narrated in Buddhajñānapāda's works and ritually enacted in generation stage *sādhana*s likewise owe a debt to systems outside of the Buddhist fold: the cosmogonic narrative outlined in the *Dvītyākrama* bears a striking, if significantly abbreviated, resemblance to the unfolding of the *tattvas* of the Sāṃkhya tradition, which were later adopted and adapted into Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions, as well.⁶⁰ Like Buddhism, Sāṃkhya is a non-theistic tradition, and thus an expedient source for a nontheistic cosmogony that could be adapted to fit a Buddhist narrative. The Classical Sāṃkhya⁶¹ system is a decidedly dualist one, and outlines twenty-five *tattvas* that comprise the entirety of existence.⁶² Sāṃkhya upholds the hard duality of *puruṣa*, the individual, self,⁶³ or consciousness, and *prakṛti*, the primordial substance, which constitute two among the *tattvas*.⁶⁴ The remainder of the twenty-five *tattvas* are manifestations that unfold from *prakṛti*, but crucially they all share the feature of appearing to be what they are not: all of the remaining *tattvas* appear in their various guises, and yet they are actually nothing other than transformations of *prakṛti*, the primordial substance itself.⁶⁵ Of the twenty-five *tattvas*, only six correspond to categories in Buddhajñānapāda's cosmogonic narrative, but for those that do correspond the parallels are close. All of these correspondences fall upon the *prakṛti* side of the Sāṃkhya duality divide; the *puruṣa*, corresponding to the self, is notably absent.

The first *tattva*⁶⁶ of the Classical Sāṃkhya system is the primordial substance, *prakṛti*, the source of all manifestations that appear to be other than it, but are actually not. This “*mūlaprakṛti*,” the “fundamental primordial substance,”⁶⁷ is described in the *Sāṃkhyakārikās* as uncreated;⁶⁸ it functions as a type of “ultimate first principle.”⁶⁹ In Buddhajñānapāda's cosmogonic narrative, this corresponds with nondual wisdom, which he describes as “the supreme nondual nature” and “the self that pervades all things.”⁷⁰ Expressed in the

⁶⁰ I'm grateful to Ryan Damron for a number of conversations on this topic that turned my attention to parallels with the Sāṃkhya system. See Goodall 2016 on the adoption of additional *tattvas* into Śaiva tantra.

⁶¹ The Sāṃkhya system underwent a series of developments from early systems to the so-called “Classical Sāṃkhya” of the *Sāṃkhyakārikās*, composed by Īśvarakṛṣṇa around the fifth century CE (Kent 1982, 259). The system I am comparing with Buddhajñānapāda's cosmogonic narrative is the Classical Sāṃkhya system.

⁶² Larson's *Classical Sāṃkhya* gives a good overview of the *tattvas*, including a very clear chart outlining their progression (Larson 1969, 236).

⁶³ The *puruṣa* is the “self” in an individual but not a personal sense; the aspect of personal ego appears as the fourth *tattva*, *ahaṃkāra* (ibid. 1969, 170-71).

⁶⁴ ibid. 1969, 172.

⁶⁵ ibid. 1969, 173-4. The manifest world—beginning right from the third *tattva*, *buddhi*—is just an emergence from or evolution of *prakṛti*, described as a “transformation or modification of itself” (ibid. 1969, 176-7).

⁶⁶ In his earlier work Larson (1969) numbers *prakṛti* as the second *tattva*, while *puruṣa* is stated to be the first. In a later article (Larson 1983) in which he considers the *tattvas* in terms of their numerical value, he assigns *prakṛti* as number one, and places *puruṣa* as number twenty-five. This makes more sense given *mūlaprakṛti*'s function as the primordial or first substance, so I have followed that schema here. In any case, the crucial aspect is that *puruṣa* stands on the opposite side of a dualistic system in contrast to *prakṛti* and all of the remaining *tattvas*, which remains the case whichever way the numbering is done.

⁶⁷ The term *mūlaprakṛti* is specific to the Classical Sāṃkhya system and is used in place of term *avyakta*, used for the second *tattva* in earlier Sāṃkhya systems (See Larson 1969, 160).

⁶⁸ ibid. 1969, 160.

⁶⁹ ibid., 161.

⁷⁰ *Muktītilaka*, D 47b.4.

Dvīṭīyakrama's "syllabic cosmogony" as the syllable *a*, Vaidyapāda comments that it is "the nature of all things because they are unarisen (i.e. uncreated)."⁷¹ The next Sāṃkhya *tattva*, the first to emerge from the *prakṛti* as its manifestation, is *buddhi*, the "mind," or "intellect." The *Sāṃkhyakārikās* describe *buddhi* as characterized by ascertainment or determination.⁷² In the *Sāṃkhyakārikabhāṣya*, two of the synonyms given for *buddhi* are "great" (*mahat*), and "thought" (*mati*).⁷³ This *tattva* corresponds in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*'s narrative with the "great thought" (*rnam tog chen po*), in the *Muktītilaka*'s briefer narrative called simply "thought" (*rtog*), which is the first aspect of duality to emerge from the nondual nature. As noted above, Vaidyapāda's commentary makes it clear that "**the great thought**, the mind alone, **arises** in a manner [in which it appears] **as if** it were endowed with conceptuality"⁷⁴ (emphasis mine), thus indicating that this manifestation is actually nothing other than the nondual wisdom from which it arose. This is parallel to the Sāṃkhya view that the manifestations of *prakṛti* only *appear* to be something else, while in fact they are transformations of the *prakṛti* itself. The parallels between Buddhajñānapāda's cosmogonic narrative and the unfolding of the *tattvas* now fall away, as the Sāṃkhya system continues to set forth an extensive series of *tattvas* that follow from *buddhi*.⁷⁵ However, the parallels pick up again in the final four of the *tattvas* that emerge as manifestations of *prakṛti*: wind, fire, water, and earth, which parallel perfectly the order of the emergence of the great elements from the "great thought" in Buddhajñānapāda's narrative.

What is more, this is not the only appearance of Sāṃkhya ideas in Buddhajñānapāda's writings. In the section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* outlining perfection stage practices, when describing the descent of the so-called "indestructible *bindu*" downwards from the practitioner's heart, the text specifies that it descends "in the form of *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva*,"⁷⁶ which are the names of the three *gūṇas*, or characteristics, outlined in the Sāṃkhya system. This is particularly significant in light of the observation made above about the correspondence between nondual wisdom in Buddhajñānapāda's system and *prakṛti* in the Sāṃkhya. The indestructible *bindu* is said in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* to be the "relative form" of nondual wisdom (a point that is explored further in the section below), and the three *gūṇas* are, in the Sāṃkhya system, the constituent aspects of *prakṛti*.⁷⁷ The statement on the descent of the *bindu* "in the form of *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva*," then, further strengthens the correspondence between nondual wisdom—of which the

⁷¹ *Sukusuma*, D 93a.5-6.

⁷² Larson 1969, 181.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *rnam rtog chen po zhes te sems tsam rtog (rtog) P, rtogs D) pa dang 'brel pa lta bu'i tshul du byung ste zhes bya 'o// (Sukusuma, D 97a.4; P 116b.3-4).*

⁷⁵ These are: *ahaṃkāra* (ego), *manas* (mind), the five *buddhīndriyas* (sense faculties; hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting, smelling), the five *karmendriyas* (faculties of action; speaking, grasping, walking, excreting, generating), the five *tanmātrās* (subtle elements; sound, touch, form, taste, smell), and finally the five *mahābhūtas* (gross elements; space, wind, fire, water, earth) (Larson 1969, 236). Perhaps it seems odd that the correspondences with the *tattvas* would break off precisely at the point that seems to hold the greatest similarity to Buddhist thought: with the *tattva* of *ahaṃkāra*, ego. But we have to remember the ritual function of this cosmogonic sequence in Buddhist tantric practice: the cosmogony is re-enacted in the generation stage as a way to purify the mistaken process of emergence into *samsāra*. *Ahaṃkāra* is innately negative in the Indic worldview, and does not have a pure form (apart from just not doing it!). What is more, in *sādhana* practice the generation of the mind, sense faculties, capacities for activity, and so forth, occur with respect to the practitioner-as-deity, not with respect to the practitioner's ordinary identity. In the generation stage this process of the generation of the deity happens only after the production of the outer world, made up of the elements, which form the support for the deity's celestial palace, at the center of which the deity is generated.

⁷⁶ *rdul dang mun pa dang// snying stobs tshul du...babs// (Dvīṭīyakrama, verse 188d-89a).*

⁷⁷ For our purposes here it is enough to simply note that the three *gūṇas* are understood to constitute *prakṛti*. For more details on the nature and character of these three and their function in the Classical Sāṃkhya system see Larson 1969, esp. pp. 162-67.

bindu is the “relative form”—and the idea of *prakṛti*. While the correspondences between the two systems are certainly far from comprehensive, the aspects that do correspond are close enough that it does appear that the cosmogony described in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, and thus also the enactment of that cosmogony in generation stage *sādhana* practice, have roots in the Sāṃkhya system of the *tattvas*.

The “Relative Form” of Nondual Wisdom as Cosmic Source

Not only does Buddhajñānapāda declare nondual wisdom to be the source of the phenomenal world, he also makes the striking statement that even its relative form, the indestructible *bindu*, acts as that source. This claim is found in yet another description in the *Dvītyākrama* of the emergence of the world, in addition to the cosmogonic narrative and “syllabic cosmogony” found at the beginning of the text. This third narrative, however, specifically references the world’s *re*-emergence after its destruction at the end of a cosmic aeon. The idea of cyclic time and cosmological cycles of arising and destruction is part of the wider Indic worldview and, like other features of the Indic cosmology, was adopted into Buddhist cosmology from an early date. This passage from the *Dvītyākrama*, which immediately follows instructions on the three types of perfection stage *bindu* meditation, explains that the cosmos re-emerges not just from nondual wisdom, but from its “relative form.”⁷⁸

Although nondual wisdom itself
 Has taken on a relative form,
 Even when the inanimate, and so forth, along with the animate,
 Brahmā and the others, the gods, *asuras*, and the rest [242]
 Completely disappear,
 That *bindu* will not cease.
 Everything animate and inanimate⁷⁹
 Will again be made to emerge from it. [243]
 But because they do not realize
 What is genuine,
 Beings are confused, [believing everything] to be arisen from Brahmā’s egg.
 That [*bindu*], which cannot be moved by any phenomena, [244]
 Which cannot be destroyed by anything at all,
 As long as it remains embodied
 Brings about [engagement in virtuous] activity and non[-virtuous] acts.⁸⁰
 Therefore⁸¹ the meditation on the indestructible *bindu*,
 Stable and beyond destruction, is explained. [245]⁸²

The “relative form” (*kun rdzob gzugs*) assumed by nondual wisdom is identified by Vaidyapāda as the so-called “indestructible *bindu*” (*mi shig pa’i thig le*), described earlier in the *Dvītyākrama* as a sphere about the size of a chickpea, radiant with five-colored light at the

⁷⁸ I present further details of Buddhajñānapāda’s perfection stage system in Chapter Six.

⁷⁹ rgyu] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), rgyur D C S P N

⁸⁰ Here I rely upon Vaidyapāda’s commentary, which notes that abandoning killing is an example of “activity” and killing is an example of “non-acts” (*Sukusuma*, D 122a.2-3).

⁸¹ pas] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), pa D C S P N

⁸² *da ni gnyis med ye shes nyid// kun rdzob gzugs la brten nas kyang// mi g.yo la sogs g.yo dang bcas// tshangs sogs lha dang lha min sogs// thams cad rab tu mi snang yang// thig le ‘gog par mi ‘gyur te// [242] rgyu dang mi rgyu bcas pa kun// slar yang de las ‘byung bar byed// de las skye bo rnams kyis ni// yang dag ma rtogs pa yi phyir// [243] tshangs pa’i sgo nga las skyes par// ‘khrul pas chos rnams kyis mi bsgul// gang gis kyang ni mi shigs pa// ji srid ‘di ni lus gnas pas// [244] las dang las min rab byed pas// brtan po ‘jigs pa rab spangs pa’i// mi shigs thig le bsgoms par bshad// [245] (*Dvītyākrama*, verses 242-45)*

center of the practitioner’s heart.⁸³ This *bindu* and others are visualized and manipulated during the perfection stage practices outlined in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and the *Muktilaka*. But the indestructible *bindu* is here described not just as a feature of the subtle body connected to perfection stage practices, but as the very source from which the entirety of the animate and inanimate cosmos re-emerges after its destruction at the end of an aeon;⁸⁴ in the face of cosmic destruction, it alone does not cease. Vaidyapāda explains this to be the case because “it has the nature of vajra wisdom, so fire and the rest cannot destroy it.”⁸⁵ The use of the term “relative” (*kun rdzob*) to describe the form of nondual wisdom as a *bindu* of light makes it clear that this form is not nondual wisdom’s ultimate (*don dam*) nature, which is presumably beyond form; wisdom simply assumes (*brten*, literally “relies upon”) this form on the relative level. And yet this *bindu*—and since the term *bindu* is used, this statement presumably *does* refer specifically to the relative form, not just its ultimate nature—“does not cease” at the end of an aeon when all else is destroyed. This is a striking statement in a Buddhist text, especially in reference to a phenomenon declared to pertain to the relative level.

What follows is a condemnation of the views of confused individuals who “believe everything to be arisen from Brahmā’s egg.” The belief in arising from Brahmā’s egg references a non-Buddhist theistic cosmogonic narrative in which the universe is said to have emerged from a cosmic egg produced by the god Brahmā.⁸⁶ The passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* appears to suggest that the confusion about Brahmā’s egg occurs because certain individuals have mistaken the *actual* emergence of the cosmos from the indestructible *bindu* to instead be emergence from Brahmā’s egg; that is, Buddhajñānapāda explains the theistic narrative of emergence from Brahmā’s egg as simply a mistaken apprehension of the genuine cosmic emergence from the indestructible *bindu*. Vaidyapāda makes this point explicit. He writes, “Because they **do not realize genuine reality**, they do not know it to be the indestructible *bindu* and **are confused**, calling [it] **Brahmā’s egg**. They think that due to the karma of beings, even though Brahmā does not appear, he left behind an egg and everything arises from that, so they say that Brahmā is their ancestor.”⁸⁷ In referencing the confusion of beings who believe the world to be born from Brahmā’s egg, Buddhajñānapāda expresses familiarity with a theistic cosmogony that was apparently similar enough to his narrative of cosmic emergence to warrant mention, while simultaneously subordinating the other account to his own assertions about the true source of the cosmos.

Religious texts from multiple traditions in medieval India used a variety of strategies of subordination to distinguish themselves from and assert their own supremacy over competing systems. Such narratives are particularly common in cases where traditions shared significant commonalities. For example, the Buddhist tantra, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, states that the Buddha taught the Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Gāruḍa and other tantras in order to help outsider, non-Buddhist

⁸³ *Sukusuma*, D 121b.2; *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 168. Vaidyapāda repeats the precise description of this *bindu* from earlier in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* at this point in the *Sukusuma*.

⁸⁴ Vaidyapāda’s commentary here specifies that this is in the context of the destructive fires and so forth at the end of an aeon (*Sukusuma*, D 121b.4).

⁸⁵ *ye shes kyi rdo rje’i rang bzhin pas na me la sogs pa gang gis kyang zhig tu med pa...* (*Sukusuma*, D 121b.4-5).

⁸⁶ There are multiple versions of this narrative in Purāṇic literature. One of these, set forth in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (the “Brahmā’s Egg *Purāṇa*”), is articulated within a strikingly Sāṃkhya-influenced system. Yet unlike the *Sāṃkhyakārikās* of Classical Sāṃkhya, the Sāṃkhya principles set forth in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* are adapted to the theistic context of its narrative (See Tagare 1958, esp. pp. 28-35). The *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, like other *purāṇas*, has many compositional layers; it has been dated to 400-1000 CE (White 2003, 310n136).

⁸⁷ *des yang dag pa’i don ma rtogs pa’i phyir mi shigs pa’i thig ler ma shes te/ tshangs pa’i sgo nga zhes ‘khrul te/ sems can gyi las kyi tshangs pa mi snang yang de’i sgo nga lus pas de las thams cad skyes pa’o zhes ‘dogs shing tshangs pa la mes po zhes smra ste/* (*Sukusuma*, D 121b.6).

practitioners.⁸⁸ From the opposite perspective, there is a Śaiva account in the *Haracaritacintāmaṇi* in which Bṛhaspati, in order to make it possible for Śiva to destroy some demons who were following a Śaiva guru, tricked them into doing “Buddhist” practice, which he simply made up using Śaiva elements. The disciples all converted to Buddhism, including accepting the views of emptiness and no self, which then allowed Śiva to destroy them.⁸⁹ Buddhajñānapāda’s assertion that the Brahmā’s egg cosmogony is merely a mistaken apprehension of cosmic emergence from the indestructible *bindu* has the same function as the narratives just described—the subordination of an alternative tradition. However, in doing this, also like in those other cases, it openly acknowledges a similarity between the two. But Buddhajñānapāda’s claim perhaps also has the function of preventing potential attacks on the doctrine of the emergence of the cosmos from the indestructible *bindu* as unbefitting of a Buddhist system by preemptively asserting the Brahmā’s egg narrative to be precisely a non-Buddhist misapprehension of a Buddhist truth.

The cosmogonic accounts in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings thus show the influence of more than one non-Buddhist system on his thought. They also, however, provide doctrinal basis and support for multiple aspects—those relating to both the generation and perfection stages—of the tantric Buddhist ritual systems that were emerging and growing in prominence in his time. Anchored in the nondual wisdom that is at the core of the view of reality and Buddhist practice espoused in his writings, these narratives of cosmic emergence explain the world, and the central Buddhist problem of *samsāra*, to be an illusory devolution from the true reality of nondual wisdom. In these accounts we have again seen doctrine ensconced in narrative, similar to Buddhajñānapāda’s creative framing of the content of the *Dvītyākrama* within his own personal narrative. In the *Muktilaka* we find yet another use of narrative—the story of Śākyamuni Buddha’s awakening—to powerfully convey a doctrine about the ways in which nondual wisdom can be communicated and realized.

III. The Transmission of Nondual Wisdom, Its Cultivation, and Instantaneous Perfection: The Structure of the Higher Tantric Path

Any yogin who wishes to realize this sublime reality of suchness should please a guru who knows this and genuinely receive the reality, just as it is.

-Mañjuśrī instructing Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

Buddhajñānapāda indicates at multiple places in the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka* that the experiential realization of nondual wisdom, or “suchness,” is transmitted directly from a guru to his or her disciple. This true reality of suchness is often said to be “received” (*blang*) or “obtained” (*thob*) from the guru’s words. However, Buddhajñānapāda is also careful to clarify that despite this language of “receiving,” as if suchness were something transferred from an outside source (i.e. the guru), in fact it is simply realized within the disciple himself in reliance on the guru’s words. Several references to the receiving or obtaining of suchness in Buddhajñānapāda’s works occur in passages that involve or suggest the context of tantric initiation, and all such references indicate that receiving suchness takes place prior to the disciple’s training in suchness on the second stage of the tantric path. Other statements speak to the immediacy or instantaneous dawning of wisdom, both in the context of the receiving of suchness, and more frequently in the context of post-initiatory training, including at the final moment of awakening. Through examining these assertions, made at various points in

⁸⁸ Sanderson 2009, 130.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 222.

Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, we are able to see the basic features and structure of the higher tantric path—the path of the perfection stage—according to his thought.⁹⁰ Many of these aspects are brought together in perhaps the most powerful and striking way in which Buddhajñānapāda advocates this higher tantric path: the narrative of Śākyamuni Buddha’s awakening, recounted in the *Muktītilaka*. In Buddhajñānapāda’s retelling of the story, that quintessential Buddhist event is re-cast as a direct transference, or pointing out, of nondual wisdom to Śākyamuni by the *sugatas*, followed by his (brief!) training in that wisdom, and finally resulting in its instantaneous full realization at the moment of his awakening. Let us first examine some of the ways in which Buddhajñānapāda *tells* us about the direct communication of nondual wisdom from a guru prior to its cultivation and full realization by the disciple, and then we will look at how he *shows* this process to us in his recounting of Śākyamuni Buddha’s awakening.

Receiving Suchness

A number of passages in both the *Dvītyākrama* and *Muktītilaka* reference the “receiving” or “obtaining” of suchness from the guru, usually through his words. Introducing the yoga of *utkrānti* (Tib. ‘*pho ba*),⁹¹ which it advocates for a practitioner who has not had the opportunity to perfect other types of training during his lifetime, the *Dvītyākrama* states:

Someone who has pleased the guru
 And received the vase [initiation] and the others
 Together with the *samayas* and vows given by him
 And thus obtains the suchness⁹² |327|
 That is found through the guru’s words...⁹³

The *Muktītilaka*, describing the “inner yoga,” which Buddhajñānapāda identifies as the “supreme suchness” (*de nyid mchog*),⁹⁴ states:

[When] this inner yoga
 Is obtained from the mouth
 Of the sublime guru, one has no doubts.⁹⁵

At the conclusion of the *Muktītilaka* Buddhajñānapāda suggests that:

...Any yogin who wishes to realize
 This sublime reality of suchness
 Should please a guru who knows this
 And genuinely receive the reality, just as it is.⁹⁶

While all of these passages use the language of “obtaining” or “receiving” to describe the process by which the disciple comes into direct contact with “suchness” or “reality,” the first two clearly indicate a teaching context where the guru’s *words* are the “source” of the suchness that

⁹⁰ I examine the yogic practices of the perfection stage according to Buddhajñānapāda’s writings in Chapter Six. This section focuses on the doctrinal aspects that frame the structure of that path.

⁹¹ I discuss this practice as it appears in Buddhajñānapāda’s works in more detail in Chapter Six on the perfection stage practices in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings.

⁹² Vaidyapāda specifies that this refers to having received the instructions on suchness together with the *sādhana* for accomplishing suchness via the seven yogas (*Sukusuma*, D 130a.3). I discuss the seven yogas in brief below, and in more detail in Chapter Seven.

⁹³ *gang zhig bla ma mnyes byas nas// des gnang dam sdom bcas ba ru// bum pa la sogs rab thob ste// bla ma’i zhal las rnyed pa yi//* |327| *de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing//* (*Dvītyākrama*, verses 327a-327a).

⁹⁴ *Muktītilaka*, D 50b.3. Vaidyapāda also indicates that the “inner yoga” is the “suchness of all phenomena” (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 55a.7).

⁹⁵ *de yi nang gi sbyor ba ni// bla ma dam pa’i zhal nas ni// thob kyi de la the tshom med//* (*Muktītilaka*, D 50a.5; P 60a.6).

⁹⁶ *de bas de nyid don dam pa// rnal ‘byor gang gis rtogs ‘dod pas// de shes bla ma mnyes byas te// ji bzhin don ni yang dag blang//* (*Muktītilaka*, D 52a.4; P 62b.5-6)

is received. Other references in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings also mention the guru’s words as functioning in some way as the source of the disciple’s realization:

Luminous and perfectly joyful like the sky,
The self-arisen great **adhideva*⁹⁷
Is realized from the words of the guru
By means of innate wisdom. |143|⁹⁸

Vaidyapāda’s commentary on this verse from the *Dvītyākrama* further emphasizes the guru’s role in a process of “transference:” “**From the words of the guru** means that due to what is transferred by the **words** of the great causal *ācārya*,⁹⁹ the bliss that actually arises within oneself should be realized.”¹⁰⁰ The mention of something being “transferred” by the guru to the disciple is repeated at several other places in Vaidyapāda’s commentaries, and Buddhajñānapāda uses the term once in that regard, as well. These statements show us clearly that Buddhajñānapāda held suchness, reality, or nondual wisdom to be something that can be “received” by the disciple from the guru or “transferred” from the guru to the disciple. Most of the references to this process also specifically mention that it takes place through the guru’s words.

Although at the outset of the *Dvītyākrama* Buddhajñānapāda clearly asserted nondual wisdom to be the very nature of all phenomena, and further specified it to be the nature of the mind, repeated statements to the effect that suchness or wisdom is “transferred” or “received” might nonetheless be construed to describe a situation in which something enters the disciple from outside. In the *Muktilaka* Buddhajñānapāda is careful to make it clear that this is not the case. Again, in reference to the “inner yoga” (that Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda identify as suchness), the *Muktilaka* explains:

It is only said to come from elsewhere
Though [in fact] it is realized by self-aware bliss,
It is thus explained as “bestowing initiation.”¹⁰¹

Clarifying that “**from elsewhere** means from the guru,” Vaidyapāda writes, “Such an essence only nominally appears as if it **comes from** the guru, but it is [actually] **realized by** means of **self-aware bliss**. This is thus also called **bestowing initiation**.”¹⁰² In another passage from the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, Vaidyapāda likewise indicates that while the guru’s words are the method through which the realization takes place, the wisdom that is realized is the disciple’s own. Referencing, presumably, the nondual wisdom that according to Buddhajñānapāda’s system is the disciple’s own true nature, Vaidyapāda writes of “having realized *one’s own* wisdom through the words of one’s guru...”¹⁰³ Thus we see in these writings, on one hand, the use of terms like “transferring” and “receiving,” and on the other hand, claims that it is not

⁹⁷ Buddhajñānapāda uses the term **adhideva* to refer to the final result of awakening at several points in his writings. I address this point below.

⁹⁸ *gsal zhing rab dga’ nam mkha’ dra// rang byung lhag pa’i lha chen po// lhan cig skyes pa’i ye shes kyis// bla ma’i kha las rtogs par bya//* |143| (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 143).

⁹⁹ The “causal *ācārya*” is one of three types of *ācārya* or guru (he uses the terms *guru* and *ācārya* interchangeably to reference these three) mentioned in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. The causal *ācārya* is explained in a verse cited by Vaidyapāda earlier in the *Sukusuma*, as well as in the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, to refer to the guru who bestows initiation upon the disciple. I address the topic of the three types of gurus in more detail below.

¹⁰⁰ *bla ma’i kha las zhes te// de [de] P, de’i D) rgyu’i (rgyu’i] P, rgyud D) slob dpon chen po’i kha las rnam par ‘pho ba las mngon sum du bde ba rang la [la] D, las P) ‘byung ba rtogs par bya’o zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 111b.4-5; P 134a.8).

¹⁰¹ *ming tsam gyis ni logs (logs] P, log D) ‘byung yang// rang rig bde bas rtogs byas na// dbang bskur shes ni bshad pa yin//* (*Muktilaka*, D 50b.2; P 60b.4)

¹⁰² *De lta bu’i ngo bo de ming tsam gyis bla ma las ‘byung ba lta bur snang yang/ rang rig pa’i bde bas rtogs pas na dbang bskur ba zhes kyang de la bya’o//* (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 55b.7-56a.1; P 143a.4).

¹⁰³ *rang gi bla ma’i kha nas rang gi ye shes rtogs...* (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47a.1; P 331b.7-332a.1).

actually a transfer that takes place, but a realization within the disciple that is catalyzed by the guru’s words. These statements seem intended to balance the necessity of relying upon a guru to “receive” suchness with the fact that the suchness “received” must be understood as something already present within the disciple as her innate nature.

The Transference of Suchness in the Context of Initiation

Like the passage just discussed, several of the references to receiving suchness in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings mention or suggest an initiatory context, and all such references make clear that the transference of suchness was meant to—or, indeed, *had* to—take place prior to the disciple’s training in it. In Buddhajñānapāda’s time a series of three tantric initiations had developed, and the early Jñānapāda School, even several centuries after Buddhajñānapāda’s life, is generally known in modern scholarship for representing a system in which just three initiations, rather than the four of later traditions, are bestowed (although this narrative may be challenged by Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*).¹⁰⁴ While there is evidence in Buddhajñānapāda’s work indicating that he understood the disciple to come into direct contact with suchness in some way through both of the “higher” tantric initiations related to perfection stage practices—the second, the *guhyaḥbhiṣeka*, and the third, the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*—his writings and those of his immediate disciples suggest that the disciple’s “obtaining” of suchness took place in the context of the third initiation, or in an instruction given just afterwards.

The *Muktilaka* contains a reference to the realization of suchness in an initiatory context, using language that suggests the third initiation, in particular. This passage, already cited above, is found in a section where a great number of tantric practices, not just initiation, are homologized with the “inner yoga” of suchness. The text states:

It is only said to come from elsewhere
Though [in fact] it is realized by self-aware bliss,
It is thus explained as “bestowing initiation.”¹⁰⁵

It is the description of suchness as realized by the disciple’s “self-aware bliss,” that points to the third initiation. In this initiation, the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*, the disciple entered into sexual union with a partner and the blissful experiences of union were, under the guidance of the guru, used to evoke, point to, or act as an example of the nonconceptual experience of suchness itself.¹⁰⁶ A section of the *Dvītyākrama* that describes the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*¹⁰⁷ states,

In the space of the lotus, the jewel of the vajra and the heart of the lotus join, and in vajra posture
The mind is observed, [within] up to the jewel. The bliss that arises is ascertained [and] that itself is wisdom.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Isaacson 2010b, 269; Wedemeyer 2014. Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, however, shows evidence that runs contrary to the narrative that the early Jñānapāda School on the whole did not know or advocate a “fourth,” since in the *Yogasapta* Vaidyapāda does precisely that. However, it appears that at this time this “fourth” was still not considered a separate initiation. I address this topic in brief below and in more detail in Chapter Seven.

¹⁰⁵ *ming tsam gyis ni logs* (logs) P, log D) ‘byung yang// rang rig bde bas rtogs byas na// dbang bskur shes ni bshad pa yin// (*Muktilaka*, D 50b.2; P 60b.4)

¹⁰⁶ See Isaacson 2010b, 268 on the function of the third initiation. Precisely what the third initiation entailed, in particular in relation to the “consort observance” (*vidyāvratā*), is a topic that has been briefly explored by Wedemeyer (2014 and forthcoming), and which I address further in reference to Buddhajñānapāda’s and his immediate disciples’ writings in Chapter Seven.

¹⁰⁷ The terms *guhya-* and *prajñājñāna-abhiṣeka* are not used in the *Dvītyākrama*. But the text does describe in some detail the rituals to which those names are normally ascribed, and Vaidyapāda uses the names of the *abhiṣekas* in his commentary. The rituals pertaining to the second and third initiations are detailed in *Dvītyākrama* verses 83-125.

¹⁰⁸ *padma’i mkha’ la rdo rje nor bu pad snying gnyis la* ‘byor dang rdo rje skyil krung sems// nor bu’i bar du mthong byas gang de bde ba ‘byung ba nges par de nyid ye shes te// (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 124c-d). Several later

In this passage, using the coded language of the tantras, the “vajra,” or penis, joins with the “lotus,” the vagina, and while in union the “mind,” or *citta*—in this case referring to the resulting *bodhicitta*, or drop of semen—is to be observed having traveled up to the “jewel,” the tip of the penis. This produces a blissful experience, the ascertainment of which is identified in the verse as wisdom. The observation of suchness during the third initiation is also mentioned in Buddhajñānapāda’s disciple Dīpaṅkarabhadra’s initiation manual, which states in its description of the *prajñāñānābhīṣeka* that “While joined with the consort, the splendid one should observe suchness.”¹⁰⁹ Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the lines from the *Dvītyākrama* cited above describes the process by which the *bindu* of *bodhicitta* is first brought into the heart, and then by means of the “downward clearing wind” it is brought to the tip of the vajra, at which point the disciple should “come to know the seven yogas by means of the guru’s oral instructions.”¹¹⁰ These “seven yogas,” mentioned in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Muktilaka* and elaborated in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, are seven aspects of the resultant state of awakening.¹¹¹ It seems that in this system it was in terms of these seven yogas that suchness was communicated by the guru to the disciple. Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* identifies the seven yogas with “the fourth”¹¹² in a move that certainly goes beyond the way initiation is described in Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving writings, which make no such reference to a “fourth.”¹¹³ However, the practice of the guru’s

authors have incorporated part of this verse into their presentation of the *prajñāñānābhīṣeka*. Cf. Dīpaṅkarabhadra’s *Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi*, verse 366c-d. *vajraparyāṅkataś cittaṃ manyantargatam īkṣyan*. Cf. also *Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 444), which incorporates these two *pādas* into the section on the *prajñāñānābhīṣeka* immediately after the incorporation of *Dvītyākrama* 88a-c, and *Daśatattva* V.15, which follows the *Vajrāvalī* in incorporating these *pādas* after the incorporation of *Dvītyākrama* 88a-c.

¹⁰⁹ *prajñāsamparkataḥ śrīmān tattvaṃ samupalakṣayet | (Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi, 366a-b.)*

¹¹⁰ *de’i dus su bla ma’i man ngag gis (gis] P, gi D) sbyor ba bdun shes par bya ste (Sukusuma, D 109a.6; P 131b.3).*

¹¹¹ The seven yogas are mentioned by Buddhajñānapāda in the *Muktilaka*, where they are described as the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” (*Muktilaka*, D 52a.2), and are also said to be realized instantaneously by a yogin engaged in post-initiatory practice (*cārya*) (*Muktilaka*, D 51b). These seven yogas, which are mentioned but not listed in the *Muktilaka*, thus seem to refer in Buddhajñānapāda’s work to practices that are to be carried out by the yogin subsequent to initiation. In Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, however, the seven yogas are explained in much greater detail as seven states or experiences that the student is meant to undergo in the context of initiation—specifically during what is called “the fourth” (See note 112). The seven are perfect example-less bliss (*dpe med bde rdzogs*), nonduality (*gnyis su med pa*), great bliss (*bde ba chen po*), lacking nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), unfolding compassion (*thugs rjes rgyas pa*), unbroken continuity (*rgyun mi chad pa*), and non-cessation (*’gog pa med pa*). The same seven factors are addressed in Vāgīśvarakīrti’s later *Saptāṅga* and his *Tattvaratnāvaloka* and its auto-commentary, where they are called the seven *aṅgas* of *mahāmudrā*, with reference to which see Isaacson (2010b, 271, 271n27) and, with a bit more detail, Isaacson and Sferra (2014, 271), where they are mentioned with reference to a citation from the *Saptāṅga* in Rāmapāla’s *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*. The seven *aṅgas* are listed in Vāgīśvarakīrti’s work as *sambhoga*, *samputa*, *mahāsukha*, *niḥsvabhāva*, *kāruṇyanirbhara*, *nirantara*, *anirodhaḥ*. I discuss the seven yogas in more detail in Chapter Seven.

¹¹² Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta-nāma-caturabhīṣekaprakaraṇa* (*Sbyor ba bdun pa zhes bya ba dbang bzhi’i rab tu byed pa*) mentions the “four initiations” in the title, but throughout the work itself the term “fourth initiation” is never used; the first three initiations are clearly called *initaiton* but “the fourth” is only ever referred to as simply “the fourth” (*bzhi pa*). Given this fact, along with the unreliability of the Sanskrit titles in the Tibetan canon, some of which (like *Dvikrama* for the **Dvītyākrama*!) appear to be incorrect Sanskrit reconstructions made by the redactors of the Tibetan canon, we may be inclined to raise doubts about the “fourth initiation,” mentioned in the title of the *Yogasapta*. However, the Tibetan translation of the title likewise makes reference to “four initiations (*dbang bzhi*). Moreover, in his *Guhyasamājamāṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā* Vaidyapāda does indeed refer to a “precious fourth initiation” (*dbang bskur ba rin po che bzhi pa*) (*Guhyasamājamāṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, D 211b.3-4; P 539b.6-7). The issue of whether Vaidyapāda considered “the fourth” an initiation or not therefore appears to be a slippery one; I discuss initiation in Buddhajñānapāda’s system and in Vaidyapāda’s writings further in Chapter Seven.

¹¹³ Vaidyapāda’s list in the *Sukusuma* of Buddhajñānapāda’s compositions, however, references a work of Buddhajñānapāda’s called *The Method for Engaging in the Fourth* (*bzhi pa la ’jug pa’i thabs*). Most unfortunately this work seems not to be extant in either its original Sanskrit nor in Tibetan translation (as we saw in Chapter One,

communicating suchness to the disciple in the context of tantric initiation does indeed feature in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. A passage from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, cited earlier, describes,

Someone who has pleased the guru
And received the vase [initiation] and the others
Together with the *samayas* and vows given by him,
And thus obtains the suchness |327|
That is found through the guru’s words...¹¹⁴

Here the text mentions the “vase [initiation] and the others,” referring to the set of initiations of which the vase (*kalaśa*, *bum pa*) is the first. But it is only *after* mentioning the initiations, as well as *samayas* and vows given by the guru to the disciple in that context, that the text brings up obtaining “the suchness that is found through the guru’s words.” It is not completely clear whether Buddhajñānapāda is referencing something that is ritually separate from the other aspects of initiation. But it *is* clear that he wants to single out the topic of “obtain[ing] the suchness that is found through the guru’s words” as something that is particularly important within the initiatory context. Vaidyapāda makes the distinction between the receiving of initiation and *samayas* and the obtaining of suchness stronger by commenting on the two topics separately, adding the phrase “and then...” between his commentary on initiation and vows and his comments on obtaining suchness. With regard to the latter, Vaidyapāda writes, “And then, **And thus obtains the suchness/ That is spoken by the guru**,¹¹⁵ means that the suchness of the seven yogas, together with the method for accomplishing that, is received.”¹¹⁶ This passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* seems, then, to refer to a moment in the context of, or possibly immediately subsequent to the third (and final) initiation, when the guru verbally communicates the nature of suchness to the disciple, who then “receives” that suchness. Such a moment is also mentioned in Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi*: “having bestowed the *guhya* and *prajñā* [initiations], suchness should be fully pointed out.”¹¹⁷

In fact, a verbal communication of suchness by the guru to the disciple subsequent to the third initiation became the predominant one among a number of ways in which the so-called “fourth initiation” (*caturthābhiṣeka*) came to be understood. Debates on the topic of a “fourth initiation,” which took place over a number of centuries, seem to have centered on—and perhaps sprung from—the meaning of a reference to “the fourth” (*caturtha*) in a passage in the

many of the works in this list *are* extant), but the fact that Buddhajñānapāda may have composed a work on “the fourth” remains a very interesting possibility. I discuss this point further in Chapter Seven, but, in brief, Vaidyapāda seems to be quite a reliable witness of Buddhajñānapāda’s system, and I see little reason to doubt him with respect to his list of Buddhajñānapāda’s compositions. Yet, the fact remains that we have no reference at all in any of Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving works to a “fourth.”

¹¹⁴ *gang zhig bla ma mnyes byas nas// des gnang dam sdom bcas ba ru// bum pa la sogs rab thob ste// bla ma’i zhal las rnyed pa yi// |327| de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing// (Dvīṭīyakrama, verse 327a-328a).*

¹¹⁵ *Bum pa la sogs pa’i dbang gong du gsungs pa ltar rab tu thob par byas te/ de nas/ bla ma’i zhal nas gsungs pa yi/ de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing// zhes pa ni sbyor ba bdun gyis de kho na nyid sgrub pa’i thabs dang bcas pa rnyed pa... (Sukusuma, D 130a.3; P 156b.4-5).* Vaidyapāda’s commentary preserves a slight variant on one line from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. The *pādas* as found in the *Sukusuma* read: *bla ma’i zhal nas gsungs pa yi/ de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing// (Sukusuma, D 130a. 3; P 156b.4)* as opposed to *bla ma’i zhal nas rnyed pa yi/ de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing//* in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. However, in his comments on these two lines Vaidyapāda mentions the word “received” (*rnyed pa*) which is absent in the verse as translated in his commentary but present in the verse as translated in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, so I suspect the variant arose in the context of translating the *Sukusuma* into Tibetan, rather than in the citation of the verse in Vaidyapāda’s commentary itself.

¹¹⁶ *de nas/ bla ma’i zhal nas gsungs pa yi/ de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing/ zhes pa ni sbyor ba bdun gyi (gyi] P, gyis D) de kho na nyid bsgrub pa’i thabs dang bcas pa rnyed pa [/] (Sukusuma, D 130a. 3; P 156b.4).*

¹¹⁷ The full verse reads, *maṇḍalaṃ devatātattvaṃ ācāryaparikarma ca | saṃkathya guhyaprajñābhyāṃ siktva tattvaṃ samuddiṣet | (Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi), 367.)*

Samājottara on the initiatory sequence.¹¹⁸ Vaidyapāda, one of the earliest commentators on the topic, referencing the passage from the *Samājottara* in his *Yogasapta*, describes “the fourth,” as the verbal communication of suchness to the disciple following the third initiation, consisting of the seven yogas. Buddhajñānapāda, however, appears not to have known the *Samājottara*, so the passage from the *Dvītyākrama* that describes “obtain[ing] the suchness that is found through the guru’s words” as part of or subsequent to initiation, seems to be an early indication of the practice of what came to be called “the fourth,” perhaps prior to its designation as such.¹¹⁹ Since Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, however, *does* refer to the practice of verbally communicating suchness to the disciple as “the fourth,” (although, importantly, *not* as “the fourth initiation”) if that designation post-dates Buddhajñānapāda’s life, it does not do so by very long.¹²⁰

Harunaga Isaacson has suggested that the line cited above from Dīpaṃkarabhadrā’s popular ritual manual—“having bestowed the *guhya* and *prajñā* [initiations], suchness should be fully pointed out”¹²¹—may have, “while not knowing a Fourth empowerment itself, provided the element that was re-interpreted as being the Fourth.”¹²² He also notes that in this *pāda*, an alternative version of which is found in some other later sources, it is possible that Dīpaṃkarabhadrā was following an earlier, possibly scriptural, literary source.¹²³ While I cannot comment on the *literary* source for that particular *pāda* of Dīpaṃkarabhadrā’s text, I would suggest that what we have seen in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings makes it extremely likely that Dīpaṃkarabhadrā’s statement in the *Maṇḍalavidhi* was drawing on the *practice* already found in his guru Buddhajñānapāda’s ritual system, of verbally indicating suchness to the disciple at (or as?) the conclusion of the third initiation. Indeed, whatever their relationship to the use of the

¹¹⁸ Isaacson 2010b, 268-271. Isaacson describes this particular position on what constitutes the fourth initiation as something that “is given verbally to the initiand by his guru and...in some way should also be seen as being or as containing, ideally at least, the goal (*lakṣya* or *phala*)” (Isaacson 2010b, 271). The suchness or nondual wisdom that Buddhajñānapāda says is conveyed by the guru to the disciple here is understood simultaneously to be the goal *and* the very nature of all things, importantly including the disciple’s own mind.

¹¹⁹ In fact, Isaacson and Sakurai argue, partly on the basis of the absence of a fourth initiation in early Jñānapāda School and early Ārya School works, that a separate fourth initiation was not actually intended in the *Samājottara* at all but arose later out of the debate on the passage therein referring to “the fourth” (Isaacson 2010b, 269). As I will discuss further in Chapter Seven, Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, does, however, provide a relatively early reference “the fourth” in the work of at least one lineage-holder of the Jñānapāda School, though as I noted above, within the text itself he does not refer to it as “the fourth initiation,” just “the fourth.” (The full title of the *Yogasapta-nāma-caturabhiṣekaprakāraṇa* does, however, mention “four initiations” and Vaidyapāda also references a “fourth initiation” in his commentary to Dīpaṃkarabhadrā’s *Maṇḍalavidhi* (*Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, D 211b.3-4; P 539b.6-7. See also note 112 on this point.) In any case, whether a fourth initiation was intended in the *Samājottara* or was only conceived subsequent to it, given that Buddhajñānapāda does not seem to have known that text, the *Dvītyākrama* provides early evidence of the practice of communicating suchness verbally to the disciple at or as the conclusion of initiation, however such a practice may have been designated at the time.

¹²⁰ I do not know whether Dīpaṃkarabhadrā—who, let us recall, was a direct disciple of Buddhajñānapāda’s and senior to Vaidyapāda—knew the *Samājottara*, but it seems that either he did not know it, or felt no need in his *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi* to hew to its systems. In that text Dīpaṃkarabhadrā makes no attempt to account for “the fourth,” nor does he include a separate ritual for the bestowal of the “consort observance” (*vidyāvratā*), as the *Samājottara* does. Vaidyapāda’s commentary on Dīpaṃkarabhadrā’s manual both mentions the bestowal of a “precious fourth initiation” that consists of the guru’s oral instructions with respect to union, and it also introduces a separate ritual for the bestowal of the *vidyāvratā* subsequent to the sequence of initiations, following the model of the *Samājottara* (on “the precious fourth initiation” see *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, D 211b.3-4; P 539b.6-7). The passage on the ritual for bestowing the *vidyāvratā* in Vaidyapāda’s commentary includes several liturgical verses, ten *pādas* of which are taken directly from the *vidyāvratā* section of the *Samājottara* (125c-127d), but without attribution (*Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, D 211b.6-212a.1; P 540a.4-7)

¹²¹ The full verse reads, *maṇḍalaṃ devatātattvamācāryaparīkarma ca | saṃkathya guhyaprajñābhyāṃ siktva tattvaṃ samuddiṣet |* (*Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*), 367.

¹²² Isaacson 2010b, 275-6.

¹²³ *ibid.*, 276n42.

term “the fourth,” or “the fourth initiation,” to describe the procedure of communicating the nature of suchness to a disciple, Buddhajñānapāda’s writings clearly show that he advocated the position that such a verbal communication of suchness from the guru to his disciple was not only possible, but actually necessary as a prerequisite to the disciple’s training in the second stage of tantric practice. And the *Dvītyākrama* does suggest that this communication took place at or as the conclusion of the third initiation.

Initiation also makes sense as the context for the “transference” of suchness to the disciple, given that throughout the references to the “receiving” of suchness in his writings, it is very clear that its communication is meant to serve as the *starting point* of the disciple’s training in the “suchness of the second stage” (*rim pa gnyis pa’i de kho na nyid*).¹²⁴ The *Muktītilaka*, in a section of the text that Vaidyapāda explains as setting forth “the preliminary foundation” for “the training in the suchness of the second stage,”¹²⁵ states:

Therefore, having obtained that suchness
Observe all beings with compassion,
Remain in seclusion or some similar place,
And constantly train in the truth of non-duality.¹²⁶

Here, just like in the instances where initiation is specifically mentioned, we see “obtaining suchness” taking place in the context of the disciple’s initial instruction in the practice of the perfection stage. Such a “transfer” provides the basis for the initial cultivation, and eventually the full realization, of that suchness—the “truth of non-duality”—which results in awakening. The fact that this “receiving” takes place prior to the training in suchness—indeed, it seems to be a prerequisite for doing so—indicates that “receiving” suchness, while it is said to constitute an instantaneous “knowing” of reality, as we will see below, certainly does not constitute the full freedom of awakening. Though not explicitly stated in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, what this suggests is that when the disciple “receives” suchness, what she receives is a mere glimpse of the reality of nondual wisdom, which must then come to be known more fully through training. The function of the higher tantric initiations in providing such a glimpse of reality *is* explicitly articulated in the writings of later tantric authors.¹²⁷

That it is possible to have an initial glimpse of the ultimate truth that is further cultivated through training is not a position held uniquely in tantric Buddhist traditions. The so-called “Path of Seeing” (*darśanamārga*, *mthong lam*), the third of the Five Paths in the traditional Mahāyāna system, is entered when the bodhisattva has an initial glimpse of emptiness on the first *bhūmi*. The bodhisattva’s realization of this ultimate truth of emptiness deepens as she traverse the remaining nine bodhisattva *bhūmis* on the “Path of Cultivation” (*bhāvanāmārga*, *bsgom lam*), culminating in ultimate truth being seen in its fullness in the vajra-like *samādhi* that marks the moment of awakening.¹²⁸ In fact, the very names of these two paths of Mahāyāna training—the Path of Seeing and Path of Cultivation—convey precisely this progression from initially seeing

¹²⁴ This term is used throughout Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, including in the title of the *Dvītyākrama*. I discuss it below in the context of Buddhajñānapāda’s privileging of the tantric path.

¹²⁵ *rim pa gnyis pa’i de kho na nyid bsgom pa’i phyir de’i gzhi’i* (gzhi’i] D, gzhi P) *rim pa dang po rnam dpe’i sgo nas bstan pa gsung pa de/* (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 51b.1; P 337b.3)

¹²⁶ *de bas de nyid thob byas nas// snying rjes sems can kun dmigs nas// dgon pa la sogs gnas nas ni// rtag tu gnyis med don bsgom bya//* (*Muktītilaka*, D 48b.1; P 58a.3-4)

¹²⁷ This is one interpretation of the function of the *prajñājñāna* initiation set forth in the *Abhiṣekanirukti*, attributed to the 11th-century master Ratnākaraśānti (but, according to Isaacson, more likely composed by his disciple Jinasujayaśrīgupta) (Isaacson 2010b, 266-68). I explore the relationship of this function of the third initiation and that of the instructions that came to be designated as “the fourth” further in Chapter Seven.

¹²⁸ In fact, these two paths were already set forth in the system of the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas, as described by de La Vallée Poussin (1936-7).

ultimate reality and gradually cultivating that until its full realization in the moment of awakening. What is unique about this process on the tantric path described in Buddhajñānapāda’s and later tantric writings is the idea that suchness can be *directly communicated* by a guru to the student, that this initial moment of insight is somehow *precipitated* by a communication from a qualified guru, such that the disciple comes to know reality in an instant—a sort of kick-start to the path of its cultivation through the yogas of the perfection stage.

Instant Knowing, Gradual Training, Sudden Realization

A number of passages in Buddhajñānapāda’s work describe the arising or dawning of wisdom as “instantaneous.” However, when we look into the context of these references to sudden insight, they seem to point to two (or maybe three) specific moments in a disciple’s experience: at the beginning of and towards, or at, the end of an otherwise gradual path of training in suchness. The majority of the references to the “instantaneous” dawning of wisdom in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings refer not to the initial “receiving” of suchness from the guru prior to training, but to an experience that takes place subsequent to this, as the disciple is in the process of cultivating the suchness he has previously “received.” But one passage from the *Muktilaka* does appear to describe the “knowing” of suchness obtained at the outset of training as instantaneous, as well. Immediately following a description of the supreme non-dual nature, the “great secret of all the buddhas,” and prior to a description of how to train in this state, the text explains that,

By constantly revering a lineage guru
Who knows this reality
Occasionally, like the [appearance of] the *udumbara* flower,
Those with merit will know it in an instant.¹²⁹

Like the references above that mention “pleasing” a guru in the context of “receiving” suchness, here the text indicates that “revering” a master who knows reality can result in the disciple’s coming to know it “in an instant.” As noted above, it is the context of the passage—after a description of suchness and prior to the description of the methods for training in suchness—that suggests that this is a reference to the guru’s communicating suchness directly to the disciple at the outset of his training in the perfection stage practices, although initiation is not specifically mentioned. This initial “receiving,” “obtaining,” or “knowing” of suchness thus appears, according to Buddhajñānapāda, to be something that takes place instantaneously.

Before we move on to look at passages that describe the “instantaneous” arising of wisdom for a disciple who has already “received” it and is in the process of training in suchness, two other points in this first passage are worth noting. First, the verse makes it clear that the guru who is to be revered is one who holds a lineage; he must be, as Vaidyapāda explains, “a sublime guru who knows nondual reality and possesses the great pith instructions of the lineage that has been passed from ear to ear.”¹³⁰ The aspect of lineage is also emphasized at other places in both the *Muktilaka* and the *Dvītyākrama*. In the latter, holding “the lineage of supreme oral instructions” is listed as one of the qualifications for a guru.¹³¹ As we shall see below,

¹²⁹ ‘*di yi don shes brgyud pa yi// bla ma dam pa rtag bkur bas// u dum bar* (u dum bar] P, u dumbār D) *ltar brgya lam na// bsod nams can gyis skad cig shes//* (*Muktilaka*, D 48b.6; P57a.7-8).

¹³⁰ *gnyis su med pa’i don shes shing rna ba nas rna bar brgyud pa’i man ngag chen po dang ldan pa’i bla ma dam pa* (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, 50a.5-6; P 336a.2-3).

¹³¹ *mchog gi gdams ngag rgyud la ldan* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 45b). The guru should also be genuine and venerable, be intent upon the conduct and training of the Mahāyāna path, know the secret, great secret, and exceptional secret of the ten suchnesses (*daśatattva*), and be willing to teach those to whom reality is concealed (see *Dvītyākrama*, verses 45-6).

Buddhajñānapāda traces this lineage of oral instructions back to Śākyamuni Buddha. A second point of note in the passage is that here instantaneous knowing of the truth is possible only for “those with merit.” The *uḍumbara* flower is used in Buddhist literature as an example of something rare, and a number of other passages in Buddhajñānapāda’s works similarly refer to the passing on of wisdom to just “a few” disciples, suggesting the rarity of such an occurrence—and perhaps also the rarity of disciples who have the merit necessary to receive it—seemingly indicating that this particular Buddhist path was not meant for everyone.¹³² In fact, these two aspects of the guru’s holding the lineage of suchness and the disciple’s having the proper merit to be able to receive it appear to be points that Buddhajñānapāda understands as essential to the transmission and realization of this wisdom. Near the conclusion of the *Dvītyākrama* he explains,

Through relying upon a genuine lineage teacher,
And one’s own previously gathered accumulation of merit—
One will come to realize this [reality]. [389]
Apart from¹³³ these [circumstances], those with little merit
Even after countless aeons will not realize this.¹³⁴

Vaidyapāda’s commentary describes these points—relying on a genuine lineage teacher and having previously accumulated merit—as the “two causes” without which the disciple is unable to connect to reality.¹³⁵ We will see both of these points come up again in the *Muktilaka*’s narrative of Śākyamuni Buddha’s awakening, which I examine below.

Let us return now, not to the disciple’s initial connection with suchness, which, as we saw above, comes about through “an instant” of knowing under the guidance of a lineage-holding guru, but to subsequent instances of “instantaneous” wisdom that occur as the practitioner trains in suchness. In several passages, training in the suchness that disciple first “received” through his guru’s guidance is said to bring about an instantaneous dawning of wisdom. Referencing the concentration on the indestructible *bindu* in the yogin’s heart-center during perfection stage practice, the *Muktilaka* states:

Through concentrating upon this,
Great wisdom will immediately blaze
Within the yogin—of this there is no doubt.¹³⁶

Also regarding the training in suchness, the text says:

[When] maintaining *samaya* and training in suchness,
Suddenly, wisdom blazes in an instant
Like lightning dispelling the darkness
Within one who is [still, at present] bound in existence!¹³⁷

¹³² For example: “I explain this for the sake of a few yogins...” *rnal ‘byor ‘ga’ zhid don du bshad par bya* (*Muktilaka* D 47a.4); “From that time onward this supreme reality/ Was [passed on] to a few fortunate ones,/ From mouth to mouth, from ear to ear—/ That lineage teaches genuine reality.” *de nas bzung ste don mchog ‘di// skal bar ldan pa ‘ga’ zhid la// zhal nas zhal dang snyan nas snyan// brgyud de nges pa’i don bstan pa’o//* (*Muktilaka* D 51a.2-3); “This will be explained to a few yogins/ who are fortunate due to their actions...” *bya bas bskal pa ‘ga’ zhid la// yang dang tu ni bshad par bya//* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 327c-d).

¹³³ ma gtogs] sugg. em., ma rtogs D C S P N

¹³⁴ *brgyud pa’i bla ma yang dag rab bsten dang// rang gi bsod nams tshogs ni sngon bskyed pas// rtogs par rab tu ‘gyur ba ma gtogs par//* [389] *bsod nams chung ba’i mi yis bskal ba dpag med par// ‘di ni rtogs par mi ‘gyur...* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 389b-390b).

¹³⁵ *Sukusuma*, D 137b.1.

¹³⁶ *de la ltas bas ye shes che// skad cig tsam gyis rnal ‘byor la (la) P, pa D// ‘bar ba ‘di la the tshom med//* (*Muktilaka*, D 49a.3-4; P 59a.1).

¹³⁷ *dam tshig dang ldan de nyid bsgom// myur du srid pa’i ‘cing ba la// glog gis mun pa bsal ba bzhin// skad cig tsam gyis ye shes ‘bar//* (*Muktilaka*, D 48a.7-48b.1; P 58b.3). The phrase “one who is bound within existence” is

Later in the text, referencing the disciple’s taking up post-initiatory practices (*caryā*), the *Muktilaka* states:

The one who engages in these [types of] practices
Realizes the seven yogas in a single instant.
And for as long as existence persists
He will have the eight characteristics of the taste.¹³⁸

The first of these three passages occurs in the middle of the instructions on the perfection stage practice of the indestructible *bindu*. Since this is only the first of the three *bindu* yogas taught in the *Muktilaka* and the *Dvītyākrama*, the wisdom that “immediately blazes” within the yogin who concentrates on this *bindu* is presumably not the realization of the final result of practice. It is simply a moment of sudden insight that takes place within the course of practice. In the second passage, it is unclear whether the wisdom that suddenly “blazes” while the yogin trains in suchness as he upholds his *samayas* refers to a moment of insight along the path or to the final result. Vaidyapāda takes it to refer to “the instant blazing of nondual wisdom due to the observance of post-initiatory practices (*gtul zhugs kyi spyod pa, vratacaryā*) at the time when one [has reached the state of being a] third [-level] yogin.”¹³⁹ His interpretation of this passage, which connects it with post-initiatory practice, corresponds closely with the third passage from the *Muktilaka*, cited above, that mentions the instantaneous realization of the seven yogas through engaging in post-initiatory practices and being endowed with the “eight characteristics of the taste,” listed in the *Dvītyākrama* as eight characteristics of the awakened state.¹⁴⁰ Moreover this verse is immediately followed by a number of descriptors of one who has “gone to the far side of *samsāra*,”¹⁴¹ making it clear that the instantaneous and full realization of the seven yogas described here does, according to Buddhajñānapāda’s understanding, mark final awakening.

The methods of “training” in suchness referenced in all three of these passages—the *bindu* yogas, as well as the post-initiatory practices (*caryā*) that, according to Vaidyapāda,

somewhat curious, given that wisdom is meant precisely to break through the bondage to existence. I have understood this to indicate that a direct glimpse of the final result is possible even within someone who is, as yet, still bound in *samsāra*, and will not become fully free from those bonds until she completes her training in, or cultivation of, such wisdom.

¹³⁸ *de ‘dra’i spyod pa la gnas pa// skad cig gis ni sbyor ba bdun// rtogs nas ji srid bar du ni// ro myang mtshan nyid bryad ldan par// (Muktilaka, D 51b. 5-6; P 62a.5-6).*

¹³⁹ *rnal ‘byor pa gsum par ‘gyur pa’i tshe/ brtul zhugs kyi spyod pas skad cig tsam la gnyis su med pa’i ye shes ‘bar bas... (Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 51b.1; P 337b.2-3).* Such a “yogin of the third level” is explained later in the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, commenting on a verse in the *Muktilaka* that likewise indicates “the occasion of being a third[-level] yogin” as the time when one should engage in the various post-initiatory practices described in the text. Vaidyapāda there explains the “third[-level] yogin” as someone who has not only gone beyond being a beginner (the first level), but also having gone beyond the intermediate level of a yogin who has “control over limited wisdom,” (the second level) to the level of a yogin who has “control over the wisdom that brings oneself and others to behold the illusory *maṇḍala*” (*Sukusuma, D 57b.2-3*). This three-level schema of the development of a yogin’s meditative progress, mentioned at several places in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s works, seems to either have been later expanded into four levels of progress in later works of the Jñānapāda School or perhaps more likely simply be mentioned in an abbreviated form in these earlier works. Sabine Klein Schwind writes of the distinctive practice instructions included in Kṣitigarbha’s *Daśatattvasaṃgraha* that are connected with generation stage practice for the yogins on each of four levels, and also references the four-fold schema also in Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, and in Ratnākaraśānti’s works (Klein-Schwind 2012, 87-92).

¹⁴⁰ The eight are listed in the *Dvītyākrama* as: permanent, free from torment, cool, singular, blissful, stainless, joyful, and mentally joyful (*Dvītyākrama*, verses 292-3). Vaidyapāda elaborates them in the *Sukusuma* (D 127a.4-7) and gives a similar presentation in his *Yogasapta* (*Yogasapta, D 74a.1-3; P 88a.2-5*).

¹⁴¹ *‘khor ba’i mtha’ yi pha rol son (Muktilaka, D 51b.6).*

include the “consort observance” (*vidyāvratā*)¹⁴²—involve the practice of sexual yoga. I explore the perfection stage yogas described in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings in more detail in Chapter Six, but for now it will suffice to note that according to his system, not only did “receiving” suchness take place in the context of initiations that had sexual elements, but the process of training in suchness once it had been “received,” also involved sexual yogas. It was thus in the context of such training that the practitioner experienced the moments of sudden insight and realization described above. We see in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, then, references to instantaneous “knowing,” “wisdom,” and “realization” occurring at multiple occasions during the disciple’s training: upon the initial “receiving” of suchness from her guru, in certain moments of insight that occur while she is training on the path, and also at the final moment of awakening.

Through the positions identified and examined in these passages from his writings, we can piece together an outline of the higher stage of the tantric path as Buddhajñānapāda conceived of it. That path looks something like this: first the disciple “receives” suchness from her guru, most likely in an oral instruction conveyed in the initiatory context, at the end of or following the third tantric initiation. This “receiving” involves the disciple’s coming to an instantaneous “knowing” of the suchness that was “transferred” by her guru, and is also intimately connected to the blissful experience of sexual union with a partner in the third initiation. Then the disciple trains in, or cultivates, this suchness via perfection stage practices, during which she may have moments of sudden insight. Finally, having taken up post-initiatory observances (*vratā*) and practices (*caryā*), including the observance of the consort-vow (*vidyāvratā*) and the sexual practices it entails, she “[fully] realizes the seven yogas in an instant” and is awakened. While we do not find all of these various pieces of receiving, training in, and perfecting the realization of suchness laid out in a clear step-by-step procedure in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, we *do* find in the *Muktītilaka* a striking passage that draws most of these elements together into a single brief narrative—that of Śākyamuni Buddha’s awakening. Let us turn now to that narrative and its function in Buddhajñānapāda’s oeuvre as a powerful statement of advocacy for the higher tantric path to awakening.

Śākyamuni Buddha’s Awakening Through the Higher Tantric Path

In a remarkable retelling of the story of Śākyamuni Buddha’s awakening in the *Muktītilaka*, Buddhajñānapāda shows that it was through the higher tantric path of receiving suchness, training in it, and coming to instantaneously realize it fully that Śākyamuni Buddha himself attained perfect awakening. The account is narrated as follows:

Why did Śākyamuni, though he gathered the requisites¹⁴³
 For countless [aeons], not realize this reality?
 At the Nairāñjanā [River]
 He remained in the *samādhi* of “Nothing Whatsoever.”
 At that time, all of the *sugatas*
 Cast away the conceptuality [regarding emptiness] that had befallen him¹⁴⁴
 And showed him the non-dual profundity and luminosity

¹⁴² *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 57b.6-7.

¹⁴³ *tshogs bsags*. This refers to the two “provisions” of merit and wisdom that must be gathered in order to attain awakening.

¹⁴⁴ *thal byung blo can*. I discuss this perplexing phrase in some detail in note 148. A slightly different version of this line is found in the citation of this passage from the *Muktītilaka* in Vaidyapāda’s *Siddhisambhavanidhi*, where it reads *thal ‘byung blo chags de bzlog ste/* “Cast away his attachment to the suddenly befallen conceptuality [regarding emptiness]” (*Siddhisambhavanidhi*, D 3a3).

That is perfectly pure like the expanse of space.
 At midnight, just like the [previous] Victors,
 He trained in suchness,
 And at dawn, in an instant, he realized it genuinely.
 Abiding thus in the essence of awakening
 He conquered the great armies of *māras*.
 Then, in order to care for beings,
 He turned the wheel of dharma.
 From that time onward, this supreme reality
 Was passed on through the lineage to a few fortunate ones
 From mouth to mouth, from ear to ear—
 Thus genuine reality has been taught.¹⁴⁵

The question posed at the outset of the passage as to why Śākyamuni had not previously attained awakening despite having gathered the requisite conditions for doing so is not answered directly; the narrative of his awakening itself serves as the answer. That is, although Śākyamuni had gathered all of the other requisites for awakening—the traditional “two requisites” (*sambhāradvaya*, *tshogs gnyis*) are merit and wisdom—he lacked one essential factor: a qualified guru who could show him suchness directly. We may recall here the two circumstances without which, Buddhajñānapāda states in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, a disciple is unable to gain access to reality: “Relying upon a genuine lineage teacher/ And one’s own previously gathered accumulation of merit.”¹⁴⁶ Thus, although he had gathered great stores of merit, it was only when the *sugatas*—here functioning as his gurus—appeared and showed Śākyamuni nondual profundity and luminosity that he was able to train in this suchness, and thereby to fully awaken. This recounting of Śākyamuni’s awakening thus includes the very same key elements of the higher tantric path that we have seen articulated at other places in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings: Śākyamuni encountered his “gurus;” they showed him nondual profundity and luminosity; he then trained in that suchness; and finally, through that training, he gained instantaneous realization. The conclusion of the narrative is also remarkable, essentially claiming Śākyamuni Buddha himself as the source of the oral lineage of teachings on suchness.

Like several passages in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings that mention “receiving” suchness from a guru without specifying an initiatory context, tantric initiation is not mentioned in this account of Śākyamuni’s awakening. While much of the evidence from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and *Muktilaka* does point to an initiatory context (or, as noted above, an immediately post-initiatory context) as the one in which a “transference” of suchness from the guru occurred, the absence of a reference to initiation in this account of Śākyamuni’s awakening suggests that Buddhajñānapāda was most interested in highlighting the aspect of the guru’s showing or pointing out suchness to his disciple. This is further corroborated by the emphasis on lineage in the conclusion of the narrative, and Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the passage also very clearly gives that sense. Vaidyapāda’s comments are worth citing here in full:

¹⁴⁵ *ci’i phyir shā kya thub pa yis// grangs med bar (bar] D, par P) du tshogs bsags kyang// ‘di don ma rtogs nai (nai] D, ni P) ra nydzar// ci yang ma yin ting ‘dzin gnas// de tshe bde gshegs kun gyis kyang// thal byung blo can de bzlog ste// nam mkha’i dbyings ltar rnam dag pa’i// zab gsal gnyis (gnyis] P, gsal D) med rab bstan te// nam phyed (phyed] P, gyed D) dus su rgyal (rgyal] D, brgyal P) ba ltar// de nyid bsgoms pas tho rangs su// skad cig gis ni yang dag rtogs// byang chub snying por bzhugs byas nas// dpung chen bdud rnam rab bcom ste// sems can gzung (gzung] D, gzud P) bar bya ba’i phyir// chos kyi ‘khor lo bskor ba ‘o// de nas bzung ste don mchog ‘di// skal bar ldan pa ‘ga’ zhig la// zhal nas zhal dang snyan nas snyan // brgyud (brgyud] D, rgyud P) de nges pa’i don bstan pa’o// (Muktilaka, D 50b.7-51a.2; P 61a.4-7)*

¹⁴⁶ *brgyud pa’i bla ma yang dag rab bsten dang// rang gi bsod nams tshogs ni sngon bskyed pas// (Dvīṭīyakrama, verse 390b-c).*

Then, in order to show that even Śākyamuni and others, **despite having gathered** limitless **requisites**, were not sublime, genuine buddhas without coming to know nondual wisdom from the mouth of their gurus, the text states, “**Why did Śākyamuni...**” etc. **Did not realize this reality** means he had not **realized** this stage (*rim pa*) that is passed on through the oral lineage. [The *samādhi* of] **Nothing Whatsoever** is remaining in [a state of] suddenly befallen emptiness (*thal byung gi stong pa nyid*). To indicate the gurus who showed him [suchness], the text states **At that time, all of the sugatas... Cast away the conceptuality [regarding emptiness] that had befallen him**, means that this *samādhi* [of Nothing Whatsoever] occasions falling [into an extreme], and because of that he did not realize the ultimate suchness; so [they] turned his mind away from it. Well, how did he realize [suchness], then? They **showed him** the nature of **nondual profundity and luminosity that is perfectly pure like the expanse of space**. Then, **at midnight**, blessed by the *sahaja ācārya*, he attained suchness **like the [previous] Victors**. Due to the strength of that [attainment], **at dawn, abiding within the essence of awakening**, he **conquered the armies of māras**. Then, he **turned the wheel of dharma for beings**. Since that time, this **genuine reality has been taught** by transferring this great reality from **mouth to mouth to a few fortunate ones** who rely as their foundation upon genuine beings. In this way he [i.e. Buddhajñānapāda] also indicates the source of the lineage.¹⁴⁷

As we can see, Vaidyapāda emphasizes that awakening was not possible, even for Śākyamuni, without receiving a direct transmission of nondual wisdom from a guru, and he explicitly identifies the *sugatas* as Śākyamuni’s gurus. Precisely what incorrect view “all the *sugatas*” cast from Śākyamuni’s mind in order to show him the nondual profundity and luminosity that precipitated his awakening is difficult to interpret, even with Vaidyapāda’s commentary, but it appears to be a kind of fixation on the quiescent aspect of meditative experience.¹⁴⁸ In any case,

¹⁴⁷ *da ni sākya thub pa la sogs pa las kyang tshogs dpag tu med pa bsags kyang gnyis su med pa'i ye shes bla ma'i zhal* (zhal] D, kha P) *las ma shes bar dam pa yang dag pa'i sangs rgyas ma yin par bstan pa'i phyir/ ci'i phyir sākya thub pa yis/ zhes* (zhes] D, shes P) *pa la sogs pa'o// 'di'i don ma rtogs zhes pa ni zhal las brgyud pa'i rim pa 'di ma rtogs bar zhes so// ci yang ma yin zhes pa ni thal byung gi stong pa nyid la gnas zhes so// de ston pa'i bla ma gsungs pa/ de tshe bde gshegs kun zhes so// thal byung blo can de bzlog ste// zhes pa ni bsam gan 'di ni lung ba'i* (ba'i] D, P om.) *skal can te/ 'dis mtha'i de bzhin nyid mi rtogs pa'o zhes de las blo bzlogs pa'o// 'o na ji lta bur rtogs she na/ nam mkha'i dbyings ltar nam par dag pa'i zab gsal gnyis su med pa'i rang bzhin bstan te/ nam gyi phyed dus su lhan cig byed pa'i slob dpon gyis byin gyis brlabs nas rgyal* (rgyal] sugg. em., brgyal D P) *ba ltar de nyid thob nas/ de'i mthus tho rangs kyi dus su byang chub kyi snying po la zhugs pas dpung chen po 'di nyid skyes bu bcom ste/ de nas sems can rnam la chos kyi 'khor lo bskor te/ dus de nas bzung ste don chen po 'di nyid skyes bu yang dag pa'i gzhi la brten pa'i skal ba dang ldan pa 'ga' la zhal nas zhal du 'pho bar byas nas/ dnges pa'i don 'di bstan to zhes* ('di bstan to zhes] D, P om.) *'di ltar brgyud pa'i khungs kyang bstan to//* (*Muktililaka-vyākhyāna*, D 56b.5-57a.3;

¹⁴⁸ This view is described in the *Muktililaka* with a term—*thal byung blo can*, the meaning of which is difficult to decipher. I have provisionally translated it as “conceptuality [regarding emptiness] that had befallen [him].” The difficulty is in understanding precisely what is meant by the term *thal byung*, which usually has the sense of “sudden” or “suddenly arisen.” Kilty (2013, 467) in translating this passage as cited in Tsongkapa’s *Lamp* has translated the term *thal 'byung* as “unimpeded,” which does not seem to me the most likely meaning of the term. In looking at the way the term is used in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, and especially how it is interpreted in Vaidyapāda’s commentaries, I believe the term *thal 'byung* here may perhaps translate the Sanskrit *āpatita*, which has the sense of something that has suddenly or unexpectedly happened, and, as we shall see, the conceptually that seems to have “(suddenly) befallen” a practitioner in the instances where the term *thal byung blo can* is used, seems to be connected specifically with a conceptualization with regard to emptiness. My conclusions with regard to this term, however, remain tentative, as I have had to be somewhat relaxed with grammar in order to make this reading work in some of the phrases where it appears. I am grateful to Harunaga Isaacson for his suggestion regarding a possible Sanskrit term.

Buddhajñānapāda uses the term *thal byung zab mo*, “a (suddenly) befallen profundity” earlier in the *Muktītilaka* in a passage where he rejects exclusively profundity or exclusively luminosity as being a cause for awakening and emphasizes the need for both. It is in that context that Buddhajñānapāda states, “I have no faith in the assertion that a suddenly befallen profundity is liberation” (...*thal byung zab mo ni// grol ‘dod de la nga mi dad//* (*Muktītilaka*, 47b.2). As I discussed earlier, the term profundity, in Buddhajñānapāda’s usage (as in the case of “the nonduality of profundity and luminosity”), indicates emptiness. Vaidyapāda’s comments on both of these terms, *thal byung zab mo* and *thal byung blo can*, suggest he understands the *thal byung* in the phrase *thal byung blo can* to refer to *thal byung gi zab mo*. In his comments on the passage describing Śākyamuni’s awakening Vaidyapāda clarifies that, “**The *samādhi* of Nothing Whatsoever** is remaining in [a state of] suddenly befallen emptiness (*thal byung gi stong pa nyid*). To indicate the gurus who showed him [suchness], the text states **At that time, all of the *sugatas*... Cast away the conceptuality [regarding emptiness] that had befallen him**, means that this *samādhi* [of Nothing Whatsoever] occasions falling [into an extreme], and because of that he did not realize the ultimate suchness; so [they] turned his mind away from it.” (*thal byung blo can de bzlog ste/ zhes pa ni bsam gtan ‘di ni ltung ba’i skal can te/ ‘dis mtha’i de bzhin nyid mi rtogs pa’o zhes de las blo blzog pa’o//* (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 56b.6-7).

Indeed, since Buddhajñānapāda mentions that Śākyamuni was remaining in the “*samādhi* of Nothing Whatsoever” before the *sugatas* cast away this state, we can indeed presume that this *samādhi* is equivalent to, or can perhaps be described as, *thal byung blo can*. There are two ways in which we might understand a *samādhi* with that name. One is as a reference to the third of the four formless concentrations, called “Nothing Whatsoever.” (This concentration is usually rendered in Tibetan as *ci yang med pa’i skye mched* (*ākīñcanyāyatana*), rather than *ci yang ma yin pa’i ting ‘dzin*, but we are dealing here with an Indic text in translation, so this discrepancy may not present much of a problem.) In some early Buddhist texts progression through the form and formless concentrations is said to be the process through which awakening takes place (See Vetter 1988, 63-71). In reference to *thal byung zab mo* mentioned earlier in the *Muktītilaka*, Vaidyapāda connects this position to that of the *śrāvakas*. He writes, “Since exclusively cultivating a **suddenly befallen profundity** (*thal byung gi zab mo*) brings about the circumstance of falling into [a state] that is like that of the *śrāvakas*, as for the assertion that this is liberation [Buddhajñānapāda states], **I have no faith at all [in that.]**” *thal byung gi zab mo kho nar bsgom pa ni nyan thos lta bur ltung ba’i skal pa can pas/ de grol bar ‘dod pa de la nga ni shin tu yang ma dad do zhes so//* (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 49b.3). In his commentary on the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* Vaidyapāda gives a further clue to his understanding of the term. Commenting on the phrase “Clinging to complete purification” he writes, “Complete purification is *nirvāṇa*. If one clings to that, then the mind is extremely attached to a suddenly befallen profundity” *rnam par byang la mngon par zhen zhes gsung la rnam par byang ba ni mya ngan las ‘das pa’o// de la mngon par zhen pa ni thal byung gi zab mo la blo shin tu chags pa’o//* (*Samantabhadri-ṭīkā*, D 148a.2-3). Taken together, these references suggest that Vaidyapāda understands this state to be a view of emptiness that involves a sort of fixation on the quiescent experience of meditation—i.e. falling into the “extreme” of the peace of *nirvāṇa*, rather than cultivating a dynamic and compassionate realization that results in continued compassionate action for the benefit of beings, a common criticism of the *śrāvakayāna* by the Mahāyāna. Additionally, as I will discuss below, the passage in the *Muktītilaka* is clearly modeled on the awakening narrative from the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*, and in that narrative the *tathāgatas* rouse Śākyamuni not from the “*samādhi* of Nothing Whatsoever” like in the *Muktītilaka*, but from the so-called *āsphānakasamādhi*, a term that remains etymologically obscure, but is usually interpreted to refer to a type of unmoving breath-holding concentration (See Yamada 1981, 7; Todaro 1985, 168-9; Kwon 2002, 51 and 51n96; Tomabechi 2006, 140n160. Thanks to Jacob Dalton for bringing this point on the *āsphānakasamādhi* to my attention.). Understood as such, this *samādhi*, which is rejected by the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, likewise suggests the rejection of a non-dynamic approach to the awakened state, and thus correlates with Vaidyapāda’s reading of the rejection of the “*samādhi* of Nothing Whatsoever” and *thal byung blo can* in the *Muktītilaka*, as entailing a rejection of a *śrāvaka* position.

While the term *thal byung* does not seem to be used frequently with reference to a perspective on emptiness, as we find in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings, the *Vajrahṛdayālaṃkāra-tantra*, one of the explanatory tantras to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (probably somewhat later than both Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda) lists *stong pa thal byung la rtog pa*, “conceptualizing in regards to a suddenly befallen [experience of] emptiness,” as the eleventh of the fourteen root downfalls that constitute breaking tantric commitments (*Vajrahṛdayālaṃkāra-tantra*, D 446b.1), though the text offers no further clarification of what is intended by *thal byung*. The lists of the fourteen tantric *samayas* do vary from tradition to tradition, but there is generally some correlation between such lists with respect to each particular commitment. One later formulation of the eleventh commitment is that it entails applying “discursive thoughts to transcendent reality,” (Kongtrül 1998, 263).

An alternative understanding of the term *thal byung gi stong pa* is found in the writings of the 15th-century Tibetan master Śākya Chokden, who states that, “In Indian texts of quintessential instructions (*man ngag, upadeśa*)

once he had been turned away from such a mistaken perception and directly shown the “nature of nondual profundity and luminosity,” Śākyamuni trained in that suchness. Vaidyapāda here adds one further—but rather consequential—detail of his training that is not mentioned in the *Muktilaka*: Śākyamuni was “blessed by the *sahaja ācārya*.” The “*sahaja ācārya*” (or *sahaja guru*—the terms are used interchangeably in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings) is one of “three gurus” (*bla ma gsum*) mentioned at several points in Buddhajñānapāda’s works.¹⁴⁹ While Vaidyapāda does not provide a definition of the *sahaja ācārya* in his commentary on Śākyamuni’s awakening narrative, at several other places Vaidyapāda identifies the *sahaja ācārya* as the tantric consort,¹⁵⁰ and in the *Sukusuma* he writes that receiving her “blessing” means engaging in sexual union with her.¹⁵¹ Thus while neither Buddhajñānapāda nor

and in sūtras, the emptiness explained by Niḥsvabhāvavādins was called the “inanimate emptiness” (*bems po’i stong pa nyid*), “nihilistic emptiness” (*chad pa’i stong pa nyid*) and “overextended emptiness” (*thal byung gi stong pa nyid*)” (Komarovski 2007, 284). I have been unable to find other instances of the term *thal byung gi stong pa nyid* in Indic sources, so it is not impossible that Śākya Chokden was actually referring to Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s works—which could definitely be qualified as “Indian *upadeśa* texts”—and interpreting the “overextended profundity” or “emptiness” that they refer to as a critique of the Niḥsvabhāvavādin (i.e. Mādhyamika) position on emptiness as “overextended” in the sense of tending towards nihilism. (Vaidyapāda also use the term *chad pa’i stong pa nyid* (“nihilistic emptiness”) in his *Yogasapta*, making it even more likely that Śākya Chokden was referencing this particular corpus with his remarks.) The *samādhi* of “Nothing Whatsoever” that the *sugatas* turned Śākyamuni away from could certainly also be interpreted to refer to such a (mis-)conception of emptiness. But Śākya Chokden’s understanding of the term *thal byung gi stong pa nyid* as a critique of the Madhyamaka position does appear at odds with Vaidyapāda’s interpretation of it as a critique of the *śrāvaka* view, and as we will see below, Buddhajñānapāda in fact held the [Yogācāra-] Madhyamaka philosophical position to be the highest among the various Buddhist philosophies. In any case, Vaidyapāda’s testimony certainly carries more weight in this case given his close proximity to Buddhajñānapāda, so I have privileged his understanding in my translation of the term in the *Muktilaka*. Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings unfortunately give us no substantial context for what he meant by the term *thal byung*—though he did find that perspective important enough to mention—and reject—twice in the *Muktilaka*.

¹⁴⁹ The “three gurus” (*bla ma gsum*) are mentioned in the first verse of the *Dvitiyakrama*. Vaidyapāda explains that these three are the causal, conditional, and *sahaja ācāryas* (*de yang gsum ste/ rgyu dang rkyen dang/ lhan cig byed pa’i slob dpon no/*) (*Sukusuma*, D 88a.6; P 106a.1). The *sahaja ācārya* is mentioned by Buddhajñānapāda himself in verse 142 of the *Dvitiyakrama*, and Buddhajñānapāda mentions the “three gurus” as a set, but without listing them, in the *Muktilaka*, as well. Vaidyapāda gives the same gloss on the identity of these three in the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* as he does in the *Sukusuma*. In both the *Sukusuma* and the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* Vaidyapāda additionally provides a citation of a passage about the three gurus from a work that he identifies in the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* as *The Precious Garland* (*rin chen phreng ba* (phreng ba] P, phrod pa D); I have been unable to identify this source). In the *Sukusuma* Vaidyapāda mentions that this passage was cited by Buddhajñānapāda himself on this topic (possibly in the context of oral instructions, since the citation is not found in any of Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving writings). There are some slight variations in the transmission of the verse in the *Sukusuma* and *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, but in summary the verse identifies the causal *ācārya* as the master who gives vows and commitments and who purifies one’s mind through the stages of initiation, beginning with the water initiation; the conditional *ācārya* as the “great goddess” with whom one engages in play and who purifies the field of one’s mind by means of the “sixteenth part;” and the *sahaja ācārya* as the one from whom one receives that (*bindu?*) and by means of whom and through whose blessing one realizes innate joy. Vaidyapāda further adds that these three are supreme because they are superior to other gurus (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47b.5-7). The difference between the conditional and the *sahaja ācāryas* is difficult to understand from the passage that Vaidyapāda cites, as both seem to refer to the tantric consort. However, in his *Yogasapta*, Vaidyapāda states that the *kaśāśbhiṣeka* is bestowed by the causal *ācārya*, the *guhya* initiation is bestowed by the causal and the conditional *ācārya*, and the *prajñājñāna* is bestowed by means of the causal, conditional and *sahaja ācāryas* (*Yogasapta*, D 70a.4; D 70a.7; D 70b.4). This suggests that the “conditional” *ācārya* may be the consort in the role as the partner of the guru for the *guhya* initiation, while the *sahaja ācārya* is the consort in her role as the disciple’s partner in the *prajñājñāna* initiation. Later in the *Sukusuma*, Vaidyapāda clearly states that the *sahaja ācārya* is the practitioner’s consort (*shes rab, prajñā*), and that uniting with her entails receiving her “blessing” (*Sukusuma*, D 111b.3-4; P 134a.6-7).

¹⁵⁰ See *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47b.5-7 and *Sukusuma*, D 88a.6-7, D 111b.3-4, D 139a.1. See also previous note.

¹⁵¹ *Sukusuma*, D 139a.1.

Vaidyapāda make any explicit reference to a sexual initiatory context—or indeed any initiatory context at all—Vaidyapāda’s commentary on Śākyamuni’s awakening narrative in the *Muktilaka* does essentially claim that after being shown nonduality by the *sugatas*, Śākyamuni trained in suchness by practicing sexual yogas with a consort, which led to his full awakening. And though Buddhajñānapāda himself did not explicitly include sexual yoga in his account of Śākyamuni’s awakening, sexual yoga does constitute an essential component of both the initiatory context in which suchness is “transferred,” and the higher tantric path of perfection stage practice that Buddhajñānapāda’s writings espouse. Thus, despite the fact that such sexual elements are not explicitly highlighted by Buddhajñānapāda here, it is not difficult to imagine that they were intended. In either case, reading this awakening narrative as a condensed presentation of the perfection stage path is crucial to understanding its function in Buddhajñānapāda’s oeuvre.

To more fully appreciate the *Muktilaka*’s narrative of Śākyamuni’s awakening, we need to look to earlier tantric literature, for Buddhajñānapāda’s retelling of the awakening narrative is not the first reimagining of Śākyamuni’s awakening. It is in reference to an earlier such account, found in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*, that we can best understand Buddhajñānapāda’s own retelling of this story. The *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*’s account of Śākyamuni’s awakening appears to be the earliest specifically tantric re-envisioning of the awakening narrative, in which certain tantric methods—in this case the practice of the “five manifestations of awakening” (*pañcākarābhisambodhi*¹⁵²), through which the practitioner generates herself in the form of the deity—are shown to be an essential component of the path to awakening.¹⁵³ In that narrative, as well, the *tathāgatas* first appear and rouse the bodhisattva from a *samādhi* that will not lead him to awakening. They ask how he will attain perfect awakening without knowing the “suchness of all the *tathāgatas*” (*sarvatathāgatattva*), and when he responds by asking what suchness is and how it is accomplished, they guide him through the stages of the five manifestations of awakening, leading to his full awakening. We know that Buddhajñānapāda was familiar with the narrative from the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra* because he cites a passage from precisely this section of the *tantra* in his *Ātmasādhanāvātāra*. It thus appears that in the *Muktilaka* Buddhajñānapāda intentionally followed the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*’s model of rewriting the narrative of Śākyamuni’s awakening in order to emphasize a specific method or process that leads to perfect awakening.

The tantric method introduced as essential in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*’s awakening narrative is, as noted above, the practice of deity yoga. In the late 7th century when the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra* was first circulated, the techniques of deity yoga were at the cutting edge of Buddhist tantric practice. By the time Buddhajñānapāda was writing, probably in the early 9th century, tantric practice had developed further, and deity yoga was now relegated to the “first stage” of tantric practice, the so-called “generation stage.” The newest techniques on the scene in Buddhajñānapāda’s time were the practices of what was being described as the “second stage,” the “higher stage,” or the “perfection stage” of tantric practice.

¹⁵² While this term itself does not occur in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*, the practices that it describes do. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for pointing out to me the fact that the term itself is absent in this *tantra*.

¹⁵³ See Snellgrove 2002, 120-21, Weinberger 2003, 185-89, and Onians 2003, 80-81 for a description of and analysis of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*’s awakening narrative, and Lessing and Wayman 1978, 25-35 for a Tibetan edition and English translation of the Tibetan scholar Khedrub Je’s (1385-1438) summary of the Yoga Tantra position on Śākyamuni’s awakening (i.e. the narrative from the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*), including the positions found in the commentaries on the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*’s narrative by three Indian commentators, Ānandagarbha, Śākyamitra, and Buddhaguhya. See Onians 2003, 78-80 for a summary of Khedrub Je (via Lessing and Wayman’s translation).

The *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*'s narrative of Śākyamuni's awakening had already shown that the generation stage was essential to bring about to full awakening. The framework of Buddhajñānapāda's narrative in the *Muktītilaka* is essentially the same as that of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*, but while the *tantra*'s emphasis is on Śākyamuni's being taught and following the method of the five manifestations of awakening associated with the deity yoga of the generation stage, the emphasis in the *Muktītilaka*'s narrative is on the *sugatas* directly showing Śākyamuni the “nondual profundity and luminosity” so that he is then able to train in it. Buddhajñānapāda's narrative in the *Muktītilaka*—in describing the process of Śākyamuni's awakening as precipitated by his being shown nondual profundity and luminosity by the *sugatas*, who acted as his gurus, and achieving awaking through training in that suchness—thus shows the perfection stage to be essential to the attainment of full awakening.

Given the centrality of sexual practice in both the perfection stage initiations during (or after) which suchness was communicated to the disciple, as well as in the sexual yogas of the subsequent training in suchness, the absence of any explicit reference to sexual elements in Buddhajñānapāda's account of Śākyamuni's awakening is notable. As I mentioned above, this may be in part due to Buddhajñānapāda's wish to focus on the very fact of the transference of suchness from a guru and the disciple's subsequent training in it, rather than the specific methods by which such a transference and cultivation took place, as being the most essential aspects of the perfection stage path. Again, the focus on lineage at the conclusion of the narrative emphasizes the great importance of this aspect of the account. However, the absence of sexual elements in the narrative may also be due to the potentially controversial nature of explicitly claiming that sexual practice was involved in the awakening of the founding figure of the Buddhist tradition, who is well known to have left behind the householder's lifestyle for that of a celibate renunciate in search of awakening, and to have founded an order of celibate monastic practitioners after his awakening. And yet, apart from the sexual elements that are omitted in the narrative, the description of Śākyamuni's awakening in the *Muktītilaka* hews so closely to the structure of the higher tantric path, which, when elaborated in more detail in Buddhajñānapāda's works undeniably involves sexual practice, that it would be no stretch at all for a reader familiar with Buddhajñānapāda's practice system to understand those sexual elements as constituting an unstated part of the narrative. Indeed, we saw that Vaidyapāda has clearly understood the narrative in this way, but even he makes the sexual aspects of the account only slightly more explicit, simply stating, “Then, at midnight, blessed by the *sahaja ācārya*, he attained suchness like the [other] Victors.” Without familiarity with the term “*sahaja ācārya*,” a reader would be unaware of the reference to a tantric consort. In fact, even though at three points in the *Sukusuma* and once in the *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* Vaidyapāda expressly defines the *sahaja ācārya* as the consort, he leaves the term unexplained here. Perhaps, despite initiations involving sexual elements and the practice of sexual yogas being otherwise unabashedly advocated in Buddhajñānapāda's and Vaidyapāda's writings, to very explicitly associate these kinds of practices with Śākyamuni Buddha would have been too radical at the time they were writing. But the use of Śākyamuni's awakening narrative to advocate a specific tantric path, which had already been done in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*, apparently was not.

Steven Weinberger has argued that the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*'s account of Śākyamuni's awakening, in depicting tantric techniques as essential to the attainment of awakening, is a crucial moment in the development of Buddhist tantra, representing “tantra's coming out party, its “declaration of independence” as its own tradition, distinct from earlier Buddhist traditions.”¹⁵⁴ But while the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*'s narrative may

¹⁵⁴ Weinberger 2003, 189.

have been the first specifically *tantric* re-imagining of Śākyamuni’s awakening, and seems clearly to have served as the impetus for Buddhajñānapāda’s own retelling of that narrative, Buddhists had been emphasizing specific doctrines via differing accounts of the awakening narrative since the earliest days of the tradition. De La Vallée Poussin, Schmithausen, and Vetter have all examined a number of different doctrinal positions in early Buddhist *sūtras* and commentaries regarding the content of Śākyamuni’s and his disciples’ awakening and the process by means of which it is said to have occurred.¹⁵⁵ These various doctrinal positions are not our concern here, but it is worthwhile to note that while none of these scholars draws particular attention to the way in which such doctrines are conveyed, a number of the sources they draw upon are indeed narrative accounts of Śākyamuni’s awakening, within which the differing doctrines on the content and process of his awakening are enconced.¹⁵⁶

Thus while the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*’s awakening narrative may have been the first tantric version, it was certainly not the first occasion in which Śākyamuni’s awakening narrative was used to set forth a particular doctrinal system. Likewise, Buddhajñānapāda was not at all the last to rework the account in accordance with his own doctrinal positions. The *Anuttarasandhi* composed by Buddhajñānapāda’s disciple Śākyamitra and included as the second chapter of Nāgārjuna’s *Pañcakrama*, includes its own such account—apparently modeled on Buddhajñānapāda’s—which describes Śākyamuni’s awakening in terms of the *prabhāsvara* doctrine of the Ārya School.¹⁵⁷ Āryadeva’s *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* likewise contains a brief such account that alludes to the third initiation and references the Ārya tradition’s *prabhāsvara* doctrine.¹⁵⁸ By the time of the much later *Caṇḍamaharoṣaṇa-tantra*, which emphasizes the worship of women along with the crucial nature of bliss as a cause of awakening, attributing Śākyamuni’s awakening to sexual practices was apparently no longer too radical, as seems to have been the case in Buddhajñānapāda’s time. The retelling of the awakening story in the *Caṇḍamaharoṣaṇa-tantra* explains that the traditional narrative of Śākyamuni’s abandoning his wives and harem and going to the banks of the Nairāñjanā to manifest full awakening did not actually take place “from the perspective of the absolute truth...since it was in the female quarters, that the Buddha, experiencing pleasure in the company of Gopā, became accomplished,”¹⁵⁹ because “awakening is attained through pleasure, and there is no pleasure in being separated from women.”¹⁶⁰ Such a reading of the awakening narrative goes so far as to render Śākyamuni’s renunciation irrelevant from the perspective of his personal accomplishment (though of course in such a narrative the act of renunciation—like the entire “display” of awakening itself according to many Mahāyāna accounts in which Śākyamuni is said to have already been liberated prior to even taking birth in this world—can be understood to have an extremely important didactic function for his disciples). It is likely that there are also other

¹⁵⁵ De la Vallée Poussin 1936-7; Schmithausen 1981; Vetter 1988.

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, the accounts of the awakening in the *Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta*, *Mahāvagga*, *Mahāsaccaka*, and *Aṅguttara IV*, referenced in their works.

¹⁵⁷ See Tomabechi 2006, 140-141 for the Sanskrit edition and French translation of this passage in the *Anuttarasandhi*. See Kilty 2012, 463-65 for an English translation of a citation of part of this passage from the *Anuttarasandhi* in Tsongkhapa’s *Lamp to Illuminate the Five Stages*. As discussed in Chapter One, I agree with Tomabechi’s assessment that Śākyamitra based his account in the *Anuttarasandhi* on Buddhajñānapāda’s (Tomabechi 2006, 139n158). See also note 161 with reference to another Ārya School presentation of Śākyamuni’s awakening in the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*.

¹⁵⁸ Wedemeyer 2007, 262. See also note 161 below.

¹⁵⁹ *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*, Chapter Ten, verses 26d-27b. The fuller account, part of which I have summarized here, is recounted in Chapter Ten, verses 25-30. See also Onians 2003, 73-77 for an analysis of this passage.

¹⁶⁰ *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*, 10.28a-b.

such accounts of the awakening narrative in tantric Buddhist literature that similarly recast the mode of Śākyamuni's awakening to correspond with their own doctrinal and ritual systems.¹⁶¹

Following the awakening narrative proper, the conclusion of the *Muktilaka*'s account in which it is explained that from the time of Śākyamuni onwards the lineage of "this supreme reality was passed on...to a few fortunate ones from mouth to mouth, from ear to ear," is also remarkable. In making this statement Buddhajñānapāda appears to be connecting the special oral lineage of the teachings on the reality of "non-dual profundity and luminosity" directly to Śākyamuni Buddha, which might not seem unusual in a Buddhist text. But it comes precisely in a period in which the tantras themselves were becoming distanced from the historical Buddha and instead connected to cosmic buddhas like Bodhicittavajra, one of the more frequently used epithets for the buddha who is the teacher of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. In that context, such a reassertion of a direct lineal connection with Śākyamuni is indeed somewhat unusual.¹⁶² The *tantras*' gradual distancing from the historical Śākyamuni and connection with other buddhas as teachers was presumably due at least in part to the increasingly antinomian nature of the practices advocated therein. The opening narrative of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* locates the buddha who is

¹⁶¹ Khedrub Je's *Introduction to Tantric Systems (Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhas pa rgyas par brjod*, translated, with annotation, in Lessing and Wayman, 1978) gives a fascinating summary of the varying accounts of Śākyamuni's awakening according to the various Buddhist vehicles, including the distinctions in the account according to different tantric systems, and even differentiating among the position of different Indian Yoga tantra commentators (Lessing and Wayman 1978, 17-40). In this account, Khedrub explains that the position of the Ārya School of *Guhyasamāja* is found in the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, and that of the Jñānapāda school is found in the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Mukhāgama*, though Buddhajñānapāda's account, in fact, does not appear in either of these, but rather in the *Muktilaka*. Khedrub further states there is no divergence between the position of the two schools (ibid., 35). The account of Śākyamuni's awakening in the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* is described in the context of the third initiation (the account begins just after the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*'s own presentation of that initiation and the author begins the presentation of Śākyamuni's awakening with the words "by this process," suggesting that he also received the third initiation at this point) and includes the Ārya School practices of *prabhāsvara* and the *māyopama samādhi*. It also concludes with a statement, like Buddhajñānapāda's, of the teachings being passed on in a lineage from "mouth to mouth" since that time (Wedemeyer 2007, 262). And while we saw that Buddhajñānapāda's account in the *Muktilaka* does not explicitly reference the third initiation, Vaidyapāda has understood it to include that practice, and as such Khedrub's claim that the two traditions are in accord on this account is indeed substantiated. The account that Khedrub gives, however, is much more detailed than that found in either the *Muktilaka* or the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, and includes the bestowal of the third initiation with a consort whose name is given as Tilottamā. This account also focuses on the development of the *prabhāsvaras* of the Ārya school (ibid., 37). The same account is also found in Ngawang Palden's *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra* (Gyatso 2006, 114). In his *Lamp for the Five Stages*, Tsongkhapa cites Abhayākara Gupta's *Āmnāyamañjarī* where it is mentioned that, "having received the wisdom initiation given by the perfect buddhas abiding in the skies above, the Śākya master relied upon it in order to attain enlightenment while sitting in front of the Bodhi tree. Also, the Bhagavan, by this alone, was initiated into the vajra essence by Tilottamā" (Kilty 2013, 468; Kilty (213, 596n849) has identified the citation in Tōh 1198, 34b.1). Whatever the original source of this account in which Śākyamuni's partner in his the final steps towards awakening is named Tilottamā, this is quite an interesting choice of name for Śākyamuni's tantric consort; Tilottamā is a famous *apsaras* from the *Mahābhārata* and other *purāṇic* myths, known for her seductive beauty (see Ludvik 2007, 120n17 and Nihom 1995) and, along with the *apsaras* Rambhā, her propensity for "distract[ing] advanced sages from their development of *tapas*" (English 2002, 92). How fitting that she should act as precisely the condition for Śākyamuni's awakening, rather than an obstacle to his path. Tilottamā appears as an *apsaras* in both the *Hevajra* and *Samputa-tantra* (Regarding the *Hevajra* see Snellgrove 1958, 94; Farrow and Menon 2001, 281 and Nihom 1995; Regarding the *Samputa-tantra* see 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha forthcoming), and in a *sādhana* of a form of Vajrayoginī, called the *Guhyavajravilāsini-sādhana*, described by Elizabeth English in which Tilottamā and Rambhā are involved in the consecration process of the tantric yogin and his partner, in a similar inversion of their ordinary role as obstacles to a yogin's practice (English 2007, 92).

¹⁶² In fact, in this particular regard it seems more in common with the lineage narratives from the Chan tradition which, precisely in the 8th century, were setting forth lineages connecting the teachings of Bodhidharma to a chain of masters going back to Śākyamuni. On 8th-century Chan lineages see Yampolsky 1967, Foulk 1992, Adamek 2007, Sharf forthcoming.

its teacher “in the *bhagas* of the vajra goddess” rather than in a geographical location in India as the earlier *sūtras* had done; it would likely have been awkward for such a narrative to feature Śākyamuni. As noted above, the practices advocated in Buddhajñānapāda’s system certainly *did* include antinomian elements; in the present discussion I have drawn attention to their sexual elements, but his writings also include references other important antinomian aspects of the Mahāyoga tantras, including the use and consumption of impure substances (sexual and otherwise). But, as we have seen, Buddhajñānapāda omitted any direct reference to such features in his account of Śākyamuni’s awakening.

What is more, as I will demonstrate in the next section of this chapter, Buddhajñānapāda appears to have held the position that it was *only* through tantric practice that full awakening could be obtained, and that the realization attained through the tantric path surpassed that of all lower paths, including even the traditional Mahāyāna path of the bodhisattvas. Given these claims, it seems that Buddhajñānapāda’s linking of the special oral lineage of the teachings of the suchness of the perfection stage directly to Śākyamuni must take into account his statement that this lineage has, since the time of Śākyamuni, been passed only to “a few fortunate ones.” That is, given his claims of the superiority of the tantric perfection stage path over other Buddhist paths, linking its lineage directly to Śākyamuni and stating that it has been passed only to “a few fortunate ones,” Buddhajñānapāda is essentially claiming that this tantric path came from Śākyamuni himself, but that unlike the *śrāvaka* vehicle or the general Mahāyāna, it was not taught publicly to the majority of disciples and was instead passed on quietly in an unbroken lineage up to the present time. While not specifically referencing Śākyamuni, the first few verses spoken by Mañjuśrī in the *Dvītyākrama* also link the oral teachings on the perfection stage that Mañjuśrī passes on to Buddhajñānapāda to the *sugatas*, and emphasize that in both the past, present, and future its teachings are only given to “some” worthy disciples.¹⁶³ In avoiding an emphasis on the antinomian aspects of the tantric practices that Buddhajñānapāda held as necessary for the attainment of awakening, he was able to link the oral lineage of the suchness of the perfection stage to Śākyamuni directly, but without making overtly controversial statements. And in linking that oral lineage directly to Śākyamuni but stating that it was passed on only to a few disciples, Buddhajñānapāda was able to connect the tantric perfection stage teachings to the historical Buddha, and still maintain his position on the superiority of tantra over non-tantric paths.

Buddhajñānapāda’s account of Śākyamuni’s awakening in the *Muktilaka*, then, draws together the most important elements—or at least those that were not too controversial to mention in conjunction with Śākyamuni—of the higher tantric path according to his practice system, and demonstrates that even Śākyamuni Buddha achieved awakening by these means. A stronger statement of advocacy for this system is difficult to imagine, even within the extremely rich Buddhist imaginaire. The presence of this narrative in his *oeuvre* indicates that it was important for Buddhajñānapāda to advocate for the system of the higher stage of tantric practice, and thus suggests that his writings may have been among the earlier works to set forth such a system. The *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka* are, in fact, some of the earliest surviving

¹⁶³ Mañjuśrī states: *a*¹⁶³ *vi yaṃ raṃ vaṃ laṃ hūṃ a la la la ho!* / The great compassionate ones, / Who have realized this, / Those vajra holders of the past, present, and future/ |20| Who obtained the excellence of the *sugatas*,/ Have taught, teach, and will teach [this truth]/ To [only] some worthy [disciples]./ In order that they may realize the genuine meaning,/ |21| I will teach this to you— / Concentrate your mind and listen!/ |22| . *a bi yaṃ raṃ baṃ laṃ hūṃ a la la la ho!* // *rje btsun thugs rje che rnam kyis* // ‘*di rtogs pa yis bde gshegs kyī* // *phun sum tshogs pa ‘thob ‘gyur pa ‘i* // |20| ‘*das dang da ltar ma byon pa ‘i* // *rdo rje ‘dzin pas snod ‘ga’ la* // *gsungs shing gsung dang gsung ‘gyur ba* // *yang dag don rab rab rtogs phyir* // |21| *nga yis khyod la bstan par bya* // *yid gcig bsdus la mnyan par gyis* // |22| (*Dvītyākrama*, verses 20-22).

Buddhist texts to describe the stages of a perfection stage practice system.¹⁶⁴ Attributing the essential components of the perfection stage path to the awakening of Śākyamuni himself, this narrative indicates the importance of tantric practice, and specifically the practice of the perfection stage in Buddhajñānapāda's thought. In fact, there are a number of other passages in his writings that show that Buddhajñānapāda held the position that not only is tantric practice primary, but it is actually an essential component of the path to full awakening. Let us move on to examine some of these statements now.

IV: Privileging Tantric Practice: The Superiority of the Tantric Path and Its Result

In order to accomplish great awakening you must experience great bliss with the girl who liberates and gives joy. Nothing else can bring about buddhahood; this girl is the genuine supreme.

-Mañjuśrī instructing Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

Historically, tantric Buddhist scriptures and authors have held quite a number of different positions on the ways in which tantra is superior to non-tantric paths. One common position is that the result of the tantric path is identical to that of non-tantric Mahāyāna, but tantra remains superior because its special methods more blissfully produce a swifter result. A well-known and often-cited (at least in the later Tibetan tradition) quotation from Trivikrama Bhaṭṭa's¹⁶⁵ *Nayatrayapradīpa* conveys this position. Here I cite the verse along with the surrounding comments in Onians' translation:

Since this [Mantranaya] has the same goal as the Pāramitānaya, it should be explained what its distinction is:

Although the goal is the same, the Tantric teaching is superior to [the Pāramitānaya] because it is not confused, has many means, is not difficult, and is appropriate for those of keen faculties.

Thus, although there is no difference between the two Mahāyānas, that of mantras and that of perfections, with regard to the result, described [already above for example] as nondual omniscience, nevertheless, the *mantramahāyāna* is superior to the *pāramitāmahāyāna* by virtue of those four distinctions.¹⁶⁶

An alternative position is that in addition to its superior methods, the final result of tantric practice itself surpasses that of the non-tantric path. Buddhajñānapāda's oeuvre indicates that he held the latter view. While, as we have seen above, Buddhajñānapāda does suggest that the tantric path outlined in his writings is meant for just "a few" fortunate disciples—presumably those of "keen faculties," as Trivikrama Bhaṭṭa states—he also asserted the tantric Buddhist perspective, path, and its result to be superior to that of non-tantric Buddhism, including even the

¹⁶⁴ Tanemura (2015, 329) even suggests that Buddhajñānapāda "was probably the first person who integrated the two systems of meditation [i.e. the generation and perfection stages] into Buddhist tantric practice." As I will discuss further in Chapter Five, it seems to me difficult to attribute such a significant development to a single individual, but Buddhajñānapāda was undoubtedly one of the first authors to structure tantric practice in terms of the two stages.

¹⁶⁵ The name of this author is given in Onians (2001) as Tripiṭakamala and Sanderson (2009, 233n536) as Tripiṭakamalla, presumably based on the name as given in the colophon of the Tibetan translation of the *Nayatrayapradīpa*. However, since then a manuscript of the *Nayatrayapradīpa* that gives the author's name as Trivikrama Bhaṭṭa has turned up. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for bringing this to my attention.

¹⁶⁶ Onians 2001, 97-98. While Onians studies Trivikrama Bhaṭṭa's work in some detail in her dissertation, she does not discuss his dates, presumably because that information is unavailable. The *Nayatrayapradīpa* was translated into Tibetan by Padmākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo, so Trivikrama Bhaṭṭa must have lived during or prior to the 11th century, but without a more detailed study of what appears to be his single surviving work, I am unable to say anything more about his dates.

traditional bodhisattva path of exoteric Mahāyāna. Buddhajñānapāda also appears to have held that within tantric practice the practice of the perfection stage is not only superior to that of the generation stage, but actually essential for the attainment of full awakening. In addition to several rather direct statements of the fact, the ways in which Buddhajñānapāda demonstrates tantric superiority are wide-ranging. He indicates the superiority of tantric and perfection stage ritual practices over non-tantric or non-perfection stage practices through drawing comparisons between sets of practices, describes the tantric view as superior to non-tantric philosophical positions, frequently refers to the ultimate nature of reality not just as suchness, but specifically as the “suchness of the second stage,” and uses unique terminology to describe the final result of awakening achieved through the tantric path. By means of these diverse statements and indications we can see clearly that Buddhajñānapāda held the higher stage of the tantric path to be an essential—and indeed the only—means to the attainment of complete awakening.

Tantric Perfection Stage Practice is the Only Means to Awakening

In Buddhajñānapāda’s writings we find several rather direct statements to the effect that it is *only* through the practice of certain tantric methods that one is able to attain complete awakening. One of these is found in his *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, which contains a passage defending the practice of deity yoga against an unnamed interlocutor. That passage includes the following verse:¹⁶⁷

Therefore, he who meditates upon himself as Samantabhadra, shining with full radiance,
And concept-free, he *alone* partakes in awakening.¹⁶⁸

This statement is followed by a citation of a block of verses from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* advocating the practice of deity yoga, though unlike Buddhajñānapāda that *tantra* does not specify that such a practice is the *only* way to awakening, simply that reliance upon this practice will bring about awakening in this very life, even for someone who has failed for billions of aeons to attain that state.¹⁶⁹ Given the reference in Buddhajñānapāda’s verse to meditating upon oneself as the deity¹⁷⁰ and its context in a passage defending deity yoga, it seems that in the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* Buddhajñānapāda is advocating the tantric practice of deity yoga as essential to attaining awakening.

However, three passages in the *Dvitiyākrama* suggest that even the practice of the deity yoga of the generation stage is not sufficient for the attainment of full awakening. All three of these passages focus on the necessity of the sexual yogas connected to the perfection stage for

¹⁶⁷ The Sanskrit appears to be in verse, but the Tibetan translators did not render it as such.

¹⁶⁸ Emphasis mine. *tasmān nirastasaṅkalpaṃ samantaspharaṇatviṣam | Samantabhadram ātmānaṃ bhāvayann eva bodhibhāḥ ||* (Szántó unpublished, 147). *de bas na kun tu rtog pa spangs pa ‘od zer ma lus pa spro ba can gyi kun bzang po ‘i bdag nyid sgom* (sgom] D, bsgom P) *par byed pa/ de kho na byang chub kyi snod yin te/* (*Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, D 56a.1-2; P 67b.2-3). Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for pointing out that this verse seems to deliberately echo the first verse of Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika*, a point I discuss further in Chapter Eight.

¹⁶⁹ Buddhajñānapāda does not name his source. I am grateful to Péter Szántó for sharing his draft Sanskrit edition of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* in which the source of these verses is identified. The verses cited are from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*’s first chapter, verses 1. 118a-119a followed by *yāvat* (*nas*) and verse 1.124c-d (*Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, D 152a).

¹⁷⁰ It is unclear what precisely is meant by “Samantabhadra” here. In Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*—which features the central deity Mañjuvajra, not Samantabhadra—Samantabhadra (when not acting as the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, in which role he *also* appears in that *sādhana*!) seems to be equivalent to Vajrasattva as a generic name for, or source of, the *yidam* deity (see *Caturaṅga-sādhana* D 37a.2 where Samantabhadra is the source of the *dharmodaya*; Vaidyapāda and Samantabhadra (the commentator, not the deity!) identify Samantabhadra here with Vajrasattva), as well as a name/term referencing the innate nature (see *Caturaṅga-sādhana*, D 42b.3).

gaining complete realization. The first of the two, which precedes a discussion on the four types of tantric consort says,

That which is luminous and joyful, equal to space—
One will not know it any other way.
Thus, a woman, the illusory *mudrā*,
Is superior among all illusions.¹⁷¹ |50|¹⁷²

Vaidyapāda explains that the subject of the verse is nondual wisdom,¹⁷³ and that the only way to come to know it is through the seven yogas, which as we saw above involve sexual practice.¹⁷⁴ Whether or not Buddhajñānapāda meant to specify the seven yogas, he is clearly stating that engaging in practice with a woman is necessary to gain the realization of “that which is luminous and joyful, equal to space.”

Yet another passage from a section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that lays out the ritual procedure for the third initiation includes several verses that form part of a liturgy to be spoken by the guru to the disciple during initiation. In these lines, the guru states that buddhahood can only be attained through practicing with the consort who is given to the disciple as part of the third initiation. It seems that these lines became part of a popular initiation liturgy, as several lines from these verses—and indeed quite a bit of the section on the third initiation from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*—have been adapted into quite a number of later tantric texts, including the *Samājottara* and the *Vajrāvalī*.¹⁷⁵ As he gives the consort to the disciple at the beginning of the ritual the guru says,

“This goddess is suitable for you.
Great being,¹⁷⁶ all of the buddhas have given¹⁷⁷
This delightful girl to you to enjoy¹⁷⁸
By means of your desire |87|
Through the ritual for the *maṇḍala-cakra*.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷¹ *bud med sgyu ma 'i phyag rgya ni// sgyu ma kun las khyad par 'phags//*. These two lines have strong parallels with the first two lines of the Chapter One, verse 4 of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, which read (in Tibetan) *sgyu ma dag ni thams cad pas// bud med sgyu ma khyed par che//* (D 151a.3). The *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* also mentions the woman as a *mudrā* in the last two lines of the immediately preceding verse: *bud med kun gyi sgyu ma 'i rgya// 'di ni gnyis med theg pa 'i mchog//* (D 151a.2). Thanks to Ryan Damron for bringing the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* reference to my attention. The two lines from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are also strongly paralleled in Śākyamitra's *Anuttarasandhi*, included as the second stage in Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama* which reads: *sarvāsām eva māyānāṃ strī-māyaiva viśiṣyate/* (Mimaki and Tomabechi 20); *sgyu ma dag ni thams cad las// bud med sgyu ma khyad par 'phags//* (*Pañcakrama*, D 49a.7; Mimaki and Tomabechi 20). Tomabechi (2006, 132n128) has already noticed these parallels and additionally notes that a passage identical to the one from the *Pañcakrama* is found in the *Vajramāṇḍalāmkāra*.

¹⁷² *gsal shing rab dga' mkha' mnyam pa// gzhan du rig par mi 'gyur bas// bud med sgyu ma 'i phyag rgya ni// sgyu ma kun las khyad par 'phags//* |50| (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 50).

¹⁷³ *gnyis su med pa 'i ye shes* (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.7).

¹⁷⁴ *Sukusuma* 99a.7-b.2

¹⁷⁵ See notes from the citation below for more details. In an earlier conference paper (C. Dalton 2014) I argued that the *Samājottara* is later than, and incorporates elements from, Buddhajñānapāda's writings. I will lay out the arguments from that paper, along with some additional evidence, in Chapter Eight.

¹⁷⁶ *sems chen*] S P N V(P), *sems can* D C V(D); Vaidyapāda's commentary also suggests that *sems chen* is the better reading: “**Great being** means someone who has the intention to liberate sentient beings.” *sems chen* (*chen*] P, *can* D) *zhes pa ni sems can bsgral ba 'i sems gang la yod pa 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.7-106a.1; P 107b.1).

¹⁷⁷ *gnang*] D C V(D and P), *snang* S P N; The Peking edition of Vaidyapāda's commentary cites the line from the verse with *snang*, but then in the explanation of the verse uses the correct spelling, *gnang*.

¹⁷⁸ ~Cf. *Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 444). This line could also be understood as “to practice with.” Vaidyapāda writes, “**Given by the buddhas to enjoy** means that the unsurpassed **buddhas give** [a woman] to some suitable disciples **to enjoy**.” *sangs rgyas kun gyis spyod du gnang* (*gnang*] D, *snang* P) / *zhes pa 'i bla na med pa 'i sangs rgyas rnam kyis snod du rung ba 'i gang zag 'ga' la spyod du gnang ba 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106a.1; P 127b.1-2).

In order to accomplish great awakening
 You must experience great bliss¹⁸⁰
 [With] the girl who liberates and gives joy. |88|
 Nothing else can bring about buddhahood
 This girl is the genuine supreme¹⁸¹
 Thus, throughout endless *samsāra*
 You must never separate from her.” |89|¹⁸²

As the passage makes very clear, engaging in sexual practice together with a consort is an essential part of the path, since “nothing else can bring about buddhahood.”

Later in the *Dvīṭyākrama* sexual yoga is described as superior to the traditional means of cultivation of the ten bodhisattva *bhūmis*, as well as the practice of the generation stage. Like the passage above in which the guru tells the disciple that practice with a consort is necessary for the attainment of buddhahood, the passage on the ten *bhūmis* of sexual practice again indicates that any of the “lower” practices not involving sexual yogas will not produce the final result of perfect awakening. Following a passage in which each of the ten bodhisattva *bhūmis* is, one by one, homologized with various stages of sexual practice,¹⁸³ the *Dvīṭyākrama* states:

By means of these ten

¹⁷⁹ Vaidyapāda seems to understand this as referring to the rituals of the generation stage practice, as he specifies that this means the *ādiyoga-samādhi*—the first of the three *samādhis* of generation stage practice—“and so forth.” The *Sukusuma* reads, “By means of the ritual of the *maṇḍala-cakra* means the ritual of the *ādiyoga*[-*samādhi*] and so forth. Thus, by means of reversing the ordinary, one attains liberation in one life.” *dkyil ‘khor ‘khor lo’i cho ga yis/ zhes te/ dang pa’i rnal ‘byor* (D adds *pa*) *la sogs pa’i cho ga ste/ tha mal pa bzlog pas tshe gcig gis grol ba’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106a.1-2; P 107a.2-3). This is an indication of the possibility of sexual yogas in the generation stage practices, rather than only in perfection stage practices as became the case in the later tradition. In any case the distinction between generation and perfection stage practices was probably still being developed at this point so some overlap is to be expected.

¹⁸⁰ ~Cf. *Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 444). *Pādas* a and c of this verse are represented in the *Vajrāvalī*, but here in Buddhajñānapāda’s text—at least in the Tibetan translation—there is an intervening *pāda* b that is elided in the *Vajrāvalī* version. Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* corresponds to the inclusion of *pāda* b in the *Dvīṭyākrama*’s verse. The subsequent two *pādas* in the *Vajrāvalī* correspond with the second half of *Dvīṭyākrama* 124 c and the first half of *Dvīṭyākrama* 124d, which were also incorporated into Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, presumably the source from which Abhayākara Gupta draws them. Cf. *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, verse 366c-d. *vajraparyāṅkataś cittaṃ manyantargatam iḥṣayan*.

¹⁸¹ These two *pādas* are nearly identical with *Samājottara* 125 c and d. The verse in the *Samājottara*, however, uses the term *vidyā* rather than “girl” (**kanyā*?). This suggests that Buddhajñānapāda’s verses may be earlier. In an earlier study (C. Dalton 2014) I have argued in some detail that the verse on the two stages of tantric practice in the *Samājottara* is likely modeled on Buddhajñānapāda’s verse in the *Muktītilaka*, rather than vice versa. In that instance, it appears that the term “buddhas” from Buddhajñānapāda’s earlier verse in his *Muktītilaka* was transformed into “vajra holders” in the *Samājottara*. Just like in this verse with the use of the term *vidyā* in the *Samājottara* rather than “girl” (**kanyā*?) in the *Dvīṭyākrama*, a move towards increased tantrification is much more likely than the reverse. In this case, moreover, the second two *pādas* of this verse in the *Dvīṭyākrama* are also found in the *Samājottara*, though with an intervening two *pādas* about the nondual nature of reality. Again, the fact that there are two intervening *pādas* in the *Samājottara*’s version suggests that if one text is based upon the other (i.e. if they are not both drawing from some separate earlier source) the *Samājottara*’s is likely later than Buddhajñānapāda’s verse, as it would be unlikely that Buddhajñānapāda would cite from a scriptural source—even unattributed—and not provide the complete citation. I discuss both of these points in Chapter Eight.

¹⁸² *lha mo ‘di ni khyod dang mthun// sems chen khyod kyis ‘dod pa gyis// yid ‘ong bu mo ‘di nyid ni// sangs rgyas kun gyis spyod du gnan// |87| dkyil ‘khor ‘khor lo’i cho ga yis// bu mo sgrol byed dga’ byin ma// byang chub chen po bsgrub pa’i phyir// khyod kyis bde chen myong bar gyis// |88| gzhan kyis sangs rgyas mi nus pa// bu mo ‘di ni yang dag mchog// de bas mtha’ med ‘khor ba’i bar// khyod kyis ‘di dang bral mi bya// |89|* (*Dvīṭyākrama*, verses 87-89).

¹⁸³ I discuss Buddhajñānapāda’s use of homologizing non-tantric and non-perfection stage practices with tantric and perfection stage practices, and examine the passage on the ten *bhūmis* of sexual practices below.

The first and the later supreme result
 Are attained, just as explained above.
 But for those disciples |310|
 Who are unable to authentically engage in this great reality
 The *tathāgatas* have taught it in terms of characteristics
 Like “Perfect Joy” and the rest.
 Through engaging in that reality, and by means of [its practice] |311|
 They gain realization—though there is still something higher.
 That itself has [also] been taught,
 To the yogins of the first [stage] ¹⁸⁴
 [As] the support and supported *maṇḍala-cakra*. |312|
 Engaging in and relying upon that, one may gain realization,
 But those who do not know *this* reality
 Are not genuine buddhas. |313|¹⁸⁵

This passage is important in explicitly stating that the result of tantric practice is superior to that of a non-tantric path. The text states that by means of the ten *bhūmis* of sexual practices, the disciple is able to attain “the first and the later supreme result.” Vaidyapāda explains that “**the first**” indicates “foolish individuals obtaining unflinching suchness from the words of the guru, like a blind person finding a jewel in a heap of rubbish,”¹⁸⁶ likely a reference to the disciple’s first “obtaining” suchness from the guru at the outset of the perfection stage path. He goes on to explain that “**the later supreme result** occurs when, having followed the unique methods, one is just like a destitute child who, with a single utterance, takes possession of his father’s wealth and enjoys it. This is because it is something that was received from someone [i.e. the guru] who is like a father.”¹⁸⁷ Thus the disciple’s first encounter with suchness and its complete realization—the “supreme result” of perfect awakening—are both said to be attained by means of sexual yogas. Referencing the first bodhisattva *bhūmi* of Perfect Joy (*rab tu dga’ ba*), the *Dvitiyakrama* suggests that it was only on account of “those disciples who are unable to engage in authentically in this great reality” by means of the ten *bhūmis* of sexual yoga that the ten *bhūmis* were taught in their exoteric Mahāyāna iteration. Vaidyapāda makes the point more explicitly: “**This great reality** means the path that perfects the ten *bhūmis* in a single instant. **Those disciples** who are **unable to enter into** it are those [who practice] the six perfections, since they see [sexual practices] as acts that are at odds with purity.”¹⁸⁸ The cultivation of the ordinary ten *bhūmis* is still said to bring about realization, but it is *not* the full realization of perfect awakening because, as the *Dvitiyakrama* makes clear, “there is still something higher.” Again Vaidyapāda is more explicit: “**The sugatas** of the past and others **have taught** [this reality], in the *sūtra piṭaka* and

¹⁸⁴ Vaidyapāda clarifies that this refers to yogins who are at the generation stage level of practice (*Sukusuma*, D 128b.2-3).

¹⁸⁵ *bcu po de yis dang po dang// phyis kyi ‘bras bu mchog ‘gyur ba// gong du gsung pa rab thob ste// de bas de ‘dra’i don chen la// |310| yang dag ‘jug par mi nus pa’i// gdul bya rnams la bde gshegs kyis// rab tu dga’ sogs mtshan nyid du// bstan nas de yi don zhugs pas// |311| de yis rtogs kyang bla dang bcas// de nyid dang po’i rnal ‘byor la// rten dang rten can dkyil ‘khor gyi// ‘khor lo rab tu bstan byas nas// |312| de zhugs de la brtan byas pas// rtogs kyang don ‘di ma shes na// yang dag sangs rgyas ma yin no// |313|* (*Dvitiyakrama*, verses 310d-313d).

¹⁸⁶ *dang po zhes pa ni mi slu* (slu] D, bslu P) *ba’i de kho na nyid dmus long gis phyag dar khrod phung du nor bu rnyed pa ltar gang zag blun pas bla m’i zhal nas de las thob pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D128a.5-6; P 154b.2)

¹⁸⁷ *phyis kyi ‘bras bu mchog gyur ba* (ba] D, pa P) / *zhes pa ni thabs kyi khyad par du gyur bzhin par byas na* (na] D, bas P) *byis pa* (byis pa] D, P om.) *dbul pos pha’i nor tshig gcig gis bdag gir byas nas spyod pa bzhin du pha lta bu de las thob pa’i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.6-7; P 154b.2-3).

¹⁸⁸ *de ‘dra’i don chen zhes pa ni sa bcu skad cig gis rdzogs pa’i lam la ‘jug par mi nus pa’i gdul bya ni pha rol tu phyin pa rnams te/ rnam par dag pa ‘gal ba’i las nyid du mthong ba’i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.7-128b.1; P 154b.4-5)

other places, in terms of **the characteristics of “Perfect Joy” and the rest.** Through **engaging in that reality** by means of the wisdom of learning and the rest via those [*bhūmis*], even if [a disciple] **realizes** its ultimate character, that is still an “ultimate” **beyond which there is something higher.** This is because the unsurpassed result is [only] realized by means of the unique path.”¹⁸⁹ Even without Vaidyapāda’s helpful clarifications, however, this passage in the *Dvītyākrama* clearly asserts the superiority of the result of tantric practice.

But Buddhajñānapāda does not leave it just at this; the next lines of the passage indicate that “that itself”—which Vaidyapāda specifies is still the ten *bhūmis*—was taught to generation stage practitioners as the “support and supported *maṇḍala-cakra*,” a term referring to the *maṇḍala* and the deities residing within it. Engaging in deity yoga practice the practitioner may gain realization, but even this is not sufficient because, as the text specifies, without knowing “this reality”—the reality that is known through the ten *bhūmis* of sexual yogas—one cannot become a genuine buddha. Again, Vaidyapāda makes the point even more explicitly: he states that focusing the mind upon the appearance of the support *maṇḍala* and supported deities was merely taught as the provisional truth (*drang pa’i don*), and that “without relying upon the practice of the post-initiatory observances (*vrata*) and the rest, one will not know this nondual reality just as it is, and will thus not become a sublime authentic buddha.”¹⁹⁰ As discussed above, the post-initiatory observances in this context certainly involve the *vidyāvrata*, the consort observance. Vaidyapāda himself specifies this elsewhere,¹⁹¹ and the context of the discussion makes it rather certain that the *vidyāvrata* was intended by the term *vrata* here. Thus while the citation from the *Ātmasādhānāvātāra* that we examined above suggests only that the tantric path of deity yoga is a crucial method for attaining awakening, all three of the passages we have seen from the *Dvītyākrama* make it clear that Buddhajñānapāda held not only deity yoga, but the sexual yogas of the perfection stage, as essential for the attainment of full awakening. The results of other paths, as the *Dvītyākrama* states explicitly, can still be surpassed.

In another passage from the *Dvītyākrama* Buddhajñānapāda explains that nondual wisdom is unknown to the practitioners and scholars of quite a wide range of non-tantric Buddhist paths and philosophies:

What can the rain do
 To someone with an umbrella in his hand?
 Likewise, when carrying the umbrella
 Of nondual wisdom, [147]
 Even if a rain of concepts should fall
 How could they do any harm?
 That kind of perfect supreme wisdom
 How could it be known by an ordinary being? [148]
 It is not known by the *śrāvakas*
 Nor by the *pratyekyabuddhas*
 The Yogācārins, Mādhyamikas,
 And bodhisattvas do not know it. [149]

¹⁸⁹ *de la ‘das pa la sogs pa’i bde bar gshogs pa rnam kyis sa dang po rab tu dga’ ba la sogs pa’i mtshan nyid du mdo sde la sogs par bstan nas/ de rnam kyis thos pa la sogs pa’i shes rab kyis de’i don la zhugs pas mthar thug pa’i mtshan nyid rtogs kyang bla dang bcas pa’i mthar thug pa ste/ bla na med pa’i ‘bras bu ni lam khyad par can gyis rtogs pa’i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 128b.1-2; P154b.5-7).

¹⁹⁰ *...brtul zhugs la sogs pa’i spyod pas ji bzhin pa’i gnyis su med pa’i don ‘di ma shes na dam pa yang dag pa’i sangs rgyas ma yin no zhes pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 128b.5-6; P 155a.3-4)

¹⁹¹ *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 57b.6-7.

Even all of the non-superior buddhas¹⁹²
 Do not know this at all.
 [But] by pleasing the future vajra-holders,
 Who know this reality, [150]
 Due to the power of one's great merit
 It will be transferred [even] without words.¹⁹³

Vaidyapāda's commentary identifies the “umbrella of nondual wisdom” as the unique path of the second stage of tantric practice,¹⁹⁴ and the context of this passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, immediately following a doxography that places the view of the perfection stage above all philosophical positions, supports this reading. Indeed, Buddhajñānapāda claims directly in this passage that many of the lower paths lack knowledge of nondual wisdom. Certainly, ordinary beings, *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, Yogācarins, Mādhyamikas, and bodhisattvas “do not know it,” a statement that clearly places the wisdom of the tantric path above that of both the exoteric Buddhist practice traditions and philosophical systems.¹⁹⁵ But the subsequent statement that “even all of the non-superior buddhas do not know it” is more cryptic. While unfortunately we do not have the original Sanskrit of this passage, the term that I have translated as “non-superior buddhas” (*bla bcas sangs rgyas*) literally means “surpassed buddhas,” and—in Tibetan at least—is a quite unusual phrase that appears to have been coined in contradistinction to the very common term “unsurpassed buddha” (or “unsurpassed buddhahood”) (*bla med sangs rgyas*). Here in this passage the “surpassable” categories mentioned, beginning with the *śrāvakas*, appear in a hierarchical order and include what is, for Buddhajñānapāda, the highest philosophical position, that of the Mādhyamikas, as well as the highest non-tantric form of practice, that of the bodhisattvas.¹⁹⁶ Thus the “non-superior buddhas,” who are placed above even all of these, appear here to constitute a separate category that is higher than the bodhisattvas but lower than those who realize the nondual wisdom of the perfection stage. Vaidyapāda identifies these “**non-superior buddhas**” as “the buddhas of the Kriyā tantras, the buddhas of the Caryā tantras, and the buddhas of the Yoga tantras.”¹⁹⁷ While we cannot be sure that this is precisely what Buddhajñānapāda intended, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is clearly referring to a category superior to the exoteric Mahāyāna but inferior to the teachings on nondual wisdom found in Buddhajñānapāda's perfection stage practice system; the lower tantras—including even the Yoga tantras—are an

¹⁹² Tib. *bla bcas sangs rgyas*. Literally “those buddhas who are surpassed by something else.” Vaidyapāda identifies these as the buddhas of the Kriyā, Caryā, and Yoga tantras (*Sukusuma*, D 112a.4-5). I discuss this term below.

¹⁹³ *gang zhig lag na gdugs thogs la// de la char pas ci byar yod// de bzhin gnyis med ye shes kyi// gdugs thogs la ni rtog pa yi// [147] char pa rab tu 'bab 'gyur yang// de la de yis ji ltar gnod// de 'dra'i rab mchog ye shes ni// so so skye bos ga la shes// [148] nyan thos rnam kyis mi shes so// rang sangs rgyas kyis kyang mi shes// rnal 'byor spyod dang dbu ma pa// byang chub sems dpas mi shes so// [149] bla bcas sangs rgyas kun gyis kyang// 'di ni cung zad mi shes so// 'di yi don shes ma 'ongs pa'i// rdo rje 'dzin pa mnyes byas nas// [150] rang gi bsod nams chen stobs kyis// yi ge med par rnam par 'pho// (Dvīṭīyakrama, verses 147-151b).*

¹⁹⁴ *Sukusuma*, D 112a.2.

¹⁹⁵ I discuss Buddhajñānapāda's philosophical position in relation to his view on the superiority of the tantric view, training, and result below.

¹⁹⁶ The term “surpassed” (*bla dang bcas*) is used at three other places in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, always indicating a state or level of realization that is lower than that attained by means of the perfection stage. In the three other passages that use the term, the point of comparison (i.e. that which is “surpassed” or “surpassable”) is always an exoteric Mahāyāna position or system: in the first instance it is non-Buddhist and Buddhist philosophical positions culminating in the Madhyamaka; in the second, the traditional Mahāyāna bodhisattva *bhūmis*; and in the third, the awakening that is attained by means of the “path involving suffering.” See *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 141, 312, and 393, respectively.

¹⁹⁷ *bla bcas sangs rgyas zhes pa ni bya ba'i rgyud kyi sangs rgyas dang spyod pa'i rgyud kyi sangs rgyas dang rnal 'byor rgyud kyi sangs rgyas so// (Sukusuma, D 112a.4-5).*

excellent candidate for such a category. Thus, in this passage the lower tantric systems appear to be overtly subordinated to tantric systems in which perfection stage practices are taught.¹⁹⁸

This is further indicated by the concluding verses of the passage, which state that “through pleasing the future vajra-holders who know this reality” it will be “transferred [even] without words.” This seems to be yet another reference to the process of the guru’s transferring suchness directly to the disciple, which, as discussed above, is the crucial initial moment of the perfection stage path. However, this verse is unusual in seeming to assert the possibility of a *nonverbal* communication of reality from the guru to the disciple.¹⁹⁹ The context of such an assertion within Buddhajñānapāda’s system remains perplexing given the predominance of references to the communication of suchness specifically by way of the guru’s words in both Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings.²⁰⁰ In any case, this passage’s reference to the transference of reality, or supreme wisdom, from the guru to disciple certainly constitutes part of the perfection stage system taught in Buddhajñānapāda’s works, and it is thus this system that is asserted to be superior.

Outside of Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings, we also find later Indian and Tibetan authors attributing to him the position that tantra, including its result, is superior to non-tantric paths. In his *Sarvasamayasaṃgraha* Atīśa writes, “The great *ācārya* Jñānapāda wrote, ‘The tantric vehicle is extraordinary in three ways: the practitioner, the path, and the result.’”²⁰¹ While this statement itself is not found in any of Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving works, the positions that it mentions do certainly fit with what we see in Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings, including the superiority of the tantric result. The same statement cited by Atīśa is also attributed to Buddhajñānapāda in the works of several later Tibetan scholars.²⁰² Moreover, the Tibetan scholar Jamyang Sheyba attributes to the *Dvīṭyākrama* the position that “without the addition of a Mantra path, final Buddhahood is not attained through the Perfection Vehicle alone.”²⁰³ The passages from Buddhajñānapāda’s works, including the *Dvīṭyākrama*, that we have examined here do indeed either state or intimate that the path of tantra, and especially that of the perfection stage, is necessary in order to attain perfect awakening. Yet another way in which Buddhajñānapāda demonstrates the superiority of the tantric path, and especially the path of the perfection stage, is by drawing direct equivalents between non-tantric practices or tantric non-

¹⁹⁸ Regarding precisely what type of tantra might be superior to lower tantric systems, both Buddhajñānapāda (see *Dvīṭyākrama*, verse 388) and Vaidyapāda (*Sukusuma*, D 107a.6-7) use the term Mahāyoga to describe what they seem to consider the highest class of tantra (though Vaidyapāda also uses other terms; see Chapter One, note 100). We may recall, however, that even the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra—the most important tantra for Buddhajñānapāda, the ostensive basis of his practice systems, and thus presumably the tantra he would have considered to fall into the Mahāyoga class—does not distinguish between the two stages of tantric practice, although sexual yogic practices that were further developed and eventually classified as the perfection stage *are* found in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. As I noted in Chapter Two, the specific perfection stage practices in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, since they were received in a visionary encounter, have Mañjuśrī himself as their source.

¹⁹⁹ The phrase in question, *yi ge med par rnam par ‘pho*, which I have translated as “transferred [even] without words,” uses the term *yi ge*—“letters,” “syllables,” or “words”—so it is possible that this could mean “without writings/texts.” Vaidyapāda says it means that “without relying upon external words (writings?) and so forth, the guru transfers [it] into the mindstream of the disciple.” *phyi rol gyi yi ge la sogs pa la brien pa med par bla mas slob ma’i rgyud du rnam par ‘pho zhes so* (*Sukusuma*, D 112a.6; P 135a.3).

²⁰⁰ It does, however, fit well with later claims in Great Perfection and Mahāmudrā traditions of the guru’s being able to communicate suchness to a disciple by means of a gesture, or some other nonverbal means.

²⁰¹ *slob dpon chen po ye shes zhabs kyi zhal snga nas sngags kyi theg pa ni rnam pa gsum gyis thun mong ma yin te/ ‘di ltar sgrub pa po dang lam dang ‘bras bu gsum mo zhes gsungs so//* (*Sarvasamayasaṃgraha*, D 44a.7).

²⁰² For example, Butön, and Jamgon Kongtrül cite the passage (See Hopkins 2008, 241 and Kongtrül 2005, 80, respectively).

²⁰³ Hopkins 2003, 637.

perfection stage practice and the practices of the perfection stage. Let us examine some of these equivalences now.

Homologizing Tantric Practices with Non-tantric Ones

In his early work on the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, Alex Wayman wrote that the Jñānapāda School, and Buddhajñānapāda's writings specifically, "adopted an interpretive position in which at each point the explanations of the *Guhyasamāja* are tied in with Mahāyāna Buddhism, particularly of the Prajñāpāramitā type," an assertion that has been repeated by a number of later scholars.²⁰⁴ Indeed, we do see Buddhajñānapāda homologizing Mahāyāna doctrines and practices with tantric ones, but again it is always perfection stage doctrines and practices with which the non-tantric doctrines and practices are related, and in drawing those relationships the perfection stage is consistently privileged. Moreover, there are other passages where Buddhajñānapāda connects not just the Mahāyāna, but tantric generation stage practices and terminology, with those of the perfection stage, always privileging the latter. This suggests that he was not merely concerned with relating tantra to the Mahāyāna, but rather showing that perfection stage practices encompassed and indeed superceded the exoteric Mahāyāna as well as the lower stages of tantric practice. This is not to say that Buddhajñānapāda held the foundational tradition of Buddhism, the Mahāyāna, or the first stage of tantra in disregard. The *Muktilaka* contains an extensive section on the importance of the foundational practice of cultivating compassion, joy, and equanimity, three among the four boundless attitudes (*apramāṇa, tshad med pa*) found in early Buddhist traditions. The Mahāyāna practice of generating *bodhicitta* and its doctrine of emptiness are emphasized in his works, and Buddhajñānapāda wrote more than one generation stage *sādhana*, including the *Samantabhadra/Caturaṅga-sādhana*, his well-known *Guhyasamāja sādhana* centered on the *maṇḍala* of Mañjuvājra. However, his writings do suggest that while he understood all of these practices as important—even essential—they were understood as such specifically in their role as foundational supports to the practice of the perfection stage.

In a passage in the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* Buddhajñānapāda equates mind's nature, or nondual wisdom, with a number of Mahāyāna principles, which are then equated with specific deities.²⁰⁵ The principles invoked include the five wisdoms, the four (!) gates of liberation, the sixteen emptinesses, and eight among the ten *pāramitās*.²⁰⁶ However, this is precisely the passage that I identified in Chapter One as a rather lengthy series of unattributed quotations from Chapter Six of Vilāsavājra's *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*. Buddhajñānapāda has thus borrowed these correspondences of nondual wisdom with the various Mahāyāna principles and the deities of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti maṇḍala* from his guru's work. As we will recall, Buddhajñānapāda, in the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka*, frequently identifies nondual wisdom as something known only through the perfection stage path, but such a claim is not found in the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*. This, I believe, constitutes further evidence—in addition to the conspicuous absence of any reference to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, so central to Buddhajñānapāda's other tantric writings—that the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* is an earlier work. In any case, like the emphasis on nondual wisdom found in the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, it seems that Buddhajñānapāda's practice of making equivalences between doctrines and practices from different Buddhist systems may be due in part to the influence of his guru Vilāsavājra.

In the *Dvītyākrama* we see another set of Mahāyāna categories homologized with the sexual practice of the perfection stage. This passage, which I already mentioned above, draws a

²⁰⁴ Wayman 1977, 94.

²⁰⁵ *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, 57a.4-58b.6.

²⁰⁶ As Tribe (2016, 6 and 14n15) has noted, some of the sets of principles have been modified to more effectively hew to tantric categories or sets of deities that they are said to represent.

direct correspondence between each of the ten bodhisattva *bhūmis* and ten different stages of sexual union, and concludes by explicitly privileging the tantric perfection stage “version” of the practice over the Mahāyāna one.²⁰⁷

[Adorned] with garlands, necklaces, anklets,²⁰⁸ and more,
 Her complexion, breasts,²⁰⁹ and the rest,
 Knowing the bliss of examining the lotus—
 This should be known as the first. |299|
 Praising with melodious song
 Like the *shajarishanisha*²¹⁰ and others,
 And delighting with the sweet sound *ṣīt* —²¹¹
 This should be known as the second. |300|
 At the time of anointing the body
 With sandalwood and other scents,
 The genuine bliss which is so produced—
 This should be known as the third. |301|
 Having sucked the honey from [her] lower lip
 The *bodhicitta* that abides in the head melts,
 Tasting it brings pleasure,²¹² thus delighting oneself—
 This should be known as the fourth. |302|
 Through anointing the body and a variety of acts
 At the time of playing
 Genuine bliss is brought about through touch—
 This is known to be the fifth. |303|
 By means of this the three wisdoms
 Are known, and one’s mind
 Is made to experience great bliss—
 This should be known as the sixth. |304|
 By means of the hardness that results
 From one’s relying on her body²¹³
 Genuine bliss is produced—
 This should be known as the seventh. |305|
 The dew from her lotus and
 The wetness of *bodhicitta*
 Bring about great delight to the mind—

²⁰⁷ The verses on the ten *bhūmis* correspond with first the six sensory experiences—visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental—and then with the four elements—earth, water, fire, and wind—respectively. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for pointing out these correspondences, which were obviously intended in the text.

²⁰⁸ Tib. *ha ra nu pur*. This seems to be a Tibetan transliteration of *hāranūpura*, necklaces and anklets. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for his assistance with this point.

²⁰⁹ *ku tsa*. This may be a Tibetan transliteration of *kuca*, breasts. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for this suggestion.

²¹⁰ This term is rendered in four different ways in the five recensions of the root text and two further ways in the two recensions of the commentary I am looking at. I have randomly selected one to attempt to phoneticize here, but I remain at a loss as to what the word should actually say. Vaidyapāda’s commentary indicates that it is an erotic melody from the **devīśāstras* (*lha mo’i bstan bcos*) (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.3).

²¹¹ sid sgra] P V (D), sing sgra D C S N V (P).

²¹² I am not entirely sure of this line, but this seems to be the meaning. Vaidyapāda writes, “**Melting the bodhicitta that abides in the head**, means that regarding the path of the *bodhicitta* that resides in the head, it is by means of that [path], that one drinks this elixir.” *mgor gnas byang chub sems ‘ju bas/ zhes pa ni mgor gnas pa’i byang chub kyi sems kyi lam ni des te des ro ‘thung ba’o’//* (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.3-4; P 154a.7-8).

²¹³ *de yi lus ni bdag gi ni// rten du gnas pa sra pa yis//* I am unsure about the translation of these two lines.

This is known as the eighth. |306|
 Due to heat—the warmth and so forth of the secret place—
 One’s mind is brought to the supreme
 Genuine delight—
 This should be known as the ninth. |307|
 Then, through stirring, the wisdom fire
 Burns the aggregates, elements, and the rest
 Through this the mind becomes genuinely blissful—
 This should be known as the tenth. |308|
 By means of these ten
 The first and the later supreme result
 Are attained, just as explained above.
 But for those disciples |309|
 Who are unable to authentically engage in this great reality
 The *tathāgatas* have taught it in terms of characteristics
 Like “Perfect Joy” and the rest.²¹⁴
 Through engaging in this truth, and by means of [its practice] |310|
 They gain realization—though there is still something higher.²¹⁵

The passage is interesting in that it focuses more on the erotic acts leading up to the bliss of orgasm rather than explicitly referring to particular sexual yogic techniques. However, the line about melting and tasting the *bodhicitta* abiding in the head and, of course, the final verse on the blazing of the wisdom fire that burns through impure appearances do clearly indicate the yogic context and purpose of these acts. As such, it does not appear to be any particular sexual yogas, but simply the act of coitus carried out with a soteriological intention and focus, that is here equated with the ten bodhisattva *bhūmis*. As I discussed in the preceding section, the final verses of this passage indicate that the sexualized version of these ten *bhūmis* are of higher value than their exoteric Mahāyāna iteration, since the latter are said to be unable to bring about full awakening.

Homologizing Generation Stage Practices with Perfection Stage Practices

Moving on from equating exoteric Mahāyāna practices with those of the perfection stage, other statements in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings homologize other “lower” tantric practices with perfection stage practice. A passage from the *Muktītilaka* equates the “inner yoga,” which

²¹⁴ *Rab tu dga’ ba*, “Perfect Joy,” is the name of the first bodhisattva *bhūmi*.

²¹⁵ *phreng ba ha ra nu phur sogs// mdog dang ku tsa la sogs pa// padma rtags pa’i dga’ shes pa// dang por rab tu shes par bya// |299| ṣa dzdze rī ni ṣā na sogs// glu byangs bstod dang sid sgra yi// snyan pa’i dbyangs kyis dga’ gyur bas// gnyis pa ru ni shes par bya// |300| tsandan la sogs sna tshogs dris// lus byugs lhan cig rtsen byed tshes// dga’ ba yang dag thob byed pa// gsum pa ru ni shes par bya// |301| ma mchu sbrang rtsi gzhis byas pas// mgor gnas byang chub sems ‘ju bas// ro ‘thung dga’ bas bdag mnyes pas// bzhi par rab tu shes par bya// |302| lus la byug cing sna tshogs kyī// spyod pas rtsen tshes reg bya yis// yang dag dga’ bar byed pas na// lnga pa ru ni shes par bya// |303| de yis ye shes rnam pa gsum// rig par byed cing rang gi yid// yang dag dga’ bar rab byed pa// drug par shes bya rnal ‘byor pas// |304| de yi lus ni bdag gi ni// rten du gnas pa sra ba yis// yang dag dga’ bar byed pas na// bdun pa ru ni shes par bya// |305| de yi padma’i zil sogs dang// byang sems rlan gyis rang gi sems// rab tu dga’ bar byed pas na// brgyad par rab tu shes par bya// |306| gsang gnas drod sogs tsha ba yis// bdag gi yid ni yang dag par// dga’ byar byed pa’i mchog yin pas// dgu pa ru ni shes par bya// |307| de nas bskyod pas ye shes mes// phung po khams sogs sreg byed pas// yid ni yang dag dga’ gyur pas// bcu par rab tu shes par bya// |308| bcu po de yis dang po dang// physis kyī ‘bras bu mchog ‘gyur ba// gong du gsungs pa rab thob ste// de bas de ‘dra’i don chen la// |309| yang dag ‘jug par mi nus pa’i// gdul bya rnam la bde gshes kyis// rab tu dga’ sogs mtshan nyid du// bstan nas de yi don zhugs pas// |310| de yis rtogs kyang bla dang bcas// (Dvīṭīyakrama, verses 299a-311a).*

Buddhajñānapāda identifies as the “supreme suchness” (*de nyid mchog*),²¹⁶ with an extensive list of tantric practices that are otherwise primarily associated with the more external ritual practices of the generation stage or initiatory ritual:

[When] this inner yoga
Is received [directly] from the mouth
Of the sublime guru one has no doubts [about this].
Because it is the union of the profound and the luminous
It is called “yoga.”
Because of being one-pointed it is [called] *samādhi*
Because of pleasing and satisfying
It is called *bali*.
Since it pacifies evil deeds, it is [called] peaceful [activity].
Because of enriching all merit [it is called enriching activity].
Because it is the great passion, it is asserted to be magnetizing [activity].
Since it kills everything, it is [called] wrathful [activity].²¹⁷
Since it draws in the great sign [of accomplishment], it is [called] summoning [activity].
[Since] it pacifies, for the duration, the dharma
Of the *śrāvakas* and so forth, it is [called] the driving out of hindrances.
Since can be realized by a *mantrin*, a yogin, abiding anywhere,
It is [called] protection.²¹⁸
[Since] knowing this, one realizes the essence of all things
As a singular nonduality it is [called] sharp eyes.
Since it transforms all concepts without exception
Into the essence of wisdom
It is [called] the poison-destroying ritual.
[Because] it burns with the fire of wisdom
The lifeless²¹⁹ matter of the aggregates and so forth it is [called] *homa*.
Because it equalizes all phenomena
By means of the profound and the luminous it is [called] the line measuring.²²⁰
Because the luminous rainbow-like body
Naturally upholds all of the twenty-one phenomena
It is [called] applying color.²²¹
Because²²² its essence abides everywhere
It is [called] the entry [into the *maṇḍala*] of everyone: the *ācārya* and the disciples.
Since it is only said to come from elsewhere²²³
But, in fact, it is realized by blissful self-awareness,

²¹⁶ Muktilaka, D 50b.3. Vaidyapāda also indicates that the “inner yoga” is the “suchness of all phenomena” (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 55a.7).

²¹⁷ These four lines are a list of the four tantric activities—peaceful, enriching, magnetizing, and wrathful.

²¹⁸ I am unsure of the meaning of these two lines. *sngag pa gang gnas rnal sbyor pas// rtogs par nus pas brsung ba'o//*

²¹⁹ Tib. *blun pa*; Skt. **jaḍa*

²²⁰ Tib. *thig gdab pa*. This refers to the process of drawing the lines of the maṇḍala in their proper ratio.

²²¹ This presumably refers to applying color to the drawn maṇḍala. I am unclear on the precise meaning of these three lines. Vaidyapāda specifies that the twenty-one phenomena refer to form and so forth, which are naturally upheld by Vairocana and so forth (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 55b.6-7)

²²² Emending *nas pa* to *gnas pas*, following Vaidyapāda (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 55b.7).

²²³ logs] logs P, log D. Vaidyapāda specifies that the place where it is only said to come from is the guru (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 55b.7).

It is called bestowing empowerment.

[Since] it bears the names, like these and others,

Of²²⁴ all phenomena it is [called] supreme suchness.²²⁵

In homologizing the inner yoga of suchness with all of these rituals, Buddhajñānapāda subsumes the more external ritual practices within the perfection stage practice of cultivating supreme suchness. While he does not claim directly that such outward practices are not necessary, he does seem to imply that all of their functions are fulfilled by the cultivation of the suchness of the perfection stage, thus placing the perfection stage practice of suchness above these other kinds of practices.

Another passage in which Buddhajñānapāda equates a set of terms generally associated with the lower stage of tantric practice with the perfection stage is found in the *Dvitiyakrama*. In this passage the practices in question are the four branches of *sevā*, *upasādhana*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana*, which are mentioned in the twelfth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. In the *tantra* itself the practices are used to describe the process of generating oneself in the form of the deity, and indeed these same four practices are the “four branches” that are used to structure Buddhajñānapāda’s *Guhyasamāja* generation stage *sādhana* of that name, the *Caturāṅga-sādhana*.²²⁶ However, in the *Dvitiyakrama* the four branches are used to describe the sexual yogas of the perfection stage—in this specific instance, in the context of tantric initiation:

When the vajra touches the lotus

This is explained to actually be *sevā*.

The vajra entering the lotus

Is actually *upasādhana*. |119|

Then, through moving and stirring a bit,

The heart quivers and attentiveness wanes

The hair on the crown falls loose and garments are cast off

Sweat²²⁷ covers the body and it takes on a reddish hue, |120|

And with reddened eyes [she] looks at one.

Moving²²⁸ repeatedly brings about *sādhana*.

Thus, without concern²²⁹

²²⁴ Emending *kyis* to *kyi* following Vaidyapāda (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 56a.1).

²²⁵ *de yi nang gi sbyor ba ni// bla ma dan pa 'i zhal nas ni// thob kyī de la the tshom med// de ni zab gsal gnyis sbyor bas// sbyor ba shes su bshad pa 'o// rtse gcig pas ni ting nge 'dzin// mnyes byed tshim par byed pa ste// gtor ma zhes ni rab tu bya// sdig pa zhi phyir zhi ba 'o// bsod nams kun gyis rgyas pa 'o// chags pa chen pos dbang du 'dod// thams cad gsod phyir mngon spyod do// rtags chen dgug phyir dgug pa 'o// nyan thos la sogs chos rnams ni// ring du zhi byed bskrad pa 'o// sngags pa gang gnas rnal 'byor pas// rtogs par nus pas bsrung ba 'o// de shes chos rnams ngo bo kun// gnyis med gcig rtogs mig rnon no// rnam par rtog pa ma lus rnams// ye shes ngo bor de 'gyur pas// dug gzhom pa yi cho ga 'o// phung po la sogs bslun pa 'i rdzas// ye shes mes bsregs sbyin sreg go// zab pa dang ni gsal ba yis// chos kun mnyam pas thig gdab po// gsal ba 'i 'ja' tshon lta bu 'i skus// nyi shu rtsa gcig chos kun la// rang bzhin gyis bzung tshon (tshon] P, mtshon D) btab po// de yi ngo bo kun gnas (gnas] sugg. em based on Vaidyapāda’s commentary nas D P) pa // slob dpon slob ma kun zhugs pa 'o// ming tsam gyis ni logs (logs] P, log D) 'byung yang// rang rig bde bas rtogs pas na// dbang bskur zhes ni bshad pa yin// de la sogs pa mtha' yas kyī (kyī] sugg. em. based on Vaidyapāda’s commentary, kyis D P) chos kun ming can de nyid mchog// (*Muktilaka*, D 41a.5-41b.2; P 60a.6-60b.5)*

²²⁶ As mentioned above, this same *sādhana* is also known by the name *Samantabhadra-sādhana*. I address the issue of the two titles of the *sādhana* and describe the generation stage practices of Buddhajñānapāda’s system in more detail in Chapter Five.

²²⁷ *rngul]* sugg. em., rdul D C S P N V (D and P). This emendation is based on the line from the parallel verse in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* which reads *rngul chu thigs pas lus kun khyab//* (*Yogasapta*, D 71a.5; P 84b.7)

²²⁸ *bsgul]* sugg. em. based on V, bskul D C S P N. Buddhajñānapāda’s text here reads *bskul*, but given the fact that earlier the text read *bsgul ba*, as well as the fact that this is glossed in Vaidyapāda’s commentary as *yang dang yang du bskyod pa* suggests that it is *bsgul* that is meant.

The diligent vow-holder, by means of moving that which is bow-shaped²³⁰ |121|
 Causes the blazing of the triangular wisdom fire
 Thereby the elements melt and the sixteenth part,
 Which is like a jasmine flower,²³¹
 Should be offered by unifying the winds. |122|
 Naturally perfectly pacified
 The suchness that is the pacification of all phenomena,
 That bliss itself, dwells at the jewel [for] an instant.
 Free from recollection, [it] is made to move
 This itself is *mahāsādhana*.²³² |123|

Just as we have seen in the passages describing sexual practices above, the text here uses quite a few coded tantric terms: the “lotus” is the vagina, the “vajra” the penis, the “sixteenth part” the drop of semen, and the “jewel” the tip of the penis. The wording used in this passage, with statements like “this is explained to *actually* be *sevā*...,”²³³ seems to indicate that while perhaps the fourfold set of terms—*sevā* and the rest—was more commonly used to describe generation stage practices, Buddhajñānapāda wishes to assert that is the sexual practices of the perfection stage that constitute the *actual* identity of *sevā*, *upasādhana*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana*.²³⁴ Regarding the final line of this passage Vaidyapāda writes, “**This itself is *mahāsādhana*** because it is the essence of the accomplishment of the *mahāmudrā*,”²³⁵ a statement that further supports Buddhajñānapāda’s claim that sexual yogic practices constitute the actual identity of the generation stage processes of *sevā* and the rest. That is, the term *mahāmudrā*, in its 8th- and 9th-century usage, refers to the form of the deity, so Vaidyapāda is stating that the *mahāsādhana* of sexual practice described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* constitutes *mahāsādhana* insofar as it is the very essence of the accomplishment of deity yoga of the generation stage of tantric practice.²³⁶

²²⁹ Vaidyapāda seems to suggest that this means something like “effortlessly.” He writes, “**Without concern** means **without** having to search for it. Since the causes have already come about, have no doubt that the fourth *tattva* will arise.” *sems khral med pa ru zhes pa ni btsal* (btsal] D, brtsal P) *dgos pa med de/ rgyu sngon du song ba’i phyir te de kho na nyid bzhi pa skye ba la the tsom mi bya’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.5; P 131a.7-8).

²³⁰ This is a reference to the wind element, the “*maṇḍala*” of which is represented in the traditional *sādhana* visualizations as a bow-shape. Vaidyapāda makes it clear that this refers to the wind *maṇḍala*. (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.5; P 131a.8).

²³¹ i.e. the *bindu* of *bodhicitta*, or semen. Jasmine is frequently used as a metaphor for semen in tantric texts.

²³² *rdo rje padmar reg pa ni// bsnyen pa’i de nyid yin par bshad// rdo rje padmar zhugs pa ni// nye bar sgrub pa’i de nyid do//* |119| *de nas bsgul zhing bskyod tsam gyis// snying ni ‘dar zhing dran pa nyams// spyi bo’i skra grol gos kyang ‘dor// rṅgul gyis lus khyab mdog dmar te//* |120| *mig dmar phra bas bdag la blta// yang du bsgul bas sgrub pa’o// de bas sems khral med pa ru// sdom brtson gzhu dbyibs gyo ba yis//* |121| *sum mdo ye shes me sbar nas// khams bzhus nas ni bcu drug char// gyur ba me tog kunda ‘dra// rlung gi sbyor bas phul bar bya//* |122| *rang bzhin gyis ni rab zhi ba// chos kun zhi ba de kho na// bde ba de nyid nor bur ‘dug// skad cig dran med g.yo bar byed// sgrub pa chen po de nyid do//* |123| (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 119-123).

²³³ *bsnyen pa’i de nyid yin par bshad*. This phrase could also be translated something like, “this is explained as the identity of *sevā*.” In either case I understand the text to be asserting that the perfection stage practices constitute the *actual* identity of *sevā* etc.

²³⁴ I will address the perfection stage practices described in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings in more detail in Chapter Six, and it would be too much of a digression at this point to examine the practices described in this passage in much detail. However, we should note that unlike the passage above that discussed the ten *bhūmis* in terms of sexual practice, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* here *does* include more specifics regarding sexual yogic practices. In fact, the description in this passage of moving the winds to cause the blazing of wisdom fire and the dripping of the elements is a very early instance of what later comes to be called *caṇḍalī* yoga, a practice found commonly in the later Yoginī tantras.

²³⁵ *de nyid la sgrub pa chen po zhes te phyag rgya chen po dngos grub kyi ngo bo nyid kyi phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.3; P 131b.7).

²³⁶ While the identification of the four branches of *sevā* and the rest not only with generation stage practice, but also with perfection stage practice, is not found in the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra (which does not distinguish between the

In these passages from his writings we have seen the ways in which Buddhajñānapāda homologizes non-tantric and generation stage doctrines and practices with those of the perfection stage as a way of not only justifying perfection stage practice, but also indicating that it is superior to, or constitutes the very essence of, the “lower” stages of Buddhist practice. Thus, while he certainly understood exoteric Mahāyāna and generation stage practices as fundamental in their role as foundational for perfection stage practice, Buddhajñānapāda’s comparisons of aspects of these traditions with the perfection stage serve to subordinate them to the higher stage of tantric practice. Our observations on Buddhajñānapāda’s techniques for advocating the superiority of tantra have up to this point primarily focused on his articulation of tantric practice and its result as superior, but we also find passages in his writings that set the perfection stage view above the views of Mahāyāna philosophical positions, a point to which we will now turn our attention.

Philosophical Doxographies and Tantric Views

Recent scholarship has begun to draw attention to the philosophical underpinnings of the perspectives of tantric Buddhist authors, which is a very welcome trend.²³⁷ To make a full assessment of Buddhajñānapāda’s philosophical position(s) would require a detailed examination of his earlier non-tantric writings, which I have not done in this study. However, in the tantric works I have examined in more detail, a philosophical perspective nonetheless does emerge, and I will make some preliminary remarks on that position here. In general, Buddhajñānapāda seems to favor the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka philosophy advocated by his guru Haribhadra, and which is also evident in the work of another of his gurus, Vilāsavajra.²³⁸ This is substantiated by the later Tibetan tradition which also seems to generally classify Buddhajñānapāda as a Svātantrika Mādhyamika who upheld the Yogācāra view of denying external objects and affirming self-awareness.²³⁹ There are several passages in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings in which he seems to

two stages) such a distinction of the four branches in terms of both generation and the perfection stage practice is found in the *Samājottara*. As I noted above, Buddhajñānapāda does not seem to have known the *Samājottara*, but Vaidyapāda did. This use of the four branches in the context of both tantric stages, then, may be an instance—of which there are in fact several—of the influence of Buddhajñānapāda’s thought on the *Samājottara*. I examine instances of and argue for the influence of Buddhajñānapāda’s thought and writings on the *Samājottara* in Chapter Eight. The association of the four branches with perfection stage practice is also found in Chapter 11 of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, though in a more general sense and without the specifics found here in the *Dvītyakrama*. Buddhajñānapāda gives no indication of knowing this tantra, though the only surviving Indic commentary on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, the *Spar khab*, is attributed to Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Vilāsavajra. I explore some of the commonalities between Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and those of the early Great Perfection tradition below.

²³⁷ See Isaacson 2013, McNamara 2017, and Yiannopoulos 2017. All of these studies focus on the philosophical positions of the 11th-century polymath Ratnākaraśānti. Isaacson and Sferra (2014) introduce, edit, and translate the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, a tantric commentary by Rāmapāla that is itself very much concerned with issues of philosophy.

²³⁸ Tribe states that a closer examination of the philosophical dimension of Vilāsavajra’s writings is necessary to make any clear conclusions on his philosophical orientation, but in the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*, Vilāsavajra cites both Madhyamaka and Vijñānavāda works, and even directly acknowledges both traditions as sources for his work, though Tribe reports that Vijñānapāda “terms, structures, and perspectives predominate in Vilāsavajra’s approach to praxis” (Tribe 2016, 11).

²³⁹ The 15th-century Sakya scholar Taksang Lotsawa describes Buddhajñānapāda (along with Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Haribhadra, Dīpaṃkarabhadra, Vaidyapāda, and Thagana) as a Svātantrika Mādhyamika who affirms self-awareness and denies the existence of outer objects (*Grub mtha’ kun shes ’grel pa*, 212.5-213.2. Thanks to Thomas Doctor, in a fortuitous conversation with whom I became aware of this passage). Jamgön Kongtrül also asserts that Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Vimuktisena, Haribhadra, Buddhajñānapāda, Dīpaṃkarabhadra (who Callahan erroneously equates here with Atīśa), Vaidyapāda, and Thagana are Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas (Kongtrül 2007, 219). We know that Haribhadra was Buddhajñānapāda’s teacher, and interestingly, the list of masters given in both these sources, proceeding from Buddhajñānapāda, is more or less a direct lineage list of Jñānapāda School

uphold such a Yogācāra-[Svātantrika]-Madhyamaka position. However, he also indicates in multiple passages that even the Madhyamaka philosophical perspective—and indeed *every* philosophical perspective—is superceded by the perspective, or view, afforded through tantric practice. So in his works, yet again, even in the realm of philosophy tantra reigns supreme.

A look at the non-tantric works cited in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Ātmasādhanāvatāra*—his only tantric prose work and therefore the only tantric work to include textual citations²⁴⁰—already gives the sense that he has a preference for Yogācāra and Prajñāpāramitā works. In the *Ātmasādhanāvatāra* Buddhajñānapāda cites the *Daśabhūmika-*, *Laṅkāvatāra-*, *Samādhirāja-*, *Mahāsāṃghikaprātimokṣa-*, and *Ratnaguṇasamcayagāthā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, as well as the *Sūtra Requested by Akṣayamati*, Maitreya’s *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, and Dignāga’s *Mañjuḥoṣastotra*.²⁴¹ A verse from Buddhajñānapāda’s *Muktitilaka* has been modeled on a well-known verse from Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, and another verse in his *Ātmasādhanāvatāra* appears to be modeled on a verse from Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavarttika*, so he was clearly familiar with and inspired by those works, as well.²⁴² Several of his writings include a number of Yogācāra- influenced passages indicating that all of the phenomenal world is mind. In the *Muktitilaka*, for example, Buddhajñānapāda writes:

[As for] the outer yoga, the form aggregate and so forth,
The conventional four elements,
All moving things—
They are pervaded by just one thing:
All are nothing more than mind.
Why? Because all sentient beings
Are only the aggregate of consciousness.
Stupid and confused beings
Are unable to understand this truth at all:
The mind, mental factors, wisdom,

masters. As I discussed in Chapter One, Dīpaṃkarabhadra was a direct disciple of Buddhajñānapāda’s, and Vaidyapāda seems to have been a somewhat later disciple of both Buddhajñānapāda and Dīpaṃkarabhadra. Thagana is a slightly later figure who composed a commentary on the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* following the Jñānapāda School (Tōh. 1845), one on Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1868), and one on Ratnākaraśānti’s *Hevajra sādhana* (Tōh. 1247). His having composed a commentary on Ratnākaraśānti’s *sādhana* places Thagana in the 11th century at the earliest. Isaacson (2002a, 459) records that the Blue Annals lists Thagana as a guru of Ratnākaraśānti’s in the Jñānapāda School.

²⁴⁰ Like many traditional Buddhist authors Buddhajñānapāda also incorporated verses and prose from other works directly without citation. This occurs both in his prose works (as in the verses incorporated from the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* in his *Ātmasādhanāvatāra* mentioned in Chapter One and which I discuss further below), and his versified works (e.g. the verses from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* incorporated into his *Samantabhadra-sādhana*, and several lines from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* incorporated into the *Dvīṭīyakrama*). But here I am referring to citations of the sort found in commentarial prose writings that are actually specified as textual citation by the author, whether or not he names their source.

²⁴¹ While I had already identified several of the citations in this work, for other identifications I am indebted to Péter Szántó, who kindly shared with me his unpublished draft Sanskrit edition of the *Ātmasādhanāvatāra*, which includes his identifications of Buddhajñānapāda’s citations.

²⁴² The verse from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* is parallel with a well-known verse from the *Samājottara* setting forth the two stages of tantric practice, which Isaacson (2002a, 468-9) has pointed out as being based on Nāgārjuna’s verse. In an earlier conference paper (C. Dalton 2014) I demonstrated that the verse from the *Muktitilaka* is most likely earlier than that of the *Samājottara*, and the source on which the *Samājottara*’s is based. I revisit this argument, adding further evidence of the influence of Buddhajñānapāda’s thought and writings on the *Samājottara*, in Chapter Eight. I also discuss in that chapter the verse from the *Pramāṇavarttika* on which Buddhajñānapāda has modeled a verse in the *Ātmasādhanāvatāra*.

And mental objects—these are alike in being mind.²⁴³

While it is clear that Buddhajñānapāda here holds a very Yogācāra-like position, asserting all things to be mind, the context of the passage must also be considered. The preceding few verses describe the suchness of all things, or nondual bliss, as possessing a series of opposing qualities—“it is not existent nor non-existent, [both] potent and non-potent, the essence of the elements and elementless, has form and is formless”—and state that “therefore it is seen through the path of yoga/union (*sbyor ba*).”²⁴⁴ But what is described in the passage I have cited here is the “outer yoga,” which Vaidyapāda indicates is the first step towards seeing or realizing suchness. What follows this passage in the *Muktilaka*—after a short description of the fact that at the time of liberation, phenomena are experienced not as many, but as “just one”—is a passage on the “inner yoga” of the practice of directly cultivating suchness, which we have examined already above. The presentation in the *Muktilaka* of phenomena as being “only mind,” then, is set forth as merely a step in the progression towards the realization of true suchness, not the final realization, nor the final view. In the *Dvītyākrama* one of a set of four verses constituting a very short description of the generation stage practice preceding the perfection stage practice that is the *Dvītyākrama*’s focus, likewise takes the practitioner through the stage of first viewing the world as mind alone, but then moves on to viewing the mind itself as empty:

Looking at [it] as mind alone

The outer world is seen to be empty of nature²⁴⁵

Seeing²⁴⁶ mind alone, as well, to be empty

Remain in self-awareness alone. |158|²⁴⁷

Vaidyapāda clarifies that this self-awareness is a state “beyond the two extremes.”²⁴⁸ Here again we see the viewing of the outer world as mind to be just a stage leading to a more profound realization. The step after cultivating the Yogācāra-like perspective of seeing the outer world as mind is the more Madhyamika-like perspective of seeing the mind itself to be empty.

An identical progression is found in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*. Here Buddhajñānapāda proceeds through a series of logical arguments to establish the fact that all phenomena are mind. First he shows the outer perceived world to be mind alone, and then he shows that the inner perceiver is likewise, just mind.²⁴⁹ But then he moves on to show that mind is not established either, because it cannot be established as being either one nor many.²⁵⁰ The

²⁴³ *phyi yi sbyor ba gzugs phung sogs// kun rdzob ‘byung ba bzhi po dang// g.yo dang bcas pa’i chos rnam kun// de gcig pos ni khyab pa ste// thams cad sems tsam kho na’o// ci phyir sems can thams cad kun// rnam shes phung po kho na’o// blun po rmongs pa rnam kyis ni// de don cung zad shes mi ‘gyur// sems dang sems byung ye shes dang// shes bya (bya] em. based on Vaidyapāda’s *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*; pa D P) rnam shes gcig pa’o// (*Muktilaka*, D 50a. 2-4; P 60a.3-5)*

²⁴⁴ *yod pa med cing med pa (pa] D, pa’i P) med// dbang po dang bcas dbang po med// ‘byung ba’i ngo bo ‘byung ba med// gzugs dang bcas shing gzugs med pas// sbyor ba’i lam gyis mthong pa’o// (*Muktilaka*, D 50a.2; P 60a.2-3). I believe that here the word *sbyor ba* (*yoga*) is intended in terms of both of its meanings, “union” as well as “yoga” in the sense of a practice.*

²⁴⁵ Tib. *stong par bya*; literally “made empty.” I have rendered the term less literally here, as the meaning is that the yogin is to see or perceives the world as empty, which is indeed its fundamental nature. Vaidyapāda comments that this means not to mentally engage with the appearance of the world as appearing separately (*Sukusuma*, D 113b.4). Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that the term “made empty” is used here to indicate that the practitioner is to “make” his perception of the world accord with the way the world actually is (personal communication, February 2016).

²⁴⁶ Again, the same wording of “making empty” is used here.

²⁴⁷ *sems tsam la ni blta bas te// phi rol rang bzhin stong bar bya// sems tsam de yang stong byas nas// rang rig tsamdu gnas par bya// (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 158).*

²⁴⁸ *mtha gnyis dang ‘bral ba* (*Sukusuma*, D 113b.5).

²⁴⁹ *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, D 52b.3-53a.4.

²⁵⁰ *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, D 53a.4-53a.7.

argument against the true establishment of an object because it is “neither one nor many” (*gcig dang du 'bral*) is one among the logical arguments that became known—in Tibet, at least—as the four (or sometimes five) “Great Logical Reasonings of the Madhyamaka” (*dbu ma 'i gtan tshig chen po*). Using this particular argument takes Buddhajñānapāda’s reasoning in the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* in a more Madhyamaka-oriented direction. While philosophers who did not uphold a Madhyamaka position may also have used the “neither one nor many” argument, it is clear that Buddhajñānapāda, at least, did understand this argument to represent Madhyamaka thought. In the *Dvitīyakrama*, we find a doxography of non-Buddhist and Buddhist philosophical viewpoints in which the Madhyamaka view is given at the top of the philosophical hierarchy, above that of the Yogācāra.²⁵¹ In that doxography Buddhajñānapāda gives a very short description of the philosophical position held by each system, and one of the descriptors of the Madhyamaka view that he uses is precisely the perspective that “[all things] are beyond the nature of being singular or multiple.” Immediately following a brief description of the Sautrāntika position, that which falls hierarchically just below that of Yogācāra, he writes,

That which has parts is not the ultimate;
 This is the case even for subtle particles.
 One cannot observe them individually;
 They do not appear, but are just like a dream. |136|
 The wisdom²⁵² that is free from subject and object
 Is the ultimate, pure like a crystal—
 This is what the Yogācārins understand. |137|
 All of these different traditions
 Are not the ultimate because
 [All things] are beyond the nature of being singular or multiple,
 Just like a lotus in the sky. |138|
 Peace [beyond] nonduality or non-nonduality
 Completely stainless like space—

The intelligent Mādhyamikas understand [reality to be] thus.²⁵³ |139|

It is clear from this, and another verse in the *Dvitīyakrama* in which Mādhyamikas are placed above Yogācārins,²⁵⁴ that among the philosophical positions that he addresses, Buddhajñānapāda places the Madhyamaka position on the top. Unlike with the proponents of other traditions listed in this doxography, the Mādhyamikas receive the qualifier of being “intelligent.” It is unclear whether Buddhajñānapāda meant to qualify Mādhyamikas on the whole as more intelligent than adherents of other philosophical positions, or whether he meant to specify a specific group of Mādhyamikas, as opposed to some other group (of, presumably, less intelligent Mādhyamikas). Vaidyapāda, however, *does* specify a specific group of Mādhyamikas in his comments on a verse in the *Dvitīyakrama* summarizing the relationship between the philosophical systems several lines later: after the Yogācāra position, Vaidyapāda mentions not that of the Mādhyamikas, but of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas (*rnal sbyor spyod pa 'i dbu ma pa*).²⁵⁵ Indeed, the fact that

²⁵¹ See *Dvitīyakrama*, verses 126-139.

²⁵² Vaidyapāda’s commentary preserves a different reading of this line. Instead of reading *ye shes te* “that wisdom,” it reads *rnam shes che*, “that great consciousness” (*Sukusuma*, 111a.4).

²⁵³ *yan lag can yang don dam min// rdul phran dag kyang de bzhin no// so sor snang ba mi dmigs pa// rmi lam lta bu mi snang ste//* |136| *gzung 'dzin spangs pa 'i ye shes te// don dam shel ltar dag pa ru// rnal 'byor spyod pas rab tu rtogs//* |137| *so sor snang ba 'i gzhung thams cad// don dam min te gcig pa dang// du ma 'i rang bzhin bral ba 'i phyir// rnam mkha 'i chu skyes bzhin du ni//* |138| *gnyis med gnyis su med min zhi// shin tu dri med nam mkha ' ltar// blo ldan dbu ma pa yis rtogs//* |139| (*Dvitīyakrama*, verses 136-39).

²⁵⁴ See *Dvitīyakrama* verse 149.

²⁵⁵ *Sukusuma*, D 111b.2.

Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Haribhadra is a well-known Yogācāra-Mādhyamika philosopher and that Buddhajñānapāda cites many Yogācāra works and includes Yogācāra influenced passages in his writings, but he ultimately chooses to place Madhyamaka on top of Yogācāra in the *Dvītyākrama*’s doxography, would suggest Buddhajñānapāda’s own position to be a Yogācāra-Mādhyamika one. But, as we will see, that was clearly not the perspective he held to be the highest; the tantric perspective yet again takes precedence.

Immediately following the philosophical doxography cited above, which places Madhyamaka above all other positions surveyed, Buddhajñānapāda makes clear that even the (Yogācāra-?)Madhyamaka position is not the view he holds as the highest. He writes,

[Though] reality abides as suchness,
 [Beings] conceptualize it distinctly
 In these and countless other [ways].
 Therefore *all* of these [perspectives] |140|
 Are not the genuine; they can be surpassed.
 The perspective of the higher yogins
 Is superior to that of the lower.
 The lower view is refuted |141|
 By the wisdom of the higher one.
 Therefore, by means of the higher stage
 The *sahaja ācārya*
 Performs the genuine blessing. |142|
 Luminous and perfectly joyful like the sky
 The self-arisen great **adhideva*
 Is realized through spontaneously arisen wisdom
 In reliance on the words of the guru.²⁵⁶ 143|²⁵⁷

According to Buddhajñānapāda, then, all of the philosophical perspectives, even the ones that he himself appears at times to advocate, are not genuine because they can all be surpassed. As for precisely what surpasses all of these views, it is the “self-arisen great **adhideva*” that is “realized through spontaneously arisen wisdom/ in reliance on the words of the guru.” As we already learned above, the *sahaja ācārya* is the consort, and her blessing is union with her.²⁵⁸ In what appears to be an interesting use of word play, Buddhajñānapāda’s explanation as to why the perspective gained through tantric perfection stage practice is higher than the philosophical systems is expressed in the lines, “the lower view is refuted/ by the wisdom of the higher one.” The word “wisdom” (*shes rab, prajñā*), is used in tantric works to indicate the consort; indeed Vaidyapāda’s commentary identifies the *sahaja ācārya* precisely as “the *prajñā*” here.²⁵⁹ Buddhajñānapāda thus appears here to be playing on the double *entendre* of the word *prajñā* to

²⁵⁶ This passage is yet another instance in which Buddhajñānapāda states that the wisdom that the disciple gains in a tantric context comes from “the words of the guru.” Vaidyapāda makes this even more explicit. He writes, “**From the words of the guru** means, from what is transferred **from the words** of the great causal master, one directly experiences the bliss which is to be realized.” *bla ma’i kha las zhes te/ de (de] P, de’i D) rgyu’i (rgyu’i] P, rgyud D) slob dpon chen poi’i kha las rnam par ‘pho ba las mngon sum du bde ba rang la (la] D, las P) ‘byung ba rtogs par bya’o zhes so// (Sukusuma, D 111b.4-5; P 134a.8). As discussed above, the “causal master” is explained in the *Sukusuma*, as well as in the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, to refer to the guru who bestows initiation upon the disciple.*

²⁵⁷ *de la sogs te mtha’ yas pa// don de kho na la gnas nas// tha dad so sor rtog pa’o// de bas de dag thams cad kyang// |140| yang dag min pas bla dang bcas// ‘og ma’i ‘og ma’i rnal ‘byor blo// gong ma gong ma’i khyad par ‘phag// og ma’i blo ni gong ma yi// |141| shes rab kyis ni sun ‘byin no// de bas gong ma’i rim pa yis// lhan cig pa yi slob dpon gyis// byin gyis brlabs pa yang dag bya// |142| gsal zhing rab dga’ nam mkha’ dra// rang byung lhag pa’i lha chen po// lhan cig skyes pa’i ye shes kyis// bla ma’i kha las rtogs par bya// |143| (*Dvītyākrama*, verses 140-43).*

²⁵⁸ *Sukusuma*, D 111b.3-4.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*

mean both “wisdom” and “consort.” He is simultaneously asserting that “the lower views [of each of the lower philosophical systems mentioned] are refuted/ by the **wisdom** of the higher ones [i.e. the view of each of the philosophical systems higher than it],” and that “the lower views [of *all* of the philosophical systems described]/ are refuted by the [view attained through practice with the] **consort** of the higher [system of the perfection stage].” That is why, Buddhajñānapāda says, the *sahaja ācārya* performs the blessing by means of the higher stage (which Vaidyapāda indicates here means initiation—referring, of course, to the third initiation²⁶⁰) and thus in reliance upon the guru’s words the “self-arisen **adhideva*” is realized. As I will explore below, Buddhajñānapāda (uniquely) uses the term **adhideva* to refer to the tantric result. But what is abundantly clear from this passage is that Buddhajñānapāda is claiming that the view gained through perfection stage tantric initiation and practice is superior to that of any and all philosophical positions, even the Madhyamaka view that he places above the other philosophical perspectives.

Vaidyapāda’s comments on the two lines from *Dvīṭyākrama* verse 141 about the lower views being refuted by the wisdom of the higher views are worth citing here, as he uses them to give a short summary of the entire doxographical passage from the *Dvīṭyākrama* (only part of which I cited above):

Compared to the non-Buddhists, the Vaibhāṣikas [are higher because of asserting things to be] impermanent. Compared to them, the Sautrāntikas [are higher because of asserting those impermanent things to be] imputations. Compared to them, the Yogācārins [are higher] because [they assert that these imputations are] merely mind, and compared to them, the Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas [are even higher] because [they further assert the idea of things being merely the mind] to be just the relative level of things. Compared to them, those who uphold the **Niruttara-grantha*(!) (*bla na med pa’i gzhung pa*) [improve further by asserting that even at the relative level, phenomena] are nothing but wisdom.²⁶¹

We see here both that Vaidyapāda takes the Mādhyamika view in question to be a Yogācāra-Mādhyamika one, as noted above, and also that he refers to the perspective that Buddhajñānapāda holds to be superior to all of the non-tantric philosophical positions as that of “those who uphold the **Niruttara-grantha*”—whatever those texts might be! Vaidyapāda uses the terms *Niruttara tantra* (*bla med rgyud*) and *Yoganiruttara tantra* (*rnal ‘byor bla na med pa’i rgyud*) seemingly synonymously in the *Sukusuma*, and appears to understand the *Yoganiruttara tantras*, which he distinguishes from the *Yoga tantras*, to be the highest class of tantra.²⁶² It is perhaps odd that he should here use the term *grantha* (*gzhung*) rather than *tantra*, but it is possible that he did so in order to include *śāstras* and other non-scriptural works—or quasi-scriptural works like the *Dvīṭyākrama*—that pertain to the *Niruttara* class, as well. In any case, given the clear description of perfection stage initiation and/or practice in the *Dvīṭyākrama* passage on which he is commenting, I do believe that Vaidyapāda is here, with the phrase “upholders of **Niruttara-grantha*” referring to the perspective of those who uphold the *Yoganiruttara tantras* and their associated literature. Indeed, the perspective that he describes—that even at the relative level all phenomena are held to be nothing other than wisdom—is a perfect match for Buddhajñānapāda’s perspective on the all-pervasive nature of nondual wisdom that I discussed in the first section of this chapter.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*

²⁶¹ *de yang mu stegs pa las bye brag tu smra ba ste mi rtag pa’o// de las mdo sde pa ste brtags pa’o// de las rnal ‘byor spyod pa ste sems tsam gyis so// de las rnal ‘byor spyod pa’i dbu ma pa ste kun rdzob tsam nyid kyis so// de las bla na med pa’i gzhung pa ste ye shes kho nas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 11b.1-2; P 134a.4-5).

²⁶² See *Sukusuma* 89b.7 and 108a.6-108b.1.

This passage from the *Dvīṭyākrama* shows us yet another way in which Buddhajñānapāda indicated the superiority of tantra: its perspective is, in his estimation, superior even to the highest among the philosophical perspectives that can be upheld. In another verse from the *Dvīṭyākrama* discussing nondual wisdom, Buddhajñānapāda states that,

It is not known by the *śrāvakas*
 Nor by the *pratyekabuddhas*
 The Yogācārins, Mādhyamikas,
 And bodhisattvas do not know it. [149]²⁶³

Here again we see clearly that even a [Yogācāra-?]Mādhyamika does not know the ultimate suchness of nondual wisdom. The reason for this lack of comprehension may be indicated in a passage from the *Muktilaka* in which it is suggested that the very methodology of philosophical analysis is itself an obstacle to the realization of the ultimate nature. Buddhajñānapāda writes,

This supreme nondual nature,
 The self that pervades all things
 And is beyond the purview of *saṃsāra*
 Is called the *dharmadhātu*.
 This type of perfect wisdom
 Is not known through direct perception and the rest
 Nor is it known by those who analyze.²⁶⁴

The intended referents in this passage of those who rely upon “direct perception and the rest,” or “those who analyze” are not immediately clear. “Direct perception and the rest” seems to be a reference to the two primary modes of knowing set forth in the writings on valid cognition (*pramāṇa*)—that is, direct perception (*pratyakṣa*, *mngon sum*) and inference (*anumāna*, *rjes dpag*)—that were routinely accepted and therefore addressed in nearly all subsequent Buddhist philosophical literature. “Those who analyze” could likewise easily be taken to refer to proponents of any philosophical system that approaches truth via the use of logical analysis, which of course encapsulates the practice of philosophers on the whole. Vaidyapāda explains that the verse is “taught in order to show that this type of truth is not know by the logicians (*rtog ge ba*, *tārkika*).”²⁶⁵ I therefore believe that we can understand this passage as a rejection of the modes of perception and analysis relied upon by proponents of *any* philosophical system as a means for accessing ultimate truth.²⁶⁶ A few verses later in the *Muktilaka* Buddhajñānapāda writes,

²⁶³ *nyan thos rnam kyis mi shes so// rang sangs rgyas kyis kyang mi shes// rnal 'byor spyod dang dbu ma pa// byang chub sems dpas mi shes so// [149] (Dvīṭyākrama, verse 149).*

²⁶⁴ *de gnyis med pa'i rang bzhin mchog// dngos po kun la khyab pa'i bdag// 'khor bas rab tu ma zin pa// chos kyi dbyings zhes bshad (zhes bshad] D, kyi shes P) pa'o// de 'dra rab mchog ye shes ni// mngon sum sogs (sogs] P V (D and P), tshogs D) pas mi shes so// de bzhin dpyad mkhan gyis mi shes// (Muktilaka, D 47b.3-4; P 57a. 4-5).*

²⁶⁵ *de 'dra ba'i don de rtog ge ba (ba] D, pa P) rnam kyis mi shes par bstan pa'i phyr/ (Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 50a.1; P 335b.4).*

²⁶⁶ This is not, however, precisely how Vaidyapāda has read the passage. He writes that these two *pādas* were included in order to show that the *tārkikas* (*rtog ge ba rnam*) do not realize nondual wisdom, but then suggests that the line on direct perception refers to the direct perception of the “outsiders” (i.e. non-Buddhists; *phyi rol gyi*) and the line about those who analyze refers to Brahmins (*tshangs pa*; the term must be understood to denote Brahmins here, not Brahmā (!)) (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 50a.1). The lines that follow explain that *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* do not know nondual wisdom either, so Vaidyapāda is not out of line in considering these comments to refer to non-Buddhist thinkers, since Buddhajñānapāda does indeed often list different positions in a hierarchical order, in which case those positions listed before Buddhist views would logically be the non-Buddhist ones. However, given that Buddhajñānapāda in other contexts is very clear when making reference to non-Buddhist traditions (he identifies them by name), and given his comments in the *Dvīṭyākrama* on the fact that even the (quite Buddhist!) Mādhyamikas still do not know nondual wisdom, I prefer to take his comments here more generally as referring to a *style* of engagement and analysis that could be applied equally by Buddhists or non-Buddhists, rather than to a particular philosophical position.

Why does buddhahood not come from concepts?
Because it comes from the utterly pure nature.²⁶⁷

While these lines are found in the context of a refutation of conceptually-oriented ritual, rather than of philosophy, nonetheless the general tenor is similar to that of the above passage. For Buddhajñānapāda the tantric perspective—or at least that of the perfection stage—is superior to that of any philosophical position at least in part because it lies beyond the reach of the conceptual world, in the experience of nondual wisdom, where analysis and concepts find no purchase.

The Suchness of the Second Stage: Distinguishing Suchness in a Tantric Context

Yet another feature of Buddhajñānapāda's writings through which he valorizes perfection stage tantric practice over other practices is the use of a particular term, "the suchness of the second stage," with reference to suchness as experienced and cultivated through the perfection stage path. Buddhajñānapāda's arguments in the *Ātmasādhanāvātāra* supporting the practice of deity yoga indicate his interlocutor there to be someone who accepts the possibility of meditation on suchness, but takes issue with the practice of deity yoga. Given that meditation on suchness is accepted by an interlocutor objecting to tantric practices, we can presume that what this interlocutor accepts is an exoteric non-tantric practice of the cultivation of suchness. This being the case, we might be inclined to think that the meditation on suchness advocated in Buddhajñānapāda's *oeuvre* was not perceived as constituting suchness in a way that is distinct from the practices of the earlier tradition. However, the use in several places in his writings—including in the title of the *Dvītyākrama*, the *Oral Instructions on Training in the Suchness of the Second Stage*²⁶⁸—of the more specific term, "the suchness of the second stage," suggests otherwise. The term must be considered within the context of Buddhajñānapāda's claims in both the *Dvītyākrama* and *Muktilaka*, examined above, that the cultivation of the suchness required for awakening is *only* possible through tantric sexual initiation and practices, and that the result of these practices is superior to that of the non-tantric Mahāyāna and of the lower stages of tantric practice. Given these facts, I believe that we must understand that Buddhajñānapāda held the "suchness" that he writes of cultivating by means of the perfection stage to be a genuine or full realization of suchness that was not accessible by means of non-tantric Mahāyāna methods, or indeed even by means of the lower stages of tantric practice; that is, it would follow logically from his statements on tantric superiority that what is cultivated through non-tantric Mahāyāna methods is not, in fact, the full genuine suchness that is the true nature of all phenomena. With respect to the difference between exoteric practices of meditation on emptiness and what may appear to be similar practices in the context of the perfection stage, Germano has noted that "the actual "content" and style of these meditations when isolated out from their context is near identical, and yet, when contextualized discursively and practically, the distinct semantic shapings of that similar "content" results in arguably quite different practices despite their formal similarities."²⁶⁹ While it is doubtful that Buddhajñānapāda would have attributed such a difference just to "semantic shapings," indeed it seems he did wish to draw a distinction between the discursive and practical aspects of training in "the suchness of the second stage" and that of the training in suchness advocated in earlier Buddhist traditions. It appears that with the use of the specific term "the suchness of the second stage," Buddhajñānapāda is yet again asserting the superiority of the tantric path. Let us take a look at several of these references in his and Vaidyapāda's works.

²⁶⁷ *ji phyir rtog las sangs rgyas min// rang bzhin rnam dag las byung phyir//* (*Muktilaka*, D 47b.7; P 57b.1).

²⁶⁸ I discussed my translation of the *Dvītyākrama*'s title in Chapter Two.

²⁶⁹ Germano, 1994 220-21.

The most prominent use of the phrase “the suchness of the second stage” is, of course, in the title of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, which is an entire work devoted to the instructions on *Training in the Suchness of the Second Stage*. In that work Buddhajñānapāda uses the phrase several times apart from the work’s title. One such passage, following a list of the names, or synonyms, of suchness reads,

Therefore, with the mind that has already [generated] faith,
Genuinely maintain the nature of all phenomena,
The profound, luminous, nondual great reality,
The suchness of the second stage |283|
Which has been taught by the guru.²⁷⁰

In this passage, the suchness of the second stage is equated with “profound, luminous, nondual great reality” itself. As we saw in the first section of this chapter, “profound,” “luminous,” and “nondual” are precisely the terms that Buddhajñānapāda frequently uses in his writings to describe suchness or the nature of reality, but here he specifies this “suchness” as specifically pertaining or connected to “the second stage” of tantric practice. However, just prior to this passage Buddhajñānapāda writes:

Non-meditation itself,
The great pith instructions of the revered master,
Transferred from ear²⁷¹ to ear,
Not known by the *śrāvakas*, |280|
Not known by the *pratyekabuddhas* and others,
The letterless itself,
Wordless, inexpressible, and so on.
In the *sūtras* and *tantras* |281|
It has been expressed, and will be again,
With these countless names and others.
There is nothing at all taught there
Besides this suchness. |282|²⁷²

Here he seems to take a more inclusive position, stating that this same suchness is precisely that which is expressed in all of Buddhist literature. And those who are specifically mentioned as left out from the knowledge are in this passage only the non-Mahāyāna *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, though the term “and so on” could easily include others such as the bodhisattvas or proponents of various philosophical views who, as we have seen, Buddhajñānapāda in other passages explicitly excludes from genuine knowledge of suchness. It seems, then, that while asserting the supremacy of the tantric view and at times explicitly stating that non-tantric paths cannot lead to the full result, Buddhajñānapāda is unwilling to deny that the truth of suchness itself is taught in the non-tantric and lower tantric scriptures. This would suggest that it is simply that the *practices* necessary for realizing and cultivating that suchness are not found in these lower paths, and that the second stage of tantric practice is thus unique in bringing the practitioner, through its practice of sexual initiation and sexual yogas, to the genuine realization of suchness, which is thus termed “the suchness of the second stage.”

²⁷⁰ *de bas dad pa sngon 'gro ba 'i// sems kyis chos kun de bzhin nyid// zab gsal gnyis med don chen po/// rim pa gnyis pa 'i de kho na//* |283| *bla ma 'i gsung ni yang dag gzung//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 283a-284a).

²⁷¹ rna] S P N V (D and P), sna D C

²⁷² *bsgom pa med pa nyid dang ni// rje btsun man ngag chen po dang// rna nas rna bar 'pho byed dang// nyan thos kyis ni shes min dang//* |280| *rang sangs rgyas sogs mi shes dang// yi ge med pa nyid dang ni// tshig dang bral dang brjod med sogs// de la mdo dang rgyud rnam las//* |281| *de 'dra rnam pa mtha' yas pa// gsungs shing yang dag gsung 'gyur ba// der ni de bzhin nyid 'di las//* |282| (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 280-282).

In another passage from the *Dvitiyakrama* following the description of the ten *bhūmis* of sexual practice Buddhajñānapāda states:

In this way, as for the suchness
Of the second stage,²⁷³
Whichever yogin drinks this supreme nectar
Together with the method |314|
Certainly becomes a son of the buddhas,
A companion of the bodhisattvas,
A leader of the *vidyādhara*s,
The husband of the *dākiṇīs*. |315|
The main guide,
Leader of the *śrāvaka*s and *pratyekabuddha*s,
The revered master of ordinary beings.²⁷⁴

In this passage, likewise, it is specifically by means of the “suchness of the second stage” that the yogin attains the results of practice, and that suchness is here identified with the “supreme nectar.” Vaidyapāda seems to understand the “supreme nectar” that the yogin should drink to be wisdom, as he writes that it is to be received “from the guru’s mouth” and experienced again and again.²⁷⁵ I am, however, inclined to read the line more literally as a reference to the drop of *bodhicitta* consumed by the disciple both in the third initiation and in the context of post-initiatory sexual yogic practice. (Of course, one can also read the passage in both ways.) In any case, both of these passages, like the *Dvitiyakrama*’s title, specify that it is the “suchness of the second stage” that is to be cultivated in order to attain the supreme result. In his commentary, Vaidyapāda explains that this passage is meant as a “praise of remaining in the suchness of the second stage,”²⁷⁶ and defines “the suchness of the second stage” as the “perfection stage of the perfection stage.”²⁷⁷ This is presumably a reference to a passage from the *Muktilaka* where the two stages of tantric practice are said to each be twofold themselves. In that passage, Buddhajñānapāda himself mentions the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” which he there identifies both with the seven yogas, as well as with unsurpassed omniscience.²⁷⁸ I will discuss Buddhajñānapāda’s classifications of the two stages further in Chapter Five, but for now it is sufficient to note that, if we follow Vaidyapāda’s identification of this suchness with the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” then the “suchness of the second stage” refers to suchness that is identical with the result of awakening, and it is precisely this which is cultivated or trained in through the practice of the perfection stage.

²⁷³ Here Vaidyapāda describes this as “the perfection stage of the perfection stage,” following Buddhajñānapāda’s four-fold classification of the creation and perfection stages in the *Muktilaka* (*Sukusuma*, D 128b.6-7).

²⁷⁴ *de ltar rim pa gnyis pa yi// de bzhin nyid ni thabs bcas pa’i// bdud rtsi mchog ‘di rnal ‘byor gang// ‘thung bar byed pa sangs rgyas kyi// |315| de yi sras su nges pa ste// byang chub sems dpa’ rnam kyi grogs// rig pa ‘dzin pa’i dpon po ste// mkha’ ‘gro ma yi khyo ru ‘gyur// |316| nyan thos rang ‘dren rnams kyi ni// ‘dren par byed pa’i gtso bo ste// sems can phal pa’i rje brtsun no// (Dvitiyakrama, verses 314a-316c).*

²⁷⁵ *rnal ‘byor gang ‘thung bar byed pa’i zhes pa ni bla ma’i zhal nas blangs nas de’i ro yag dang yang du myong byar byed pa’o// (Sukusuma, D 129a.1).*

²⁷⁶ *rim pa gnyis pa’i de kho na nyid la gnas pa’i sngags (Sukusuma, D 128b.6).*

²⁷⁷ *rim pa gnyis pa’i de bzhin nyid ni rdzogs pa’i rim pa’i rdzogs pa’i rim pa’o// (Sukusuma, D 128b.6-7).*

Vaidyapāda again identifies the “suchness of the second stage” with perfection stage practice in his *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, when introducing the section of the *Muktilaka* on the three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage. There he writes, “Having [first] remained in the generation stage, [now] in order to teach the training in the suchness of the second stage, the text begins...” (*da ni de ltar bskyed pa’i rim pa la gnas pas rim pa gnyis pa’i de kho na (kho na] D, P om.) nyid bsgom pa bstan pa’i phyr... (Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 52b.3-4, P 339a.1-2).*

²⁷⁸ *Muktilaka, D 52a.1-2.*

Another passage from the *Dvīṭyākrama* also equates suchness or reality with the second stage of tantric practice, and likewise identifies this with the final result, here called *nirvāṇa*:

The sphere of the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*
 The unborn vajra, manifest awakening,
 The supreme essence of all *sugatas*,
 This great nondual nonconceptual reality
 Is explained as the second stage.²⁷⁹ |34|²⁸⁰

The final line of the verse (*rim pa gnyis par rab tu bshad*) could equally well be translated so that the verse reads “this great nondual nonconceptual reality/ is explained *in* the second stage,” rather than *as* the second stage. Both readings of the Tibetan are perfectly suitable. But while it is certainly the case that nondual reality is explained *in* the teachings on the second stage, given the descriptions of the “suchness of the second stage” that we have seen above, and the equation of the suchness of the second stage with the final result of practice, I believe it is better to understand the verse to be saying that nondual reality “is explained *as* the second stage.” That is, the second stage is the “perfection” stage—*utpannakrama* could actually be translated more literally as the *perfected* stage—precisely because it is the stage of training in the reality that itself is already perfected, already manifest.²⁸¹ Thus, again, in referencing the “suchness of the second stage,” Buddhajñānapāda raises the status of perfection stage practices, and their connection with the final, perfect tantric result, over those of other non-tantric and non-perfection stage practices. The use of the phrase “the suchness of the second stage” did not catch on among other tantric writers, however; within the translated Tibetan canon it is found only in Buddhajñānapāda's writings and Vaidyapāda's commentaries. This phrase thus appears to be a unique way in which Buddhajñānapāda chose to qualify and distinguish tantric—and specifically perfection stage—practice from that of the exoteric Buddhist traditions.

Expressing the Result of Buddhist Practice in Tantric Terms

Buddhajñānapāda writes of the result of Buddhist practice with an array of commonly used Buddhist terms: “*nirvāṇa*,” “buddhahood,” “*dharmakāya*,” “suchness,” “reality,” and others. However, there several places in his writings where he refers to the result of awakening in specifically tantric terms. Examining these passages gives us a better sense of what Buddhajñānapāda understood to constitute the result of tantric practice, which, as we saw above, he holds to be superior to the non-tantric result. At several points in the *Dvīṭyākrama* Buddhajñānapāda employs an unusual term for the final result of tantric practice. The term that he uses there, the **adhideva* (*lhag pa 'i lha*),²⁸² means superior or supreme deity, and can at times

²⁷⁹ Vaidyapāda gives three synonyms for the second stage: the spontaneously generated stage (*lhan cig skyes pa 'i rim pa*), the perfection stage (*rdzogs pa 'i rim pa*), and the stage of [things] just as they are (*ji bzhin pa 'i rim pa*). He then gives a brief description of the generation stage: “as for the generation stage it is for the purpose of reversing the coarse delusions of the world and its contents. This yoga that involves engaging with the conceptual mind is the first [stage].” *rim pa gnyis par rab tu bshad zhes pa ni/ lhan cig skyes pa 'i rim pa 'am/ rdzogs pa 'i rim pa 'am/ ji bzhin pa 'i rim pa (rim pa)* P; om. D) *rnam grangs so// bskyed pa 'i rim pa ni snod bcud rags par 'khrul pa bzlog pa 'i phyir ro// blos rnam par gzhas pa 'i rnal 'byor pa ste dang po 'o// (Sukusuma, D 96b.6-7).*

²⁸⁰ *sangs rgyas mya ngan 'das pa 'i khams// skye med rdo rje mngon byang chub// bder gshegs kun gyi snying po mchog// gnyis med rtog bral don chen te// rim pa gnyis par rab tu bshad// |34| (Dvīṭyākrama, verse 34).*

²⁸¹ Moreover, as I explore in Chapter Six, Buddhajñānapāda most frequently uses the terms “perfection stage” (*utpannakrama*; *rdzogs pa 'i rim pa*) and “second stage” (*dvīṭyākrama*; *rim pa gnyis pa*) to refer to suchness itself, rather than the yogic methods that one uses to cultivate this experience.

²⁸² Unfortunately, I cannot be certain about the reconstruction of the term *lhag pa 'i lha*; there are a number of good candidates. The terms *adhideva*, *adhidevatā*, and *adhidaiva*, are all attested for *lhag pa 'i lha* (Negi 1993, vol 16., 7546). The term *adhidaivata* is also closely linked with, and often used synonymously with these terms, though it

be used as synonymous with the term tutelary deity (*iṣṭadeva(-tā)*, *yi dam*), the personal meditation deity of a practitioner. However, the way that Buddhajñānapāda employs the term in the *Dviṭīyakrama* makes it clear that in his usage **adhideva* does not refer (just?)²⁸³ to the tutelary deity, but rather to the final result of the Buddhist path—a result that is, according to his system, achieved only through tantric practice. At the conclusion of the *Dviṭīyakrama*'s description of the types and qualities of tantric consort, and immediately prior to the description of the rituals for the second and third tantric initiations in which the consort plays a crucial role, Buddhajñānapāda states what seems to be the purpose of relying upon consort practices:

In that way, by means of the illusory great *mudrā*

Of that type of female,

The so-called **adhideva*,

So difficult to encounter in the three realms, will be accomplished. |82|²⁸⁴

Here Buddhajñānapāda does not indicate clearly what he means by the **adhideva*, but Vaidyapāda's comments suggest that he understands the term to refer to Mahāvajradhara, whom he states to be superior to the gods, bodhisattvas, and even the buddhas. Vaidyapāda explains that Mahāvajradhara is present in all beings (presumably as their basic nature) but can only be accomplished using the “higher methods which seal by means of wisdom,” that is to say, practices involving a consort.²⁸⁵ Just a few verses later, in the first verse in the *Dviṭīyakrama* dealing with the ritual for the third initiation, Buddhajñānapāda himself indicates that the **adhideva* refers to the final result of practice, and that it is for the purpose of attaining this result that the disciple is to practice with his consort. He writes,

And then, in order to bring about the realization

Of the self-arisen *dharmakāya*, great joy

That is equal to space, called the **adhideva*,

The girl is given to him [i.e. to the disciple].²⁸⁶ |86|²⁸⁷

Here the **adhideva* is directly equated with “the *dharmakāya*, great joy that is equal to space,” a clear reference to one among the *kāyas*, or bodies, of awakening that are said to be the result of Buddhist practice. We should note that it is not either of the *rūpakāyas*, the form-based bodies of

seems to be more commonly translate as *rab tu che ba'i lha* (see, for example, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyayoga-tantra*, I.2, which Buddhajñānapāda incorporates into verse 314 of the *Dviṭīyakrama*, and which I discuss below).

²⁸³ As we saw earlier in this chapter, Buddhajñānapāda uses the term “profound and luminous” (*zab gsal*) to refer to suchness, and the way he describes the aspect of luminosity appears to connect this aspect to the *mahāmudrā*, the form of the deity. (The passage in the *Muktilaka* in which we find this connection, which I already discussed above, reads: “Because it is the purification of the mind of oneself and others/ As illusory and rainbow-like/ In the form of the *mahāmudrā*/ It is called genuine luminosity,” *phyag rgya chen po'i gzugs 'chang ba// sgyu ma 'ja' tshon lta bu ru// rang dang gzhan gyi rgyud sbyong bas// yang dag gsal ba zhes bya'o//* (*Muktilaka*, D 47b.2-4).) Given this connection, it is possible that in using the term **adhideva* to refer to the final result of tantric practice, Buddhajñānapāda is also bringing in a form-based aspect of the result of awakening—the practitioner actually manifesting in the form of her personal tutelary deity—though we will see below that in the *Dviṭīyakrama* he explicitly links the **adhideva* not with the form *kāyas*, but with the formless *dharmakāya*.

²⁸⁴ *de ltar de sogs bud med kyi// sgyu ma'i phyag rgya chen pos ni// 'jig rten gsum du rnyed dka' ba'i// lhag pa'i lha shes bya ba bsgrub//* |82| (*Dviṭīyakrama*, verse 82).

²⁸⁵ *ci'i phyir 'lhag pa'i lha zhes bya zhe na/ lha rnam las mchog tu gyur pa ni kha na ma tho ba med pa'o// de las mchog tu gyur pa ni byang chub sems dpa'o// de las mchog tu gyur pa ni sangs rgyas rnam so// de rnam kyi phul du gyur pa ni rdo rje 'chang chen po sbyor ba bdun dang ldan pa'o// de lta bu sems can thams cad la mi slu ba'i tshul du gnas kyang ye shes kyi rgyas btob pa'i thabs gong ma dang bral na mi 'grub pas/ de rnam dang lhan cig tu gyur pa'i lhag pa'i lha zhes bya ba sgrub ces bya'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 102b.3-5; P 123b.2-5).

²⁸⁶ *de la*. Vaidyapāda clarifies that in response to the disciple's supplications the guru gives the girl “that he has blessed” into “the disciple's right hand” and recites the subsequent verses. (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.6-7).

²⁸⁷ *de nas de la rang 'byung gi// chos sku rab dga' mkha' nmyam pa// lhag pa'i lha zhes bya ba ni// rtogs bya'i ched du bu mo byin//* |86| (*Dviṭīyakrama*, verse 86).

awakening, that Buddhajñānapāda equates with the **adhideva*—which we might have expected given the usual use of the term to mean the tutelary deity, who indeed has a specific form—but rather the *dharmakāya*, the formless buddha *kāya* that is “equal to space.” And again, this passage clearly states that it is in order to bring about this final realization that the disciple is to take up practice with his consort. Buddhajñānapāda mentions the **adhideva* once more, in a passage that we examined earlier, found at the conclusion of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*’s philosophical doxography in which he sets forth the highest—the tantric—position. There, just after a verse describing the *sahaja ācārya* (i.e. the consort) performing the genuine blessing (i.e. that of union), it is mentioned that the **adhideva* is accomplished through the guru’s words:

Luminous and perfectly joyful like the sky

The self-arisen great **adhideva*

Is realized through innate wisdom²⁸⁸

In reliance on the words of the guru. |143|²⁸⁹

It is again clear here that the **adhideva* is the result that is to be accomplished, and the context of the passage indicates that this is achieved specifically by means of sexual yogas performed with a consort.

The first two lines of the final passage from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in which we find the term **adhideva* are parallel with the first two *pādas* of Chapter One, verse 2 of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*.²⁹⁰ This unattributed citation from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* employs the term “supreme deity” (*adhidaivata*, *rab tu che ba’i lha*), which Buddhajñānapāda’s verse equates, in the next line, with the **adhideva* (*lhag pa’i lha*); indeed these two terms appear often to be used synonymously.²⁹¹ This verse in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* gives more detail about the nature of the result that is to be accomplished, and in the final line frames that result in an even more specifically tantric context. The verse follows the passage homologizing the ten *bhūmis* with sexual practices and indicating that these sexualized *bhūmis* are superior to their exoteric Mahāyāna counterparts. As we saw above, that passage suggests that it is only through such sexual yogas that a practitioner can come to genuinely know reality. Buddhajñānapāda states that those who lack knowledge of such reality are not genuine buddhas, and then writes:

This is the self-arisen *bhagavan*

The sole supreme deity (*adhidaivata*),

Called the **adhideva*

²⁸⁸ *lhan cig skyes pa’i ye shes*, **sahajajñāna*(?)

²⁸⁹ *gsal zhing rab dga’ nam mkha’ dra// rang byung lhag pa’i lha chen po// lhan cig skyes pa’i ye shes kyis// bla ma’i kha las rtogs par bya//* |143| (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 143).

²⁹⁰ Those two *pādas* read: *asau svayambhūr bhagavān eka evādhidaivataḥ*. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for bringing this parallel to my attention and to Péter Szántó for sharing with me his draft Sanskrit edition of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*. These same two *pādas* of the tantra are also incorporated into the *Pañcakrama* IV.2 (see Tomabechi 2006, 165).

²⁹¹ The way the term *adhidaivata* as used in this particular passage of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* (I.1-2) in fact appears somewhat related to the way Buddhajñānapāda uses the term **adhideva*. The *adhidaivata* is identified there with Vajrasattva and with the *bhagavan*, terms that do, of course, represent the resultant state of awakening. However, the way that the term *adhidaivata* is used throughout the remainder of the tantra seems more consonant with the meaning of “tutelary deity,” or “personal deity,” which really does not correspond with the way that Buddhajñānapāda uses the term **adhideva*. I suspect that the way that the term *adhidaivata* is used in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* I.1-2 inspired Buddhajñānapāda’s use of the (easily synonymous) term **adhideva*. Indeed, it seems likely that the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* exercised an even broader influence on Buddhajñānapāda’s thought; as we saw earlier in this chapter, that *tantra*’s comfort with the term “self” (*ātman*, *bdag*) is also reflected in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, and I suspect that a line from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* may possibly have acted as a scriptural basis for Buddhajñānapāda’s presentation of the three blisses occurring in tantric practice. I discuss the latter point in Chapter Six.

[And] explained to be the thirteenth *bhūmi*. |314|²⁹²

While the traditional Mahāyāna system has only ten bodhisattva *bhūmis*, later tantric systems sometimes added up to an eleventh, thirteenth, or even more *bhūmis*, thus setting the tantric result as distinct from and superior to that of the exoteric Mahāyāna. Here, in equating the **adhideva* with the “thirteenth *bhūmi*,” Buddhajñānapāda is yet again asserting the superiority of the tantric result. It is noteworthy, as well, that both this and the previous passage use the term “self-arisen;” this term is used to refer directly to the **adhideva* in the first passage, and to the *bhagavan*, who is equated with the **adhideva*, in the second. Describing the ultimate result of practice in this way corresponds with Buddhajñānapāda’s assertion explored at the beginning of this chapter that nondual wisdom—which is equated with suchness and therefore with the final result of practice—is in fact the innate nature of all phenomena, including the nature of mind.

In this passage the **adhideva* is also called, or equated with, the “supreme deity” (*adhidaivata*, *rab tu che ba’i lha*), further emphasizing the “deity” (*deva*, *daivata*) aspect of the term. Indeed “supreme deity,” and “**adhideva*” are somewhat curious terms to use for the result of the path of an ultimately non-theistic system like Buddhism. While the term **adhideva* is certainly used in tantric Buddhist texts, in most such works—at least as far as I am aware—it is used in its aforementioned sense of the tutelary deity, as synonymous with *iṣṭadeva*, but not to indicate the result of tantric practice, as Buddhajñānapāda uses it.²⁹³ The term **adhideva* is, however, used throughout non-Buddhist Indian religious literature to indicate any number of supreme deities in the many theistic religious systems that flourish there. The use of this term in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings to indicate the tantric result could be seen as a way of linking the practice of deity yoga as a crucial tantric method with the final result of practice (attained, of course, through the perfection stage), a “space-like” state that transcends even concepts like “deity;” but it could also be seen as a further indication of Buddhajñānapāda’s familiarity and interaction with non-Buddhist practice systems. In any case, like the phrase the “suchness of the second stage,” using the term **adhideva* to qualify the final result of tantric Buddhist practice appears to be a unique feature of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings.

In the *Muktilaka* we find another presentation of the result of the path in specifically tantric terms. Here, Buddhajñānapāda makes reference to the different *kāyas* that arise from engaging in the two stages of tantric practice. After having first explained that the practice of the dharma is divided into two stages, the generation and perfection stages, he writes:

Due to the distinction of the two stages

There [arise] the *mantrakāya* and the *jñānakāya*.

The *jñānakāya* has two [aspects]:

The *jñāna* [*kāya*] and the *kāya* of complete purity (**viśuddhikāya*?).

This completely pure [*kāya*] is the seven yogas,

The perfection stage of the perfection stage;

It is unsurpassed omniscience

Endowed with the supreme of all aspects.²⁹⁴

Vaidyapāda explains this passage as follows,

²⁹² *di ni rang byung bcom ldan ‘das// gcig pu rab tu che ba’i lha// lhag pa’i lha zhes bya ba ni// bcu gsum sa zhes bya bar bshad//* |314| (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 314).

²⁹³ *Adhideva* is used in the sense of *iṣṭadeva*, for example, in the *Vajrāvalī* (See Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 357).

²⁹⁴ *bskyed pa’i rim pa rnam pa gnyis// de bzhin rdzogs pa’i rim pa’o// rim pa gnyis kyi bye brag gis// sngags kyi sku dang ye shes sku// ye shes sku la ye shes dang// rnam par dag pa’i sku gnyis so// rnam par dag pa sbyor ba bdun// rdzogs pa’i rim pa rdzogs rim ste// rnam pa kun gyi mchog ldan pa// thams cad mkhyen pa bla me ‘gyur//* (*Muktilaka*, D 52a.2-3; P 62b.2-4)

Then, in order to indicate the **different types of bodies** of the deity [that come about] by means of those two stages [he writes] **Due to the distinction of...** Here, the *mantrakāya* is the *kāya* that is generated. [It is so called] because it arises from [syllables like] *hūṃ* and so forth, [and] it is impure. The *jñānakāya* is the perfected *kāya* and is pure. That [perfected *kāya*] also has two divisions, **the *jñāna* [*kāya*]**, or the illusory body, which is the pure *kāyā* [attained] by the yogin of the third [level] who has slightly [gained] the wisdom of realization; and the ***kāya* of complete purity**. This [*kāya* of complete purity] also has two [aspects]: that which remains in a state in which it displays characteristics, and is therefore [called] the unfailing *kāya*, and the resultant *kāya*, which is [the nature of that,] just as it is. These two are the primordially pure **completely pure body, which is the seven yogas**. That is also **the perfection stage of the perfection stage**. You should know that precisely this is also **omniscience endowed with the supreme of all aspects**.²⁹⁵

Since the distinction into the generation and perfection stages was made immediately prior to this passage, it is clear that the *mantrakāya* is meant as the *kāya* that comes about due to the practice of the generation stage, while the *jñānakāya* is that which results from the perfection stage. As we have already seen, Buddhajñānapāda makes it clear in his writings that the final result of practice comes about only through perfection stage practice, so the *mantrakāya* cannot be that final result. Indeed, as Vaidyapāda explains, the *mantrakāya* is an impure *kāya* that is so-called because it arises from syllables. This certainly refers to the visualized form of the deity that the practitioner generates from a seed-syllable during generation stage practice. Among the two aspects of the *jñānakāya* that arise due to the practice of the perfection stage, the second one, called the completely pure *kāya*, is identified with the final result of practice, described here as “unsurpassed omniscience,” a commonly used term for the state of awakening in the Mahāyāna tradition. The use of the common Mahāyāna term for the awakened state here in the *Muktitilaka* can be understood on the one hand to explicitly and clearly equate the more tantric terms, the “seven yogas,” and “the perfection stage of the perfection stage,” with the more common non-tantric terms for awakening. But again, in explicitly connecting this common term for the result of awakening with the second stage of tantric practice, Buddhajñānapāda may also be indicating that the tantric path is the only way to bring about this final result.

While the term *jñānakāya* itself is far from uncommon, Buddhajñānapāda’s association of the *jñānakāya* with perfection stage practice and his division of this *jñānakāya* into two aspects is worth examining a bit further here. Since Buddhajñānapāda himself does not elaborate on the first of these two aspects of the *jñānakāya*—he only notes that this first aspect is itself also called simply the *jñānakāya*—we must rely here on Vaidyapāda, who identifies this *kāya* as one that is produced by the perfection stage practices of “a yogin of the third [level] who has slightly [gained] the wisdom of realization.” The third level is one of a series of three (or four?) levels of progress in yogic practice mentioned in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings, which appears to be the stage from which the yogin progresses on to the final result of awakening.²⁹⁶ This first aspect of the *jñānakāya* that arises in the practice of a third-level yogin, as it is

²⁹⁵ *da ni rim pa gnyis kyis lha'i sku'i bye* [bye] P., bya D) *brag bstan pa'i phyir rim pa gnyis kyis zhes pa la sogs pa'o// de la sngags kyi sku zhes pa ni bskyed pa'i sku ste/ hūṃ la sogs pa las byung ba'i phyir te ma dag pa'o// ye shes sku zhes pa ni rdzogs pa'i sku ste dag pa'o// de la yang gnyis te ye shes dang zhes pa ni sgyu ma lta bu'i sku ste/ rnal 'byor pa gsum pas rtogs pa'i ye shes cung zad dag pa'i sku'o// rnam par dag pa'i sku zhes pa dang gnyis so// de la yang gnyis so// mtshan nyid kyi tshul du gnas pas na mi* (na mi] D, ni P) *slu* (slu] D, bslu P) *ba'i sku dang/ de ji bzhin pa'i 'bras bu'i sku 'o// de gnyis ni ye nas shin tu dag pa'i sku ste sbyor ba bdun no// rdzogs pa'i rim pa'i rdzogs rim kyang de'o// rnam pa kun gyi mchog dang ldan pa'i thams cad mkhyen pa yang de nyid yin par shes par bya'o//* (*Muktitilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 38b.2-6; P 366b.4-367a.2).

²⁹⁶ See note 139.

described by Vaidyapāda here, is a pure body called the illusory body (*māyādeha*), a term that is found more commonly in texts laying out the Ārya School perfection stage practices, where it describes the practitioner’s attainment of a type of “wisdom body” of the deity during the third among the so-called “five stages” (*pañcakrama*) of practice according to that tradition. The use of the term *māyādeha* in Vaidyapāda’s writings, in a way that appears rather similar to its usage in the Ārya School, is an interesting precursor to the use of that term in that tradition’s slightly later Guhyasamāja practice system.²⁹⁷ But, according to Vaidyapāda’s presentation here (and, perhaps not incidentally, also according to the Ārya School’s system) this is not yet the final result of practice. The aspect of the *jñānakāya* that is, according to the *Muktītilaka*, equivalent to the state of omniscience itself is the so-called *kāya* of complete purity (**viśuddhikāya?*), which Buddhajñānapāda identifies with the seven yogas, and with the “perfection stage of the perfection stage.” The seven yogas, as I have mentioned above, are seven aspects of the state of awakening that are referred to in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and presented in more detail in Vaidyapāda’s works,²⁹⁸ and the “perfection stage of the perfection stage” is likewise identified with suchness itself. Vaidyapāda, however, divides even this *kāya* of complete purity into two aspects: one aspect that displays characteristics, or form, which he refers to here as the “unfailing *kāya*” —presumably this corresponds with the *rūpakāya*, the “form body” of perfect awakening—and another aspect that he calls the “resultant *kāya*,” and describes as the very nature just as it is—presumably this would parallel the *dharmakāya*, free from any type of form or characteristics.

These passages in the *Muktītilaka* and the *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* are important in providing us a sense of how both Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda understood the results of different types of tantric practice and their relationship with the state of final awakening. We see clearly again that it is only through the practice of the perfection stage that a yogin is able to achieve the *kāyas* that constitute the final state of awakening; the results that are achieved through lower levels of practice are inferior (and it seems that, at least according to Vaidyapāda’s presentation, even the perfection stage itself first brings about a pure *kāya* that is not yet the final result). However, it is worth noting that *all* of the *kāyas* mentioned here—including even those describing the manifestation of final awakening—seem to be in some way related to the deity. At the beginning of the passage in the *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* Vaidyapāda states that all of these different *kāyas* that are brought about through the generation and perfection stage practices are “different types of bodies of the deity” (*lha’i sku’i bye drag*), and the *kāyas* that are mentioned and described do indeed seem to be a series of progressively refined or purified forms of the deity. Thus even the seven yogas and the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” which are terms or aspects of the final state of awakening, unsurpassed omniscience, are also somehow understood to constitute “types of bodies of the deity.” Describing awakening in this way certainly gives the presentation of the final result of Buddhist practice a distinctly tantric flavor.

We have seen now quite a number of ways in which Buddhajñānapāda distinguished the tantric perspective, practice, and result from that of non-tantric paths in his writings, and both directly and indirectly indicated the superiority of tantric practice generally, and that of the perfection stage specifically. While the position of asserting the superiority of the tantric result was certainly held by some tantric Buddhist authors, as noted above, it seems that

²⁹⁷ As I discussed in Chapter One, the Ārya School appears to be slightly later than the Jñānapāda School. Vaidyapāda cites the *Anuttarasandhi* of Śākyamitra, who Toru Tomabechi has argued may well be an intermediary figure between the Jñānapāda and Ārya Schools, but otherwise does not seem to show awareness of any writings of the Ārya School.

²⁹⁸ The most detailed presentation of them in Vaidyapāda’s writings is found in his *Yogasapta*, which I discuss in Chapter Seven.

Buddhajñānapāda may perhaps have been in the minority in making this claim. The evidence found throughout his *oeuvre*, however, leaves little doubt that this was his position, and that he specifically associated the superior tantric result with the view and practices associated with the perfection stage. Let us now move on to look at another doctrinal feature of Buddhajñānapāda's work, namely, the rhetoric of non-action, which we also find closely associated in his writings with the second stage of tantric practice.

V: Ritual and the Rhetoric of Non-action

The yogin who holds actions to be the great path is like a wild animal chasing a mirage—the goal continually appears, but can never be grasped.

-Mañjuśrī instructing Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

Buddhajñānapāda's writings illustrate a tension between the detailed ritual practices of the tantric path and a rhetoric of non-action, connected particularly with the second stage of tantric practice. It is clear from his writings that Buddhajñānapāda advocated the practice of the rituals of Mahāyoga tantra; he composed several *sādhanas* for generation stage practice, including his well-known *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, which set forth the elaborate ritual structures of that stage of tantric practice. He also composed a short work, the **Gativyūha*, detailing the specifics of the physical postures to be assumed during certain ritual contexts. Moreover, even his more perfection stage-oriented works include ritual instructions, like the *Dvītyākrama*'s ritual formula for the higher tantric initiations and perfection stage visualizations, and the *Muktilaka*'s brief elaboration on the tantric *samayas*. In the latter passage Buddhajñānapāda declares flesh, marrow, blood, bone, and the subtle channels to be equivalent to the five buddhas, and gives an injunction to consume a number of such impure substances and also to offer them in the *homa*. However, both the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka* also include passages which declare a variety of external ritual practices, including *maṇḍala*, *homa*, mantra recitation, and other practices, to be unnecessary and advise that the yogin who knows the true nature of reality should give them up.

The *Dvītyākrama* seems to advocate a middle-road perspective on the issue, negotiating the need for engaging in outward practices but also the need to abandon them, presumably in the context of perfection stage practice:

Thus the *maṇḍala*, *homa*,

Bali, recitation, the counting rosary, |151|

Sitting cross-legged, maintaining postures, and so forth—

Are in contradiction²⁹⁹ to the unelaborate,

[Thus] they should not be [exclusively] taken up; but neither should they be [wholly] rejected

Since they are emanated by the **adhideva*. |152|

The yogin who holds actions

To be the great path

Is like a wild animal chasing a mirage—

[The goal] continually appears but can never be grasped. |153|

When infected by the great sickness of actions,

The one who heals [himself] with the great medicine

Of unwavering wisdom is a sublime being. |154|³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Tib. *rnam par slu ba*, Skt. **visamvāda*?

This passage emphasizes the problematic nature of action in general, and specifically the various ritual practices that involve such outward actions, privileging “unwavering wisdom” as the antidote to such action-focused spiritual pursuits. This passage is preceded by one expressing the superiority of the nondual wisdom of the second stage of tantric practice, and followed by detailed instructions on cultivating suchness by means of the three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage. Thus we can understand both “the unelaborate” and the “unwavering wisdom” that is mentioned here, to refer to the nondual wisdom of the perfection stage of tantric practice. When Buddhajñānapāda states that the various ritual practices including the *maṇḍala*, *homa* and the rest “should not be [exclusively] taken up” nor “[wholly] rejected,” he seems to be drawing a middle ground between advocating these practices in the context of the earlier stages of the tantric path—those that lead up to and frame the perfection stage—and cautioning that they must be left behind in the final training in the suchness of the second stage. But his statement that “they are emanated by the **adhideva*” also seems to suggest that these more action-oriented practices are somehow expressions of the very wisdom that is the result of tantric practice. Vaidyapāda here explains further that, “**neither should they be [wholly] rejected** means that they should not be **rejected** since through remaining in these [activities] one perfects the accumulation of merit. **The **adhideva*** is the characteristic-less **deity**, and [the text] says [**those practices**] **are emanated by** [the **adhideva*] because it is the source of everything.”³⁰¹ In this way, Vaidyapāda links the **adhideva*—a term which, as we saw above, Buddhajñānapāda uses to refer to the result of practice—with the wisdom that is, in Buddhajñānapāda’s system the very source of the entire phenomenal world, here including the tantric practices that involve ritual action and elaboration.

The *Muktilaka* takes a somewhat stronger position on the point of avoiding action, but again the advice to abandon action-based ritual practices is specified as being “for the yogin who knows [the] reality” of suchness. The passage in question reads:

For the yogin who knows this reality
 What is the point of fatiguing himself
 With the activity of the *maṇḍala*?
 With the activity of *bali*?
 With the activity of *homa*?
 With the activity of counting mantras?
 With the activity of sitting cross-legged and the rest?
 Since such things are [just] meant to fool³⁰² beginners!
 Why does buddhahood not come from concepts?
 Because it comes from the utterly pure nature.
 All of those conceptual rituals,
 All of that weariness—give it up!
 Activity arises from this nature³⁰³

³⁰⁰ *de la dkyil 'khor sbyin sreg dang// gtor ma bzlas pa bgrang phreng dang//* |151| *skyil mo krung dang stang stabs sogs// spros bral rnam bar slu ba ste// bya ba ma yin dgag pa min// lhag pa'i lha yis sprul phyir ro//* |152| *bya ba rnam la rnal 'byor pa// lam chen dag tu yongs 'dzin pa// ri dwags smig rgyu snyeg pa ltar// rtag tu snang yang ma zin no//* |153| *bya ba'i nad chen gyis zin la// ye shes g.yo med sman chen gyis// gso byed skyes bu dam pa'o//* |154| (*Dvītyākrama* verses 151b-154).

³⁰¹ *dgag pa ma yin zhes te de la gnas pas bsod nams kyi tshogs rdzogs par bya ba'i phyir mi dgag ste/ lhag pa'i lha ni mtshan ma med pa'i lha ste/ de las thams cad 'byung ba'i phyir na sprul phyir ro// zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 112b.2-3; P 135a.8-135b.1).

³⁰² *'drid*. See note 306 below.

³⁰³ Vaidyapāda elaborates, “within the nature there is everything!” *rang bzhin las ni thams cad yod do//* (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 50b.3-4).

[And] action also arises from this nature.³⁰⁴

[But] having come to know that nature

Activity is exhausted and there is no action.³⁰⁵

The verses immediately prior to this passage discuss the “supreme nondual nature,” and how it is beyond the purview of non-tantric practitioners. Thus, the *Muktilaka* advocates that a practitioner who knows this reality abandon all sorts of action-based practices that are “meant to fool beginners!” This is certainly a provocative statement,³⁰⁶ but Vaidyapāda explains that it is because beginners are obscured by so many concepts that their minds are unable to remain in nonduality, such that even if that nonduality were taught, their minds would not be tamed. Thus in order to “fool” them—presumably into training in the practices that will eventually prepare them to approach nonduality directly—they are taught these action-based practices.³⁰⁷ Similar to the statement in the previous passage from the *Dvitiyakrama* that action-based practices are “emanated from the **adhideva*,” here the *Muktilaka* explains that action and activity do originate from the ultimate nature. However, when that nature is realized—which is precisely what happens via the second stage of tantric practice—action and activity are exhausted. What follows in the text is an example: it is just like when someone makes and uses a raft to cross a river, but once she has crossed the river she leaves the raft behind and goes along on her way. Again, the passage seems to indicate that action-based practice are necessary in the beginning stages of practice, but should be set aside when one has a direct experience of suchness.

In this way, the rhetoric of non-action found in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings appears to be directed specifically towards the second stage of tantric practice, which is the focus of both the *Dvitiyakrama* and the *Muktilaka*. One way of understanding these statements is to regard the rhetoric of non-action in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings as just that—a rhetoric, which does not necessarily serve to undermine the action-based practices that Buddhajñānapāda also clearly advocates. As we will see below, this is one way that scholars have understood the similar rhetoric found in the context of the writings of the Great Perfection tradition.³⁰⁸ Another possible way to understand the statements about non-action is to read them as denying just the *external* activities that were emphasized in earlier tantric systems that were more ritually focused, and suggesting that these are to be set aside in the context of performing perfection stage practices that were more directed towards inward meditative processes. Indeed, many of the examples given in these passages on what the yogin is to give up are precisely such outer rituals, like *maṇḍala* practices, *bali* offerings, *homa*, mantra recitation, and so forth. It does seem that Buddhajñānapāda is suggesting a rejection of these external ritual practices in the context of the second stage of tantric practice where there is more of a focus on the internal processes of visualization and the manipulation of the winds and energies of the subtle body. Indeed, Jacob

³⁰⁴ D om. this line

³⁰⁵ ‘*di yi don shes rnal ‘byor pas// bya ba’i las ni dkyil ‘khor dang// bya ba’i las ni gtor ma dang// bya ba’i las ni sbyin sreg dang// bya ba’i las ni bgrang phreng dang// bya ba’i skyil mo krung la sogs// dal byed pas ni ci zhis bya// dang po pa rnam ‘drid phyir ro// ci phyir rtog las sangs rgyas min// rang bzhin rnam dag las byung phyir// rtog bcas cho ga de dag kun// ngal ba la sogs spangs byar bya// rang bzhin las ni byed pa’ang yod// rang bzhin las ni bya ba’ang yod// (rang bzhin las ni bya ba’ang yod//] P, D om. this line) rang bzhin yongs su shes pa la// byed pa sed (sed] D, med P) cing bya ba’ang med// (Muktilaka, D 47b.6-48a.1; P 57a.8-b.2).*

³⁰⁶ The text reads ‘*drid*, and Vaidyapāda’s commentary supports this reading (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 50b.2). As this is a rather strong statement, I wonder if ‘*drid* could be a transmission error for ‘*khrid*, which would mean “guide” instead of “fool”? This would be a slightly less provocative statement that would also make sense, and is an easy slip. However, as tempted as I am to make this emendation, the text as stands clearly reads ‘*drid*, so I have no basis for doing so other than conjecture.

³⁰⁷ *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 50b.1-2.

³⁰⁸ Bernard Faure has also made reference to such a “rhetoric of immediacy” in his work by that title on Chan/Zen Buddhist traditions (Faure 1991).

Dalton has written about a move towards the “internalization” of Buddhist tantric practice precisely in the 8th and 9th centuries withen Buddhajñānapāda was writing,³⁰⁹ and I believe that we can understand this shift in focus to be at least part of what these passages on non-action in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings suggest.

However, what is not clear from his surviving writings is precisely how this advocacy of non-action is to be understood with regard to the ritualized and action-based practices that pertain to the perfection stage itself. That is, as we shall see in Chapter Six, many of the perfection stage practices described in Buddhajñānapāda’s works do involve action—sexual activity to be carried out with the tantric consort, manipulations of the wind and energies of the subtle body while in union with the consort, and the visualizations that accompany these practices. As we saw above, in addition to rejecting external ritual activity, the passages on non-action also refer specifically to wisdom as a “remedy” for action, and describe the rituals that are to be given up as “conceptual.” We saw earlier in this chapter how Buddhajñānapāda’s writings emphasize freedom from conceptuality—that is, freedom even from conceptual “action”—as an important quality of nondual wisdom. Another possible way, then, of understanding the context and function of Buddhajñānapāda’s statements about non-action with regard to perfection stage practices is in relation to the passage in the *Muktilaka* that divides the perfection stage itself into two stages. Vaidyapāda explains that the first of these is the “generation stage of the perfection stage,” which consists of the three *bindu* yogas—precisely the action-based and visualization-focused perfection stage practices I just noted—and the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” which he explains to be the reality that is indicated by such practices, just as it is. Buddhajñānapāda’s injunctions on non-action can thus perhaps be understood to refer to the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” that is the final result of suchness itself, which is what is trained in by means of the perfection stage practices. The internal and mental “activity” of the perfection stage practices are directed precisely to realizing this state of the “perfection stage,” which is itself nondual nonconceptual wisdom, free from any sort of action whatsoever. This “second part of the second stage” is also how Vaidyapāda glosses the term “great perfection,” which is used in the final verses of the Tibetan translation of the *Dvītyakrama*, a point to which we will turn in the next chapter.

VI. An Innovative Turn-of-the-9th-century Voice: Some Conclusions

We have here surveyed a wide swath of doctrinal positions laid out in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. But as I noted at the beginning of this chapter, this is just a first scratch along the surface of his his *oeuvre*. I have endeavored to show just some of the positions evidenced in Buddhajñānapāda’s works—those that stood out as particularly interesting or worthy of mention—and where possible to show how those ideas grew out of the roots of earlier traditions, and then became the roots for the further growth of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist tantric doctrine and practice. In Buddhajñānapāda we see a figure who wove the idea of nondual wisdom into a thoroughly tantric fabric, but also showed how a practitioner could, through the practice of that tantric path—and particularly through the sexual yogas of the perfection stage—come to perceive the truth that the thread of nondual wisdom has made up the basic fabric of all of appearance and existence from the very beginning. While framing his discourse in a clearly Buddhist context, he did not hesitate to draw upon non-Buddhist sources and ideas to communicate to his disciples and readers. Buddhajñānapāda adopted and adapted Śākyamuni’s own awakening narrative to emphasize the importance—indeed the necessity—of the higher tantric path as the means to awakening, and did not shy away from declaring that path to be the

³⁰⁹ J. Dalton 2004.

only way to attain the final result of full awakening. His works emphasize the importance of the oral transmission from a guru of the very nature of reality itself, allowing the disciple to experience her own nature directly, so that she knows experientially what she must train in as she completes the path. Buddhajñānapāda also indicated that once the practitioner thoroughly knows that nature, the effortful practices that have been instrumental in bringing her to that knowledge can then fall away. This emphasis on non-action is found specifically in the writings that focus on the perfection stage, in reference to which, as we saw above, the term “great perfection” (*rdzogs pa chen po*) appears twice in the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda’s works. Given the presence of this term in his writings, and the many references to its usage in his *oeuvre* in the work of later Tibetan Great Perfection authors, the relationship of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and the early/proto- Great Perfection literature that was beginning to emerge in Tibet precisely around his time is a topic worth examining. It is to this inquiry that we will now briefly turn.

Chapter Four

The Perfection Stage of the Perfection Stage: Buddhajñānapāda and the Great Perfection?

Having come to fully understand this, the universal form of the wisdom of the great perfection, the perfectly pure body, Great Vajradhara, the essence of all the great glorious ones, is accomplished through this second stage.

-Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

Scholars familiar with early Great Perfection literature will have noticed in the previous chapter's discussions that each one of Buddhajñānapāda's positions that I have examined has at least some parallels in the early (or proto-) Great Perfection literature that began to surface in Tibet in the 8th and 9th centuries. It is therefore not just the use of the term *rdzogs chen* in Buddhajñānapāda's writings—a point which has received note in both traditional and modern scholarship on the Great Perfection—that is deserving of our attention, but rather the ways in which the positions evidenced in his writings parallel the doctrinal positions found in early Great Perfection works. In this chapter I will briefly examine the views highlighted in Chapter Three in Buddhajñānapāda's works and show similarities or parallels between these and some early Great Perfection writings, including the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, Padmasambhava's *Garland of Views: A Pith Instruction (Man ngag lta ba'i 'phreng ba)*, and several short works from Dunhuang. However, two points need to be mentioned before we get into this material. First, what follows is a very preliminary look into this topic, meant as a sort of gateway into the material and an invitation for further inquiry; and second, with regards to the early Great Perfection works whose positions I examine below, while I have familiarized myself with these writings, I am here relying primarily on the work of scholars who specialize in that literature since my own main focus in this study has been on the content of Buddhajñānapāda's *oeuvre*. As I noted above, the mere use of the term *rdzogs chen* in Buddhajñānapāda's works—the only point of relationship between his writings and the Great Perfection literature that has been heretofore examined in modern scholarship—is only part of what I would like to take a look at here, but the instances where this term is found in the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda writings are a good place to start.

The Term “*rdzogs chen*” in Buddhajñānapāda's Writings

The term *rdzogs chen*, “great perfection,” is found in the Tibetan translations of two of Buddhajñānapāda's surviving works, the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and the *Dvītyākrama*, though only the appearance in the *Dvītyākrama* seems to have been noted in modern scholarship. As I mentioned in Chapter One, unfortunately the Sanskrit original for neither of these passages survives. However, we have two extant Tibetan translations of the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1855 and Tōh. 1856, respectively)—one translation under each of the two titles by which the text circulated—and one Tibetan translation of the *Dvītyākrama*. I will first examine the term *rdzogs chen* as it is found in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, since we have more sources here—multiple translations of the *sādhana*, as well as multiple commentaries—and what we glean from this investigation will help us to better contextualize the term as it is found in the *Dvītyākrama*, where we have fewer sources to work with. The transmission history of the *sādhana* is complicated (I will explore it further in Chapter Five), but for now suffice it to say that I believe the two recensions of the text

that circulated separately (for reasons that remain elusive) under these different titles did include some very minor variations, but otherwise constitute a single work. With regards to the passage in question, only one of the two translations—that of the *Caturaṅga*, translated by Smṛtijñānakīrti (an Indian *paṇḍita* who knew Tibetan well enough that he worked alone, without the assistance of a Tibetan collaborator), uses the term *rdzogs chen*, where it forms part of the phrase *rdzogs chen ye shes*, “the wisdom of the great perfection.” At this same place, the translation of the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* by Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo instead reads *bsam yas ye shes*, “inconceivable wisdom.” The verse is as follows:

Having realized in this way, the one who is filled with compassion
 Instantly accomplishes the wisdom of the great perfection¹/inconceivable wisdom,²
 Glorious Samantabhadra, the innate state.³
 Who, then, would not mediate upon this? |162|⁴

Among the four surviving commentaries on the *sādhana* that are available for study,⁵ two of them—by Thagana (Tōh. 1868) and Śrīphalavajra (Tōh. 1867)—comment on the *Samantabhadra*, and two—by Vaidyapāda (Tōh. 1872) and Samantabhadra (Tōh. 1869; yes, the commentator’s name is Samantabhadra!)—comment on the *Caturaṅga*. The commentaries generally follow the minor variants corresponding with the particular version of the *sādhana* (i.e. the *Caturaṅga* or the *Samantabhadra*) that they are commenting on. Therefore, paying particular attention to the terminology used in Vaidyapāda’s and Samantabhadra’s commentaries—since they both comment on the *Caturaṅga*—should give us a clue into whether the use of the term *rdzogs chen* in Smṛtijñānakīrti’s translation of the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* is an instance of an actual variant between the *Caturaṅga* and the *Samantabhadra*, or simply a difference in translation choice between Smṛtijñānakīrti and the team of Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo. With regard to the passage in question, the translation of only one of the four commentaries—Vaidyapāda’s *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā* (yes, his commentary on the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* is titled *Samantabhadrī!*)—uses the word *rdzogs chen ye shes* in citing the root verse, which, not incidentally, Vaidyapāda glosses as *dpag tu med pa’i ye shes*, “limitless wisdom,” already coming closer to the “inconceivable wisdom” in Rinchen Zangpo and Śraddhākaravarman’s translation of the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*.⁶ Two of the other three commentaries, those by Samantabhadra and Thagana, both read *bsam gyis mi khyab pa*, “inconceivable” (though only in the case of Thagana’s work is this term clearly modifying “wisdom”; Samantabhadra glosses *bsam gyis mi khyab pa* alone). Śrīphalavajra’s commentary here reads *rnam par mi rtog pa’i mtshan nyid can kyī ye shes*, “wisdom characterized by nonconceptuality,” though it is unclear whether “nonconceptual” here is a gloss on a term from the root text or simply the author’s addition.⁷

¹ *rdzogs chen ye shes* (reading from the translation of the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*).

² *bsam yas ye shes* (reading from the translation of the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*).

³ *gzhi yi dgnos po* (reading from the translation of the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*); *rang gi ngo bo* (reading from the translation of the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*). I believe this minor difference to be simply due to variant translation choices.

⁴ *de ltar shes nas snying rje ldan pas rdzogs chen ye shes rab tu ‘grub pa’i sems// dpal ldan kun tu bzang po gzhi yi dngos po gang gis bsgom par mi bya’o// (Caturaṅga-sādhana, D 42b.2-3; P 50b.8-51a.1). de ltar rtogs na snying rjer ldan pa dag// ye shes bsam yas skad cig gis sgrub pa// dpal ldan kun tu bzang po’i rang gi ni// ngo bo su zhig nges par sgom mi byed// (Samantabhadra-sādhana, D 36a. 1-2; P 42a.8).*

⁵ One additional Sanskrit commentary survives but is not available for study (see C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming).

⁶ *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 177b.7.

⁷ Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī*, D 45a.4, translated by Nyayanaśrī and Loden Sherab; Thagana’s *Śrīsamantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti*, D 230b.3, translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo; Śrīphalavajra’s *Samantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti*, D 186b.1, translated by Vīryabhadra, Vibhākara(?), and Rinchen Zangpo. The

Due to the fact that we are in all cases working with texts in translation, it is difficult to say anything conclusive on the matter, but given the prevalence of the term *bsam gyis mi khyab pa*, “inconceivable,” in the commentaries as well as its use in Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo’s translation of the root text, it seems more likely that whatever the Sanskrit term in the *sādhana* was, it was something that was at the very least more easily translated into Tibetan as “inconceivable wisdom” than as the “wisdom of the great perfection.” However, the context of this passage, in which the innate state is equated with Samantabhadra, and also with wisdom, a translator working in context of 11th-century Tibet (which all of the translators of both the *sādhana* and its commentaries were), and particularly one such as Tsalana Yeshe Gyaltsen, who had some connection to the Nyingma traditions, might very well find it appropriate to translate the term qualifying wisdom here as “great perfection.” I cannot speculate on Smṛtijñānakīrti’s choice of the term *rdzogs chen* in his translation the *sādhana*. But, in the case of Kamalaguhyā and Tsalana Yeshe Gyaltsen’s translation of Vaidyapāda’s commentary, Davidson has noted that Yeshe Gyaltsen’s translations were “influenced by Nyingma terminology and are therefore some of the few places where the term “great perfection” (*rdzogs chen*) is located in writings widely accepted as canonical.”⁸ In the end, it looks like the use of the term *rdzogs chen* in the translation of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and Vaidyapāda’s commentary may tell us more about the translators of those works than about Buddhajñānapāda’s use of a term that had the same semantic content as the Tibetan term *rdzogs pa chen po*.

The Tibetan translation of the *Dvītyākrama* also uses the term *rdzogs pa chen po*, though here we only have a single translation, and a single commentary—Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma*—which also survives only in its Tibetan translation. Both the root text of the *Dvītyākrama* and Vaidyapāda’s commentary were translated by Kamalaguhyā and Tsalana Yeshe Gyaltsen, and the term *rdzogs pa chen po* appears at this point in both. The verse in question reads:

Having come to fully understand this,
 The universal form of the wisdom of the great perfection,
 The perfectly pure body, Great Vajradhara,
 The essence of all the great glorious ones, [is accomplished] through this second stage,⁹
 |392|¹⁰

Given what we saw with respect to Kamalaguhyā and Tsalana Yeshe Gyaltsen’s translation choice of term *rdzogs chen* in the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*, a bit of caution is warranted in our assessment of the passage here. Again we see a passage whose context—the universal form of wisdom, Great Vajradhara—is something that could clearly have been associated with the term *rdzogs chen* in 11th-century Tibet, especially with a translator who was familiar with Nyingma

Sāramañjarī survives in part in multiple Sanskrit recensions, and the longer recension does include the commentary on this verse, but the whole line from the Tibetan recension of the *Sāramañjarī* that glosses the term *bsam gyis mi khyab pa* is absent in this recension of the work (see Szántó, unpublished edition, 150). Szántó, therefore, has not included any modifying adjective for *jñāna* in his Sanskrit reconstruction of the verse based on the *Sāramañjarī*. The presence of a line in the Tibetan translation that is absent in the Sanskrit recension of the *Sāramañjarī* is not, however, unusual. There are many discrepancies between the Tibetan translation and the multiple extant Sanskrit recensions of the work, which themselves are not uniform in length. The fact that all four commentaries extant in Tibetan translation give some kind of gloss here, though, suggests that there was likely an adjective used in the Sanskrit, whatever it may have been, and despite the fact that the Sanskrit *Sāramañjarī* does not comment on one.⁸ Davidson 2005, 114.

⁹ Vaidyapāda clearly indicates that this is to be understood as the “second stage,” the perfection stage only, rather than the “two stages.” (*Sukusuma*, D 137b.7-138a.1). I have translated in accordance with his comments, somewhat (but not completely unfeasibly) against the grain of the Tibetan translation of the root text, which would be more easily translated as the “two stages.”

¹⁰ *de ltar rab tu shes par byas nas su// rdzogs pa chen po ye shes spyi yi gzugs// yongs su dag sku rdo rje 'chang chen po// dpal ldan kun gyi ngo bo rim gnyis 'dis// |392| (Dvītyākrama, verse 392).*

traditions and terminology. It is also worth noting that the phrase in this verse, *rdzogs pa chen po ye shes*, “the wisdom of the great perfection” is the very same phrase in the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*, which, as we saw, other translators chose to translate as *bsam yas ye shes*, “inconceivable wisdom.” But when we look at Vaidyapāda’s commentary on this passage in the *Dvītyākrama*, it is clear that there is something different here. Whereas Vaidyapāda’s gloss on the term *rdzogs chen ye shes* in the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* was “immeasurable wisdom” (*dpag med ye shes*), here he glosses the term *rdzogs pa chen po*, “the great perfection” alone, as “the second stage of the second stage” (*rim pa gnyis pa’i rim pa gnyis pa*).

This gloss appears to be drawing on Buddhajñānapāda’s division in the *Muktītilaka* of each of the two stages of tantric practice into two further sub-stages, where, as we saw before, he identifies the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” with the seven yogas.¹¹ Here in the *Dvītyākrama*, then, given that Tsalana Yeshe Gyaltsen and Kamalaguhya translated both the root text and its commentary, it seems quite clear why they chose *rdzogs pa chen po* to translate whatever Sanskrit term they found in the *Dvītyākrama* at this point, since Vaidyapāda glosses this term—again, whatever the Sanskrit may have been—as precisely what constituted the Tibetan term *rdzogs chen* in some of its earliest usages, as the culmination of the perfection stage (which I will address further below). What the Sanskrit term they translated actually was, and whether it held the semantic sense of “the great perfection” is still, however, in question. If, for example, the Sanskrit phrase were equivalent to that from the *Samantabhadra/Caturaṅga-sādhana*—which is in fact a distinct possibility, since the Tibetan phrase in translation is indeed identical—what has been rendered here as “great perfection” may have been a term that could just as easily have been rendered “inconceivable.” In that hypothetical case, Vaidyapāda’s gloss on the term would still hold sense: “**inconceivable** refers to the second stage of the second stage.” Again, we are left without the possibility to make any definitive conclusions on terminological usage, since we are dealing entirely with works in translation. However, given what we saw regarding Yeshe Gyaltsen’s and Kamalaguhya’s translation choices in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, we have to acknowledge that it is certainly possible that a term with the semantic sense of “great perfection” was *not* found in Buddhajñānapāda’s work. But taking a look now at how the term *rdzogs chen* was used in other proto-/early great perfection from around the same period, I think we will be inclined to feel confident that the Tibetan term *rdzogs pa chen po* does indeed seem to correspond, in terms of content, to the way it has been used in the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda’s *oeuvre*.

The term *Rdzogs chen* in Early Great Perfection Literature

As a point of comparison with what we have seen in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, let us look briefly at the use of the term *rdzogs chen* as it is found in some other works of Indic origin from around the same period. In these writings we see the term *rdzogs chen* used much in the same sense as whatever term(s) Smṛtijñānakīrti, Kamalaguhya, and Yeshe Gyaltsen translated as “great perfection” in Buddhajñānapāda’s works and Vaidyapāda’s commentaries—that is, as the culmination, or the outcome, of perfection stage practice. The closest parallels to the way the translators used the term *rdzogs chen* in Buddhajñānapāda’s works are found in the mid-8th century *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, a text that, while its origins have been the subject of some debate among traditional authors in Tibet as well as modern scholars, is ostensibly an Indian tantra, though it now survives only in its Tibetan translation. It is worth noting here, as well, that the only extant Indic commentary on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* (again surviving only in Tibetan translation), the *Spar khab*, is attributed to Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Vilāsavajra. The term *rdzogs*

¹¹ *Muktītilaka*, D 52a.

chen in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* constitutes the earliest known appearance of the term in a way that resembles its usage in the later Great Perfection literature.¹² It appears in the *tantra* just four times, and seems to indicate the ritual moment associated with the sexual climax of the perfection stage yogas immediately following the ritual consumption of the *bodhicitta* produced through those yogas, as well as in a more general sense to indicate the realization that is attained through the perfection stage.¹³ However, it is important to note that while the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*'s references to the “great perfection” do indeed seem to indicate that it is meant as the culmination of the practices that characterize the perfection stage, neither the terms “generation stage” (*bskyed rim*) nor “perfection stage” (*rdzogs rim*) appear in the *tantra* itself. Indeed, the earliest usage of those specific terms (similar terms are used in Padmasambhava's mid-to-late 8th-century *Garland of Views*, discussed below) of which I am aware is in Buddhajñānapāda's *Muktilaka*.¹⁴ Sam van Schaik has noted that the signification of the term *rdzogs chen* in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*

seems to differ little from later Great Perfection traditions: all qualities (*yon tan*) and enlightened activities (*phrin las*)—that is, the aims of the Buddhist practitioner—are complete (*rdzogs*) from the start (*ye nas*). That is to say, in another phrase that is used in the *tantra* far more often, everything is spontaneously present (*lhun gyis grub*).

Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the transcendence of concepts in a state beyond the reach of thought (*bsam gyis mi khyab*).¹⁵

When looking at the ways the term *rdzogs chen* is used in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* alongside the ways it is found in the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda's writings and Vaidyapāda's commentaries, we find of course the parallel in the use of the term *rdzogs chen* to indicate the culmination of the perfection stage. But we also find strong resonance with the identification in Buddhajñānapāda's *Muktilaka* of the “perfection stage of the perfection stage” with the seven yogas, which, as we saw above, are both seven aspects of the final result of awakening as well as being closely connected with perfection stage practices, through which they are meant to be experienced and realized. Moreover, the idea found in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* of the result—“the aims of the Buddhist practitioner,” as van Schaik puts it—being already and spontaneously present from the beginning is echoed in Buddhajñānapāda's identification of nondual wisdom with the very nature of the entirety of the phenomenal world, and of the mind itself. Finally, the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* is a Mahāyoga *tantra*, and the presence of what came to be called the “great perfection” in close association with a Mahāyoga tantric framework is also paralleled in Buddhajñānapāda's writings. These commonalities include aspects connected with generation stage practices such as the basic view of the aggregates and elements as the male and female buddhas, as well as those connected with perfection stage practices, such as the use of the four-fold framework of *sevā* and the rest (the *caturaṅga*) which are applied to a perfection stage context in both the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* and the *Dvīṭyākrama*. The fact that the Great Perfection tradition developed, at least in part, within Mahāyoga tantric context has been noted by a number of scholars, including Karmay, Germano, Jacob Dalton, and van Schaik.¹⁶

¹² van Schaik 2004, 167.

¹³ Dalton 2004.

¹⁴ The terms generation stage (*utpattikrama*) and perfection stage (*utpannakrama*) are well known to appear in the *Samājottara*, which Isaacson (2002a, 468-9) identifies as their scriptural *locus classicus*. Nonetheless, the very verse in which the terms appear in the *Samājottara* is found in parallel in the *Muktilaka*, and in an earlier paper (C. Dalton 2014) I have argued that Buddhajñānapāda's verse is the earlier of the two. I examine this point more fully in Chapter Eight.

¹⁵ van Schaik 2004, 168.

¹⁶ Karmay 1988, especially Chapter 6; Germano 1988, 212-226; Dalton 2004, 8-21; van Schaik 2004, 167; Dalton 2016, 34-47.

Another work by an Indian author appearing around the time of Buddhajñānapāda's writings that uses the term *rdzogs chen* is Padmasambhava's mid-to-late-8th-century *Garland Of Views: A Pith Instruction*, a work on the thirteenth chapter of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*.¹⁷ In this treatise *rdzogs chen* appears as part of the term “the mode of the great perfection” (*rdzogs pa chen po 'i tshul*) following the “generation mode” (*skyed pa 'i tshul*) and “perfection mode” (*rdzogs pa 'i tshul*) as the third of the threefold “modes” of the vehicle of inner yoga.¹⁸ In fact, this classification occurs at the culmination of a doxography that is somewhat reminiscent of the *Dvītyākrama*'s doxographical section discussed above.¹⁹ In the *Garland of Views* the “great perfection” is clearly connected with the generation and perfection stage practices of deity and sexual yogas, and also in some sense constitutes the culmination of the perfection stage, as the “mode” that supersedes it, the very highest perspective in Padmasambhava's doxography. However, given that each of these practices, including generation and perfection, are referred to and discussed as “modes” (*tshul*) of practice, rather than the usual “stages” (*rim pa*), the way the term *rdzogs chen* is used in the *Garland of Views* may constitute a slight shift away from the more limited use that we saw in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* itself—and in the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda's works—as a ritual moment or a result that is the specific outcome of perfection stage practices. As van Schaik interprets its usage, *rdzogs chen* in the *Garland of Views* “primarily functions as an interpretive framework” for the “visualization of deities and the experience of bliss through sexual union.”²⁰ And indeed, the term “mode” of practice does indeed suggest that *rdzogs chen* may serve as a framework of sorts, but the way the “mode of the great perfection” is defined in the *Garland of Views*, while it may perhaps shift slightly away from the other usages we have discussed, remains very much rooted in them. The *Garland of Views* defines the “mode of the great perfection” as “meditation [based in] having realized all mundane and supramundane phenomena as indivisibly and primordially possessing the nature of the *maṇḍala* of awakened body, speech, and mind.”²¹ As such, it still functions, as in the case of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* and the usages of the term in translations of Buddhajñānapāda's works, as a meditation on, or training in, the true state of things, the result that the yogin has come to realize. The method by means of which such realization is attained is, in the case of both Buddhajñānapāda's works and in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, clearly indicated to be the perfection stage yogas. In the *Garland of Views* the presence of the generation and perfection “modes” as preliminary to the “great perfection mode” within the vehicle of “inner yoga” suggests that they are likely understood to form the basis for the perspective of the great perfection in Padmasambhava's view, as well, thus indicating that the great perfection as portrayed in his *Garland of Views* is not just a framework for interpreting the earlier practices, but as a cultivation of the experience of the ultimate or resultant state, which is the outcome of those earlier practices, as well.²² Indeed, Karmay has noted that the term *rdzogs chen* in the *Garland of*

¹⁷ This is one of the few works traditionally attributed to Padmasambhava whose attribution is also generally accepted by modern scholars.

¹⁸ *Man ngag lta ba 'i 'phreng ba*, 4a.4.

¹⁹ *Man ngag lta ba 'i 'phreng ba*, 4b.2. I address this point further below.

²⁰ van Schaik 2004, 171.

²¹ *'jig rten dang 'jig rten las 'das pa 'i chos thams cad dbyer med par sku gsung thugs kyi kdkyil 'khor gyi rang bzhin ye nas yin par rtogs nas sgom pa*. (*Man ngag lta ba 'i 'phreng ba*, 4b.2).

²² In terms of terminology, the *Garland of Views* is a particularly interesting case, since—assuming that the attribution is correct—it is the work of an Indian author that seems to have been composed directly in Tibetan; that is, there is no translator's colophon to indicate that the work is a translation. This, then, may be the earliest known use of the term *rdzogs chen* in a work that was composed in the Tibetan language, rather than translated from Sanskrit. The method of this text's composition is interesting to consider given that it is a Tibetan language composition by an Indian author. Considering Davidson's (2005) model of “grey texts,” a category somewhere between original compositions and translations and which arose at the nexus of Indian authors and their Tibetan

Views, “appears only as an extension of the term *rdzogs rim*,”²³ and van Schaik also holds that for Padmasambhava in this work *rdzogs chen* is “the culmination of the development and perfection stages.”²⁴

What is more, the perspective on ultimate reality, the realization of which constitutes the great perfection in the *Garland of Views*—that all mundane and supramundane things have always had the nature of the *maṇḍala* of awakened body, speech, and mind—is very reminiscent of Buddhajñānapāda’s assertion that all phenomena have, from the very beginning, had nondual wisdom as their nature. Buddhajñānapāda’s writings also include a similar use of the term *maṇḍala* to describe the innate state. In a striking passage from the *Muktililaka* Buddhajñānapāda writes

Since everything is beyond conception
 So-called “*samsāra*” does not exist.
 Just like a rope “snake,” it appears
 But is held not to exist,
 Because when false perception is abandoned,
 Apart from the rope, no trace of anything else can be found.
 Likewise, when conceptual elaboration is abandoned,
 Within the *maṇḍala* no trace of *samsāra* can be found.
 Thus due to [experiencing] the profound and luminous *maṇḍala*
 I²⁵ remain in unceasing *nirvāṇa*.
 Because ordinary beings don’t know this truth
 They are tormented by the suffering of existence.²⁶

Setting aside for the moment Buddhajñānapāda’s explicit declaration of his own personal state of awakening (!) in this passage, his assertion that *samsāra* is merely a false perception while the true nature of all things is “profound and luminous *maṇḍala*” is quite similar to the perspectives on the ultimate state as constituting the *maṇḍala* of awakened body, speech, and mind found in the *Garland of Views*.

In addition to sharing a similar perspective on the state of reality that is the culmination of the perfection stage, and which the *Garland of Views* clearly terms *rdzogs pa chen po*, there are a number of other commonalities between the *Garland of Views* and Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. The doxography in the *Garland of Views*, as mentioned briefly above, is quite reminiscent of the one in the *Dvitiyakrama*, and not only in terms of the simple fact that both texts contain such a doxographical presentation. Jacob Dalton has observed that most doxographical classifications of tantra from Indian sources were ritual-based rather than

translators, it is possible that the *Garland of Views*’ content might have been dictated by its author (in an Indian language or in Tibetan) and then recorded in Tibetan by a Tibetan disciple.

²³ Karmay 2008, 138.

²⁴ van Schaik 2004, 179. J. Dalton (2016, 41-2) suggests that in the early great perfection literature the term *rdzogs chen* was used in quite a variety of different ways, including immersion in a nonconceptual state, as the interpretive “framework” for deity yoga, the nonconceptual state that arose from the ingesting of sexual fluids, and likely others, as well.

²⁵ The Dpe sdur ma edition (962) here reads *da*, but the Derge (47b.1), Peking (56b.8) and Vaidyapāda (*Muktililaka-vyākhyāna*, D 49a.7) clearly read *nga*. Vaidyapāda’s commentary makes the point even more clear, adding “I and others....” (*bdag srogs*) (*Muktililaka-vyākhyāna*, D 49a.7).

²⁶ *thams cad rnam rtoḡ dang bral bas// ‘khor ba zhes bya yod ma yin// ‘on kyang thag pa’i sprul lta bur// snang zhing med pa nyid du ‘dod// rab rib spangs pas thag pa las// gzhan ni cung zad rnyed mi ‘gyur// de bzhin spros spangs dkyil ‘khor la// ‘khor ba cung zad rnyed mi ‘gyur// des na zab gsal dkyil ‘khor bas// nga ni rtag tu mya ngan ‘das// de don skyes bos ma shes bas// srid pa’i sdug bsngal gyis gzir ro//* (*Muktililaka*, D 47a.7-47b.1; P 57b.5-58a.-1)

philosophically-based.²⁷ The *Dvīṭyākrama*'s doxography, which begins with non-Buddhist views and then classifies Buddhist views in a hierarchical mode, thus stands out in being not ritually- but philosophically-based, while also including the perfection stage tantric perspective as the highest among the “views” surveyed. The *Dvīṭyākrama*'s doxography does not, however, distinguish between the various classes of tantra. The *Garland of Views*' doxography holds an interesting middle ground: in the section on exoteric traditions (both non-Buddhist and Buddhist, just as in the *Dvīṭyākrama*) it focuses on view, but then the text transitions to an emphasis on ritual distinctions when distinguishing among the various classes of tantra. Their philosophical perspectives (“views”) still receive mention in Padmasambhava's discussion of the different tantric systems, but the views he sets forth here are largely consistent among the classes of tantra, while their distinctions are expressed in ritual terms. The single exception here may be the “mode of the great perfection” where Padmasambhava identifies this mode as “meditation”—which we may take as a form of practice that could thus be identified as a “ritual”—but then describes that meditation not in terms of its ritual details (as he has done with the other tantric classes), but rather in terms of its view: the “mode of the great perfection is” “to meditate [on the basis of] having realized all mundane and supramundane phenomena as indivisibly and primordially possessing the nature of the *maṇḍala* of awakened body, speech, and mind.”²⁸

Yet another point of commonality between Buddhajñānapāda's writings and the *Garland of Views* is their reinterpretation of the four “branches” of *sevā*, *upasevā*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana*. As we saw above, these four terms seem to have first been applied to the various practices of the generation stage, as in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (and indeed they continue to be so applied, even in the context of modern-day practice), but Buddhajñānapāda reinterprets them in the *Dvīṭyākrama* to correspond to the stages of sexual union associated with the perfection stage practice. A similar, but more general, association of this schema with perfection stage practice is found in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*.²⁹ In the *Garland of Views* these same four categories are repurposed to span practices fitting into both the generation and perfection stages, beginning with the generation of oneself as the deity, up to the blissful moment at the culmination of the perfection stage. Though their way of interpreting the four branches is not identical, Buddhajñānapāda and Padmasambhava are clearly working within a common milieu, with similar material and terminology. Additionally, the *Garland of Views* is similar to Buddhajñānapāda's works in making it clear that the highest path of tantra—in the *Garland*'s presentation, this is the path of the great perfection—is not suitable for everyone, and that it is to be kept secret because it is beyond the comprehension of ordinary individuals.³⁰ One final curious connection between the *Dvīṭyākrama* and the *Garland of Views* is a citation in Padmasambhava's text that is identified in the commentarial literature as a quotation from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. Karmay notes that the passage in question is, however, *not* found in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, which is true, though I have identified a passage that contains a slightly extended form of basically same content in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, at the end of its fifteenth chapter.³¹ However, this particular passage cited in the *Garland of Views* is nearly identical to a

²⁷ Dalton 2005, 119-120.

²⁸ 'jig rien dang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i chos thams cad dbyer med par sku gsung thugs kyi kdkiyl 'khor gyi rang bzhin ye nas yin par rtogs nas sgom pa (*Man ngag lta ba*'i 'phreng ba, 4b.2).

²⁹ *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, D 122a.5-6.

³⁰ *Man ngag lta ba*'i 'phreng ba, 8b.3-9a.1.

³¹ Karmay 2007, 158. The passage from Matsunaga's edition reads: *atha te sarvatathāgatāḥ sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittavajraṃ tathāgatam evam āhuḥ/ sarvatathāgatadharmā bhagavan kutra sthitāḥ kva vā sambhūtāḥ/ vajrasattva āha/ svakāyavākcittasamsthitāḥ svakāyavākcittasambhūtāḥ/ bhagavantaḥ sarvatathāgatā āhuḥ/ svakāyavākcittavajraṃ kutra stitham/ ākāśasthitam/ ākāśam kutra stitham/ na kvacit/* (Matsunaga, 85). Fremantle's edition and translation give a version of the passage from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* that is even closer to

passage from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (which is not identified as a quotation).³² The passage as cited in the *Garland* reads:

Phenomena abide in the mind;
The mind abides in space;
And space abides nowhere.³³

The parallel passage from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* reads:

...Why is that? Because all phenomena
Abide in the mind. This, as well,
Abides in space. Space itself
Abides nowhere; it is luminous.³⁴

Whether both passages were separately adapted from the longer passage in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* or are a quotation from some other shared source (perhaps the more likely scenario, given that Padmasambhava, at least, identifies the passage as a quotation) the presence of this parallel passage is further evidence that the two texts do very much seem to be coming out of a similar milieu, both in terms of the ideas found in the works, as well as their literary sources. Having noted these similarities between Buddhajñānapāda's writings and some early Indic sources for the Great Perfection literature, let us now take a more topical approach, and look at instances in which some of the doctrinal features I have identified in Buddhajñānapāda's writings appear in some early Great Perfection works.

Nondual Wisdom as the Nature of Mind and all Phenomena

As we saw in Chapter Three, Buddhajñānapāda clearly asserts at many points in his writings that nondual wisdom is not only the resultant state of awakening, but is itself the very identity of the mind and indeed the entire phenomenal world. Such an identification of the result of awakening with the nature of the mind and the phenomenal world is a common characteristic of many Great Perfection works, starting from a very early period. Van Schaik has noted that “all forms of the Great Perfection place a great emphasis on nonduality and assert often that the enlightened state is immanent in the everyday state.”³⁵ The *Guhyagarbha-tantra* states that, “The mind itself is the perfect Buddha; Do not search for the Buddha anywhere else,”³⁶ and a Mahāyoga treatise by the 9th-century Indic author *Madhusādhū that has been preserved at Dunhuang, and which shows strong affinities with early Great Perfection literature, likewise

the quotation from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and *Garland of Views*. Her edition reads: *atha te sarvatathāgatāḥ sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittavajram evam āhuḥ/ sarvatathāgatadharmā bhagavan kutra sthitāḥ kva vā sambhūtāḥ/ vajrasattva āha/ svakāyavākcittasamsthītāḥ svakāyavākcittasambhūtāḥ/ bhagavantaḥ sarvatathāgatā āhuḥ/ cittam kutra sthitam/ ākāśasthitam/ ākāśam kutra sthitam/ na kvacit/* (Fremantle 1970, 348; see also Fremantle 1970, 349 for the Tibetan edition of the passage. Fremantle's English translation of the passage reads: “Then all the Tathāgatas said to the Tathāgata, Vajra Body, Speech and Mind of all Tathāgatas: O Blessed One, where do the dharmas of all the Tathāgatas exist and where do they come from? Vajrasattva said: they exist in your body, speech, and mind, and they come from your body, speech and mind. The Blessed Tathāgatas said: where does mind exist? He answered: it exists in space. They asked: where does space exist? He answered: nowhere.” (Fremantle 1970, 110).

³² As we have seen, Buddhajñānapāda seems to have freely adapted passages from other texts into his writings without the need to identify them as quotations, as in the passage parallel to the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* in verse 50 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (see my translation and notes for further details), and the numerous passages from the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* adapted into his *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* that I addressed above (See also Appendix I).

³³ *chos rnam s thams cad ni sems la gnas so// sems ni nam mkha' la gnas so// nam mkha' ni ci la yang mi gnas so//* (*Man ngag lta ba'i 'phreng ba*, 5b.2-3).

³⁴ *ci yi phyir na chos thams cad//|32| sems la gnas te de nyid kyang// nam mkha' la gnas nam mkha' ni// gang du min gnas 'od gsal ba//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 32d-33c).

³⁵ van Schaik 2004b, 51.

³⁶ van Schaik 2008, 14.

echoes this idea: “It is sufficient to realize mind’s reality. It is not necessary to seek buddhahood anywhere other than in the mind.”³⁷ In the lines for taking refuge at the beginning of his *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* Buddhajñānapāda expresses this same identification quite clearly: “I constantly take refuge in the *sugatas*/ Who abide within my mind.”³⁸ The *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, moreover, identifies the phenomenal world with the awakened state noting that, “all the *tathāgatas* and all phenomena are characterized by having the single essential identity of being primordially awakened.”³⁹ As we will recall, Buddhajñānapāda shares a similar perspective in the *Dvītyākrama*. He writes,

The nature of phenomena,
From form and the rest up to omniscience,
Is the perfectly pure wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous,
Which is like the center of space. |23|⁴⁰

In identifying phenomena with nondual wisdom, he essentially identifies them with the awakened state, though this idea is not made quite as explicit in Buddhajñānapāda’s works as it is in some of the early Great Perfection writings.

The World Arises out of Nondual Wisdom: A Gnostic Cosmogony

The cosmogonic narratives that identify nondual wisdom as the source of the phenomenal world explored above in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings also share parallels in some early Great Perfection works. As we will recall, Buddhajñānapāda wrote of the emergence of *samsāra* from the reality of nondual wisdom in the *Dvītyākrama*:

The reality which is like that
Is present pervading all things.
Yet,⁴¹ from beginningless time, even from this
There was arising in the manner of the great thought. |35|⁴²
And from that also the great elements [arose]:
The *maṇḍala* of wind arose,
And from that also, the great element of fire
Arose and spread. |36|
From that, the great element of water also
Arose and spread, and from that also earth.
From the essence of the gathering of the four [elements]
Mountains, and so forth, and all sentient beings also [arose] |37|
In all their variety: subtle and gross:
Men, women, and hermaphrodites,
The young and old,

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *rang gi yid la gnas par gyur pa yi// bde gshegs rnam la rtag tu skyabs su chi// (Samantabhadra-sādhana, D 29a.6).*

³⁹ *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad dang/ chos thams cad ye nas sangs rgyas pa’i ngo bo nyid du gcig pa’i mtshan nyid yin pas... Guhyagarbha-tantra, D 112b.2.*

⁴⁰ *chos rnam gzugs la sogs pa rnam// kun mkhyen bar gyi rang bzhin ni// nam mkha’ dkyil ltar rnam dag pa’i// zab gsal gnyis med ye shes te// |23| (Dvītyākrama, verse 23).*

⁴¹ Vaidyapāda explains further, “Although that kind of nonduality pervades and remains [as the nature of] all things, the reason that this is not apparent is explained with the lines beginning, “Yet, from beginningless time...” *de yang gnyis su med pa de lta bus dngos po kun rnam par khyab ste gnas kyang de mi gsal ba’i rgyu ni thog med dus nas zhes te/ (Sukusuma, D 97a. 4).*

⁴² *de ‘dra’i don des dngos po kun// rnam par khyab ste rnam gnas kyang// thog med dus nas de las kyang// rnam rtog chen po tshul byung ste// |35| (Dvītyākrama, verse 35).*

Gods, *nāgas*, and *yakṣas*, [38]
 Evil spirits, planets, Yāma,
 The Lord of Water, Indra, hell beings,
Pretas, animals, and those who abandon all of this,⁴³
 Beings who rely upon consciousness alone,⁴⁴
 Such beings remain, spread far and wide.⁴⁵ [39]
 Therefore, the nondual nonconceptuality
 That is higher than that is completely obscured.
 Because of not realizing it, all beings
 Cycle around in *samsāra*. [40]⁴⁶

The *Guhyagarbha-tantra*'s account of the emergence of *samsāra* is similar in identifying its source as “the essence of the *sugatas*” and the manifestation of confusion as “concepts,” from which all the various forms of *samsāric* existence unfold. Both works also identify conceptualization as that which obscures beings' experience of their original nature or essence. The second chapter of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* states:

Amazing! [Even] from within the essence of the *sugatas*, [confusion occurs].
 Emanated by an individual's concepts and karma
 Diverse bodies and enjoyments,
 Places, suffering, and so forth,
 The self, [and things that are] mine are all separately perceived.
 No captor has bound us, bondage is nonexistent,
 Nor is there anything to be bound.
 Conceptualizing and grasping to a self
 We insist upon untying knots in space,
 [But] there is no bondage nor release.⁴⁷

Moreover, the cosmogonic emergence of phenomena from nondual wisdom that is articulated in Buddhajñānapāda's works can be seen as closely related to the idea of a single basis that manifests either as *samsāra* or *nirvāṇa* depending on the presence or absence of realization. This idea, which became very important in later Great Perfection works, is found in

⁴³ Vaidyapāda identifies these as the *śrāvakas* and so forth. *de kun spangs pa ni nyan thos la sogs pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.1).

⁴⁴ Vaidyapāda identifies these as those beings of the realm of Limitless Space, and so forth—inhabitants of the Formless Realm—since they have abandoned form. *nam mkha' tha' yas la sogs pa ste/ gzugs spangs ba'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.1-2).

⁴⁵ Vaidyapāda comments that the statement that these beings live far and wide means that, “having been produced by conceptuality, they appear in the ten directions.” *de kun rgyas par gnas zhes pa ni rtog pas bzo byas nas phyogs bcu kun du snang ba'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.2).

⁴⁶ *de 'dra'i don des dngos po kun// rnam par khyab ste rnam gnas kyang// thog med dus nas de las kyang// rnam rtog chen po tshul byung ste//* [35] *de las yang ni 'byung ba che// rlung gi dkyil 'khor nyid byung ste// de las kyang ni me yi khams// chen po byung nas khyab mdzad de//* [36] *de las chu khams chen po yang// byung ste khyab mdzad de las kyang// sa byung bzhi bsdu ngo bo las// ri sogs sems can thams cad kyang//* [37] *sna tshogs phra ba sbom po dang// skyes pa bud med ma ning dang// gzhon nu dang ni rgan po dang// lha dang klu dang gnod sbyin dang//* [38] *gdon dang skar ma gshin rje dang// chu bdag rgya byin dmyal ba dang// yi dags dud 'gro dang de kun// spang dang shes tsam rab brten pa'i// 'gro ba kun du rgyas par gnas//* [39] *de bas de yi gong ma yi// gnyis med rtog bral rab bsgribs te// ma rtogs pas na 'gro ba kun// 'khor bar rab tu 'khor bar 'gyur//* [40] (*Dvitiyakrama*, verses 35-40).

⁴⁷ *e ma bde gshegs snying po las// rang gi rnam rtog las kyis sprul// sna tshogs lus dang longs spyod dang// gnas dang sdug bsgal la sogs pa// bdag dang bdag gir so sor 'dzin// sus kyang ma bcings bcings med de// bcings bar bya ba yod ma yin// rnam rtog bdag tu 'dzin pa yis// nan gyis mkha' la mdud pa dor// bcings med rnam par grol med pa'i//* (*Guhyagarbha-tantra*, D 112b.2-4).

the eleventh chapter of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*,⁴⁸ as well as in the 9th-century treatise of *Madhusādhū preserved at Dunhuang, which reads:

Because the phenomena of *nirvāṇa* (*mya ngan las 'das pa*) and *saṃsāra* (*'khor ba*) manifest depending on whether there is realization or non-realization, they are nondual.

Therefore they are called the single basis (*gzhi gcig*) or the single truth.⁴⁹

While Buddhajñānapāda's works do not use the terminology of a "single basis," the same perspective is not only implied by the cosmogonic narratives in his writings in which nondual wisdom acts as the source for *saṃsāric* phenomena, which, when their nature is realized, are none other than *nirvāṇic*, but is found more overtly in statements such as this one, from the *Muktilaka*, already cited above:

Since everything is beyond conception
So-called "*saṃsāra*" does not exist.
Just as a rope "snake," it appears
But is held not to exist,
Because when false perception is abandoned,
Apart from the rope, no trace of anything else can be found.
Likewise, when conceptual elaboration is abandoned,
Within the *maṇḍala* no trace of *saṃsāra* can be found.
Thus due to [experiencing] the profound and luminous *maṇḍala*
I⁵⁰ remain in unceasing *nirvāṇa*.
Because ordinary beings don't know this truth
They are tormented by the suffering of existence.⁵¹

This passage clearly indicates that the only distinction between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is the presence or absence of conceptual elaboration, which also is what makes the distinction as to whether or not an individual is experiencing the "profound and luminous *maṇḍala*." To be sure, this idea of the distinction between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* coming down to just concepts is a much older one in Buddhism. In a verse from his *Mañjughoṣastotra*, cited by Buddhajñānapāda in the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* (and which, incidentally, may have been the inspiration for the line in the *Muktilaka* in which Buddhajñānapāda states that he himself "remain[s] in unceasing *nirvāṇa*"), Dīgnāga wrote:

There is nothing called *saṃsāra*
Apart from concepts
Therefore when free from concepts
You remain in unceasing *nirvāṇa*.⁵²

⁴⁸ Dorje n.d., 61. The term in the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* here reads *rgyu gcig*, "single cause" rather than *gzhi gcig* "single basis," but the idea is the same (*Guhyagarbha-tantra*, D 122a.2).

⁴⁹ van Schaik 2008, 17.

⁵⁰ The Pedurma edition (962) here reads *da*, but the Derge (47b.1), Peking (56b.8) and Vaidyapāda (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 49a.7) clearly read *nga*. Vaidyapāda's commentary makes the point even more clear, adding "I and others...." (*bdag srogs*) (D 49a.7).

⁵¹ *thams cad rnam rtog dang bral bas// 'khor ba zhes bya yod ma yin// 'onkyang thag pa'i sprul lta bur// snang zhing med pa nyid du 'dod// rab rib spangs pas thag pa las// gzhan ni cung zad rnyed mi 'gyur// de bzhin spros spangs dkyil 'khor la// 'khor ba cung zad rnyed mi 'gyur// des na zab gsal dkyil 'khor bas// nga ni rtag tu mya nga 'das// de don skyes bos ma shes bas// srid pa'i sdug bsngal gyis gzir ro//* (*Muktilaka*, D 47a.7-47b.1; P 57b.5-58a.1)

⁵² The passage as it is cited in the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* reads: *rnam rtog las gzhan 'khor ba zhes// bya ba 'ga' yang yod min te// de phyir rnam rtog bral gyur pas// rtag tu khyod ni mya ngan 'das//* I am grateful to Péter Szántó who shared with me his draft Sanskrit edition of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* in which he identifies the source of the passage as Dīgnāga's *Mañjughoṣastotra*.

But the connection of this idea with a cosmogony in which the reality of nondual wisdom or the “essence of the *sugatās*” acts as the source of the phenomenal world, that the awakened nature itself is the single basis of both *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* does seem to be a unique expression of this doctrine that is common to Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and early Great Perfection works, and which finds much further expression in the later Great Perfection tradition.⁵³

The Transmission of Nondual Wisdom: Pointing It Out

We saw in Chapter Three how Buddhajñānapāda’s writings describe the direct transmission of the reality of nondual wisdom from a guru to his disciple, usually specified as taking place through verbal means, in the context of the third tantric initiation or immediately afterward—precisely what, in later traditions, came to be known as a “fourth initiation.” This fourth initiation became extremely important in later Great Perfection traditions, where it is also called the “precious word initiation” (*tshig dbang rin po che*). In these later Great Perfection traditions, as well as in the later tradition of Mahāmudrā, the technique of bestowing a transmission of the nature of reality directly to the student was also abstracted from the context and sequence of tantric initiation, and took the form of a symbolic conveyance of the nature of reality from guru to disciple called an “introduction” (*ngo sprod*). As David Germano has noted with reference to early Great Perfection meditation practices, “subsequent Great Perfection traditions indicate that such styles of meditation begin with a symbolic indication of the mind’s nature in an encounter with one’s teacher referred to as a “pointing to” or “introduction to” the mind’s nature (*sems khrid; ngo sprod*).”⁵⁴ The function of this (usually) verbal conveyance of the nature of reality in these later Great Perfection traditions—as the initial method by means of which the disciple is brought to a direct experience of reality that serves as the basis for her later training in it—is indeed identical to the function of the transmission of suchness that we find in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. But despite the emphasis in the later Great Perfection traditions on the importance of such a transmission or “introduction,” the earliest Great Perfection writings—at least those that have so far received attention from modern scholars—do not seem to discuss this procedure. This important feature of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings thus is in little evidence in early Great Perfection works. Given the importance of such a transmission in the later tradition, the lack of its mention in the early writings is notable. The lacuna might well be attributed to the fact that the early Great Perfection tradition was still so enmeshed in the tradition of Mahāyoga tantra that a “pointing out” instruction outside the structures of tantric initiation had not yet developed, and since the early works (at least those that have been studied by modern scholars) tend not to focus on tantric ritual structures, while they certainly do mention tantric initiation, they do not generally discuss its details. Given that, like we have seen in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, this kind of “transmission” formed, from the late 8th/ early 9th century, part of the initiatory sequence, the lack of a discussion of the details of ritual in general, and initiation in particular, in early Great Perfection texts would mean that such a transmission might not have been mentioned in the texts, though it may have been taking place in practice. In any case, there appears to have been little research done on the origins and development of the practice of “introduction” or “pointing out” within Great Perfection traditions. Besides Germano’s brief reference, cited above, Yamamoto mentions the term’s occurrence in the works of the 12th-

⁵³ This idea continued to be developed and expressed in the Great Perfection traditions. For example, the idea of a “genuine foundation of unification (*sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi*)” that unifies all *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* because it is “both the cause for all thoroughly afflicted phenomena to appear and the basis for their purification” is described in Nubchen Sangye Yeshe’s 10th century *Armor Against Darkness (Mun pa’i go cha)* (J. Dalton 2016, 42). For a 12th-century Tibetan presentation of the idea of the single basis see Yeshe and J. Dalton 2018, esp. 263-272.

⁵⁴ Germano 1994, 228.

century Tibetan master Lama Zhang in conjunction with the Mahāmudrā tradition, and Hatchell, in reference to 14th-century developments in the Great Perfection describes such an introduction as a “fundamental feature of the Great Perfection tradition.”⁵⁵ But while these scholars define and briefly discuss the term, none discuss its provenance or its development. As far as I am aware, such a practice receives no mention at all in the modern scholarship on the early Great Perfection.

What does receive brief mention in some early works of the Great Perfection, however, is the related issue of sudden versus gradual realization, and here we again find a point of connection with Buddhajñānapāda’s perspectives. As we saw, Buddhajñānapāda seems to have accepted aspects of both sudden and gradual realization; that is, the path of higher tantric practice as he describes it includes both sudden experiences of realization at the outset of the path when receiving the transmission of reality from the guru, as well as and during or at the conclusion of the path. But Buddhajñānapāda also acknowledges a gradual process of training in that reality as the disciple progresses along the path. Jacob Dalton writes of the works of Pelyang, that he likewise takes “a diplomatic position on the sudden-gradual debate...as he allows for gradual progress along a path that culminates in a moment of sudden enlightenment.”⁵⁶ The 10th-century Great Perfection author Nubchen Sangye Yeshe is perhaps even more explicit on this point.⁵⁷ This feature of a balanced approach to the issue of gradual versus sudden realization, then, seems to be another feature shared between Buddhajñānapāda’s thought and at least some writings of the early Great Perfection tradition.

Privileging Tantric Practice: The Superiority of the Tantric Path and its Result

Buddhajñānapāda’s position that the tantric path and result are superior to that of the non-tantric path is an important aspect of his thought. As we saw above, this view is evidenced throughout his writings, both directly and indirectly. A similar position seems to be found in the treatise on the four yogas by Madhusādhu, which likewise asserts the superiority of the Vajrayāna, including the superiority of its result.⁵⁸ However, Madhusādhu’s position does differ somewhat from Buddhajñānapāda’s in claiming that the Mahāyāna path can still lead to full buddhahood.⁵⁹ While his view on the superiority of tantra may not have been precisely shared with early writings from the Great Perfection tradition, Buddhajñānapāda’s *method* for showing the superiority of tantric practice—homologizing tantric practices with non-tantric ones, or generation stage practices with perfection stage ones, and always privileging the “higher” practices—does appear in several early Great Perfection works. As we saw above, like Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* applied the fourfold structure of *sevā*, *sādhana*, and the rest to perfection stage practices (though without actually mentioning the term “perfection stage”), including its culmination in the “great perfection,” and Padmasambhava’s *Garland of Views* likewise applied this framework to span practices from the generation stage up through the great perfection. Germano has noted that the reinterpretation of this four-fold schema continued up through the works of the 14th-century Tibetan scholar Longchenpa, who interpreted all four stages in terms of the practices of the great perfection.⁶⁰ The *Questions and Answers of Vajrasattva*, a short treatise found at Dunhuang that lies at the intersection between Mahāyoga

⁵⁵ Yamamoto 2009, 300; Hatchell 2009, 160.

⁵⁶ J. Dalton 2012, 188.

⁵⁷ J. Dalton 2016, 42. Thanks to Jacob Dalton for drawing my attention to Nubchen’s position on this issue.

⁵⁸ van Schaik 2008, 13.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 27. Van Schaik does not elaborate on the apparent tension between Madhusādhu’s holding the Vajrayāna result to be superior and at the same time asserting that the bodhisattva path can lead to full awakening.

⁶⁰ Germano 1994, 223-4.

and the early Great Perfection, likewise recasts the practices of *sevā* and *sādhana* in terms of freedom from an actor or action and freedom from effort, important aspects of the Great Perfection tradition that are also emphasized in Buddhajñānapāda's writings, as we shall discuss below.⁶¹ Thus while the works of the early Great Perfection tradition did not necessarily clearly articulate the position that the result of the Vajrayāna was superior, they did use the same technique of reinterpreting the terms of Mahāyoga to suit and characterize the practice traditions that they held to be the pinnacle of Buddhist practice.

Another point of intersection between Buddhajñānapāda's works and some early Great Perfection writings in this regard is the clear preference for the tantric view above that of the various philosophical schools current and popular in their time. We saw that Buddhajñānapāda sometimes upheld a Yogācāra-Madhyamaka position in his writings, and clearly asserted the (Yogācāra-)Madhyamaka position to be the superior one among philosophical views, but at least in his later writings he always indicated this to be lower than the tantric view. Likewise, Padmasambhava's doxography in the *Garland of Views*, though it deals only with the larger category of the "vehicles" of Buddhist practice rather than the details of specific philosophical systems within those vehicles, places the tantric view, and especially that of the great perfection, higher than that of all other systems. As noted above, Padmasambhava also discusses the great perfection specifically in terms of its "view," or philosophical perspective, rather than presenting it in terms of its ritual aspects, like he does with the lower tantric traditions. The *Questions and Answers of Vajrasattva*, is, like Buddhajñānapāda, more specific in placing the perspective of the great perfection above that of the highest philosophical positions. The *Questions and Answers* notes that the yogin must discard as delusion *all* philosophical distinctions "even those of the two highest philosophical schools in early Tibet, the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka and the Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka."⁶²

Ritual and the Rhetoric of Non-Action

Yet another point of contact between Buddhajñānapāda's writings and those of the early Great Perfection tradition is their shared emphasis on the rhetoric of non-action. This type of rhetoric is an important feature of the writings of the Great Perfection tradition, starting from the earliest period. A number of early or proto- Great Perfection works like Mañjuśrīmitra's *Meditation on the Awakened Mind* (*Byang chub sems bsgom pa*), Buddhagupta's *The Secret Handful* (*Sbas pa'i rgum chung*, IOL Tib J 594), an unascribed commentary on *Cuckoo of Awareness* (*Rig pa'i khu byug* IOL Tib J 647), and Palyang's *Six Lamps* (*Sgon me rnam drug*) feature the rhetoric of nonaction.⁶³ However, as van Schaik points out, other early treatises like the *Questions and Answers of Vajrasattva*, in which the great perfection approach is "firmly embedded in [a] Mahāyoga treatise," suggest that the rhetoric of nonaction found in these other works should not be taken to imply an actual rejection of all practice.⁶⁴ Germano has likewise noted that, "in the history of Buddhism we often find the rhetorical negation of a practice serves a variety of functions without necessarily entailing the literal rejection of the practice in question."⁶⁵ He suggests that such a rhetoric can serve the function of discouraging a rigid fixation on techniques as producing experiences.⁶⁶ In Buddhajñānapāda's writings, just like those of the early Great Perfection tradition, we see the rhetoric of nonaction alongside a Mahāyoga

⁶¹ Dalton 2012, 194.

⁶² J. Dalton 2012, 188; 197.

⁶³ van Schaik 2008, 4-5.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ Germano 1994, 227-8.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

ritual context. Indeed, Buddhajñānapāda’s works seem to simultaneously advocate ritual practices and reject them. As we saw in the *Dvītyākrama*, Buddhajñānapāda wrote that

Thus the *maṇḍala*, *homa*,
Bali, recitation, the counting rosary, |151|
Sitting cross-legged, maintaining postures, and so forth—
Are in contradiction⁶⁷ to the unelaborate,
[Thus] they should not be [exclusively] taken up; but neither should they be [wholly]
rejected
Since they are emanated by the **adhideva*. |152|⁶⁸

Likewise, the author of the *Questions and Answers of Vajrasattva* “is keen to get the message across that the practice of deity yoga is emphatically not to be abandoned, but any concept of the practices as a cause for enlightenment, or of the deities as separate from one’s own primordially enlightenment (sic) mind, is to be abandoned.”⁶⁹ Some of these early texts even share a similar metaphorical language on nonaction with Buddhajñānapāda. The passage cited above from the *Dvītyākrama* continues:

The yogin who holds actions
To be the great path
Is like a wild animal chasing a mirage—
[The goal] continually appears, but can never be grasped. |153|
When infected by the great sickness of actions,
The one who heals [himself] with the great medicine
Of unwavering wisdom is a sublime being. |154|⁷⁰

The *Cuckoo of Awareness* (*Rig pa’i khu byug*) likewise describes effort as a “sickness” which is to be “abandoned.”⁷¹

As discussed above, the rhetoric of non-action in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings seems to be primarily found in the context of the practices of the perfection stage, and specifically in terms of the yogin’s having come to know the wisdom that is gained through perfection stage practice. In that way, outward ritual can be understood in his system to constitute a foundation for practices that become increasingly unelaborate. In a passage from the *Muktilaka* cited above Buddhajñānapāda writes,

Why does buddhahood not come from concepts?
Because it comes from the utterly pure nature.
All of those conceptual rituals,
All of that weariness—give it up!
Activity arises from this nature
[And] action also arises from this nature.⁷²
[But] having come to know that nature

⁶⁷ Tib. *rnam par slu ba*, Skt. **visaṃvāda*?

⁶⁸ *de la dkyil ‘khor sbyin sreg dang// gtor ma bzlas pa bgrang phreng dang// |151| skyil mo krung dang stang stabs sogs// spros bral rnam bar sluba ste// bya ba ma yin dgag pa min// lhag pa’i lha yis sprul phyir ro// |152| (Dvītyākrama, verses 151c-152).*

⁶⁹ van Schaik 2004a, 172-3.

⁷⁰ *dbya ba rnams la rnal ‘byor pa// lam chen dag tu yongs ‘dzin pa// ri dwags smig rgyu snyeg pa ltar// rtag tu snang yang ma zin no// |153| bya ba’i nad chen gyis zin la// ye shes g.yo med sman chen gyis// gso byed skyes bu dam pa’o// |154| (Dvītyākrama verses 153-154).*

⁷¹ van Schaik 2004b, 72.

⁷² D om. this line

Activity is exhausted and there is no action.⁷³

Here, as was already discussed above, while acknowledging that action and activity have their source in the “utterly nature pure nature” of nondual wisdom, Buddhajñānapāda notes that once the yogin has come to know that nature, activity and action are no longer needed. This perspective on the rhetoric of non-action, that it is to be understood within the larger framework of action-based practices, but as their culmination or fruition when the ultimate nature has already been known—known precisely by means of having engaged in such action-based practices—may also be a helpful framework for addressing the rhetoric of non-action in the early Great Perfection tradition, as well. In both the cases there is likely some combination of the two perspectives: on the one hand the rejection of ritual is rhetorical, meant to prevent the practitioner from getting too fixated on ritual methods as producing an outcome, especially since that outcome is, in these systems, already present as the very nature of the practitioner and the world from the very beginning; but such statements against action and effort may also be meant to indicate the actual abandonment of such elaborations as the yogin’s practice comes to fruition.

The Nexus of Mahāyoga Tantra and Poetic Pith Instructions on the Nondual Nature

One final point of intersection between Buddhajñānapāda’s works and those of the early Great Perfection tradition concerns the presence of both traditional Mahāyoga tantra-based content as well as more poetic statements on nonduality and primordial purity. Both Germano and Karmay have suggested that the early Great Perfection developed at the nexus of the literature of Mahāyoga ritual traditions and literature in the style of the “mind section” of the Great Perfection, that is a “pristine, ritual-free discourse” of “*siddha*-style yogic practitioners.”⁷⁴ Van Schaik has, more recently, argued that these were not two separate traditions, but rather that “the early or proto- Great Perfection texts were written by the same people who were producing more conventional direct exegesis on the tantras. There were clearly two different kinds of texts being written, yet the tradition of placing those two kinds of discourse into two different textual categories, Mahāyoga and Atiyoga, had yet to be developed.”⁷⁵ The 9th-century author Palyang, he says, “wrote treatises on Mahāyoga ritual with a particular emphasis on nonduality and spontaneous presence, as well as short treatises that took the ideas of nonduality and spontaneous presence and expounded them without reference to the ritual universe of the Mahāyoga tantras.”⁷⁶

While Buddhajñānapāda’s works seem, like Palyang’s writings, to fit more into the category of Mahāyoga-based works that have particular emphasis on nonduality, we do find in his writings short poetic passages that sound very much like mind series literature, and seem as if they could be abstracted and indeed stand alone from the rest of the work as short aphorisms, or pith instructions. That is, it is almost as if in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings we find both strains that are described by scholars as constituting the roots of the Great Perfection tradition present together in the same text. One such pithy passage from the *Dvitīyakrama* reads:

Just as someone possessed of mantras and medicines |145|
Enacts the slaying of snakes,

⁷³ ‘di yi don shes rnal ‘byor pas// bya ba’i las ni dkyil ‘khor dang// bya ba’i las ni gtor ma dang// bya ba’i las ni sbyin sreg dang// bya ba’i las ni bgrang phreng dang// bya ba’i skyil mo krung la sogs// dal byed pas ni ci zhih bya// dang po pa rnam ‘drid phyir ro// ci phyir rtog las sangs rgyas min// rang bzhin rnam dag las byung phyir// rtog bcas cho ga de dag kun// ngal ba la sogs spangs byar bya// rang bzhin las ni byed pa’ang yod// rang bzhin las ni bya ba’ang yod// (rang bzhin las ni bya ba’ang yod//] P, D om. this line) rang bzhin yongs su shes pa la// byed pa sed (sed] D, med P) cing bya ba’ang med// (*Muktilaka*, D 47b.6-48a.1; P 57a.8-57b.2).

⁷⁴ van Schaik 2004a, 166-67; Germano 1994a, 215.

⁷⁵ van Schaik 2004a, 195.

⁷⁶ *ibid*, 201.

Likewise, when the great lord of yogins,
 Seals [them] with the medicine of wisdom
 What can the afflictive emotions do? |146|
 What can the rain do
 To someone with an umbrella in his hand?
 Likewise, when carrying the umbrella
 Of nondual wisdom |147|
 Even if a rain of concepts should fall
 How could they do any harm?⁷⁷

Thus while Buddhajñānapāda's works certainly frequently refer to nondual wisdom in the context of Mahāyoga doctrines like the visualization of the deity, recitation of mantra, and especially the practices of the perfection stage that involve visualizations and sexual yogas, we do also see glimpses like this of statements about nondual wisdom that are abstracted from that kind of framework. Such passages are indeed reminiscent of works of the early Great Perfection. The presence of passages like this in his works may not have been noted in modern scholarship, but the doctrinal similarity between Buddhajñānapāda's writings and those of the mind series did receive mention by the 14th-century Tibetan historian Gö Lotsāwa, who even goes so far as to cite a number of parallel passages between Buddhajñānapāda's works and mind series texts.⁷⁸

Buddhajñānapāda and the Great Perfection?

What, then, shall we make of the later Tibetan claims that Buddhajñānapāda was an Indian upholder of the tradition of the Great Perfection? Was some Sanskrit term with the semantic equivalent of the term “great perfection”—whatever that term may have been—used in Buddhajñānapāda's own writings? Without the Sanskrit originals of the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and the *Dvītyākrama* we will never know, but as we saw above, at least in the case of the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, and probably in the *Dvītyākrama*, as well, the answer is most likely no. However, was the *idea* of what came to be identified as “the great perfection,” especially according to the earliest literature of that tradition, found in his writings—“the perfection stage of the perfection stage,” “Great Vajradhara,” “Glorious Samantabhadra, the innate state,” a state of wisdom that the yogin could recognize and train in, which at the same time constituted the final result of awakening as well as the foundational ground of phenomenal existence? Yes, by all means, *that* certainly does appear to be the case. And were quite a number of the doctrines espoused in his writings very much in line with those found in the early or proto- Great Perfection writings appearing in Tibet at precisely the time of Buddhajñānapāda's life? Again, here the answer is a definitive yes. As van Schaik has noted, “though there is little doubt that most of the texts in the canons of Great Perfection scriptures originated in Tibet, Indic models may well have existed at one time.”⁷⁹ Van Schaik may perhaps be referencing specifically the type of Great Perfection texts in which the great perfection is abstracted from the Mahāyoga context out of which it seems to have arisen, and here we do not find such a textual model in Buddhajñānapāda's works. But Buddhajñānapāda's writings *do* appear to be a set of Indic texts that share in much the same context and flavor of the very earliest Tibetan Great Perfection works in which the tradition was still enmeshed within,

⁷⁷ *ji ltar snags dang sman ldan pas//* |145| *sbrul dag gsod par byed pa bzhin// de 'dra'i rnal 'byor dbang phyug che// ye shes sman gyis rgyas btab pas// nyon mongs gyis ni ci byar yod//* |146| *gang zhig lag na gdugs thogs la// de la char pas ci byar yod// de bzhin gnyis med ye shes kyi// gdugs thogs la ni rtog pa yi//* |147| *char pa rab tu 'bab 'gyur yang// de la de yis ji ltar gnod//* (*Dvītyākrama*, verses 145d-148b).

⁷⁸ Roerich, 168-9.

⁷⁹ van Schaik 2004a, 201.

and perhaps just beginning to emerge out, of its Mahāyoga chrysalis. Here, indeed, the parallels are very strong, and it is in that sense that I believe we can acknowledge Buddhajñānapāda's writings as Indic works that are very much in accord with the earliest writings of the Great Perfection tradition.

Having familiarized ourselves in Chapter Three with the broader doctrinal ideas espoused in Buddhajñānapāda's work, and here in this chapter with their relationship to the early Great Perfection traditions that were developing at this time, in the next section we will shift our focus to take a look at the more practical details of the ritual systems that provided the means for Buddhajñānapāda's disciples and the practitioners of his tradition to immerse themselves in these doctrines in a direct and experiential way.

Ritual

Chapter Five The Two Stages of Tantric Practice: Generating Self as Deity in Buddhajñānapāda's Generation Stage *Sādhana*

In an isolated place or on the edge of town, having appropriately completed all the required tasks, sit down on a comfortable seat. Then bring to mind all sentient beings by means of the four great *brahmacaryas*. With these and the rest, purify the karmic obscurations in one's mind-stream. Looking at it as being mind alone, the outer world is seen to be empty of nature. Seeing mind alone, as well, to be empty, remain in self-awareness alone. Then that awareness is imagined as a moon, and so forth, upon a seat, which when struck with the pen of the syllable becomes a characteristic implement. From that, generate oneself as the deity. And while possessing divine pride, seal with the four *mudrās* and emanate the deities of the *maṇḍala-cakra*, then please them. Accustom oneself to this through training.

-Mañjuśrī's brief generation stage instructions to Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvitiyakrama*

The division of tantric Buddhist practice into two stages is an important feature of the tradition that continues, up to the present day, to provide a fundamental framework for the tantric path. This division into the generation stage (*utpattikrama*, *bskyed rim*) and perfection stage (*niṣpannakrama*, *utpannakrama*, *rdzogs rim*)¹ developed in the 8th century, as newer practice techniques involving sexual yogas and the manipulation of the inner winds and energies of the practitioner's subtle body began to be integrated with the earlier practices of self-generation in the form of the deity. Harunaga Isaacson has identified the scriptural *locus classicus* of the two stages in the *Samājottara*,² which first circulated separately but was later integrated into the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* as its eighteenth chapter. A parallel verse on the distinction into two stages is, however, found in Buddhajñānapāda's *Muktilaka*. A comparison between the two verses suggests that Buddhajñānapāda's is likely the earlier of the two, and indeed his writings show no clear knowledge of the *Samājottara*, but rather seem likely to have influenced that work in a number of places.³ Tanemura has even suggested that Buddhajñānapāda "was probably the first person who integrated the two systems of meditation (i.e. the generation and perfection stages) into Buddhist tantric practice."⁴ Buddhajñānapāda was certainly a forerunner in the integration of the generation and perfection stages into a system of tantric practice, and his writings may well be the earliest still extant to present a complete and integrated system of both stages, but reference to the two stages is also made in other late 8th-century works like Padmasambhava's *Garland of Views* (assuming that the attribution of that work is correct). The division of tantric practice into the generation and perfection stages thus seems to be one that was coming into currency, in both authored works—composed by multiple authors—and Buddhist scriptures, right around the turn of the 9th century. At this far of a historical remove, we may not be able to say much more than that about the emergence of these important categories.

¹ Both the terms *niṣpannakrama* and *utpannakrama* are used in Sanskrit Buddhist literature to refer to what is translated into Tibetan as *rdzogs rim*, and what I refer to here as the perfection stage. We do not know for certain which of the Sanskrit terms Buddhajñānapāda used for this stage of practice (or if he perhaps used both?), as none of his writings using the term survive in Sanskrit. However, a verse from the *Muktilaka* setting forth the two stages of practice is parallel with a verse in the *Samājottara*, which *does* survive in Sanskrit, and the *Samājottara* verse uses the term *utpannakrama* (to be more precise, it reads *kramam utpannakam*), perhaps suggesting that this was the term Buddhajñānapāda himself used.

² Isaacson 2002a, 468-9.

³ C. Dalton 2014. I explore these influences further in Chapter Eight.

⁴ Tanemura 2015, 329.

The generation stage of tantric practice focuses on the processes by means of which the practitioner gradually envisions herself in the form of a tantric deity, including visualization of the deity's consort (if applicable), complete retinue, and entire celestial abode. Beginning with a recollection of the state of emptiness, it involves a complete reimagining of the entire cosmos in the purified form of the deity's pure abode, while all of the living beings within the cosmos—with the practitioner-as-deity⁵ central among them—are reimagined as deities. In the generation stage, then, the practitioner “generates,” or gradually mentally creates, a purer—and according to the tantras, therefore a more accurate—vision of herself and the cosmos in which the world and beings, headed by the practitioner-as-deity, participate in a shared awakened reality. This purified vision of reality that is imagined in the generation stage is taught to align more closely with the nature of reality in its apparent aspect (the empty aspect of reality being undifferentiated in terms of purity or impurity). The procedures by means of which this pure re-envisioning takes place are homologized with the ordinary processes by means of which beings are born into *samsāric* existence, thus making explicit the fact that in the generation stage the practitioner is recreating this same process, but in a pure form. Having generated herself in the form of the deity, the practitioner then stabilizes this vision by remaining within this pure reality while carrying out the performance of a variety of tantric activities.

As for the perfection stage, this term is generally used to describe two further aspects of tantric practice. The first of the ways that the term perfection stage is used—described in the later Tibetan tradition as the “perfection stage with attributes” (*mtshan bcas rdzogs rim*)—is to refer to practices that involve the manipulation of the internal winds and energies of the practitioner's subtle body using yogic techniques—generally *while* the practitioner is visualized in the form of the deity. Such manipulations of the subtle body are meant to allow the practitioner to cultivate, and thus bring about a full actualization of, the awakened reality that was envisioned in its apparent form in the generation stage, but the focus in the perfection stage is more on the cultivation of the empty or non-apparent aspect of reality, the direct and non-conceptual experience of suchness itself. These practices sometimes involve applying yogic techniques while in sexual union with a partner (who is sometimes specified as visualized, and other times specified as flesh-and-blood, though often the texts do not make either specification). Perfection stage practices, particularly those associated with yogic techniques involving the manipulation of the winds and energies in the subtle body, are often said to bring about a series of processes and signs that are homologized, not with birth like in the generation stage, but instead with the process of death. The perfection stage practices thus bring about these experiences in an intentional and controlled manner via yogic techniques, thus (re-)producing the death process, as well, but like in the generation stage, in a purified matter that is intended to result in awakening rather than in the continued experience of *samsāra*. A second aspect of the perfection stage—in the later Tibetan tradition termed the “perfection stage without attributes” (*mtshan med rdzogs rim*)—refers to the practice of cultivating the direct experience of suchness within the context of traditions like that of the Great Perfection and some Mahāmudrā traditions, in which suchness is cultivated *without* reliance on the previously mentioned yogic techniques. In these traditions less (or no) emphasis seems to be placed on bringing about the signs of the death process, but rather on the practitioner's simply remaining for more and more prolonged

⁵ While I use this particular neologism to make clear that the deity here means the practitioner self-visualized as the deity, it is not so different from the way the practitioner-as-deity is referred to in the traditional literature. The Sanskrit recension of the *Sāramañjarī*, a commentary on Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* uses a similar phrase to describe the practitioner during the practice of the *sādhana* in which he is self-visualized as the main deity, Mañjuvajra. He is referred to in the *Sāramañjarī* as the “yogin whose identity is Mañjuvajra” (*Mañjuvajrātmayogī*) (see, for example, Tanaka 2017, 66).

periods—eventually constantly—within the state of suchness itself, which is identified directly with the state of awakening. In contrast to these common uses of the term “perfection stage” to refer to the various methods and techniques by means of which suchness is directly cultivated, in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings we will see that this term, and its synonym the “second stage,” is used much more frequently to refer not to those various *methods* for the cultivation of suchness (which in his system are a series of yogas performed with a partner in which the winds and energies of the subtle body are manipulated), but rather directly to the experience suchness itself. I will explore Buddhajñānapāda’s use of the term “perfection stage” in more detail in the next chapter, but for now let us first take a look at the way that his works make a distinction between the two stages of tantric practice.

Distinguishing Generation and Perfection in Buddhajñānapāda’s Writings

As noted above, the classical verse distinguishing the two stages of tantric practice found in the *Samājottara* has an earlier parallel in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Muktilaka*. The verse, in Buddhajñānapāda’s rendering, reads:

The dharma taught by the buddhas
Abides authentically in two stages:
The generation stage
And the perfection stage.⁶

As Isaacson has already noted, the *Samājottara*’s verse is clearly modeled on Nāgārjuna’s well-known verse from the *Mūlamadhyāmakārikās* that sets forth the distinction between the two truths, the relative truth and the ultimate truth, and the parallels between the two stages and the two truths that the verse’s structure invokes was undoubtedly intentional.⁷ Unlike the *Samājottara*, the *Muktilaka* goes on to divide both the generation stage and the perfection stage into two subsidiary stages. Immediately following the verse cited above, Buddhajñānapāda writes:

The generation stage has two aspects
And the perfection stage likewise.
Due to the distinction of the two stages
There [arise] the *mantrakāya* and the *jñānakāya*.
The *jñānakāya* has two [aspects]:
The *jñāna* [*kāya*] and the *kāya* of complete purity.
This completely pure [*kāya*] is the seven yogas,
The perfection stage of the perfection stage;
It is unsurpassed omniscience
Endowed with the supreme of all aspects.⁸

Vaidyapāda explains this passage as follows,

The generation stage has two aspects means the generation stage [aspect of the generation stage], the *ādiyoga*-[*samādhi*] and so forth, and the perfection stage [aspect of the generation stage], the [practices involving the] *bindu* and so forth. **And the perfection stage likewise** means the generation stage [aspect of the perfection stage],

⁶ *sangs rgyas rnam kyis chos bstan pa// rim pa gnyis la yang dag gnas// bskyed pa yi ni rim nyid dang// rdzogs pa'i rim pa kho na'o// (Muktilaka, D 52.1-2 P 62b.1-2).*

⁷ Isaacson 2002a, 468-9.

⁸ *bskyed pa'i rim pa rnam pa gnyis// de bzhin rdzogs pa'i rim pa'o// rim pa gnyis kyi bye brag gis// sngags kyi sku dang ye shes sku// ye shes sku la ye shes dang// rnam par dag pa'i sku gnyis so// rnam par dag pa sbyor ba bdun// rdzogs pa'i rim pa rdzogs rim ste// rnam pa kun gyi mchog ldan pa// thams cad mkhen pa bla me 'gyur// (Muktilaka, D 52a.2-3; P 62b.2-4)*

meditating on the three *bindus*; and the perfection stage [aspect of the perfection stage], the reality, just as it is, which is indicated by that. Then, in order to indicate the distinction in the bodies of the deity [that come about] by means of those two stages [he writes] **Due to the distinction of...** Here, the *mantrakāya* is the *kāya* that is generated. [It is so called] because it arises from [syllables like] *hūṃ* and so forth, [and] it is impure. The *jñānakāya* is the perfected *kāya* and is pure. That [perfected *kāya*] also has two divisions, **the wisdom [kāya]**, or the illusory body, which is the pure *kāyā* [attained] by the yogin of the third [level] who has slightly [gained] the wisdom of realization; and the **kāya of complete purity**. This [*kāya* of complete purity] also has two [aspects]: that which remains in a state in which it displays characteristics, and is therefore [called] the unfailing *kāya*, and the resultant *kāya*, which is [the nature of that,] just as it is. These two are the primordially pure **completely pure body, which is the seven yogas**. That is also **the perfection stage of the perfection stage**. You should know that precisely this is also **omniscience endowed with the supreme of all aspects**.⁹

Though Buddhajñānapāda's verses only directly identify the fourth among the four subdivisions of the two stages, "the perfection stage of the perfection stage," Vaidyapāda's comments fortunately provide more details with respect to these subdivisions. The first of the four, "the generation stage of the generation stage," he describes as "the *ādiyoga[-samādhi]* etc." *Ādiyoga* is the name of the first of the three *samādhis* that structure the practice of deity yoga in the Yoga tantras and continue to structure the generation stage in Indic tantric texts all the way up through the late Yoginī tantras, so this is clearly a reference to what are commonly known as generation stage practices. However, Vaidyapāda's statement "the *ādiyoga[-samādhi]* etc." here leaves the precise line of demarcation between these and the next set of practices, the "perfection stage of the generation stage" unspecified. We might presume that his "etc." is meant to encompass all three of the three *samādhis* that are often associated with the generation stage, but it seems that this may not be the case; although it is not made clear in this passage, we will see below that the third among the three *samādhis*, the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi*, appears to be, in Buddhajñānapāda's system, the place where perfection stage practices began to be integrated into the already established system of the Yoga tantra's three *samādhis* of deity yoga. But what we *do* see described here in Vaidyapāda's commentary on this passage from the *Muktilaka* is an indication of precisely this same blurring of the line, or overlap, between the two stages that we find in Buddhajñānapāda's ritual writings, which, presumably, serve as Vaidyapāda's reference for these statements. That is, the distinction between generation and perfection stage practices that I described above—which is what came to be the standard distinction between the two stages—keeps generation stage practice limited to visualization practice of oneself as the deity and its *maṇḍala*, usually accompanied by the recitation of mantra, and other associated activities. Practices involving the manipulation of the subtle energies in the body—such as the *bindu* yogas that Vaidyapāda mentions—would normally be counted as part of the yogas of the perfection

⁹ *bskyed pa'i rim pa rnam pa gnyis/ zhes pa ni bskyed pa'i rim pa ni dang po'i (po'i) D, po P) rnal 'byor la sogs pa dang/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa ni thig le la sogs pa'o// de bzhin rdzogs pa'i rim pa'o// zhes pa ni de bzhin du bskyed pa'i rim pa thig le gsum bsgom pa dang/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa des mtshon pa'i ji bzhin pa'i don to (to) D, no P)// da ni rim pa gnyis kyis lha'i sku'i bye (bye) P., bya D) brag bstan pa'i phyir rim pa gnyis kyis zhes pa la sogs pa'o// de la sngags kyi sku zhes pa ni bskyed pa'i sku ste/ hūṃ la sogs pa las byung ba'i phyir te ma dag pa'o// ye shes sku zhes pa ni rdzogs pa'i sku ste dag pa'o// de la yang gnyis te ye shes dang zhes pa ni sgyu ma lta bu'i sku ste/ rnal 'byor pa gsum pas rtogs pa'i ye shes cung zad dag pa'i sku'o// rnam par dag pa'i sku zhes pa dang gnyis so// de la yang gnyis so// mtshan nyid kyi tshul du gnas pas na mi (na mi) D, ni P) slu (slu) D, bslu P) ba'i sku dang/ de ji bzhin pa'i 'bras bu'i sku 'o// de gnyis ni ye nas shin tu dag pa'i sku ste sbyor ba bdun no// rdzogs pa'i rim pa'i rdzogs rim kyang de'o// rnam pa kun gyi mchog dang ldan pa'i thams cad mkyen pa yang de nyid yin par shes par bya'o// (Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 38b.2-6; P 366b.4-367a.2).*

stage.¹⁰ But here in Vaidyapāda’s description of the subdivisions of the two stages we see some overlap in the categories of the “perfection stage of the generation stage,” which he describes as “the [practices involving the] *bindu* and so forth,” and the “generation stage of the perfection stage,” which he describes as “meditating on the three *bindus*.” It is not clear from these statements precisely what the difference between the *bindu*-related practices that comprise these two categories might be, or indeed what the difference between something called the “perfection stage of the generation stage” and the “generation stage of the perfection stage” might be. As we shall see, the matter is indeed not completely clear.¹¹

When we look to Buddhajñānapāda’s ritual works, particularly the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and the section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that outlines the perfection stage yogas, we see precisely this same slight overlap or blurring of the lines between the two stages reflected in Vaidyapāda’s comments above. In the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, after the main generation stage practices of generating the deity, the consort, and the *maṇḍala* deities, consecrating each of them and making offerings, praises, and the “tasting of nectar”—that is, after the completion of the first two *samādhis*, the *ādiyoga*- and the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhis*—we find, at the start of the *karmarājāgrī-samādhī*, a series of two *bindu* yogas prior to the mantra recitation practice. While all of the other practices listed above are quite expected in a generation stage *sādhana*, the presence of these *bindu* yogas at this point is a bit unexpected. The first of the *bindu* yogas involves the contemplation of the *bindu* at the yogin’s heart center, but the second, the *sūkṣma* yoga, performed at the “nose tip”—which is specified in multiple commentaries as being the “tip of the lotus’ nose”—indicates that the visualization takes place at the point of the yogic partners’ conjoined sexual organs.¹² While the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is generally known as the generation stage *sādhana* of Buddhajñānapāda’s system, these yogas, both in their description in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* itself, as well as in terms of the further details that are provided in multiple commentaries on the *sādhana*, are very similar—though not precisely identical (they are less elaborate)—to the first two of the three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and *Muktilaka*. We may guess, then, that the two simpler practices involving the contemplation of the *bindu* at the yogin’s heart center and the *sūkṣma* yoga at the “nose tip” described in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* are what Vaidyapāda refers to in his commentary on the *Muktilaka* as “the [practices involving the] *bindu* and so forth” that constitute the “perfection stage of the generation stage,” while the three more elaborate *bindu* yogas described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are what Vaidyapāda refers to as “meditating on the three *bindus*,” which constitutes the “generation stage of the perfection

¹⁰ The practice of the *sūkṣma* yoga (one of the types of *bindu* yogas described in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings) has precursors in the *Sarvatathāgatattvaśaṅgraha-tantra*, where the distinction between the two stages of tantric practice is not yet made. We can thus see Buddhajñānapāda’s writings as a sort of intermediary between that earlier system, and later systems of tantric practice in which the stages of generation and perfection are more clearly divided in terms of the presence or absence of yogic techniques involving the manipulation of energies in the subtle body.

¹¹ In addition to serving as an important resource for clarifying the distinction between the two stages as articulated by Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda, the passages from the *Muktilaka* and the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* just cited are also very important for what they tell us about the result of tantric practice as it was understood by both of these authors. I examined some of these aspects already in Chapter Three.

¹² Whether the consort for these practices is a person or simply a visualized partner is not specified in the *sādhana* or the commentaries. At this point in the *sādhana* the yogin is continuing to visualize himself as Mañjuvajra, who is in any case in union with his consort throughout the whole of the *sādhana*. However, some of the instructions found in the commentaries on the second *bindu* yoga do suggest that a flesh-and-blood partner is most likely intended here. See, for example *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 168a.2-4, *Sāramañjarī*, D 37b.6-38a.3, and Szántó unpublished 125.

stage.” While it does seem likely that Vaidyapāda’s classifications could be applied to the practices described in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings in this way, this remains speculative, as none of our texts states this directly. In any case, all of this taken together suggests that in Buddhajñānapāda’s system some aspects of what came later to be relegated to the perfection stage were integrated with the practices pertaining to the generation stage. Later traditional authors seem to have noticed this idiosyncrasy of Buddhajñānapāda’s system, as well. In a commentary on the *Samputa-tantra* Gambhīravajra writes that, “regarding ‘that which has the form of the chickpea’¹³ the pith instruction texts of Jñānapāda indicate this as the *bindu* of *bodhicitta* that pertains to the generation stage. But other masters’ writings say [it pertains to] the perfection [stage].”¹⁴

Such a blurring of the lines—or overlap—between what came to be the standard distinction between the two stages is, however, not unexpected in the work of one of the earliest writers to describe tantric practice within the framework of these categories. Generation stage and perfection stage practices are similarly found together in *sādhanas* at Dunhuang, which seem to reflect more or less the same period of tantric development as Buddhajñānapāda’s writings.¹⁵ In fact, some later systems of Indian Buddhist tantra likewise appear to uphold a form of practice that combines generation and perfection stage practices, so the more common later paradigm that separates the two stages into two separate ritual practices does not appear to be the only one.¹⁶ Nonetheless, despite the slight blurring, or overlap, of the two stages in Buddhajñānapāda’s system, the basic character of the distinction of the generation and perfection stages as it came to characterize tantric Buddhist practice already holds from the time of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. Indeed, even Buddhajñānapāda’s division of the perfection stage into two aspects or stages, which Vaidyapāda has termed the “generation stage of the perfection stage” and the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” corresponds quite well with the later Tibetan traditions’ categories of the “perfection stage with attributes” and the “perfection stage without attributes.” It therefore seems that such a dual function of the term “perfection stage” was already present from the time of the early writings on these practices. Having briefly explored the distinction between the two stages as it is articulated in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings I will, in the remainder of this chapter, focus on the generation stage writings found in Buddhajñānapāda’s *oeuvre*, before taking up the perfection stage practices in the next chapter.

Buddhajñānapāda’s Generation Stage *Sādhanas*

Five generation stage *sādhanas* that can be confidently attributed to Buddhajñānapāda—the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhādhra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1855 and 1856), *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1861), *Guhyajambhala-sādhana* (Tōh. 1862), *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* (Tōh. 1863), and *Śrītheruka-sādhana* (Tōh. 1857)—survive in Tibetan

¹³ The *bindu* is in some practices described as being the size of a chickpea, and in others the size of a mustard seed.

¹⁴ *rtsa na ka yi zur gzugs can/ zhes bya ba ni ye shes zhabs kyi man ngag gi gzhung gis/ bskyed pa’i rim pa’i phyogs su byang chub sems kyi thig le’o// slob dpon gzan ma’i gzhung gis de ni rdzogs par gleng/* (*Śrīguhyārthaprakāśamahābhūta*, D 127b.6-7).

¹⁵ J. Dalton 2004, 8. Also see, for example IOL Tib J 464/1 as described in J. Dalton and van Schaik 2006, 60-1. The Guhyasamāja *sādhanas* at Dunhuang show no knowledge of a distinction between the Jñānapāda School or the Ārya School, so they are thought to represent an early stage of Guhyasamāja practice. However, as I noted in Chapter One, the Mahāyoga *sādhanas* from Dunhuang seem to hew to a different ritual paradigm than do those from much of the Indic tradition (see Chapter One note 126).

¹⁶ Ratnākaraśānti’s *Mahāmāyā-sādhana* (Tōh. 1643) for instance, seems to combine both stages of practice. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for pointing out this feature of the *sādhana* to me.

translation (one of them in two different Tibetan translations), and portions of three of these *sādhana*s—the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, *Vistarajambhala-sādhana*, and *Śrītheruka-sādhana*—survive in their original Sanskrit. Four of the five works are minor, very short *sādhana*s, while the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is a major work that inspired the composition of a number of Indic commentaries and related writings, and provides the basis for the nineteen-deity generation stage *maṇḍala* that characterizes the Jñānapāda School of Guhyasamāja practice. As I noted in Chapter One, while the *Mukhāgama* (again, not to be confused with Buddhajñānapāda’s *Dvītyakramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*, which is referred to as the *Mukhāgama* in some modern scholarship!), a generation stage *sādhana* based closely on the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, is attributed both traditionally and in modern scholarship to Buddhajñānapāda, its concluding verses clearly indicate that it was compiled/composed by Śākyamitra on the basis of Buddhajñānapāda’s oral instructions, and an earlier part of the text suggests that Śākyamitra wished to distinguish his own style of composition from that of Buddhajñānapāda’s. Thus, I do not consider this work to be among Buddhajñānapāda’s generation stage writings. However, it does provide some clarifications on certain points of the generation stage practice that are not included in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* itself. The fact that the *Mukhāgama* shares a number of details in common with Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the *Caturaṅga* suggests that it very well may have been based on Buddhajñānapāda’s oral instructions on the practice, and it therefore remains an important resource in the study of the generation stage according to his system.

I will focus my comments in this chapter on the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, as this is clearly the most important of Buddhajñānapāda’s generation stage works. However, before getting into that more elaborate work, a few observations on his shorter *sādhana*s are in order. Three of the short *sādhana*s, the *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana*, *Guhyajambhala-sādhana*, and *Vistarajambhala-sādhana*, are practices of the wealth deity Jambhala, who, as we may recall, played a rather important role in Buddhajñānapāda’s life story; Jambhala is credited in the later autobiographical section of the *Dvītyakrama* with having provided Buddhajñānapāda and his disciples their daily provisions when they lived together in the Parvata cave near Vajrāsana in the later part of Buddhajñānapāda’s life. Of these three *sādhana*s, the *Vistarajambhala-sādhana* also survives in Sanskrit, as *Sādhanamāla* No. 285,¹⁷ though it is not precisely identical with the Tibetan translation in several places. The three Jambhala *sādhana*s are grouped together in the Tengyur with a common colophon. Like the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, these Jambhala *sādhana*s give a short description of the standard preparations for the practice, such as generating *bodhicitta*, making offerings, confessions and the like, and then describe the generation of the practitioner-as-deity in a very simple way—he emerges from his seed syllable *jaṃ*. Two of the three Jambhala *sādhana*s involve the process of *nyāsa*, the installation of syllables or deities on the body of the deity, which also features in the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*. The Jambhala practices also describe a number of ritual activities that the practitioner is to engage in, including making water offerings to Jambhala and the wealth goddess Vasudhārā, creating drawn images, and a wrathful means of accomplishing Jambhala involving Vajra Hūṃkara, which is given as a failsafe if the peaceful methods of accomplishment do not prove effective. Like the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, one among the three, the *Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana*, gives details on how to practice during post-meditative activities like eating.

The fourth short generation stage *sādhana* attributed to Buddhajñānapāda is the *Śrītheruka-sādhana* for the practice of an otherwise un-named Heruka. This work is clearly

¹⁷ Bajracharya 1928, No. 285.

associated in its commentary with the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* and shares several features with the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, including the generation of the main deity by means of a causal or progenitor deity who is identical in terms of form, color, and symbolic implements to the causal deity described in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra*. Both are likewise referred to by the common epithet for a causal deity, the “*vajrasattva*.” While the cremation ground aesthetic with which the Heruka in the *Śrīheruka-sādhana* is depicted is not reflected in Buddhajñānapāda’s other works, much of the rest of the structure of this brief *sādhana* aligns with the structure of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, albeit in a very condensed way. This is the only one among the short *sādhana*s attributed to Buddhajñānapāda that is overtly connected with the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. His most important Guhyasamāja generation stage work is, however, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, to which we now turn.

The *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* and Associated Works

Judging only by the number of extant Indic commentaries on this *sādhana*—there are five!—the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* may have been Buddhajñānapāda’s most popular work. The *sādhana* is preserved in two different Tibetan translations which each bear one of the two different titles under which the work seems to have circulated: the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* (Tōh. 1855), which was translated into Tibetan by Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo, and the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* (Tōh. 1856), which was translated by Smṛtijñānakīrti, working alone. Despite the overwhelming parallels between the two works (which are, in fact, nearly identical in content), the existence of two separate Tibetan translations with different titles and the additional fact that the translation of the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* in the Tibetan canon preserves a mixed-up page order (it appears that the pages of the text were quite literally shuffled, and the translation was somehow preserved in the Tengyur with this shuffled page order), there has been some question in earlier scholarship as to whether these two translations constitute two separate works, or are separate translations of a single work.¹⁸ The two translations are quite different in style: Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo’s *Samantabhadra-sādhana* breaks the verses of the Sanskrit text into four nine-syllable lines, while Smṛtijñānakīrti has rendered the verses of the *Caturaṅga* into two lines ranging from thirteen to nineteen syllables. The former has resulted in a translation that is more readable in Tibetan, but the overall content of the two translations is in most places identical. That is, a careful reading of the two translations side-by-side shows that *most* of the differences between the two can be attributed to differences in translation word choice, but there do remain some minor variants that indicate that these may represent two separate recensions of the same work.¹⁹ The Tibetan translation of the *Caturaṅga* also shows more evidence of textual corruption than that of the *Samantabhadra*, and there are a number of instances where recourse to the *Samantabhadra* is necessary to make sense of the *Caturaṅga*’s corruptions. This includes the use of the *Samantabhadra* to restore the correct order of the *Caturaṅga*.²⁰

¹⁸ See Kikuya 2012, 1265 and Tanaka 2017, 29.

¹⁹ Here I concur with Tanaka (1996, 264) who has come to the same conclusion. Tanaka has compared a few phrases from the two translations (1996, 263-64).

²⁰ See Kikuya 2012 for a table of the correspondences. I did not have access to the editions Kikuya references in this article and was thus unable to make sense of his correspondences. I therefore restored the verse order myself when reading the two texts side-by-side, so I am able to separately confirm that the verse order of the complete *Caturaṅga* (with the exception of three *pādas* and three half-*pādas* that seem to have been lost in the page-shuffling process) can be fully restored with recourse to the *Samantabhadra*.

A comparison of the available commentaries on the *sādhana* adds both clarity and complexity to our picture of the transmission of the work. Four commentaries survive in Tibetan translation, two of which indicate in their titles that they are commentaries on the *Caturaṅga*—Vaidyapāda’s *Caturaṅgasāadhanopāyikā-samantabhadrī-nāma-ṭīkā* (Tōh. 1872) and Samantabhadra’s *Caturaṅgasādhana-ṭīkā-sāramañjarī-nāma* (Tōh. 1869)—and two of which indicate in their titles that they comment on the *Samantabhadra*—Śrīphalavajra’s *Samantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti* (Tōh. 1867) and Thagana’s *Śrīsamantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti* (Tōh. 1868). Two Sanskrit manuscripts of Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī* survive: one fragmentary manuscript discovered by Kimiaki Tanaka in the Nepal National Archives, which has been edited, translated, and studied by him, and another nearly complete manuscript of a significantly more extensive recension of the work, photographs of which were brought to Europe by Giuseppe Tucci, and which is currently under study by Péter Szántó.²¹ However, neither of these recensions is precisely identical with the Tibetan translation of the *Sāramañjarī*, and there are passages where even the two Sanskrit texts do not correspond.²² (To make the situation even more complicated, the longer Sanskrit recension also incorporates at least some passages from Vaidyapāda’s commentary—which survives only in Tibetan—that are not found in the Tibetan translation of the *Sāramañjarī*!²³) The Tucci manuscript of the *Sāramañjarī*, however, does include a colophon confirming that the *Sāramañjarī* styles itself a commentary on the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*, rather than on the *Samantabhadra*.²⁴ A fifth Sanskrit commentary survives, but is unavailable for study.²⁵ The fact that two of the surviving Indic commentaries indicate by their titles that they are commenting on the *Caturaṅga*, while two self-identify as commentaries on the *Samantabhadra*, and yet all four of these are, in fact, commenting on a *sādhana* with the same content, suggests that the work was preserved and circulated under two different names in India. Among the Indic commentators on the work, Vaidyapāda and Samantabhadra are the earlier of the four, and thus the closest to Buddhajñānapāda. Given that both use the title *Caturaṅga* for the *sādhana*, we can surmise that this is the earlier of the two titles under which the work circulated. Regarding their respective chronologies, Vaidyapāda and Samantabhadra were likely contemporaries, some time in the mid-9th century. As was discussed in Chapter One, Vaidyapāda was probably a direct disciple of Buddhajñānapāda himself, as well as a disciple of some of Buddhajñānapāda’s senior disciples, like Dīpaṃkarabhadra; Samantabhadra seems to have been a disciple of Buddhajñānapāda’s co-disciple (under their guru Pālitapāda) Śrīkīrtipāda,

²¹ See Tanaka 2017 for the most recent edition and English translation of the shorter Sanskrit recension of the *Sāramañjarī* from the Nepal National Archives. Tanaka had already published the Sanskrit edition of the manuscript in a series of earlier articles and book chapters (Tanaka 1991; 1995; 1996; 2007b; 2010). It is not unexpected that we find a manuscript of the *Sāramañjarī* preserved in Kathmandu given that, according to the colophon of its Tibetan, the work was translated into Tibetan “in the palm of Nepal” (*bal yul gyi thil du bsgyur*), which I assume to be the Kathmandu Valley (*Sāramañjarī*, D 45b.4). See Szántó 2015 for a description of the longer Sanskrit recension of the Tucci manuscript. I am grateful to Péter Szántó for sharing with me his unpublished draft Sanskrit edition of the longer Sanskrit recension (and hope he will publish it soon!).

²² In fact, it is possible that the differences among the various “recensions” are significant enough to make it difficult to identify them as a single work, though there are certainly enough parallels that it is tempting to do so, and I tentatively do. Further comparative study of the texts is necessary to determine their relationship more clearly.

²³ See, for example *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā* D 145b.2-4, corresponding with the Sanskrit in Szántó, unpublished, p. 48, 39.2.

²⁴ The colophon reads *Sāramañjarī nāma Caturaṅgasāadhanasya ṭīkā samāptā. kṛtir iyam ācāryaśrīSamantabhadrapādānām iti*. (Szántó, unpublished draft Sanskrit edition of the *Sāramañjarī*, 152.) This is helpful as the Sanskrit titles given in the Tibetan translations of works in the Kangyur and Tengyur are sometimes reconstructions and are thus not always reliable (as in the case of the *Dvīṭīyakrama!*).

²⁵ The existence of this commentary is reported in Kawasaki 2004.

who he notes in the colophon of the *Sāramañjarī* commanded him to compose that work.²⁶ The other two commentators, Śrīphalavajra and Thagana, who both comment on the *Samantabhadra*, are from a later period, with Thagana probably living in the eleventh century.²⁷

Vaidyapāda's and Samantabhadra's commentaries are strikingly similar. Significant elements are nearly or actually identical between the two works, even down to the exact wording in a number of passages. Given that they seem to have lived around the same time, we are left with only textual evidence from the two commentaries to determine their relationship. A close reading of the two commentaries side-by-side has led me to the conclusion that Vaidyapāda's work was likely earlier, and that Samantabhadra probably relied on Vaidyapāda's commentary when composing his own.²⁸ Another interesting point on the relationship between these two commentaries is that while Samantabhadra's *Sāramañjarī* identifies itself as a commentary on the *Caturaṅga*, there are a number of passages where the *Sāramañjarī* diverges from Vaidyapāda's *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā* in which the *Sāramañjarī* is closer to the text of the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* as it is preserved in Tibetan translation, while the *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā* hews more closely to the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* as preserved in the Tibetan.²⁹ While it is certainly possible that some of these instances result from differences arising out of the translation process, there are enough such instances that seem to actually represent minor variants in the *sādhana* itself, that it appears as if the *Sāramañjarī* may be commenting on a version of the *sādhana* that has already undergone a small amount of change from the version that Vaidyapāda commented on, and that those minor changes in the *sādhana* were later associated with its alternative title, the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*. This is just a tentative suggestion, however, and warrants further research. But the fact that the two different titles, *Caturaṅga-sādhana* and *Samantabhadra-sādhana* were understood by Indian commentators to refer to the same work is

²⁶ On the latter point see Szántó 2015, 554.

²⁷ See my Chapter Three note 239.

²⁸ There are, for example, instances where both cite the same passage of a different work to support their comments on the *Caturaṅga*, and often in those cases Samantabhadra's citation is a longer version of the one that Vaidyapāda provides, adding further context. This is the case even for the Tibetan recension of the *Sāramañjarī*, which is not nearly extensive as the longer Sanskrit recension, which includes even more extensive citations not present in either of the other two recensions. See for example *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā*, D 136b.7 and *Sāramañjarī*, D 8a.1-2. In the occasional instances where Vaidyapāda provides a longer version of a citation that is common to the two commentaries, Samantabhadra follows his abbreviated citation with a prose summary of the rest of the full citation that Vaidyapāda has provided (See for example *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā*, D 138b.1 and *Sāramañjarī*, D 9a.7-9). There are yet other sections where Vaidyapāda explains that a certain topic ought to be learned from the oral instructions, but Samantabhadra gives more detail on that very topic in writing in his commentary (See, for example, *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā*, D 139a.3 and *Sāramañjarī*, D 10b.3). Of course, even given this evidence, my conclusions on the relationship of Vaidyapāda's and Samantabhadra's works remain speculative, especially given that we know, from comparing its various recensions, that Samantabhadra's commentary itself was augmented over time. A study of the relationship between the various recensions of the *Sāramañjarī* would certainly provide a fruitful way to study the development of texts from this period. As something of an aside, I will add that I have seen a similar situation in the case of a much later (18th-century) Tibetan generation stage commentary that was similarly augmented—often with additional citations, which is precisely what we see in the case of the *Sāramañjarī*. Certainly texts grew, but it may be that this genre of practical *sādhana* instructions was particularly susceptible to development and augmentation.

²⁹ See, for example *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā*, D 141b.2 which reads 'dul ba, following the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*, and the *Sāramañjarī* D 13a.3, which reads 'dul bya following the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*; See also *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā*, D 142b.3 which reads zas lnga following the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* and *Sāramañjarī* D 14a.5 which reads mchod pa lnga following the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*. See also *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā*, D 143b.3 which reads tshad med 'od gzhi following the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* and *Sāramañjarī* D 14b.2, which reads 'od zer dpag du med pa (omitting bzhi) following the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*. See also *Caturaṅga-ṭīkā* D 143b.5 which reads mchog gi rdo rje 'i ye shes gzugs sogs pa following the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*'s rdo rje dam pa ye shes gzugs, and *Sāramañjarī* D 15a.2, which reads nor bu dmar 'dra zhes pa ni / padma rāga dang 'dra ba'o// following the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*'s rdo rje bzang 'dir nor bu dmar 'dra la//. These are just a few of the many instances of this pattern.

strongly suggested by the fact that Thagana, commenting in the 11th century on the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* appears to have been reading Samantabhadra's 9th-century commentary on the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*. Thagana follows Samantabhadra's commentary on quite a number of points, many of which are places where Samantabhadra's comments diverge from Vaidyapāda's.³⁰ There is certainly more to learn about the transmission history of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, but even just this limited comparison of the extant commentaries shows us that the *sādhana* seems to have undergone some minor changes in India, and that it was preserved there under two different titles that were nonetheless recognized by exegetes as referring to the same work.³¹

In addition to the several commentaries that it inspired, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* also served as the basis for at least two other Indic works: Śākyamitra's *Mukhāgama* and Dīpaṅkarabhadra's *Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi*. Both of these texts paraphrase or repurpose large sections of the *sādhana*. Śākyamitra's text, which he claims to be a record of Buddhajñānapāda's oral instructions on the *Samantabhadra-sādhana*, is an unusual work in that it seems to be something of a cross between a *sādhana* and a *sādhana* commentary, but almost entirely in verse. The *Mukhāgama* basically follows the structure of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, describing the same *maṇḍala* of deities from the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra*, but with added details on certain points that are not elaborated in Buddhajñānapāda's work, including an extensive elaboration on the *raṅgacakra* of wrathful deities that form the protective boundary for the practice of the *sādhana*. Some of the details added in the *Mukhāgama* also appear in Vaidyapāda's commentary on the *Caturaṅga-sādhana*, which does enhance the possibility that both works were indeed composed on the basis of oral instructions on the practice of the *sādhana*. The *Mukhāgama* also superimposes a structure of sorts on the practice, including a brief preliminary discussion of the initiatory prerequisites, and a structuring of the generation stage process in terms of the twelve links of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) and the four boundless attitudes (*apramāṇa*).³² The *Mukhāgama*, however, departs from the order of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in several places, and also seems to repeat certain processes of the *sādhana* more than once with alternate descriptions.

Dīpaṅkarabhadra's *Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi* directly paraphrases most of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, which it integrates as the framework for an initiation manual in Buddhajñānapāda's Guhyasamāja tradition.³³ While Dīpaṅkarabhadra's work follows the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra* much more closely than does the *Mukhāgama*, Dīpaṅkarabhadra, like Śākyamitra, also rearranges the verse order of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra* in several places, and changes the content of some verses, such as,

³⁰ For evidence that Thagana is reading Samantabhadra, see, for example, *Sāramañjarī* D 6a.2-3 and *Śrīsamantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti*, D 192a.5-6 on the offerings to the buddhas of the three times which are discussed in the later two *pādas* of verse 8 of the *sādhana*.

³¹ My observations here on the relationship among the commentaries were made without reference to Szántó's draft edition of the long recension of the *Sāramañjarī*, which I received after I had already read the *sādhana* and the extant Tibetan commentaries alongside Tanaka's edition of the shorter recension of the *Sāramañjarī* in Sanskrit. A closer look at this longer recension of the work will certainly add more to our picture of the relationship between the commentaries, as well as providing a fascinating look at way a single commentarial work developed.

³² Several scholars have attributed this structuring of the generation stage practice in terms of the twelve links of dependent origination to Buddhajñānapāda himself, but as I have discussed above, the *Mukhāgama* is clearly attributed to Śākyamitra. While such categories may very well have been part of Buddhajñānapāda's oral instructions on the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, it is difficult to assert categorically that they are his contributions when they are nowhere represented in his own writings.

³³ Daisy Cheung, a doctoral student at the University of Hamburg, is currently preparing a doctoral dissertation on Dīpaṅkarabhadra's text, which will be a very welcome addition to the research on Buddhajñānapāda's Guhyasamāja tradition.

for example, the verses on taking refuge in the three jewels, which have a content very different from Buddhajñānapāda’s refuge verses. Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s popular work is the subject of two extant Indic commentaries, by Vaidyapāda and Ratnākaraśānti, and appears to have been quite influential. But not more influential, it seems, than the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* itself, which, including its five commentaries and the two works based on it, served as the direct inspiration for at least seven different extant Indic works.³⁴

Structure of the Generation Stage in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*

As described above, the practice of the generation stage involves the practitioner visualizing herself in the form of a tantric deity and the deity’s retinue. This “generation” of oneself as the deity is generally preceded by some preliminary practices including taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha; generating *bodhicitta*, the aspiration to achieve awakening for the benefit of all sentient beings; and generating a protective circle within which the practice will unfold, along with the deity’s pure abode. Once the full *maṇḍala* of the deity, consort (if there is a consort), and retinue have been completely generated out of the state of emptiness, the so-called wisdom deities (*jñānasattva*) are invited and descend into the practitioner-as-deity after which offerings and praises are presented to the deity and *maṇḍala*. This is usually followed by some mantra recitation and ultimately with the dissolution of the visualization back into emptiness and the closing of the practice with dedications and aspirations. Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* follows this general model, with some elaborations at various points.

The commentaries on the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* place its generation stage processes within the structure of three *samādhis*, which were already used to structure the practice of self-generation as the deity in the Yoga tantras. According to the commentarial tradition these three *samādhis*—the *ādiyoga-samādhi*, *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi*, and the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi*—constitute the larger framework within which the *sādhana* is to be practiced. Indeed, these same three *samādhis* are employed as the framework for generation stage *sādhana* in most Indian tantric traditions from the Yoga tantras onwards, all the way up through works on the later Yoginī tantras like the *Cakrasaṃvara*, *Hevajra*, and *Samputa-tantra*. Generally, the three *samādhis* encompass the generation stage process as follows: the *ādiyoga-*

³⁴ In addition to being Buddhajñānapāda’s work that has received the most attention from Indic commentators, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is also the work that has received the most attention from modern scholars. Kimiaki Tanaka has done the most extensive research on the *sādhana*, having edited and published the Sanskrit fragment of the *Sāramañjarī*, as well as translating it in full and providing a very brief study of the generation stage process of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra* (Tanaka 1996 (in Japanese); 2010 (in Japanese with English Chapter Summaries); and 2017). Yukei Matsunaga wrote (in Japanese) about the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in his work on the history on the development of tantric Buddhism (Matsunaga 1980 *A history of the formation of esoteric Buddhist scriptures*, cited in Tanaka 2017). Kazuo Kano has published an edition of verses 20-54 of the *sādhana* preserved in a manuscript in Tibet (Kano 2014). The full text is presumably preserved in the manuscript from which Kano derived the verses published in this article. However, it is kept on display at the Tibet Museum in Lhasa and scholars are not given access to the manuscript. Kano published his edition of the verses that happened to be on display at the museum on a given day and which he was able to photograph. Péter Szántó has produced an as-yet-unpublished edition of the long Sanskrit recension of the *Sāramañjarī*. Ryuta Kikuya has reconstructed the verse order of the *Caturaṅga* on the basis of the *Samantabhadra* (Kikuya 2012; this article was published in Japanese, but Kikuya gave a 2014 conference presentation in English the content of the article). Tsutomu Sato has also written in Japanese about the *maṇḍala* of the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* (Sato 1995, *The Composition of Maṇḍala in the Jñānapāda-school*, cited in Tanaka 2017) and Chizuko Yoshimizu studied the four branches of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in her unpublished master’s thesis, also in Japanese (Tanaka 2017, 36).

samādhi involves the preliminaries as well as the practitioner’s self-generation as the deity (and, if there is one, the generation of the deity’s consort), the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi* includes the generation of the remaining deities that constitute the retinue of the main deity, and the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi* consists of the ensuing activities performed by the yogin while self-visualized as the deity, along with the dissolution of the *maṇḍala* and the concluding activities of dedication and aspiration. The *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* adheres to this paradigm quite closely. The *ādiyoga-samādhi* of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* consists of the preliminary practices and the self-generation of the practitioner as the main deity Mañjuvajra along with his consort, as well as the consecration of both; the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi* encapsulates the generation of all of the other eighteen deities of the *maṇḍala* and their consecration, along with the offerings and praises that are made to Mañjuvajra and the surrounding deities of the *maṇḍala*; and the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi* consists of a number of activities including a philosophical analysis of reality, a contemplation of the symbolism of the *maṇḍala* deities, the practice of *bindu* yogas, the dissolution of the *maṇḍala*, and concluding prayers and aspirations. The Indic commentaries are uniform in their division of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* into these three *samādhis*, though they differ on the minor point of whether to also include in the third *samādhi* a number of instructions on post-meditative conduct, as well as some short rites to be practiced in conjunction with the *sādhana*, as needed.³⁵

The next level of structure of the *sādhana* involves dividing the practice into the four branches—*caturaṅga*—the division that has given the *sādhana* one of its names. While the structuring of the text into these four branches is also set forth only in the commentarial tradition—the *sādhana* itself makes no mention of any of the four branches—the fact that the *Caturaṅga-sādhana* seems to be the earlier of the two titles by which the work was known suggests that these divisions are likely not a later addition to the tradition but were part of the way Buddhajñānapāda himself structured the practice of the generation stage. (Presumably this is also the case with the three *samādhis* discussed above, since that division was already used to structure Yoga tantra *sādhana*.) The four branches themselves—*sevā*, *upasādhana*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana*—are described in Chapter Twelve of the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. That passage reads (in Fremantle’s translation):

Absorption in the sacred law of *sevā*, the arising of *upasādhana*, the sacred law whose object is *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana* the fourth, —having understood their distinctions, then perform the Acts. Absorption in the *samādhi* of *sevā* is to meditate on ultimate enlightenment, in the great *siddhi* of *upasādhana* examine the *vajra* senses, in *sādhana* visualize the Mantra Lord—this is called arousing, and at the time of *mahāsādhana* the *vajra* wisdom will succeed by visualizing the image of the *Vajra* of his mantra with the Lord in his crown.³⁶

These verses are followed by a short section of the tantra describing the practice of *sevā* and the vows of *upasādhana*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana*.

It seems that the four branches as described here in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* provide just a very basic guideline for the way in which they are employed in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*. That is, the branches as they are described as pertaining to the *sādhana* correspond

³⁵ Vaidyapāda indicates that the conclusion of the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi* takes place with the dissolution of the *maṇḍala* deities in verse 139. Samantabhadra includes the following section of additional practices within the third *samādhi* and holds that the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi* concludes only after verse 157.

³⁶ Fremantle, 1971, 70. *sevāsamayasamīyogam upasāadhanasambhavam/ sādhanārthasamayaṃ ca mahāsāadhanacaturthakam/ vijñāya vajrabhedenga tataḥ karmāṇi sādhayet/ 60 sevāsamādhisamīyogam bhāvayed bodhim uttamam/ upasādhanasiddhyagre vajrāyatana vicāraṇam/ 61 sādhanā codanaṃ proktaṃ mantrādhīpatibhāvanam/ mahāsāadhanakāleṣu bimbaṃ svamantravajrinaḥ/ 62 makuṭe 'dhipatiṃ dhyātva sidhyate jñānavajrinaḥ/ 63* (Matsunaga 1980, 42-3).

only loosely with the way they are described in the *tantra*. In accordance with the commentators on the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*—who are uniform in dividing the *sādhana* into these four branches—*sevā* consists of generating the deity; *upasādhana* consists of the practice of *nyāsa*, filling the body of the deity with syllables that represent deities; *sādhana* involves the consecration of the deity’s body, speech, and mind with the syllables *om āh* and *hūm*, representing awakened body, speech, and mind; and *mahāsādhana* consists of the deities receiving consecration and having their crown ornamented by the presiding buddha of their particular buddha-family. These four branches are described in the Indic commentaries as occurring three times in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in three different “grades:” lesser (*mṛdu*), middling (*madhya*), and greater (*adhimātra*).³⁷ The lesser four branches involve the four processes described above as applied to the main deity of the *sādhana*, Mañjuvajra. The middling four branches involve the same four processes as applied to Mañjuvajra’s consort. Both the lesser and middling four branches pertain to the *ādiyoga-samādhi*. The greater four branches involve applying the same four processes to the other deities of the *maṇḍala*, and thus pertain to the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-sāmadhi*. The first of these three sequences of the four branches—the lesser four branches as applied to Mañjuvajra himself—is presented in the *sādhana* in the most detail, constituting sixteen verses of the *sādhana*, whereas the middling set is much more abbreviated, in just four verses. In the case of the third set of four branches, that relating to the *maṇḍala* deities, only the first branch of *sevā*—the generation of the *maṇḍala* deities—is described in detail in the *sādhana* itself, while the other three branches—the practices of *nyāsa*; consecrating body, speech, and mind; and ornamenting the crown of the *maṇḍala* deities—are merely alluded to in a single line of the *sādhana*, but are elaborated in the commentarial tradition.

To give a further sense of the details of the generation stage practice as described in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, I include below a detailed topical outline of the contents of the work.³⁸ Many of the major topical headlines in the outline are derived from the commentarial tradition, primarily Vaidyapāda’s *Samantabhadri-ṭīkā*, while the minor divisions are my own and are meant to give a sense of the practical details of the generation stage processes that the *sādhana* sets forth. Following the topical outline, I summarize the *sādhana*’s contents, with recourse to the commentaries for some additional details—thus elaborating further on the topical outline—and finally present a brief discussion some of the notable features of the *sādhana*.

Topical Outline of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*

I. Textual Preliminaries

1. Author’s Homage and Pledge to Compose the *Sādhana* [1-2]

II. Main Part of Text

A. The Main Part of the Generation Stage Practice

I. *Ādiyoga-samādhi*

1. Injunction to Practice [3-6]
2. The Preliminaries to the Session
 - a. Sitting Down to Practice, Visualizing the Buddhas [7-8]
 - b. Offering and Confession [9-10]

³⁷ Tanaka (2017, 34-36) discusses the three grades of the four branches as they are presented in the short Sanskrit recension of the *Sāramañjarī*.

³⁸ Tanaka has included what appears to be a topical outline of the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* in his 2009 publication on *maṇḍalas* (501-503). This outline is, however, in Japanese, which I am unfortunately unable to read, so I have not relied upon it in preparing my own.

- c. Rejoicing and Dedicating [11]
- d. Taking Refuge in the Three Jewels [12-14]
- e. Arousing *Bodhicitta* [15-17]
- 3. The Preliminaries to Generating the Deity
 - a. Contemplating Three Gates of Liberation [18]
 - b. Meditating on the Protection Circle [19a]
 - c. Generating the *Dharmodaya* [19b-20]
 - d. Generating the Celestial Palace [21-27]
 - e. Generating the Seats of the Deities [28]
- 4. Generating the Main Deity: The Four Branches—Lesser Stage
 - a. Lesser *Sevā*: Self Generation as Mañjuvajra with Consort
 - i. Generating the Causal Deity
 - 1. Generating the Causal Deity and Consort [29-34]
 - 2. Unique Preliminaries: Purifying and Generating Embodied Beings and the Inanimate World as Deity
 - a. Buddhas Enter into Causal Deity [35]
 - b. Goddesses Emerge from Causal Deity and Dissolve into Consort [36]
 - c. *Maṇḍala* emerges into Consort’s Lotus, All Beings Placed in *Maṇḍala* [37]
 - d. Buddhas Enter *Maṇḍala* and Confer Initiation on Beings [38]
 - e. Beings are Purified and Emanated as *Maṇḍala* Deities from Syllables [39-43]
 - 3. Practitioner’s Mind as *om āḥ hūm* Enters into the Consort’s Lotus and Melts [44]
 - 4. Causal Deity and Consort Melt [45]
 - 5. Goddesses Sing for Deity to Emerge [46-49]
 - ii. Generating Resulting Deity: Mañjuvajra [50-54]
 - 1. Light from Syllable *maṃ* Summons Buddhas who Dissolve into Oneself who Becomes Mañjuvajra [50-52]
 - 2. Description of Deity and Blessing [53-54]
 - b. Lesser *Upasādhana*: Bodhisattvas Fill Mañjuvajra’s Sense Faculties [55a-b]
 - c. Lesser *Sādhana*: Consecration of Mañjuvajra’s Body, Speech, Mind [55c-63]
 - d. Lesser *Mahāsādhana*: Consecration and Crowning of Mañjuvajra with Family Lord [64-65]
- 5. Generating the Consort: Four Branches—Middle Stage [66]
 - a. Middling *Sevā*: Generate the Consort [66a-b]
 - b. Middling *Upasādhana*: Bodhisattvas Fill Consort’s Sense Faculties [66c]
 - c. Middling *Sādhana*: Consecration of Consort’s Body, Speech, Mind [66d]
 - d. Middling *Mahāsādhana*: Consecration and Crowning of Consort with Family Lord [66d]
- 6. Consecrating the Consort’s Body with The Five Families [67-68]
- 7. Joining in Union with the Consort to Please the *Tathāgatas* [69]

II. *Maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi* [70-108]

1. Generating the *Maṇḍala* Deities: Four Branches—Greater Stage [70-
 - a. Greater *Sevā*: Generate the *Mandala* Deities [70-
 - i. Summon Buddhas and Emit *Maṇḍala* into Consort’s Lotus [70-71]
 - i. The Five Buddhas
 1. Cittavajra (=Akṣobhya) Who Dissolves into Mañjuvajra [72-73]
 2. Kāyavajra (=Vairocana) in East [74]
 3. Ratneśa (=Ratnasambhava) in South [75]
 4. Amitabha in West [76]
 5. Amoghasiddhi in North [77]
 6. A Description of Their Common Features [78]
 - ii. The Four Consorts
 1. Locanā in Southeast, resembling Vairocana [79]
 2. Mamakī in Southwest, resembling Akṣobhya [80]
 3. Pandara in Northwest, resembling Amitabha [81]
 4. Tārā in Northeast, resembling Ratnasambhava [82]
 5. A Description of their Common Features [83]
 - iii. The Six Sense Goddesses, Rūpavajrā etc. at Four Corners and Two Sides of Main Door [84]
 - iv. Wrathful Gatekeepers
 1. Yamantaka, resembling Akṣobhya in Eastern Gate [85-86]
 2. Aparājita, resembling Vairocana in Southern Gate [87]
 3. Hayagrīva, resembling Amitabha in Western Gate [88-89]
 4. Amṛtakunḍalin, resembling Akṣobhya, northern gate [90]
 5. Crowning Gatekeepers with Family Lords [91]
 - b. Inviting the Wisdom *Maṇḍala* [92]
 - c. Making Yamāntaka etc. Protect the *Maṇḍala* [93]
 - d. Greater *Upasādhana*, *Sādhana*, and *Mahāsādhana* [94 c]
 2. Making Offerings [94a-b, d; 95-100]
 3. Praises [101-106]
 4. Tasting the Nectar [107-108]

III. *Karmarājāgrī-samādhi* [109-139]

1. *Bindu* Yoga: Emanate out Buddhas who Make Beings into Buddhas and Bring them Back into Seed-Syllable [109]
2. The Philosophical Investigation: Establishing All Phenomena to be Mind, Which is Free From Perceiver and Perceived [110-126]
 - a. Pure Equivalences of the *Maṇḍala* Deities [121-124]
3. *Bindu* Yoga at Heart [127-129]
4. *Sūkṣma* Yoga at “Nose Tip” [130-131]
5. Mantra Recitation [132-138]
6. Request to Depart and Dissolving the *Maṇḍala* [139]

B. Branch Practices

- I. Dedication and Aspiration [140]

II. Instructions in Post-Meditation Practices

1. Maintain Identity as Main Deity, World as Cittavajra etc. [141-143]
2. How to Eat [144-146]
3. When Enjoying the Sense Pleasures Make Offerings [147]
4. Perform All Actions Within Equipoise of Being the Deity [148]
5. All Acts of Body and Speech are Forms of *Mudrā* and Mantra and [149-151]
6. Rite for Mending *Samaya* [152-153]
7. How to Sleep [154]
8. How to Wake Up [155]
9. How to Receive Accomplishment [156]
10. How to Avert Obstacles during the Rite for Receiving Accomplishment [157]

III. Conclusion

1. Presentation of Nature of the *Saṃsāric* Predicament and its Remedy, According with Reality [158-161]
2. Injunction to Practice Deity Yoga [162]
3. Author's Dispensing with Pride [163-164]
4. Dedication with Signature Line [165]

Summary of Contents of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*

Preliminaries

The *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* begins with Buddhajñānapāda's homage to Mañjuśrī (verse 1), and his commitment to compose the *sādhana* on the basis of a request from his spiritual teacher (verse 2). Vaidyapāda and Samantabhadra identify the spiritual teacher who requested the *sādhana* as Buddhajñānapāda's guru Pālitapāda, while Vaidyapāda also provides the alternative interpretation that this could also refer to Mañjuśrī himself, who in the visionary encounter described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* commanded Buddhajñānapāda to compose a generation stage *sādhana* of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*.³⁹ These textual preliminaries are followed by several verses in which Buddhajñānapāda gives the injunction that a qualified disciple—one who is compassionate, has aroused *bodhicitta*, who practices generosity, and who has received the proper initiations—should take up the practice of the *sādhana* of Mañjuśrī (verses 3-6). Our commentators do not indicate whether this short section is considered part of the *Ādiyoga-samādhi*, or whether the *samādhi* proper begins with the next verse that begins to describe the actual meditation.

The meditation proper begins with the practitioner visualizing a radiant syllable *maṃ*, Mañjuvajra's seed syllable, in his heart center and bringing to mind the "three gates of liberation" (*rnam thar sgo gsum*), a series of contemplations on emptiness (verse 7). He then visualizes the buddhas of the three times (verse 8) in front of whom he will make offering and confess his past negative actions (verses 9-10). He rejoices in the merit that has been accumulated by others and dedicates that merit to the awakening of all beings (verse 11). The practitioner then takes refuge in the Three Jewels—the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha (verses 12-14)—and arouses the altruistic attitude of *bodhicitta*, the intention to establish all sentient beings in the state of awakening (verses 15-17). This group of verses, beginning with that on confession, seems to have become a popular liturgical set, as they are cited (without attribution)

³⁹ *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 131b.5; *Sāramañjarī*, D 2b.7; Szántó unpublished, 4. In verse 367 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* Mañjuśrī does, indeed, command Buddhajñānapāda to compose a generation stage *sādhana* for the practice of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, and in verse 377, Buddhajñānapāda himself mentions composing some *sādhana*s at the instigation of his guru Pālitapāda.

in a number of Nepalese Buddhist Sanskrit manuals, as well as transliterated and translated, as a set, into Chinese in the *Miaojixiang pingdeng bimi zuishang guanmen dajiaowang jing* (Taishō 1192).⁴⁰

Generation of the Rakṣacakra and Celestial Palace

What follows are some preliminaries to the actual generation of the deity, which again begin with a contemplation of emptiness by means of the three gates of liberation, this time along with the recitation of the mantra *om śūnyatājñānavajrasvabhāvātmako 'ham* (verse 18). Then the practitioner is to contemplate the protective space in which the practice will unfold. In the *sādhana* itself this is described simply as a ground made of vajras. The commentaries, however, outline a much more detailed process that involves visualizing a ten-spoked wheel on which ten wrathful protective deities are visualized (the so-called *rakṣacakra*), though Vaidyapāda notes that the details of this ritual are to be learned, not from a textual source, but from the oral instructions.⁴¹ This process of generating the *rakṣacakra* is also elaborated in detail in Śākyamitra's *Mukhāgama*, which he indicates is based on Buddhajñānapāda's oral instructions. This contemplation is followed by the visualization of the *dharmodaya*—the “source of phenomena”—in the form of a white triangle that has emerged from Samantabhadra. At the center of this triangle is a lotus and a crossed vajra (verses 19-20). It is here that a “*maṇḍala*”—understood by the commentators to refer to the deity's celestial palace—is visualized. This palace emerges from Vairocana and consort, who have themselves emerged from a *cakra*, which was produced from the syllable *bhrūṃ* (verse 21). The celestial palace is described in the *sādhana* some detail, including the pure correspondences (*viśuddhi*) of its architecture with the positive qualities of the Buddhist path and of the state of awakening (verses 22-28).

Generation of the Causal Deities

The generation of the principal deity proper, and thus the process of “lesser *sevā*” the first branch among the four branches of the “lesser” grade, begins at this point in the *sādhana*.⁴² The generation of the practitioner-as-deity in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* involves a two-fold generation process, first of the “causal” deity—referred to by the commentators both as Vajrasattva, a common epithet for the causal deity, and as Vajradhara. This causal deity is actually a pair of deities in union who function as the progenitors of the main deity of the *sādhana*, Mañjuvajra, and his consort. This causal pair is generated, according to the commentators, by means of the process of the five manifestations of awakening (*pañcākarābhisambodhi*), a procedure for deity generation already known from the Yoga tantras. The process of these five stages is, however, not fully laid out in the text of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* itself; one must have recourse to the commentaries for the full details. The causal deity is described as “arisen from the seed-syllable of Paramādyā” (*paramādyahṛdayasambhavam*),⁴³ who is identified in the commentaries as Vajrasattva or Vajradhara—terms which again seem to simply be used as epithets of the causal or progenitor

⁴⁰ Tanaka 2017, 30-31.

⁴¹ See *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 139b; *Sāramañjarī*, D 10b; *Mukhāgama*, D 19a.1-20b.4.

⁴² The Indic commentaries actually do not identify the point at which this *sevā* starts, but they do point out where it ends. In a much later (18th-century) Tibetan commentary by Jamgön Kongtrül it is mentioned that this first part of the lesser grade of *sevā* includes both the generation of the causal deities as well as the resultant deities, so I have followed that presentation here (Kongtrül 2008, 77).

⁴³ For the Sanskrit edition of this verse see Kano 2014, 66.

deity (verses 29-31).⁴⁴ This causal deity is white in color with three faces—the right black, and the left red—and six arms, two of which embrace his consort and the other four of which hold a vajra, sword, lotus, and jewel (verses 32-33). He is described as the “body who produces all of the Victors” (*jinajanakatanum*) and the yogin is instructed to visualize himself as this deity (verse 34). This factor of self-visualization as the progenitor deity is an unusual feature of Buddhajñānapāda’s *sādhana*, but one which is preserved in the later works of the Jñānapāda School; in most *sādhana*s pertaining to other traditions that employ the causal deity method of generation, the causal couple is visualized in front of the practitioner.⁴⁵ I discuss some of the implications of this unusual feature of the *sādhana* below.

Unique Preliminaries: Purifying Embodied Beings and the Inanimate World and Generating them as the Deity

What follows are a series of preliminaries to the process by which the main deities of the *sādhana*, Mañjuvajra and consort, are “born” from the causal deities, and which seem to constitute yet another unique feature of the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*. This begins with the buddhas entering into the body of the practitioner-as-causal-Vajradhara (verse 35). Then, the nine goddesses of the *maṇḍala*—Locanā and the rest of the four buddha consorts, along with Rūpavajrā and the rest of the six sense goddesses—are emanated out from his body and dissolve into the body of his consort (verse 36). A *maṇḍala* of rays of “stainless moonlight” emerges into her lotus, and the practitioner then mentally places all sentient beings in that *maṇḍala* (verse 37). Then, Vairocana and the other buddhas enter into the *maṇḍala* “in the form of the fluid moon” (*indudravarūpa*)—that is, in the form of *bodhicitta*—and confer initiation upon beings there (verse 38). After this initiation, the *sādhana* simply describes the emanation, by means of their seed syllables, of a number of deities (verses 39-42). First are the six *bodhisattvas*, Kṣitigarbha, etc., who are the pure embodiment of the sense faculties—the eyes, and so forth—but who do not form part of the main set of the *sādhana*’s *maṇḍala* deities; in the generation of the main *maṇḍala* later in the *sādhana*, these *bodhisattvas* are visualized on/as the sense faculties of the main *maṇḍala* deities (verse 39). Next are the six goddesses, Rūpavajrā and the rest, who are the purification of the sense objects, and who do form part of the 19-deity *maṇḍala* generated later in the *sādhana* (verse 40a-b). Then Locanā and the rest of the four buddha consorts who are the purified forms of earth and so forth, the four elements (verse 40c-d), are emanated out. They, too, constitute part of the main 19-deity *maṇḍala*. Finally come the buddhas, Vairocana and the rest of the five buddhas, who are the purified form of form and other five aggregates (verse 41). The five buddhas also constitute members of the main *maṇḍala-cakra* that is generated later in the *sādhana* (but, as we shall see, when they are generated as part of the main *maṇḍala* Akṣobhya merges with Mañjuvajra, as he does not have a separate seat in the *maṇḍala*). These deities—that is, all of the main deities of the 19-deity *maṇḍala* with the exception of the main deity Mañjuvajra (who is here represented by Akṣobhya), his consort, and the four gate guardians, and with the addition of the six *bodhisattvas* who mark the sense faculties of all the *maṇḍala* deities—are emanated by means of their individual seed syllables (verses 42-43).

⁴⁴ Vaidyapāda (*Samantabhadri-ṭīkā*, D 143b.4) identifies him as Vajrasattva, as does Samantabhadra in the long Sanskrit recension of the *Sāramañjarī* (Szántó unpublished, 43). The Tibetan translation of the *Sāramañjarī* here reads *rdo rje ’chang*, Vajradhara (*Sāramañjarī*, D 15a.1).

⁴⁵ Schwind 2012, 76. This feature of self-identification with the causal deity is also seen in several *sādhana*s preserved at Dunhuang. However in those *sādhana*s the practitioner then somehow “steps back out of that form to be absorbed back into it and become the resultant deity” (Jacob Dalton, personal communication).

While the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* itself states clearly that all sentient beings are ushered into the *maṇḍala* at the point of union where they are initiated or consecrated by the buddhas, the *sādhana* does not elaborate on the nature of the deities that are subsequently emanated out from this *maṇḍala*. The commentaries, however, elaborate on this point rather significantly. Samantabhadra’s commentary explains that after the initiation within the *maṇḍala* located in the casual consort’s lotus, it is *sentient beings themselves* who, having been purified by means of the process of transforming them into the deities like Kṣitigarhba and so forth (by means of their seed syllables), are emanated out from the celestial palace in the lotus of the causal consort.⁴⁶ Vaidyapāda similarly explains that during the initiation that takes place in the *maṇḍala* at the point of union, the *dharmas* of all sentient beings “melt as the moon” (*zla bar zhu*) and then transform into the various syllables, which transform into symbolic implements, which transform into the deities, who are then emanated out from this *maṇḍala*.⁴⁷ That is, the commentaries describe a process by means of which the entirety of the constituent parts of beings as well as the inanimate world—the sense organs of beings, the sensory objects, the four great elements, and the five aggregates of beings—are dissolved into fluid through the initiation and re-emerge in their pure forms as the *maṇḍala* deities. What is not made clear in either the *sādhana* or the commentaries is the location *to which* these sentient beings-purified-as-deities are emanated. Indeed, these very same *maṇḍala* deities are generated again in the main generation stage of the *sādhana* where they are “born” from the union of Mañjuvajra and his consort and emanated out into the *maṇḍala*. This issue of their “double emanation”—first being emanated out as deities who are purified sentient beings from the union of the causal deities here, and later being emanated out as the *maṇḍala* deities who are buddhas born from the resultant deities in the main generation stage of the *sādhana*—is, to my knowledge, not addressed in the commentarial tradition.⁴⁸ However, the entire process of the drawing in, purification, and emanation out in purified form of the beings and the inanimate world at this point in the *sādhana* is, to my knowledge, a unique feature of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*. I discuss the function and doctrinal implications of this unusual feature of the *sādhana* in more detail below.

Generating the “Resultant” Principal Deity: The “Lesser” Four Branches

The next step in the practice is the generation of the practitioner as the main deity of the *sādhana*, the “resultant deity” Mañjuvajra, together with his consort. This involves the practitioner’s mind—specified in the commentaries as the *antarabhavacitta*, the mind of the so-called “intermediate state,” the “*bardo*” state between death and rebirth—being visualized in the form of the syllables *om*, *āḥ*, and *hūm*, concealed between two syllables *hōḥ*.⁴⁹ The practitioner’s mind, in the form of these syllables, enters into the causal deity—the commentaries specify that it enters through his mouth and travels out via the vajra path—and emerges into the lotus of the causal consort where, due to her passion, it melts into liquid (verse 44). The light that emerges from the melting of the syllables thus causes the causal deity and consort themselves to “become the liquid moon,” that is, to melt into the form of *bodhicitta*, to which the goddesses Locanā and

⁴⁶ *Sāramāñjarī* (see Szántó unpublished, 48). The important details included in this section of the *Sāramāñjarī* are not present in the Tibetan translation of the text.

⁴⁷ *Samantabhadri-ṭīkā*, D 145a.7-145b.6.

⁴⁸ It is definitely not addressed in either Vaidyapāda’s or Samantabhadra’s commentary.

⁴⁹ As I mentioned above and discuss further below, the generation stage process re-envisioned the ordinary processes by means of which rebirth into *samsāric* existence takes place in a purified form. The reference to the practitioner’s mind as being the *antarabhavacitta*, the mind of the being in the intermediate state prior to taking rebirth makes this point quite explicit.

the rest sing in order to incite this *bindu* of *bodhicitta* to emerge as the deity (verse 45).⁵⁰ The passionate songs that they sing are taken directly from Chapter 17 of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (verses 46-49).⁵¹ In response to the goddesses' inspiring songs, light rays from the seed-syllable *maṃ* turn all of the buddhas into forms of Mañjuvajra, which are then dissolved into the practitioner, who thus instantly becomes Mañjuvajra (verses 50-51).⁵² He is red in color like saffron, with three faces—the right face is black and the left, white—and has six arms, two of which embrace his consort and the rest of which hold a sword, an arrow, a blue *utpala*, and a bow (52-53). The practitioner is instructed to recognize that phenomena are free from subject and object and to perform the blessing of reciting the mantra *oṃ dharmadhātusvabhāvāthao 'haṃ* (verse 54).

Next comes the branch of lesser *upasādhana*, through which seed syllables for the *bodhisattvas* Kṣitibarbha and the others—which the commentators tell us emerge from the *maṃ* at Mañjuvajra's heart center—transform into those bodhisattvas who then fill the eyes and other sense organs of Mañjuvajra (verse 55a-b). This is followed by the branch of lesser *sādhana*, through which Mañjuvajra's mind, speech, and body (in that order) are consecrated with the syllables *hūṃ*, *āḥ*, and *oṃ*, respectively, which become Cittavajra, Vācvajra, and Kāyavajra⁵³ at his heart, throat and crown, respectively (verses 55c-56). Rays of light from their hearts and from the point of union of Mañjuvajra and consort make offerings to the Victors, who then bestow blessings of vajra mind, speech, and body (verse 57-63). The verses of supplication for the bestowal of these blessings are drawn directly from Chapter 12 of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, and are punctuated in the *sādhana* with mantras through which the practitioner self-identifies with vajra mind, speech, and body.⁵⁴ This is followed by the branch of lesser *mahāsādhana* in which Mañjuvajra is consecrated by a gathering of goddesses arisen from light rays that have emerged from the buddhas, who themselves were invoked with light rays from Mañjuvajra's heart center. The consecration takes place with water from vases poured by the goddesses, resulting in Mañjuvajra's becoming ornamented by his “family lord”—the presiding buddha of his “family”—who the commentators identify as Akṣobhya (verses 64-65).

Generating the Consort: The “Middling” Four Branches

The next step in the generation process is the “middling” four branches, applied to Mañjuvajra's consort, who is not named in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, nor in Vaidyapāda's nor Samantabhadra's commentaries.⁵⁵ The *sādhana* simply states that the

⁵⁰ Neither the *sādhana* nor the commentaries explain where these four goddesses came from, but Vaidyapāda, in his commentary on a section of the *Dvīṭyākrama* that gives a very condensed version of the generation stage, explains that the four goddesses are transformations of the four boundless attitudes. He writes, “By means of the three syllables entering, and so forth, [the causal deities] melt into light and then the previously mentioned four boundless attitudes transform into goddesses. In response to their inciting, this [light] transforms into the seed syllable of one's deity.” *yi ge gsum 'jug pa la sogs pas 'od du zhu ba las gong gi tshad med pa bzhi lha mor gyur/ de bskul bas rang gi lha 'I sa bon du gyur/* (*Sukusuma*, D 114a.3; P 137a.6-7).

⁵¹ = *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, 17.72-75.

⁵² The commentators describe this second-generation process as again taking place via the five manifestations of awakening, but the *sādhana* itself does not indicate this.

⁵³ That is, Akṣobhya, Amitabha, and Vairocana, respectively.

⁵⁴ The verses are *Guhyasamāja-tantra* 12.74-75 for vajra mind, *Guhyasamāja-tantra* 12.72-73 for vajra speech, and *Guhyasamāja-tantra* 12.70-71 for vajra body.

⁵⁵ Tanaka (1996, 260) identifies Mañjuvajra's consort as Māmākī but does not note the source of this information. Tanaka 2009 again identifies Mañjuvajra's consort as Māmākī, explaining this with the statement that the *Mukhāgama* (which Tanaka regards as Buddhajñānapāda's work; as I have discussed already, I hold it to be Śākyamitra's composition) “clearly explains that Akṣobhya has Māmākī as his consort” (Tanaka unpublished English translation of Chapter Five of his 2009 work, 289; 289n38). Indeed, the *Mukhāgama* does identify

practitioner is to visualize that from his own seed-syllable emerges a consort who resembles the main deity (verse 66 a-b). Vaidyapāda, however, elaborates that this process takes place through the same procedure as the generation of Mañjuvajra—she is generated first through the process of the *pañcākarābhisambodhi*, then the three syllables enter her mouth, and she dissolves into light and is incited by the songs of the goddesses upon which she emerges via the syllable *maṃ*, then a symbolic implement, and finally in her form as Mañjuvajra’s consort.⁵⁶ The branches of *upasādhana*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana*—through which her eyes and other sense organs are filled with Kṣitigarbha and the other bodhisattvas, her body, speech, and mind are consecrated, and she is crowned with the lord of her family—are expressed succinctly in just two lines (verse 66 c-d). The consort is then consecrated, through placing syllables symbolizing the five buddha families at five points on her body, and the transformation of the syllables *āḥ* and *hūṃ*, respectively, into the pericarp and petals of her lotus (verse 67-68). The practitioner-as-Mañjuvajra then engages in sexual union with his consort, with the thought that doing so is pleasing to the *tathāgatas* (verse 69) and recites the mantra *oṃ sarvatathāgatānurāganavajrasvabhāvātmaḥam*. This completes the first of the three *samādhis*, the *ādiyoga-samādhi*.

Generating the Maṇḍala Deities: The “Greater” Four Branches

The second *samādhi*, the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi* consists of the “greater” stage of the four branches, those pertaining to the *maṇḍala* deities. First is the greater *sevā*, the generation of the *maṇḍala* deities, which takes place by means of their “birth” from Mañjuvajra and his consort, who, as we saw above, have just begun to undertake the act of union. In this sequence light rays from the seed-syllable in Mañjuvajra’s heart summon the buddhas, who enter into Mañjuvajra and emerge from his vajra and into the consort’s lotus in the form of *bodhicitta* (verse 70). These buddhas-as-*bodhicitta* are then imagined taking on the form of the *maṇḍala* deities and are thus emanated out in order to benefit the world (verse 71). The emergence of the individual deities follows, starting with the five buddhas. Cittavajra—that is to say Akṣobhya—is summoned with the mantra *vajradhṛk* (verse 72). He is drawn in and made to enter into oneself as Mañjuvajra (verse 73). All of the other deities who will be emanated take seats at various places in the *maṇḍala*. The dissolving of Akṣobhya into Mañjuvajra indicates that Mañjuvajra here functions as an embodiment of Akṣobhya, the representative of the vajra family at the center of the *maṇḍala*. Kāyavajra—that is, Vairocana—is summoned with the mantra *jinajik* and placed in the east (verse 74). Ratneśa—another name for Ratnasambhava—is summoned with *ratnadhṛk* and placed in the south (verse 75). Amitābha is summoned with the mantra *arolik* and placed in the west (verse 76). Amoghasiddhi is summoned with *prajñādṛk* and placed in the north (verse 77). All of the five buddhas are adorned with beautiful locks, a crown, and jewels, and are to be visualized seated in union with their consorts on sun discs (verse 78).

The four buddha consorts are the second group of deities to be summoned by their mantras. First is Locanā, who resembles Vairocana, summoned with the mantra *moharatī* and placed in the southeast (verse 79). Māmakī, resembling Akṣobhya, is summoned with *dveṣaratī* and placed in the southwest (verse 80). Pandaravaṣiṇī, resembling Amitābha, is summoned by *rāgaratī* and placed in the northwest (verse 81). Tārā, resembling Ratnasambhava, is summoned by *vajraratī* and placed in the northeast (verse 82). These consorts hold a wheel, red *utpala*,

Akṣobhya’s consort as Māmakī, and in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* Akṣobhya merges with Mañjuvajra after he is generated; this latter point is, however, less clear in the *Mukhāgama*. I am grateful to Dr. Tanaka for sharing with me his unpublished English translation of Chapter Five of his 2009 publication in Japanese.

⁵⁶ *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 151a.6-151b.2. Samantabhadra also summarizes this process (*Sāramañjarī*, D 21a.6-21b.2; Szántó unpublished, 63).

lotus, and a yellow *utpala*, and otherwise appear like the lords of their families (verse 83).⁵⁷ Next, the six goddesses representing the sense objects, Rupāvajrā and the others, are generated by means of the three syllables *om*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ* and placed in the four corners of the *maṇḍala* and at the two sides of the main door. They also are similar in appearance to Akṣobhya and the other buddhas, in accordance with their particular buddha families (verse 84). Finally, the wrathful gatekeepers who occupy the four gates of the *maṇḍala* are summoned. Yamāntaka, who resembles Akṣobhya is summoned with *yamāntakṛt* and placed at the eastern gate (verses 85-86). Aparājita (or Prajñāntaka), resembling Vairocana, is summoned with *prajñāntakṛt* and placed in the southern gate (87). Hayagrīva, resembling Amitabha, is summoned with *padmāntakṛt* and placed in the western gate (88-89). Amṛtakunḍalin, also resembling Akṣobhya, is summoned with *vighnāntakṛt* and placed at the northern gate (verse 90). These wrathful deities hold a club, staff, lotus, vajra, and other implements and their crowns are adorned with Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi, respectively (verse 91).

Having thus generated all of the deities of what is generally called the visualized “*samaya maṇḍala*,” the deities of the “wisdom *maṇḍala*” are then invited in order to merge with and consecrate this visualized *maṇḍala*. This procedure involves summoning the *sugatas* with hook-like rays of light from the seed-syllable at Mañjuvajra’s heart, which, according to the commentaries, incites the four gate guardians to carry out the work of inviting, binding, and pleasing the wisdom *maṇḍala*, which they are then made to protect (verses 92-94b). The commentaries add the branch of greater *upasādhana* in which the deities’ sense organs are filled with the *bodhisattvas*, as above, and the branch of greater *sādhana* in which the deities’ body, speech, and mind are consecrated. Then initiation is conferred, and the deities are crowned by their respective family lords, which the commentaries note constitutes greater *mahāsādhana* (verse 94c). What follows are a series of verses in which offerings are made to the deities of the *maṇḍala*. Here, the ten goddesses of the *maṇḍala* are drawn into Mañjuvajra, emitted as *bodhicitta* in the consort’s lotus, and emanated out through the consort’s pores as light rays with goddesses at their tips who are beautifully adorned and who make offerings to the buddhas of the *maṇḍala*. The practitioner is instructed to engage in this practice of offering while remaining free from the concepts that there is someone who is offering, an offering being made, and the like (94d-100). This sequence is concluded with the mantra *om sarvatathāgatapūjāvajrasvabhāvātmake ‘ham*. Then, verses of praise, taken from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, are made to five buddhas of the *maṇḍala* (verses 101-106).⁵⁸ The final two verses of the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi* are the verses for “tasting the nectar,” in which the practitioner visualizes making an offering of the five nectars to the deities of the *maṇḍala* who consume it through vajra-tongues marked with the syllable *hūṃ* and are satisfied by the offering (verses 107-108).

Activities Performed While Visualized as the Deity: The Karmarājāgrī-Samādhi

The third and final *samādhi* is the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi*, which involves a series of practices that the practitioner performs while maintaining his self-visualization as the deity and *maṇḍala*. The *karmarājāgrī-samādhi* of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* consists primarily of the practice of several *bindu* yogas, along with the practice of mantra recitation, but it also contains a somewhat elaborated philosophical excursus of the sort not usually found in the middle of a *sādhana*. It is in this *samādhi* that we see the peculiarity of what appear to be

⁵⁷ The fact that the four buddhas surrounding Mañjuvajra are said to be in union with their consorts at the cardinal points of the *maṇḍala*, and that those very same consorts are also said to be seated in the intermediate directions of the *maṇḍala* is not addressed in either the *sādhana* nor the commentaries.

⁵⁸ Verses 101-106 of the *sādhana* are drawn from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* 17.1-5.

perfection stage practices included in what is generally regarded as a generation stage *sādhana*. The philosophical section is preceded by a short *bindu* yoga practice in which the practitioner emanates buddhas out from the seed-syllable in his/Mañjuvajra’s heart center. Those buddhas clear away sentient beings’ ignorance, transform them into buddhas, and usher them back into the seed-syllable at Mañjuvajra’s heart center (verse 109).

The philosophical section immediately follows this verse. Vaidyapāda tells us that the arguments therein are meant to refute the concern that it would not be possible for all that appears and exists to enter into the *bindu* if the outer world were materially existent,⁵⁹ and Samantabhadra gives a similar reason.⁶⁰ The verses that follow closely parallel several of the arguments set out in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, and state that neither outer phenomena nor an inner apprehending subject are truly established. This section also includes a set of verses that set out the pure correspondences (*viśuddhi*) of many of the *maṇḍala* deities. Some of these correspondences are the same as those given in the section of Buddhajñānapāda’s *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* that contains passages taken (without attribution) from Vilāsavajra’s *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*.⁶¹ At the conclusion of this section of the *sādhana* Buddhajñānapāda explains that the arguments were set forth here in order to prevent the practitioner from fixating on any type of distinctions (verses 110-126).

Following this excursus, the *sādhana* returns to the practice of the *bindu* yogas. The text instructs that, having considered all things to exist in a way that accords with the investigations just performed, the practitioner should proceed with the meditation of “his own mind” in the form of a “mantra *bindu*” in the center of the symbolic implement in his/Mañjuvajra’s heart center (verse 127). This *bindu* emanates out light that illuminates the body, speech, and mind of the yogin visualized as Mañjuvajra, and then dissolves back into the *bindu*, causing a downward flow of nectar from the *bindu* (verse 128). Subsequently, the light from the *bindu* again fills the interior of the body and then radiates out from each of Mañjuvajra’s pores, first filling the area of the *maṇḍala* and then extending even further (verse 129). The commentaries explain that this light is to be gathered back in again and made to dissolve into the *bindu*, again inspiring the production of nectar, and that this entire process is to be engaged in repeatedly. The next yoga described in the *sādhana* is the practice called the “subtle yoga” (*sūkṣma yoga*), which involves meditating on the entire *maṇḍala* of deities inside of the deity’s symbolic implement, this time at the tip of the “[lower] nose,” that is to say at the tip of the yogin’s vajra (i.e. the penis) (verse 130). The commentaries explain that this is effected by first emanating out light rays from the seed-syllable at Mañjuvajra’s heart center which draw in the *tathāgatas*, and melting them into *bodhicitta*, which descends into the center of the consort’s lotus where it transforms into a *maṇḍala* in the center of the deity’s symbolic implement; in the instance of Mañjuvajra, the symbolic implement is a sword. The practitioner then visualizes the tip of his own vajra as hooked light rays which draw the *maṇḍala* from the center of the consort’s lotus to the “nose tip” of the lotus.⁶² The *sādhana* indicates that when the practitioner sees the “signs of stability” with respect to this practice he should repeatedly emanate out forms of the buddhas together with their symbolic implements (verse 131). The commentaries identify these signs of stability as a series of five experiences that indicate the dissolution of the elements—seeing something like a mirage,

⁵⁹ *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 161a.3-4.

⁶⁰ *Sāramañjarī*, D 27b.7-28a.2; Szántó unpublished, 97.

⁶¹ Not all of the correspondences are identical, of course, given that the *maṇḍala* described in the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī* (and thus in the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*) is that of the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti, not the Guhyasamāja *maṇḍala* present here in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.

⁶² Vaidyapāda specifies that these are the practical instructions (*man ngag*) for the practice (*Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 168a.2-4.) See also *Sāramañjarī*, D 37b.6-38a.3 and Szántó unpublished 125, where Samantabhadra gives the same instructions.

smoke, a bright sky (or fireflies)⁶³, a flickering lamp, and a cloudless sky—that are mentioned in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (verses 196-99) as unfolding in the context of perfection stage practice.⁶⁴ The mention of the appearance of these signs in relation to a practice from the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is again indicative of the overlap between the generation and perfection stages in Buddhajñānapāda’s works.

The next section of the *sādhana* describes the ritual for mantra recitation, in which the practitioner is to acknowledge all phenomena as having the identity of his own mind. Then he meditates on his mind in the form of his mantra—which the commentators indicate to mean his seed-syllable—radiant with light. He emanates this light outwards and uses it to draw back in the forms of the *maṇḍala* deities while reciting the mantra, in connection with the inhalation and exhalation of his breath (132-134b). Then offerings are made “as before,” which the commentators specify as following the same procedure from the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-sāmadhi*, in which the goddesses are drawn into the consort’s lotus and then emanated out of her pores, make offerings to the *tathāgatas*, and then dissolve back into the consort (verse 134c-d). These *tathāgatas* who have received offerings are then gathered back in, and dissolve into the body of the yogin-as-Mañjuvajra, while he experiences the bliss of being joined in union with his consort (verse 135). The *sādhana* specifies that if the practitioner’s body or mind becomes weak or tired through the practice, the consorts, Locanā and the rest, sing songs as before to rouse the practitioner-as-Mañjuvajra, and offerings are again made just as before during the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhī* (verse 136). Then, *bodhicitta* is drawn in by means of the breath, which takes the form of hooked light rays, and made to descend into Vairocana and the rest “according to the ritual” in order to dispel weariness or passion (*kheda*). The commentators describe this ritual of drawing in *bodhicitta* with the breath as involving the visualization of a moon disc the size of a handspan, located a handspan’s height above the practitioner’s head, where the syllable *om* rests above the syllables of the five nectars. The light from these hooks draws in the *tathāgatas* of the five families who dissolve into syllables and melt, and this liquid is then brought down into Vairocana and the other buddhas by means of the hooked light rays of the inhalation and exhalation of the breath, filling their *nāḍīs* and satisfying them (verse 137). The yogin should remain in this practice for a moment, while continually reciting the mantra (verse 138). Having completed these yogas, the practitioner should then make the request for the deities of the wisdom *maṇḍala* to depart by first repeating the offerings and praises (and the tasting of the nectar, adds Vaidyapāda), and then dissolving the *maṇḍala* deities into the syllables *om*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ* (Vaidyapāda gives details on which deities dissolve into which syllables), which syllables then themselves dissolve. According to Vaidyapāda, this dissolution of the *maṇḍala* deities marks the completion of the third of the three *samādhīs*, the *karmarājāgrī-samādhī*, and therefore the formal completion of the practice of the *sādhana* as such (verse 139).⁶⁵ Samantabhadra includes the following section of additional practices within the third *samādhī* and holds that the *karmarājāgrī-samādhī* concludes only after verse 157.⁶⁶

“Branch Practices” Performed Outside of Formal Sessions

⁶³ The *Dvīṭīyakrama* itself (verse 198) reads “like a bright sky” but Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* specifies that this is “like fireflies,” the more common description of this particular sign (*Sukusuma*, D 117b.1-2).

⁶⁴ These same signs are also mentioned in the *Samājottara* (vv. 150cd-151d). Samantabhadra cites the passage on these signs from the *Samājottara* in his commentary (*Sāramañjarī*, D 28a.3-4 Szántó unpublished, 126).

⁶⁵ *Samantabhadra-ṭīkā*, D 170b.3.

⁶⁶ *Sāramañjarī*, D 43b.5-6. Samantabhadra notes that because these various procedures are connected to the *karmarājāgrī-sāmadhi* they are also included therein. This passage absent in the longer Sanskrit recension of the *Sāramañjarī*.

What follow are, according to Vaidyapāda, several “branch practices” that are to be pursued at a number of different occasions outside of the formal practice session. The first of these post-meditative instructions, presumably to be carried out immediately following the final *samādhi*, instructs the practitioner, who has by means of the *sādhana* “seen suchness,”⁶⁷ to make dedications and aspirations toward the liberation of all beings (verse 140). Having thus emerged from the *samādhi*, the practitioner should continue to mentally regard himself in the form of the deity, and to regard his surroundings, likewise, as deities, rather than just as ordinary forms. He should additionally regard all phenomena as being undifferentiated, sharing in the single nature of Vajradhara (verse 141-142). Freed from mistaken conceptuality, he carries out whatever activities ought to be done and constantly makes offerings to the *maṇḍala-cakra* (verse 143). The next instruction is about how to eat, which involves the yogin’s visualizing the seed-syllable at his heart center, incanting food with the syllables *om*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ*, and imagining that while eating he is satisfying the deities with the food. Consuming food is likened to the outer *homa* (the practice of making burnt offerings) but performed now with the mind—a mental *homa*. The *sādhana* then notes that the supreme *homa* is the process by means of which the fire of wisdom consumes the fuel of the aggregates (144-146). Likewise, the text indicates, enjoyment of any of the sense pleasures is to be regarded as making an offering to the deity, and engaging with the sense pleasures in this way is to be understood as a *samaya* (verse 147). The practitioner should engage in all physical and verbal acts while remaining in a state of equipoise (verse 148). In this way, all of his physical and verbal actions become forms of *mudrā* and *mantra* (verse 149). Since different perceptions of a given object arise due to different conceptual states, because the practitioner’s mind is pure, all of his physical and verbal acts are likewise pure (verses 150-151). Next, a series of additional rituals and practices are given. The first of these is the ritual for mending *samaya* if it has been broken (verse 152-153). Then follow the practices for going to sleep (verse 154) and waking in the morning (verse 155). There are instructions on the ritual for receiving accomplishment (*siddhi*) at the conclusion of the practice (156), and the way to avert obstacles during the rite for receiving accomplishment (verse 157).

Conclusion of the Sādhana

Finally, the conclusion to the composition begins by identifying conceptuality as the central cause of *samsāric* suffering. The *sādhana* then states that there is no conceptuality within “that which is by nature profound and exalted,” which the commentators identify as the *maṇḍala-cakra* (verses 158-159). Buddhajñānapāda goes on to describe the process of using a remedy—which the commentators explain to be meditation on the *maṇḍala-cakra*—to counteract its opposing factor, which the commentators identify as *samsāric* suffering. He then advocates meditating upon one’s own nature as Samantabhadra in order to accomplish wisdom instantly (verses 160-162). Finally, Buddhajñānapāda writes two verses dispelling his own pride with regards to the act of composing the *sādhana* (verse 163-164), and a single dedicatory verse, into which—like in many of his works—he has inscribed his own name, Buddhajñāna (verse 165).

Some Notable Features of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*

Two-Stage Generation and Self-Generation as Causal Deities

⁶⁷ Again this reference to the practitioner “seeing suchness” in the context of the *sādhana* uses language that tends, in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, to be connected more to the perfection stage than the generation stage. And, indeed, the *bindu* yogas that have just been performed do seem to constitute perfection stage practices.

The *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, along with its associated commentarial literature, deserves a full study; my outline and summary of the practice above, and my comments here, remain just a preliminary investigation into this material. However, I will address here in brief several features of the *sādhana* that I find notable. The first point of particular interest is the process by means of which the deities are generated in Buddhajñānapāda’s *sādhana*. His is a relatively early example of *sādhana* literature in general, and much work still needs to be done on the process of development of the structure of deity-yoga *sādhana* as a genre. As noted in Chapter Three, the process by which the practitioner is to generate herself in the form of the deity following the tradition of the Yoga tantras is through the *pañcākarābhisambodhi*, the “five manifestations of awakening,” the canonical source for which is the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha-tantra*⁶⁸ (though there is some evidence that the sequence in the tantra is a narrativized version of a previously existing ritual procedure). In the later Yoganiruttara tantras, this generation process was expanded to encompass a two-fold process involving what have come to be called the “causal” (*hetu, rgyu*) and “resultant” (*phala, ‘bras bu*) deities, a process followed in many such later generation stage *sādhanas*. Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is an early example of a *sādhana* that uses this formula of two-fold generation. In the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* the causal deity, together with his consort, is generated by means of the procedure of the *pañcākarābhisambodhi*, just as in earlier Yoga tantra practice, though the procedure is only partially spelled out in the *sādhana*, and one must rely on the commentaries for further details. It is this causal deity and consort who then produce the main deity of the *sādhana* Mañjuvajra, who appears together with his own consort. As already mentioned above, Buddhajñānapāda’s *sādhana* is notable here in that the causal deity is also a self-generation, whereas in the later works of other practice systems the practitioner is instructed to identify only with the resultant, or main, deity of the *sādhana*. This slightly unusual feature, which is, however, preserved in later Jñānapāda School works,⁶⁹ may be a further indication that the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is one of the earlier *sādhanas* to use this method of causal and resultant deity generation, since the idea of the resultant deity as being somehow self-produced—produced by a causal deity with whom the yogin already identifies—is slightly awkward compared to the later and more streamlined version of the process where the progenitor deities are not visualized as oneself, but oneself-as-deity is generated or “born” from them. However, this self-identification with both the progenitor deities as well as the resultant deities does fit well with Buddhajñānapāda’s assertion that the entirety of the phenomenal world is nothing other than nondual wisdom, which is itself the nature of the practitioner’s own mind. From this doctrinal perspective, which emphasizes the singular awakened nature of the outer world and the practitioner’s own mind, the practitioner’s identification with both the progenitor deities as well as the resultant deities is unproblematic, and even fitting.

Purifying Sentient Beings and the Inanimate World as Deity

What follows the self-generation of the practitioner as the causal deities is a sequence in which sentient beings are drawn into the visualized *maṇḍala* at the causal deities’ point of union, purified, and then emanated back out in a purified form. This is another process that appears to

⁶⁸ As noted in Chapter Three, these five processes are clearly present in the *tantra*, but the term *pañcākarābhisambodhi* itself is not found there. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for pointing out to me the fact that the term itself does not appear in the tantra.

⁶⁹ See Schwind 2012, 76. As I also noted above, this feature of self-identification with the causal deity is also seen in several *sādhanas* preserved at Dunhuang. However in those *sādhanas* the practitioner then somehow “steps back out of that form to be absorbed back into it and become the resultant deity” (Jacob Dalton, personal communication).

be unique to Buddhajñānapāda's system.⁷⁰ As I have already briefly described in the summary of the *sādhana* above, in this part of the visualization, first all of the buddhas are first drawn into the causal deity, and all of the female deities of the *maṇḍala* are emanated out and absorbed back into the causal deity's consort. Presumably this serves to consecrate, in some sense, the causal deities, identifying them with all buddhas and buddha consorts, as well as expressing the ultimate identity of the buddhas and the buddha consorts, themselves. A *maṇḍala* of *bodhicitta* then emerges from the causal deity's vajra into the consort's lotus, and all sentient beings are mentally ushered into that *maṇḍala*. The *tathāgatas* then enter the same *maṇḍala* in the form of *bodhicitta*, via the causal deity's vajra, and confer initiation upon sentient beings there. As I described above, the *sādhana* itself states only that the deities of the *maṇḍala*—with the exception of Mañjuvajra, his consort, and the four gate guardians, and with the addition of the six *bodhisattvas* who are not deities of the *maṇḍala* proper, but instead are installed on the sense organs of all the *maṇḍala* deities—are to be emitted from this *maṇḍala* by means of their seed syllables. The commentaries, however, explain that the deities being emitted from this *maṇḍala* are none other than the very same sentient beings who entered the *maṇḍala*, were purified through their consecration by the *tathāgatas*, and thereby transformed into deities. According to the commentaries, the sentient beings who have entered into the *maṇḍala* first dissolve into *bodhicitta*, then transform into syllables, and then into symbolic implements, and finally into deities, in which form they are emanated out from this *maṇḍala*, presumably back into the world from whence they came (though our commentators are silent on this latter point of their destination). The groups of deities emanated out from the *maṇḍala* are described in the *sādhana* as the pure forms (*viśuddhi*) of a series of sets of phenomena—the sense organs, sensory objects, elements, and aggregates—that amount to the entirety of the constituent parts of beings, and indeed of the entire world. Vaidyapāda's commentary gives more details about the process of this transformation: beings' sense organs dissolve into *bodhicitta* and emerge as Kṣitigarbha and the others of the six *bodhisattvas* (who, in the *sādhana* itself are installed in those sense organs of the *maṇḍala* deities); form (as a sensory object) and the rest of the sense objects dissolve into *bodhicitta* and emerge as Rupavajrā and the rest of the six sense-object goddesses; the earth and the rest of the four great elements dissolve into *bodhicitta* and emerge as Locanā and the others among the four buddha consorts; the aggregate of form (or matter, *rūpa*) and the rest of the five aggregates dissolve into *bodhicitta* and emerge as Vairocana and the others of the five *tathāgatas*.⁷¹ This process involves a purification of each of the constituent parts that make up beings—their aggregates and sense organs—along with the entire inanimate world—the elements and sensory objects—such that all of those constituent parts, and thereby those beings, and that world, re-emerge in the form of deities. This is, in effect, a ritual enactment of the doctrine, articulated in Chapter 17 (vv. 51-52) of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, that makes precisely the same equation of the buddhas with the aggregates, the consorts with the elements, and the *bodhisattvas* with the sense faculties that is made in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, and on which the *sādhana*'s statements are certainly based.⁷²

⁷⁰ At least I, myself, have not seen this feature elsewhere and its being unusual was confirmed to me by both Jacob Dalton (personal communication) and Harunaga Isaacson (personal communication), neither of whom are familiar with its being used in other *sādhana*s.

⁷¹ I have, in this section on the *viśuddhi* of the deities, closely paraphrased Vaidyapāda's *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 145a.7-145b.2. See also Samantabhadra's *Sāramañjarī* (D 16b.5-17a.5; Szántó unpublished 48-50), which describes essentially the same process. Vaidyapāda is clearer in some places, Samantabhadra in others.

⁷² The six goddesses and their associate with the sense objects are not mentioned in the *tantra*, but their very names—Rupavajrā (“Vajra Form”), etc.—make their association with the sense objects clear. The absence of Mañjuvajra and consort among the deities that are emitted in this process is consonant with the fact that the yogin himself will emerge as Mañjuvajra in the next process of the *sādhana*, and the omission of the wrathful gate

Linking Deity Generation to Human Reproduction

While the generation of the main deity, Mañjuvajra, proceeds by means of the usual method for *sādhana*s that employ a two-step generation process, as I noted above the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is important as an early representative that employs the method of double-generation. The procedure involves the practitioner visualizing his own mind—described in the commentaries as the mind in the intermediate-state (*antarabhava*) between death and rebirth—in the form of syllables (in this case *oṃ āḥ hūṃ*) enters into the causal deity through his mouth, is emitted into the consort’s lotus and melts into *bodhicitta*. Due to their state of passion, the two causal deities themselves melt into a *bindu* of *bodhicitta*. They are roused back into form with songs of passionate (yet soteriologically-oriented) longing, sung by each of the four buddha consorts, in turn.⁷³ The process by means of which the resultant deities, Mañjuvajra and consort, emerge from this *bindu* is explained much more simply in the *sādhana* itself than in the commentaries. The *sādhana* states that light rays from the seed-syllable *maṃ* turn all of the buddhas into forms of Mañjuvajra, which are dissolved into the practitioner, who thus instantly becomes Mañjuvajra. The commentarial tradition explains the emergence of the practitioner-as-deity as taking place through the five-stage process of the *pañcākarābhisambodhi*, through which the causal deities were previously generated.⁷⁴

In any case, the generation of the practitioner-as-deity from the pair of causal deities in the two-step generation process, as well as the generation of the *maṇḍala* deities from the point of union of Mañjuvajra and consort, very clearly augments the non-sexualized generation process of the *pañcākarābhisambodhi* from the Yoga tantras with a sexualized generation process that mimics the process of human reproduction. As such, this two-fold generation procedure, which we find in *sādhana*s starting from the *Guhyasamāja* tradition onwards, marks an important development in the structure of tantric *sādhana*. The fact that deities in these newer tantric systems were commonly depicted in sexual union allowed for this direct homologizing of the process of self-visualization as the deity with the process of human reproduction. In fact, Śākyamitra’s *Mukhāgama*—which is clearly based on, but not identical to, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, and which, according to Śākyamitra, follows Buddhajñānapāda’s oral instructions—structures the process of *sādhana* within the framework of the unfolding of the twelve links of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) that characterize the stages of the process of rebirth within *samsāra*, making the connection of the generation stage with reproduction and birth even more explicit.⁷⁵ Earlier Buddhist traditions explained that the process of the twelve links needed to be reversed or severed in order to free the practitioner of the bonds of *samsāra*; Śākyamitra’s relating the twelve links—in their ordinary forward

guardians may perhaps be due to their identification as wrathful forms of compassionate wisdom; it might be unseemly for ordinary sentient beings—even purified ones—to appear in the forms of compassionate wrath.

⁷³ As noted above, these are GST 17.46-49.

⁷⁴ It is unclear whether this represents a development in the ritual tradition between the composition of the *sādhana* and the composition of its commentaries—the usual process in later *sādhana*s does indeed repeat the sequence of the *pañcākarābhisambodhi* here—or whether the use of the *pañcākarābhisambodhi* generation process for the resultant deities, as well, is part of the oral tradition dating back to Buddhajñānapāda himself. Both of these possibilities are tenable; *sādhana*s as a genre—especially in when composed in verse—frequently abbreviate or omit details that are assumed knowledge, which is usually passed down through an oral or textual commentarial tradition.

⁷⁵ Tanaka 2009 states that this feature of dividing the *sādhana* in to the twelve links of dependent origination is also shared with the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, but I have seen no evidence of this either in the *sādhana* nor in the commentarial tradition. Tanaka gives, in this work, a summary of the process of deity generation as connected to the twelve links based on the *Mukhāgama*, with additional reference to these twelve processes according to the *Abhidharmakośa*. I am grateful to Dr. Tanaka for sharing with me his as-yet-unpublished English translation of Chapter Five of his 2009 book, which was originally published in Japanese.)

progression, not reversed—to the process of generating the deity and the *maṇḍala* indicates that the generation stage was seen as a method for freeing the practitioner from the bondage of *samsāra* precisely by re-enacting the very same stages by which he is normally bound in *samsāra* in a pure manner, resulting in the generation of a pure wisdom deity rather than an impure sentient being.⁷⁶

The Philosophy Section

Another notable feature of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is the philosophical excursus that occurs in the context of the *bindu* yogas towards the end of the *sādhana*. As I mentioned above, such an extensive philosophical investigation is not common in a *sādhana*. Moreover, when more abbreviated philosophical reflections do occur in *sādhana* literature—which is not terribly uncommon—they are usually found at the beginning of a *sādhana* at the point where the practitioner is to bring to mind emptiness prior to generating herself as the deity.⁷⁷ In that more common case, the philosophical reflections function as a sort of analytical meditation meant to assist the practitioner in bringing about an experiential sense of emptiness out of which the deity and entire *maṇḍala* are to be generated. At that earlier point in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, we may recall, Buddhajñānapāda included a single verse (verse 18) about the three gates of liberation, presumably meant to assist the practitioner in bringing to mind the empty nature of phenomena prior to reciting the mantra *om śūnyatājñānavajrasvabhāvātmake* ‘ham and visualizing the emergence of the *maṇḍala* out of the state of emptiness. Here, however, in the context of the *bindu* yogas, he has included eleven verses (verses 110-120) refuting the existence of materially existent outer phenomena, as well as an inner apprehending consciousness or mind that could perceive them. The verses also state that the mere reversal of the concept of self constitutes the purification of the *samsāric* state and emphasize the identity of *samsāra* and *nirvāna* from the perspective of their ultimate nature. As noted above, Vaidyapāda explains that the function of these verses is to help the practitioner overcome the concern that, were the world materially existent, it would be impossible for all appearance and existence to enter into the *bindu*;⁷⁸ Samantabhadra’s explanation of the verses’ function is very similar.⁷⁹ It seems, then, that these verses in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* were meant to serve as a kind of philosophical justification, underpinning, or support for the practices of the *bindu* yogas of the “perfection stage of the generation stage” found in the *sādhana* (and perhaps also for the practices of the “generation stage of the perfection stage” in the *Dvīṭyākrama* and *Muktilaka*, as well). In the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* Buddhajñānapāda sets forth a philosophically-based defense of the practice of deity yoga against an unidentified interlocutor who suggests that deity yoga amounts to nothing more than the superimposition of the idea of the form of a buddha on the body of the practitioner, a position that Buddhajñānapāda rejects.⁸⁰ Here in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, then, it seems that Buddhajñānapāda

⁷⁶ Tanaka 2009 suggests that it was Buddhajñānapāda who “introduced sexology into the visualization of the *maṇḍala*.” The *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is the earliest *sādhana* of which I am aware to use this two-stage generation process that employs the causal and resultant deities, but I am hesitant to attribute such a significant development in the process of *sādhana* to a single individual. There are, for example, *sādhana*s at Dunhuang that also use this model, and which seem to represent a pre-Buddhajñānapāda stage of development, or at least to show no knowledge of a distinction between the Jñānapāda and Ārya Schools (Jacob Dalton, personal communication).

⁷⁷ See Isaacson 2007, 292.

⁷⁸ *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 161a.3-4.

⁷⁹ *Sāramañjarī*, D 27b.7-28a.2; Szántó unpublished, 97.

⁸⁰ The body *maṇḍala* debate between Khedrub Je and Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo in 15th-century Tibet studied by Yael Bentor (2015) and Rae Dachille (2015) appears to be a debate over a very similar question some six centuries later. Thanks to Jacob Dalton for drawing my attention to this.

is providing a similar set of philosophically-based arguments (some of them, in fact, parallel to those found in a different section of the *Ātmasādhanaāvātāra*) for the practices of the *bindu* yogas in his practice system. A key aspect of these arguments, which is again mentioned later in the *sādhana* in the section on *mantra* recitation (verse 132), is the fact that all phenomena must be understood as being nothing other than the practitioner’s mind.

Perfection Stage Yogas in “Generation Stage” Sādhana

Yet another noteworthy aspect of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* that was already mentioned above is the inclusion in the *sādhana* of *bindu* yogas that seem clearly to be related, in some manner, to the perfection stage. It is possible that Vaidyapāda may be referring to precisely these *bindu* yogas from the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* when he identifies the second of the two aspects of the generation stage mentioned by Buddhajñānapāda in the *Muktilaka* as the “perfection stage of the generation stage.” The section of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in which the *bindu* yogas appear is the third of the three *samādhis*, the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi*. There are, in fact, several indications that the practice of the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi*, or at least part of that *samādhi*, may have been considered in Buddhajñānapāda’s system to relate or pertain to the perfection stage. One of these indications is found, not in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, but in the *Dvītyākrama*. In that text, just before the instructions on the three *bindu* yogas, we find five verses (vv. 156-160) that summarize the practice of the generation stage, but only up through the practices included in the second *samādhi*, the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi*. Vaidyapāda’s commentary confirms this reading of these verses, identifying which of the practices mentioned in the verses pertain to each of the first two *samādhis*.⁸¹ The verses culminate in the injunction for the practitioner to “accustom oneself to this through training”—which Vaidyapāda explains as meaning “to apply oneself assiduously to the two yogas,”⁸² still referring, presumably, to the first two *samādhis*. The *Dvītyākrama* goes immediately on to explain that having so trained, this the practitioner should then “train in the ultimate suchness/ That is the buddhas’ supreme sphere of experience,”⁸³ and proceeds with the instructions for the three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage. Given that the generation stage instructions given in these verses correspond with the practices of only the first two among the three *samādhis*, the *samādhi* that would logically follow to encompass the *bindu* yoga practices would be the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi*. And, indeed, that third *samādhi* is precisely where we see seen the *bindu* yogas in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, albeit in significantly more abbreviated form than those found in the *Dvītyākrama*. Vaidyapāda introduces the *bindu* yogas of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*’s *karmarājāgrī-samādhi* writing, “In order for the yogin, who has in the [preceding] manner perfected the *maṇḍala-cakra*, to bring his mind under control by means of training in suchness, the greatest of [all] great things, he [i.e. Buddhajñānapāda] teaches the *bindu* yoga.”⁸⁴ As we saw in Chapter Three, “training in suchness” is a term that in Buddhajñānapāda’s practice system, is generally used to describe the second stage of tantric practice.

Taken together, these passages suggest that in Buddhajñānapāda’s system the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi* served as the place where perfection stage practices—whether the “perfection stage of the generation stage” or “the generation stage of the perfection stage”—were

⁸¹ *Sukusuma*, 114a.1-7; P 137a-137b.4.

⁸² *De la goms pa bslabs pas zhes pa ni sbyor ba gnyis la nan tan du byas pas zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 114a.7-b.1; P 137b.5)

⁸³ *sangs rgyas rnam kyī spyod yul mchog// mtha’ yi de nyid bsgom par bya//* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 161b-c).

⁸⁴ *de liar dkyil ‘khor gyi ‘khor lo rdzogs pa’i rnal ‘byor bas/ che ba’i che ba de kho na nyid bsgoms pas sems dbang du bya ba’i phyir thig le’i sbyor ba gsungs pa/* (*Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 160b-7-161a.1).

integrated into the already established system of deity yoga. This resulted in a system in which the two modes of practice appear not to have been practiced in isolation, but in an integrated way where the first two *samādhis* of the generation stage served as the framework for perfection stage practices that were integrated as part of the third *samādhi*. Since the *bindu* yoga practices in the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi* of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* are simpler, while the practices of the first two *samādhis* in that *sādhana* are more elaborate, it is possible that this style of combining the two stages was emphasized for a practitioner towards the beginning of his practice. The more elaborate *bindu* yogas in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and the *Muktītilaka* may have been combined with a simplified version of the first two *samādhis*, similar to their brief summary in verses 156-160 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, for a more advanced practitioner whose practice then emphasized the more elaborated yogas of the perfection stage. These comments are merely speculative, but they are based in part on later perfection stage practice manuals that often involve a more simplified form of generation; none of the early works of the Jñānapāda School are, to my knowledge, explicit about how a yogin should employ the variety of practices available in that tradition at various stages in his development as a practitioner.

As I discussed above, the slight overlap of perfection stage practices into the generation stage may be reflective of the fact that the two stages were being newly distinguished at the time when Buddhajñānapāda's system was developed. However, the inclusion of *bindu* yogas in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* also brings up the issue of whether or not these *bindu* yogas were meant to be practiced while in sexual union with a partner—and the description of at least the *sūkṣma* yoga suggests that it was—which also raises the question of which initiations would have been necessary for the practitioner to engage in this *sādhana*. As I will discuss further in Chapter Seven, the initiation rituals as described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* suggest that the *kalaśābhiṣeka* may have been bestowed in a separate ritual context from the *guhya*- and *prajñājñānābhiṣekhas*, but the presence of these *bindu* yogas in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* might suggest otherwise. Indeed, given the *bindu* yogas that form what appears to be an integral part of the *sādhana*, it seems unlikely that the *kalaśābhiṣekha* alone would have sufficed for the practice of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.

The Development of Generation Stage *Sādhana*: Some Conclusions

This brief look at the generation stage in Buddhajñānapāda's writings, with a focus on the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, serves as an indication that we still have a lot to learn about the development of *sādhana* as a *genre*, and even about a topic as basic as the division of tantric practices into two stages, and precisely what constitutes those stages according to different authors. As one of the earliest surviving authored *sādhanas*, Buddhajñānapāda's work is an early example of many features of generation stage *sādhana*, and a more detailed study of his system—especially in relation to the *sādhana*-like sections found in the writings of earlier authors, like the fifth chapter of Vilāsavajra's *Nāmamantrārthaloḥkāviṇī*, and to the *sādhanas* of later authors—would further facilitate our understanding of the development of the *genre*. More study on the relationship between individual *sādhanas* and the tantras that provide their bases and on which they clearly draw would also be illuminating.

For Buddhajñānapāda himself it seems that the generation stage served as the ritual framework for the practice of the perfection stage, which was, in his perspective, the real vehicle leading to awakening. But his attention to the details of the generation stage and his composition of multiple generation stage *sādhanas* indicates that it was a very important framework, and one that could also be used to accomplish other aims. Indeed, while the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-*

sādhana contains perfection-stage-style *bindu yoga* and *sūkṣma yoga* practices, Buddhajñānapāda's other shorter generation stage *sādhana*s do not. These shorter *sādhana*s, especially the three *sādhana*s of the wealth deity Jambhala, seem more focused on the use of the *sādhana* as a framework for the application of tantric rites for accomplishing more worldly aims, like the production of wealth. But even the short Heruka *sādhana*, which lacks such rituals for the accomplishment of worldly aims, is also free from any overtly perfection-stage-oriented practices. It thus appears that Buddhajñānapāda may have regarded the generation stage as having multiple functions, both the more ordinary and worldly function of achieving a variety of desired aims, as well as serving as a framework for the liberative practices of the perfection stage. Let us now turn our focus back to the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka* and take a look at some of the details of the perfection stage practices that Buddhajñānapāda sets forth in those works.

Chapter Six The Ultimate Path to Awakening: The Perfection Stage in Buddhajñānapāda's Writings

In the space of the lotus, the jewel of the vajra and the heart of the lotus join, and in vajra posture the mind is observed within the jewel. The bliss that arises is ascertained—that itself is wisdom. This is explained by all of the genuine supreme gurus to be the perfection stage.

-Mañjuśrī's instructions to Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

The second stage of tantric practice, the perfection stage, was extremely important for Buddhajñānapāda; he indicates at multiple places in his writings that it is *only* by relying on this “second stage” that a practitioner is able to reach full awakening. As I have already discussed in Chapter Five, Buddhajñānapāda was among the early authors to make a distinction between the two stages of tantric practice and thus to use the term “perfection stage.” His writings therefore give us a window into how this second stage was understood and practiced in the earliest period of its development within the tantric Buddhist tradition. In this chapter I will first examine a bit more closely the way that the term “perfection stage” and its synonym, the “second stage,” are used in Buddhajñānapāda's writings. I will then take a look at some of the perfection stage practices that he outlines, primarily in the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka*, as well as the way in which Buddhajñānapāda relates these practices to the schema of three blisses (his system lists only three, rather than the four blisses of later tantric traditions) that are said to arise in the context of these practices, and to three among the six branches of the classic “six branch yoga” (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) that are mentioned in his writings. Then, because the perfection stage practices in his system primarily consist of sexual yogas that involve practice with a partner, I will also examine what Buddhajñānapāda has to say on the topic of the tantric consort and reflect about the way that the tradition of *kāmasāstra* appears to have influenced his writings (and perhaps vice versa!). Finally, I will briefly discuss the practice of *utkrānti*, the yogic “ejection of consciousness” at the moment of death, for which the *Dvītyākrama* is an early Buddhist source, and which that text specifies as a practice appropriate for yogins who have already been introduced to the suchness of the perfection stage. But before we get into the details of the perfection stage practices outlined in Buddhajñānapāda's writings, let us first look carefully at how he uses the terms “perfection stage” and “second stage” in his *oeuvre*, so that we begin with a clearer understanding of what these terms meant for him.

The “Perfection Stage,” or the “Second Stage,” in Buddhajñānapāda's Writings

As I noted in Chapter Five, the term “perfection stage” in tantric Buddhist traditions has come to be used in two different ways. One is to refer to yogic practices that involve the manipulation of the internal winds and *bindus* within the channels that are held to constitute part of the practitioner's subtle body, as a means for cultivating the direct experience of suchness itself. The second is to refer to the cultivation of the direct experience of suchness which, in some later traditions of Mahāmudrā and the Great Perfection is said to be done without reliance on such yogic techniques, or even without any technique at all. In the later Tibetan tradition these two different aspects are referred to by the terms “perfection stage with characteristics” (*rdzogs rim mtshan bcas*) and “perfection stage without characteristics” (*rdzogs rim mtshan med*). In his writings, however, Buddhajñānapāda uses the term “perfection stage” synonymously with the

term “second stage,” primarily to refer not to the *method* by means of which suchness is cultivated—which in the case of his practice system is the *bindu* yogas performed with a partner—but rather to refer directly to the experience of suchness itself.¹

The term “perfection stage” appears four times in the *Muktilaka* and three times in the *Dvītyakrama*, while the “second stage” is used eight times in the *Dvītyakrama*, and not at all in the *Muktilaka*. The first appearance of the term “perfection stage” in the *Dvītyakrama* is in reference to wisdom that is experienced by the disciple in reliance upon the sexual bliss of the third initiation. The text stages:

In the space of the lotus, the jewel of the vajra and the heart of the lotus join, and in vajra posture

The mind is observed within the jewel. The bliss that arises is ascertained, and that itself is wisdom. |124|

This is explained by all of the genuine supreme gurus to be the perfection stage.²

Later in the *Dvītyakrama*, “the perfection stage” is given as one among a list of the names of suchness, immediately after “the ultimate truth.”³ The third use of the term in the *Dvītyakrama* makes reference to the “yogin of the perfection stage,” who is equated with “the supreme Vajradhara.”⁴ As was discussed in the previous chapter, it is in the *Muktilaka* that Buddhajñānapāda sets forth the distinction between the two stages of tantric practice. In his presentation of the perfection stage in that text, he notes that it has two aspects, one of which he identifies further as the “perfection stage of the perfection stage.” Buddhajñānapāda equates this “perfection stage of the perfection stage” with the seven yogas, which, as we have seen in Chapter Three, are seven aspects of the final result of awakening, and therefore correspond to suchness.⁵ All of the references to “the perfection stage” in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings thus

¹ One might be tempted to equate this usage with the later Tibetan term “perfection stage without characteristics” (*rdzogs rim mtshan med*), but the latter term, I believe, is used in contrast to the “perfection stage with characteristics” (*rdzogs rim mtshan bcas*) specifically to distinguish the *methods* (or lack thereof) by means of which suchness is cultivated—in the “perfection stage without characteristics” type of practices of the Great Perfection the “method” is considered to be precisely the absence of any method or act of cultivating suchness.

² *padma'i mkha' la rdo rje nor bu pad snying gnyis la 'byor dang rdo rje skyil krung sems/ nor bu'i bar du mthong byas gang de bde ba 'byung ba nges par de nyid ye shes te/ |124| 'di ni rdzogs pa'i rim pa yin par bla ma mchog rnam kun gyis yang dag bshad/ (Dvītyakrama, 124c-125a).* While I believe that the text is quite clear here in identifying the wisdom of suchness itself with the perfection stage, it may be worth noting that Tsongkhapa likewise seems to have read this passage in a similar way. In his *Lamp to Illuminate the Five Stages*, in what I believe to be a reference to precisely this passage in the *Dvītyakrama* he writes, “This is like Buddhaśrījñāna’s *Oral Teachings of Mañjuśrī* explaining that the innate wisdom that arises in a similar way during initiations, before meditation on the path has begun, is the completion stage” (Kilty 2013, 532). The first two lines of the passage I have cited here are themselves cited—with some variant readings—in a number of other tantric texts, in some of which the verse is attributed to the *Paramādyā-tantra*, though Isaacson and Sferra (2014, 297 n 239) note that it is not found in any of the surviving recensions of that tantra. *C.f.* *Abhayapaddhati* (MS A fol. 15v2), the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 185), the *Kriyāsaṅgrahapañjikā* (Sakurai 1996, 514) and the *Yamāritantraṃḍalopāyikā* (fol. 24r.3), and the *Amṅāyamañjarī* (D 68b.1-2). This list of sources is given by Isaacson and Sferra (2014, 297 n 239) in reference to the verse’s citation in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*; the page numbers I have given here are those provided in Isaacson and Sferra’s citation, and include sources that I, myself, have not looked at. The interested reader is therefore directed to Isaacson and Sferra’s bibliography for further details). I address this verse further below in terms of its relevance to the three blisses in Buddhajñānapāda’s perfection stage system.

³ *don dam pa yi bden pa dang/ rdzogs pa yi ni rim pa dang/ (Dvītyakrama, v 276c-d).*

⁴ *bdag po rdo rje 'chang ba mchog/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa'i rnal 'byor pa/ (Dvītyakrama, v 293c-d).*

⁵ *rnam par dag pa sbyor ba bdun/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa rdzogs rim ste/ (Muktilaka, D 52a.3; P 62b.2).*

Vaidyapāda’s commentary on this passage names the other aspect of the perfection stages as the “generation stage of the perfection stage,” which he identifies with the three *bindu* yogas. This “generation stage of the perfection stage” amounts to a use of the term “perfection stage” in a way that corresponds more closely with what came to be called the “perfection stage with aspects” (*mtshan bcas rdzogs rim*) in the later Tibetan tradition; that is, it refer to the

seem to use the term to indicate not the practices by means of which suchness is experienced, but rather the actual experience of suchness itself.

The term “the second stage” is used more frequently in the *Dvīṭyākrama* than the term “the perfection stage,” most prominently, of course, in the title of that text: *The Oral Instructions on Training in the Suchness of the Second Stage*. This term, too, seems most often to be used to reference the direct experience of suchness itself, though there is a single instance where Buddhajñānapāda uses the term the “second stage” to refer to the techniques of perfection stage practice, as well. As I already discussed in Chapter Three, the phrase “the suchness of the second stage” is equated in the *Dvīṭyākrama* with reality itself, but several references to “the second stage” in the *Dvīṭyākrama* indicate that Buddhajñānapāda likewise understands the term “the second stage” alone to also be synonymous with suchness. For example,

The method for training in the second stage

Is the meditation upon the indestructible *bindu*.⁶ |271|

In this instance it is clear that “the second stage” refers to suchness itself, since the *bindu* meditation is explicitly described as the “method for training” in that. Later in the *Dvīṭyākrama*, after listing all of the synonyms of suchness (one of which, as noted above, is “the perfection stage”) Buddhajñānapāda advises:

Therefore, with a mind that has already [generated] faith,

Genuinely maintain the nature of all phenomena,

The profound, luminous nondual great reality,

The suchness of the second stage, |283|

Which has been taught by the guru.

Maintaining this, by means of the previously-described procedures,

The individual who constantly habituates himself to it

Based on this [practice] will give rise to the signs |284|

As if leaping from *bhūmi* to *bhūmi*!⁷

Here the instruction to “maintain” the “suchness of the second stage” by means of the “previously-described procedures,” which in this case refers to the procedures of the three *bindu* yogas that were just described in the text, again suggests that “the second stage” refers directly to suchness itself. This suchness, according to the passage, is what is to be maintained by means of the *bindu* yogas, which here would (like in the above passage) constitute the methods for maintaining or cultivating that suchness. As I suggested already in Chapter Three, I believe we should understand the genitive relationship in the phrase the “suchness of the second stage” (and thus the relationship of the two terms in the Sanskrit compound) (*rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid, *dvīṭyākramatattva*) to be appositional, and thus to mean “the suchness which is the second stage.”

Another verse from the *Dvīṭyākrama* likewise equates “the second stage” with wisdom itself:

Having come to fully understand this,

[One knows] the universal form of the wisdom of the great perfection,

yogas that are meant to bring about the experience of suchness itself, rather than directly to that experience of suchness. It is possible—perhaps even likely—that Buddhajñānapāda himself intended this “generation stage of the perfection stage” as the other aspect of the perfection stage, and thus may also have used the term “perfection stage” in this sense, as referring to the yogic practices that help to bring about the experience of suchness. However, he does not indicate this directly in his own writings.

⁶ *rim pa gnyis pa bsgom pa'i thabs// mi shigs thig le bsgom pa'o//* |271| (*Dvīṭyākrama*, 271e-f.)

⁷ *de bas dad pa sngon 'gro ba'i// sems kyis chos kun de bzhin nyid// zab gsal gnyis med don chen po// rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na//* |283| *bla ma'i gsung ni yang dag gzung// de gzung gong ma'i rim pa yis// rtag tu goms byed skyes bu gang// de la brten pa'i rtags skyes nas//* |285| *sa nas sar ni 'phar ba ltar//* (*Dvīṭyākrama*, 283a-285a).

The perfectly pure body, Great Vajradhara,
 The essence of all the great glorious ones, this second stage.⁸ |391|⁹
 Vaidyapāda’s commentary is explicit that “the second stage,” which he identifies as “the perfection stage alone,” is synonymous with all of the other terms listed in this verse.¹⁰ One further verse also seems to identify the “second stage” with suchness:

The sphere of the buddhas’ *nirvāna*
 The unborn vajra, manifest awakening,
 The supreme essence of all *sugatas*,
 This great nondual nonconceptual reality
 Is explained as¹¹ the second stage. |34|

As I discussed in Chapter Three, the last lines of this verse could equally well be translated as “This great nondual nonconceptual reality/ Is explained *in* the second stage.” But while nondual reality is certainly explained in the teachings on the second stage, I think that given the other references in the *Dvitiyakrama* that directly equate suchness with “the second stage” it is better to understand this verse to likewise state that nondual reality “is explained *as* the second stage.” Vaidyapāda’s comments on this verse also give three synonyms for “the second stage:” he says it is also called the “spontaneously arisen stage” (*lhan cig skyes pa’i rim pa*), the “perfection stage” (*rdzogs pa’i rim pa*), and the “stage of [things] just as they are” (*ji bzhin pa’i rim pa*).¹²

There is a single use of the term “the second stage” in the *Dvitiyakrama* that suggests Buddhajñānapāda may have also employed this term to sometimes refer to the techniques of practice that are meant to bring about the experience of suchness, rather than as referring directly to the experience of suchness itself.¹³ That verse reads as follows:

Here in the second stage, the practitioner
 Practices one-pointed retention.¹⁴

The fact that this verse makes reference to practices done “*in* the second stage” suggests that the “stage” here is meant to refer to the procedures of perfection stage practice, as opposed to the experience of suchness, as the term otherwise seems to be used in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings.

⁸ rim gnyis ‘di (‘di] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), ‘dis D C P N S). Vaidyapāda clearly indicates that *rim gnyis ‘di* is to be understood as the “second stage,” the perfection stage (or, according to P, the “perfection stage of the perfection stage”) only, rather than to the “two stages.” (*Sukusuma*, D 137b.7-138a.1; P 166a.5). I have translated in accordance with his comments, somewhat (but not completely unfeasibly; *rim gnyis* could very easily be an abbreviation of *rim pa gnyis pa* made for metrical reasons) against the grain of the grammar of the Tibetan translation of the verse, which would otherwise be more easily read as the “two stages.” Also, given that the topic of the verse is wisdom, “the second stage” is really the only reading that makes sense here.

⁹ *de ltar rab tu shes par byas nas su// rdzogs pa chen po ye shes spyi yi gzugs// yongs su dag sku rdo rje ‘chang chen po// dpal ldan kun gyi ngo bo rim gnyis ‘di//* |391| (*Dvitiyakrama*, vese 391).

¹⁰ *de nyid la rim pa gnyis ‘di zhes te rdzogs pa’i rim pa* (pa] D, *pa’i rdzogs pa’i rim pa* P) *de kho na zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 137b.7-138a.1; P 136a.5). Note that P reads “the perfection stage of the perfection stage alone.”

¹¹ *rim pa gnyis par*.

¹² *Sukusuma*, D 96b.6-7; P 116a.5.

¹³ Vaidyapāda definitely uses the term in this way at times. For instance, in a passage of his *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* cited in Chapter Three in which Vaidyapāda comments on the verses on the *Muktilaka* where Buddhajñānapāda discusses the two stages, Vaidyapāda identifies the two aspects of the perfection stage as the “generation stage of the perfection stage” and the “perfection stage of the perfection stage.” The former, which he defines as the three *bindu* yogas, clearly uses the term perfection stage to refer to the yogic methods used for cultivating suchness. The “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” however, Vaidyapāda equates with suchness itself (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 38b.2-3; P 366b.5-6).

¹⁴ *rim pa gnyis ‘dir sgrub pa po// rtse gcig pa yis rnam par gzung//* (*Dvitiyakrama*, 324a-b). In fact, this line in the Tibetan more literally reads “Here in these *two stages*...” rather than “in this second stage.” However, the context of the passage makes it much more likely that what is meant here is the “second stage.” I suspect that the Tibetan translation reads *gnyis* rather than *gnyis pa* here simply for metrical reasons.

However, it is also possible to understand the locative particle in the verse as topical—i.e. “With regard to the second stage/ The practitioner practices one-pointed retention”—in which case the second stage could still be understood as referring not to practice techniques, but again to suchness itself. In either case, this brief survey of the ways in which Buddhajñānapāda uses the terms “the perfection stage” and “the second stage” clearly shows that, for him, their primary referent is not the method by means of which a yogin trains in cultivating suchness, but rather that very suchness itself.¹⁵

Perfection Stage Practices in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Oeuvre*

As should be evident from the sources cited in the above discussion on terminology, it is only in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Dvītyākrama* and *Muktilaka* that we find direct mention of the perfection stage or the second stage. Likewise, it is in these two texts that we find details of the perfection stage practices according to his system. Indeed, these two works are identified in the later Tibetan tradition and in modern scholarship as presenting the perfection stage practices of Buddhajñānapāda’s system, while the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is understood to set forth the generation stage procedures according to his system. However, as discussed in Chapter Five, some of the practices outlined in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* appear to be less complex versions of several of the very same yogas delineated in *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka*, and the Indic commentaries on the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* discuss these practices in ways that make reference to signs of accomplishment ordinarily connected with perfection stage practice. A study of the perfection stage practices of Buddhajñānapāda’s system must therefore also take the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* into account. Generally speaking, the *Dvītyākrama* provides the most detailed presentation of the perfection stage practices described in Buddhajñānapāda’s *oeuvre*. In fact, there is not a single perfection stage practice referenced in any of his other writings, including the *Muktilaka*, that is not presented in significantly more detail in the *Dvītyākrama*. Yet even the *Dvītyākrama*’s presentation of some of these practices is difficult to follow without reference to the commentarial tradition.

The perfection stage yogas in Buddhajñānapāda’s system—or, to more closely mirror his own use of the term, the yogas by means of which one trains in the perfection stage—consist primarily of a set of three “*bindu* yogas,” outlined in both the *Dvītyākrama* and the *Muktilaka*. As I noted above, a simplified version of two of these yogas are also found in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*. In the *Dvītyākrama*, these practices are described in verses 156-271, amounting to more than a quarter of that work’s total content. It is worth considering the context of the verses describing the perfection stage yogas within this text because, while the *Dvītyākrama*’s content does include quite a diversity of topics, there is a coherent progression in the text’s overall narrative into which the perfection stage practices fit. I described the contents of the *Dvītyākrama* in more detail in Chapter Two (and, of course, the entire *Dvītyākrama* is translated in Part II of this dissertation). What follows here is just a very brief summary, intended to indicate the way in which the perfection stage practices fit within the overall structure of the text, because this also indicates how they fit within the context of the path of tantric practice in Buddhajñānapāda’s system.

The *Dvītyākrama* begins with Buddhajñānapāda’s autobiographical narrative leading up to his vision of Mañjuśrī, followed by Mañjuśrī’s instructions, which, as we will recall, constitute the majority of the text. These instructions begin with a general description of reality, or

¹⁵ There are two further uses of the term “the second stage” that I have not addressed in this discussion, in verses 155 and 314 of the *Dvītyākrama*, but neither of these provides any further information on what Buddhajñānapāda intends by this term beyond what we have already examined in the verses above.

suchness, followed by a discussion of the appropriate characteristics of both the student and the teacher of the path that leads to realizing suchness. Then, since according to this work it is not possible to come to this realization without relying on a consort, the characteristics of four different types of consort, as well as the appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for such a partner, are set forth. This general information is followed by a description of the initiatory rituals that allow a practitioner to take up the practice of suchness, including the various practices by means of which he first comes to a direct recognition of the suchness of the perfection stage during that initiation. Following these initiatory rituals and practices, meant to bring the student to a direct experience of what he should then train in, is a doxography of views that places the tantric perspective recognized through those just-described rituals at the very top. It is then that the methods for training in suchness—the three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage and a final perfection stage instruction involving the practice of dissolution—are described in some detail. These instructions are followed by a list of the names of suchness and the benefits and results of training in it. Here there is an excursus that departs somewhat from the narrative progression of the text, in which the ten *bhūmis* are homologized with sexual practices. This is followed by a praise of the yogin who trains in these procedures, and a condemnation of those who would deprecate him, concluding with the assurance that a practitioner who perfects this training will achieve the final result of awakening within this very life. Next, Mañjuśrī gives instructions in the yoga of *utkrānti*—the yogic ejection of consciousness at the moment of death—which is prescribed for individuals who have already received the suchness of the second stage but were unable to perfect its realization through training in the perfection stage yogas during this lifetime. Mañjuśrī elaborates on the importance of the instructions that he has given and commands Buddhajñānapāda to compile them and to compose supplementary texts relating to *Guhyasamāja* practice. The *Dvītyākrama* concludes with Buddhajñānapāda’s closing autobiographical narrative, starting from the dissolution of his vision of Mañjuśrī, followed by a final injunction to practice, and the dedications and aspirations that conclude the text.

We can see through this brief description of its overall content that the *Dvītyākrama* focuses entirely on the perfection stage, describing the reality of suchness itself, the requisites that are necessary to come to this realization (a qualified guru, student, and consort), the way that the practitioner comes to directly experience suchness through initiation, and the practices through which he then trains in this suchness that he has obtained from his guru, either during this life via the three *bindu* yogas, or at the moment of death via the practice of *utkrānti*. Thus, while the title of the work—*Oral Instructions on Training in the Suchness of the Second Stage*—only promises instruction on how to train in suchness, the text in fact provides the full structure of the perfection stage path from the first moment of its recognition during initiation, through the process of training in it, up to its full realization resulting in awakening. The *bindu* yogas through which that training takes place are a central part of the process, and thus constitute a major focus of the text. Indeed, if we also include the instructions on the yoga of *utkrānti* along with the other perfection stage yogas (which I believe makes sense, given that the *utkrānti* instructions are specified as appropriate for a practitioner who has already received suchness from his guru), these practical instructions make up more than one-third of the *Dvītyākrama*’s verses.

Meditating on the Indestructible *Bindu*: The First *Bindu* Yoga

The first *bindu* yoga described in the *Dvītyākrama* is called meditation on the “indestructible *bindu*” (*mi shig pa’i thig le*), which Vaidyapāda specifies as having “the nature of

the wisdom of bliss (*dga' ba'i ye shes*).¹⁶ This is a reference to the wisdom connected with the first of the three blisses, called simply “bliss” (*dga' ba, ānanda*), that are said to arise during sexual yogic practices in Buddhajñānapāda’s system.¹⁷ Indeed, later in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* Buddhajñānapāda explicitly states that the meditations on the three *bindus* correspond with the three blisses.¹⁸ Instructions on this first *bindu* yoga practice are also found in the *Muktītilaka*, and there are parallels in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, as well.¹⁹ The description of this yoga in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* indicates that the framework for its practice is the generation stage. As I noted in Chapter Five, the generation stage practices summarized at this point in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are practices included in the first two among the three *samādhis*, the *ādiyoga-samādhi* and the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi*, concluding with the emanation and pleasing of the deities of the *maṇḍala-cakra* that completes the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi*.²⁰ Then the practitioner is instructed, to “cast away the outer body” and “train in the ultimate suchness that is the buddhas’ supreme sphere of experience.”²¹ Vaidyapāda explains the casting away of the outer body as the practice of purifying the four processes of birth (from heat and moisture, miraculously, from a womb, and from an egg²²) by means of training in the generation stage, and notes that the perfection stage instructions begin with the injunction to train in suchness.²³ What follows is a series of visualizations in which the practitioner-as-deity meditates on a *bindu* at his heart center, from which he emanates out and reabsorbs light rays that illuminate a series of syllables and *maṇḍalas*, and then draw these back into the *bindu*.

The procedure begins with the generation of sentient beings in the form of buddhas by means of emanating light out from the seed syllable visualized in the center of the *samayamudrā* (i.e. the *jñānasattva*)²⁴ of the yogin-as-deity’s heart center, which emerges from the right nostril, and from which *tathāgatas* and the deities of the *maṇḍala-cakra* emerge and fill the world.²⁵ All beings are then purified and generated in the form of buddhas,²⁶ who then melt into nectar, “the

¹⁶ *dga' ba'i ye shes kyi rang bzhin mi shigs pa'i thig le bsgom pa* (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.2-3; P 137b.8).

¹⁷ Buddhajñānapāda’s works are among the early writings to give a typology of blisses in the context of tantric practice. I address this topic in more detail below.

¹⁸ This was the authentic teaching of the ritual/ Of meditating on the three *bindus*/ That correspond with the three blisses. / [241] *de ltar dga' gsum bye brag gi// thig le rnam gsum bsgom pa yi// cho ga yang dag bstan pa'o//* [241] (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 241). I discuss this point further below.

¹⁹ See *Muktītilaka* D 49a.2-5, and *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, verses 109 and 127-129.

²⁰ See *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 156-160. As I noted in Chapter Five, the first of the *bindu* yogas included in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* likewise appears at precisely this point in the *sādhana*’s structure—immediately following the completion of the *maṇḍalarājāgrī-samādhi*.

²¹ *phyi rol lus ni log byed de// sangs rgyas rnam kyi spyod yul mchog// mīha' yi de nyid bsgom par bya//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 161a-c).

²² These are the four modes by which sentient beings take birth according to Buddhist Abhidharmic systems.

²³ *Sukusuma*, D.114b.1-3; P 137b.5-8.

²⁴ The term used in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* here, the *samayamudrā*, refers to a smaller image of the deity visualized at the practitioner’s heart center. This is more commonly termed the *jñānasattva* and in fact Vaidyapāda’s commentary glosses the term *samayamudrā* as used in this passage as the *jñānasattva* (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.4; P 138a.1-2). Buddhajñānapāda himself uses the term *jñānasattva* instead of *samayamudrā* in a later passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* to reference this smaller deity visualized in the heart (see *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 248, 252, 261, and 262).

²⁵ *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 161-164.

²⁶ Vaidyapāda elaborates on this process: “They are **generated in the form of buddhas**. How is this done? **They are made to melt as the moon, dissolve, and are purified**, which means that the emanated *maṇḍala*, which has melted like the moon, dissolves into sentient beings and they become as above. That itself, as well, **enters into oneself as the essence of wisdom** means that they are gathered as the **essence of wisdom** which is pure like water and ushered into one’s left nostril.” *de rnam sangs gyas kyi skur bskyed pa'o// de gang gis she na/ zla bar zhu byas te/ thim pas rnam par dag byas nas/ zhes* [zhes] D, *shes* P) *pa ni 'phros pa'i dkyil 'khor zla ba lia bur zhu ba sems can thams cad la thim pas de rnam gong ma lta bur gyur pa'o// de nyid kyang ye shes ngo bo ru* (bo ru] P, *bor* D) *rang la zhes te chu ltar dang* (dang] P, *dangs* D) *ba'i ye shes kyi ngo bor 'dus zhing rang gi g.yon p'ai ha sar*

essence of wisdom,” and are then drawn back in that form into the practitioner through his left nostril. This nectar is ushered into the seed syllable at his heart center, which is then visualized as the indestructible *bindu*, the size of a chickpea and blazing with five-colored light.²⁷ The yogin is to visualize all phenomena as gathered within his mind, within that *bindu*.²⁸ Light from the *bindu* gradually radiates outward, first illuminating the area around itself, then the interior of the *samayamudrā* visualized at the practitioner’s heart, and then gradually out into the practitioner’s body, where it illuminates sixteen syllables representing *bindus* of *bodhicitta*²⁹

zhugs par bya zhes so// (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.7-115a.2; P 138a.6-8). A similar (but not identical) process involving the purification of sentient beings is found in the process of the generation of the causal deities in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.

²⁷ Vaidyapāda clarifies that the seed syllable *becomes* the indestructible *bindu*. This also makes sense, since first there is a syllable there, and then the practice is done with a *bindu*, rather than a syllable, so some sort of transformation from syllable to *bindu* must take place at some point. Vaidyapāda writes: “Once it has been made to enter inside in that way, it is brought into the seed syllable that abides in the center of the symbolic implement mentioned above; this sets forth the source and locus of the practice. By means of that [process], what does it become? This is expressed in the verse beginning, **This itself...**” *nang gi la yang de bzhin du zhugs nas gong gi mtshan ma’i dbus na gnas pa’i sa bon la zhugs par bya ste ‘grub pa’i rgyu (rgyu] D, rgyud P) dang gnas bstan (bstan] P, brtan D) pa’o// des cir ‘gyur zhes na/ (des cir ‘gyur zhes na/] D, P om.) de nyid ces pa la sogs pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 115a.2; P 138a.8-b.1).

²⁸ *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 165-168. The procedure described in verses 161-166 is also set forth (in a less elaborated form) in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in a single verse—verse 109—at the outset of the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi*.

²⁹ The verses identifying these sixteen syllables and their location on the body (verses 171-174 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*) are attested in Sanskrit in a citation (?) given in the single surviving manuscript of Kalyāṇavarman’s *Catuspīṭhapañjikā* (see note 325 in my translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* for the Sanskrit and for further details). The verses appear as part of a larger citation, in which they are preceded by part of verse 111 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and followed by some verses that are not found in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. This set of verses—which essentially consist of a combination of verses from two different sections of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* along with verses that are not from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*—are attributed in the *Catuspīṭhapañjikā* to the “*Aṣṭāṣṭaka*,” which seems to be the title of a work, though this is not entirely clear.

The verses in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (171-174) that describe the sixteen syllables located at the sixteen places in the body conclude with a single somewhat cryptic line: “These are completed at the time of the sixteenth” (*bcu drug dus su rdzogs ‘gyur ba*//), which Vaidyapāda explains to be a reference to sixteenth day of the lunar calendar—the fullest moment of the full moon (*Sukusuma*, D 115a.6). Vaidyapāda elaborates—unfortunately still somewhat cryptically—on this point: “Also, one should know that this is with regard to the stages of the first day [of the month] and so forth. **They are completed at the time of the sixteenth**, means that at the time when the outer moon comes to **fullness**, these are also perfected. One must understand that this is then reversed. Regarding being **perfected at the time of the sixteenth**, the sixteen places that are stirred up through practice also become “the sixteen.” These then [become] the *bindu* and this becomes like the moon, which produces the consciousness of joy. **The previous light rays hook**, means that they **hook** the sixteen syllables and draw them into the *bindu*. By slightly holding one’s mind, like the first wisdom, there for a moment, what happens? [The text then says] **Meditate with determination/ On the great [maṇḍala]-cakra of deities together with its support.**” *de yang tshes gcig la sogs pa’i rim par shes par bya’o// bcu drug dus su rdzogs gyur pa zhes pa ni phyi’i zla ba rdzogs par’i dus su de yang rdzogs pa’o// de ne bzlog ste shes par bya’o// bcu drug dus su rdzogs par ‘gyur ba ni sgrub (sgrub] P, bsgrub D) pas dkrugs pa bcu drug/ de (de] D, ste P) yang bcu drug par ‘gyur/ de yang thig le/ de yang zla ba lta bur song nas/ dga’i ba’i shes pa ‘byung ba’o// gong gi ‘od kyis rnam pa bkug ste zhes pa ni yi ge bcu drug po rnam par bkug nas thig le’i nang du bcug la der rang gi sems dang po’i ye shes ltar bag zhad bzung bas cir ‘gyur zhe na/ lha’i ‘khor lo che/ rten dang bcas pa mos pas bsgom/* (*Sukusuma*, 115a.6-115b.1; P 138b.6-139a.2). These statements are very similar to Vaidyapāda’s comments at an earlier point in the *Sukusuma*: “Moreover, through practicing, by means of the agitation of the locations, the sixteen syllables appear, and these, then, become the sun and moon. Having transformed into a *bindu* like that, they go to the tip of the vajra. This itself, in a form which blazes with thousands of light rays, is meditated upon by the yogin in accordance with the ritual that will come below. When this happens, the suchness that has been spoken of will be realized, [and that is the] purpose [of this practice.]” / (*de yang bsgrub pas gnas rnam dkrugs pa las yi ge rnam bcu drug par gyur/ de yang nyi zlar gyur/ de lta bu’i thig ler gyur nas rdo*

located at different points in the body, and draws these syllables into the *bindu* at the heart center.³⁰ Then the practitioner should contemplate the entire *maṇḍala* within a tiny *bindu* at the center of the lord of the *maṇḍala* who is himself visualized at the center of a slightly larger—but still small!—*maṇḍala* within the center of the chickpea-sized *bindu*. The procedure of visualizing light rays emanating out from that smaller *bindu* is repeated in the same way as above, until finally they emerge out of the outer body of the yogin-visualized-as-deity, illuminating the *maṇḍala-cakra* of which he himself is a part, and touch all of the *tathāgatas*.³¹ These rays then enter their mouths, collect nectar from the *bindu* in their hearts, and emerge from the vajra path before returning and entering into the practitioner’s right and left nostrils,³² and finally dissolving into the *bindu* at his heart.³³ He is to hold his mind with concentration on this *bindu*, which is white tinged with red, blazing with five-colored light, and “has the nature of

rje rtse mor 'gro ba ste/ de nyid 'od zer stong du 'bar ba'i gzugs su rnal 'byor pa rnams kyis 'og nas 'byung ba'i cho gas bsgoms nas/ ji skad du gsung pa'i de kho na nyid rtogs par 'gyur pa'i phyir ro/ (*Sukusuma*, D 88a.4-5).

In his much later (15th-century) instruction manual on the perfection stage rituals of the Jñānapāda School, Tārānātha, who reports having received initiation into and teachings on the Jñānapāda lineage from his master Buddhaguptanātha, gives an ever-so-slightly clearer presentation of this practice that does not seem substantially different from what is already here in Buddhajñānapāda’s text, with Vaidyapāda’s clarifications. He writes, “For the second part, the light from the *bindu* illuminates the *jñānasattva*, and from that light radiates forth and illuminates the interior of the foundational body. Like holding up a lamp in darkness, one sees clearly the sixteen *bindus*, which are the white substance.... [He lists here the syllables at all of the locations on the body, exactly as they are described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*]...All of these are white and radiate white light. Think of them as being of the nature of bliss. The light from the heart center, either in stages or all at once, as one prefers, dissolves those syllables into the indestructible *bindu* at the heart center, and [it] then blazes with light and causes a strong increase in the essence of bliss. Contemplate thus.” (*gnyis pa ni thig le'i 'od kyis ye shes sems dpa'i sku gang / de las 'od 'phros gzhi lus kyi nang gsal zhing gang bar byas/ mun khung du sgron me bteq pa ltar dkar cha thig le bcu drug po rnams gsal bar mthong ba ni/ thams cad kyang kha dog dkar po 'od zer dkar po 'phro ba/ bde ba'i rang bzhin can du bsam/ snying ga'i 'od kyi yi ge de rnams rim pas sam cig car gang mos kyis snying ga'i mi shigs pa'i thig ler bstims pas/ 'od zer 'bar zhing/ bde ba'i ngo bo lhag par rgyas par bsam mo//* (*Dpal grol ba'i thig la'i khrid yig*, 243-244). Tārānātha does not include any reference to the line “They become complete at the time of the sixteenth,” which is unfortunate because Vaidyapāda’s commentary on this point is rather cryptic.

³⁰ *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 169-175. This same procedure is described in a single verse in the *Muktilaka* (D 49a.2); Vaidyapāda’s commentary there adds many details from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* to fill in the parts of the procedure that are not elaborated in the *Muktilaka*’s version of the instructions (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 52b.5-52b.7)

³¹ *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 176-179. The same procedure, with slight variation (the light from the *bindu* at the heart is described as emerging from the nose, rather than radiating outward through the body), is described in the *Muktilaka* (D 49a-3-4).

³² Vaidyapāda explains that what enters into the right nostril is the nectar emerging from Akṣobhya, and so forth, the male deities, while what enters into the left nostril is what emerges from Locanā and so forth, the female deities (*Sukusuma*, D 115b.7-116a.1; P 139b.1-2). Tārānātha likewise describes this process in the same way, but is more explicit, explaining that the substance emerges from the vajra of the male deities and the lotus of the female deities. (*Dpal grol ba'i thig la'i khrid yig*, 244).

³³ These lines in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are slightly perplexing. The text reads, “Then it dissolves into the wisdom *bindu*/ Via the apparent *bindu*.” *de nas ye shes thig le la// snang ba'i thigs par thim par 'gyur//* Vaidyapāda explains: “The **wisdom bindu** is the first *bindu*. The **apparent bindu** is the one that appeared from that, which is suchness.” *ye shes kyi thig le zhes pa ni dang po'i thig le'o// snang ba'i thigs pa* (thigs pa] P, thig le D) *zhes pa ni de las snang ba'i thig le ste chos nyid do//* (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.1; P 139b.2-3). The wording of these two lines is a bit strange, suggesting that the transmission may be corrupted. I am tempted to emend as follows: *de nas ye shes thig le las/ snang ba'i' thigs par* (or *thig ler*) *thim par 'gyur*. Following Vaidyapāda’s commentary, we could suggest emending in this way, but it’s not clear if he is actually glossing the root text there or merely explaining. The translation, following both emendations, would be: “Then, it dissolves into the *bindu* that has appeared from the wisdom *bindu*.” For now, I will simply leave this here as an alternative way to read the line. Tārānātha, for what it’s worth, does not mention anything about two *bindus* here, but he also left out the nesting sequence above in which the second *bindu* was visualized. He simply states that the two flows of nectar dissolve into the “root *bindu*” (*rtsa ba'i thigs las*) (*Dpal grol ba'i thig la'i khrid yig*, 244).

dripping.” He should then repeat this process of emanating light, absorbing nectar from the buddhas, and holding that nectar and his concentration within the *bindu*.³⁴ This practice is said to bring about an encounter with the “mind as the vajra of cessation” and the signs of “the glorious wish-fulfilling gem that is the great receptacle of all the buddhas.”³⁵ These attainments, which are mentioned in Chapter Eleven, verse 41 of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, in the context of a different yoga,³⁶ are here specifically identified as the results of this first *bindu* yoga; a different result—the arresting of the breath—is mentioned below in the context of the second *bindu* yoga performed with the “secret *bindu*” at the tip of the vajra. The signs that occur with the attainment of “the vajra of cessation” are, according to Vaidyapāda, the same signs mentioned by Buddhajñānapāda himself later in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as indications of the effectiveness of perfection stage practices: laughter, yawning, and trembling.³⁷

Meditating on the Secret *Bindu*: The Second *Bindu* Yoga

The second *bindu* yoga described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is called the yoga of the secret *bindu* and, according to Vaidyapāda, has the nature of the wisdom of the “intermediate bliss” (*dga’ ba bar ma’i ye shes*), the second of the three blisses according to Buddhajñānapāda’s system.³⁸ This practice involves moving the *bindu* that was previously meditated upon at the heart center down to the tip of the penis, where it is held and meditated upon following a visualization similar to the one described above for the indestructible *bindu* at the heart center. The process by which this moving of the *bindu* takes place involves emanating light rays in the form of hooks from the *bindu* at the heart center that hook the *sugatas* and their *maṇḍala-cakras* and draw them—in the form of wisdom nectar—into the *bindu* at the heart center, which causes

³⁴ *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 180-183.

³⁵ *Dvīṭīyakrama* verse 184. These lines are part of a verse adapted from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (11.41) and are also included in the *Muktilaka* (D 49a.4-5). The verse from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* reads: *nirodhavajragatamcittam yadā tasya prajāyate/ sa bhavec cintāmaṇiḥ śrīmān sarvabuddhāgradhārakaḥ/* (I have emended Matsunaga’s edition of the line from the tantra to follow the variant *-dhārakaḥ* found in two of his manuscripts, since that is the reading found here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (it is also, incidentally, the reading found in the Tibetan translation of the tantra). Vaidyapāda explains: “The mind will become the vajra of the cessation of all entities, and the signs of stability [in that] arise. That is to say, **Eventually, one will come to encounter means at some time** [one] will suddenly **encounter** the goddess within the unchanging *bindu*, and at that time.... [the signs will authentically arise] **of having become the glorious wish-fulfilling gem/ That contains all the great buddhas...**” *” sems dgnos po kun las ‘gog pa’i rdo rje gyur nas brtan pa’i rtags skyes pa ste/ nam zhig de la reg gyur pa/ zhes pa ni dus nam zhig na mi ‘gyur ba’i thig le la lha mo (mo) P, mo’i D) lam gyis reg par gyur pa de’i tshel/ sangs rgyas kun gyi mchog ‘dzin pa // yid bzhin (bzhin) sugg. em based on Dvīṭīyakrama D C, and Guhyasamāja-tantra, 11.41), sbyin V (D and C)) dpaḥ dang ‘dra bar ‘gyur ba’ ‘o// (Sukusuma, D 116a. 4; P 139b.6-7). Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the parallel lines from the *Muktilaka* reads: “**The vajra of cessation within the mind itself** indicates that [this takes place] by means of the **mind** [which engages in] the action of inhalation into(?) that *bindu*. **Whoever comes to eventually encounter that**, means one should not have any doubts that by means of **encountering** [it?] with that mind the signs will arise.” *’gog pa’i rdo rje sems nyid du/ zhes pa ni thig le de la(?) (la?) sugg. em., las D P) dbugs ‘jug pa’i spyod pa’i sems kyis so// nam zhig de la sus reg pa/ zhes pa ni sems des reg pas rtags rnam skye bar ‘gyur ba la som nyi mi bya’o// (Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 53a.4-5).**

³⁶ The yoga described in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* here reads, in Fremantle’s translation: “By joining the great five-pointed vajra, adorned with five flames, to the five places, you will attain vajra perception. Visualize your mantra as a wheel densely filled with sparks of fire, and joining it to the five vajras you will attain vajra perception. Visualize a wheel shining with the flames of the Buddhas at the centre of vajra space, and with the entrance of the Buddhas become their dwelling. Place Vairocana in your body at the centre of the *maṇḍala* of the Buddha, and visualizing OM in his heart meditate on your consciousness in the mantra; when your mind enters the vajra state of suppression you will become the glorious Wishing-gem which contains all the great Buddhas.” (Fremantle 1971, 63-4).

³⁷ *Sukusuma*, D 116a.5-6; P 140a.3-4.

³⁸ *dga’ ba bar ma’i ye shes kyī rang bzhin gsang ba’i thig le...* (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.7; P 140a.3-4).

it to descend “in the form of *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva*” to the center of the jewel of the vajra (the head of the penis). Vaidyapāda specifies that this process is performed by means of the “moving wind that has the form of *hūm phaṭ*,”³⁹ and that the aspects of *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva* descend via the right, left, and central channels respectively.⁴⁰ Then the practitioner is to visualize the subtle symbolic implement of his deity at the tip of the vajra, and within it the full support and supported *maṇḍala* together with the *bindu* in an area the size of a mustard seed. The *Dvīṭīyakrama* then notes that if while regarding the *maṇḍala* within the *bindu*, the practitioner’s mind becomes weary, the *bindu* may emerge from the center of the vajra, and instructs that if this takes place the yogin should “make it remain at the tip of the nose⁴¹ and examine by means of the bliss of cessation,” which is the third of the three blisses in Buddhajñānapāda’s system.⁴² This short passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that gives instructions for what to do if the *bindu* emerges from the vajra during the practice appears to be something of an aside, providing instruction for how to practice in the case of emission; the explanation of the yoga—presumably the practice that the yogin is otherwise meant to continue prior to emission—continues below. What is more, the practice as described in the *Muktītilaka* lacks this ancillary instruction on what to do in the case of emission, and simply continues to present the practice of the *bindu* yoga.⁴³ The practice follows the same stages of visualization as the yoga of the indestructible *bindu*: the emanation of light out of the *bindu*, gradually filling the space around itself and eventually emerging out through the nostril, touching the buddhas, drawing in their wisdom as nectar, and ushering it back into the *bindu*.⁴⁴ This is described as the “branch of emptying,” (*stong pa’i yan lag*) and is said to “stop the breath.” This branch is the first among three of the yogas pertaining to the “six branch yoga” (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) that receive mention in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.⁴⁵ The yogin is instructed to hold his mind gently within the *bindu*, which brings about a state of “entitylessness” (*dnegos po*

³⁹ *hūm phaṭ rnam pa dang ldan par gyo ba’i rlung gis so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.1; P 140a.4-5).

⁴⁰ *Sukusuma*, D 116b.3-4; P 140a.8-140b.1. This use of the three *guṇas* from the Saṃkhya system to describe the constituent aspects of the *bindu* is unusual, and is an example of Buddhajñānapāda’s use of non-Buddhist terminology, suggesting that he was indeed operating in an eclectic milieu.

⁴¹ *sna rtse rnam par gnas byas nas// dga’ bral dga’ bas brtag par bya//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 192. c-d). While looking only at the root verse, one might presume that the “nose” referred to here is (as is often the case) the tip of the yogin’s penis. Vaidyapāda, however, specifies that one is to “**make it remain at the tip of the nose** of the goddess’ lotus.” *lha mo’i padma’i sna rtser rnam par gnas par byas nas/* (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.6-7; P 140b.4). This might lead us to speculate that the yogin may withdraw from his partner at this point, leaving his penis resting against, but not within, her vagina, presumably in order to assist with the arrest of the *bindu* at the tip of the penis. However, given the fact that we find an association of the bliss of cessation precisely with the process, not of retention, but rather of emission (or at least in the context of emission following retention) at several places in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, it seems unlikely that the process of making the *bindu* remain at the nose-tip of the lotus is related to the process of retention. Moreover, a similar passage in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is described in Vaidyapāda’s and Samantabhadra’s commentaries as indicating a process by means of which the yogin appears to be instructed to draw the *bindu* that was previously emitted into the lotus of the consort out onto the “nose tip” of her lotus by means of transforming the “prong” of his vajra into hook-like light rays that hook the *bindu* and draw it out to this location. (See *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* verse 130 (*Samantabhadra-sādhana*, D 34b.3), Vaidyapāda’s *Samantabhadri-ṭīkā* (D 168a.2-5), and Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī* (D 38a.1-3; Szántó unpublished 125). This again suggests that the practice of making the *bindu* remain at the nose-tip of the lotus is not connected to the practice of seminal retention, or follows retention, because it clearly follows emission of the *bindu* into the lotus.

⁴² This statement in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is one of several references in Buddhajñānapāda’s works to the observation of the third of the three blisses—the “bliss of cessation” (*dga’ bral gyi dga’ ba*) in the context not of seminal retention, but rather of emission, a point that I will discuss further below.

⁴³ *Muktītilaka*, D 49b.5-6.

⁴⁴ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 193-4. *Sukusuma*, D 116b.7-117a.3; P 140b.5-141a.1.

⁴⁵ This particular branch is more normally termed *prāṇāyāma*. I discuss the three among the six branches that receive mention in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* below.

med pa'i gnas).⁴⁶ Then, through training in “retention,” another yoga from among the six branch yogas, five signs indicating the dissolution of the elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and space—into one another occur; these signs, along with the element whose dissolution or withdrawal they indicate, are each described in the *Dvīṭyākrama*.⁴⁷ The process of the dissolution of the elements is generally said to accompany the death process. Bringing about this process intentionally within the controlled context of the practice of the perfection stage, which is accompanied and thus identified by the appearance of the five signs is, in the *Dvīṭyākrama*, explained to bring about the result of non-abiding *nirvāṇa*.⁴⁸ Next, in order “to make this reality pervasive,” the yogin is instructed to “emanate it from the vajra path into the realm of space,” a practice which is described as the practice of “recollection” (*anusmṛti*, *rjes 'dren*), which is also the next among the practices of the six branch yoga.⁴⁹ Here in the *Dvīṭyākrama* this involves a series of “recollections” of various aspects of the dharma, in what amounts to a tantric version of the traditional Buddhist practice of *anusmṛti* (recollection). The yogin visualizes the emanation and absorption of the *maṇḍala-cakras* of the various *maṇḍala* deities, and engages in the practice of several other rituals from the generation stage practice, like impassioning, tasting of nectar, and so on. Vaidyapāda repeatedly introduces the various practices of recollection with the phrase, “Regarding the recollection of ... (any given factor: the *maṇḍala*; *samaya*; body, speech, and mind, etc.), what should one recall with respect to the reality that was previously seen?”⁵⁰ This suggests that in the practice of recollection here is understood to bring to forth different aspects or qualities of the reality of suchness that the practitioner has previously experienced through the practice of the *bindu* yoga. Vaidyapāda clarifies further that “it is called the **branch of recollection** because of **recalling** [something] with respect to the reality that one has previously seen.”⁵¹ The *Dvīṭyākrama* concludes the section on the secret *bindu* by noting that it is by means of the three branches mentioned in the text—i.e. the branches of emptying, retention, and recollection—that the practitioner trains in the practice of the secret *bindu*.

Meditating on the Emanated *Bindu*, or *Vajrajapa*: The Third *Bindu* Yoga

The third *bindu* yoga described in the *Dvīṭyākrama*, which Vaidyapāda specifies as having the nature of the wisdom of the bliss of cessation (*dga' bral gyi ye shes*)—the third among the three blisses in his system—is that of the “emanated *bindu*” (*sprul pa'i thig le*).⁵² This same practice is also quite commonly—including in the *Dvīṭyākrama*—called vajra recitation (*vajrajapa*, *rdo rje zlas pa*), and involves visualizing the emanation of elemental *maṇḍalas* from various centers in the body along with the exhalation, inhalation, and retention of the breath. In the practice as described in the *Dvīṭyākrama* the yogin should visualize a smoke-

⁴⁶ Vaidyapāda explains that this does not mean that entities are empty because they are destroyed or overcome. Rather, by means of the yoga of lacking nature (one of the seven yogas mentioned by Vaidyapāda in his *Yogasapta*) one turns away from other mental states, and since one therefore remains only in suchness, the state of entitylessness ensues. (*Sukusuma*, D 117a.4; P 141a.2-3)

⁴⁷ *Dvīṭyākrama* verses 196-199. These signs are also described in the *Samājottara* (vv. 150-151) and referenced in the *Muktilaka*. I discuss more about the relationship between the *Samājottara* and Buddhajñānapāda's works in Chapter Eight.

⁴⁸ *Dvīṭyākrama*, verse 200.

⁴⁹ *Dvīṭyākrama*, verse 201.

⁵⁰ For example, *dam tshig rjes su dran pa ni smgon mthong ba'i don la gang dran zhe na/* (*Sukusuma*, D 118a.4; P 146ba.7).

⁵¹ *de rnams ni sngon mthong ba'i don la rjes su dran pas na rjes su dran pa'i yan lag go//* (*Sukusuma*, D 118b.6; P 143a.3-4).

⁵² *da ni dga' bral gyi ye shes kyi rang bzhin sprul pa'i thig le gsungs pa/* (*Sukusuma*, D 118b.6-7; P 143a.4).

colored wind *maṇḍala* marked by a white syllable *om* within a symbolic implement in the heart center of Vairocana who is located at the crown of the yogin’s head. At his throat he should visualize a white water *maṇḍala* marked by a red syllable *āḥ* within a symbolic implement in the heart center of Amitābha. At his heart center he should visualize a red fire *maṇḍala* marked by the black syllable *hūṃ* in the heart center of Akṣobhya. In heart center of the *samayamudrā* between his two breasts the yogin should visualize the seed syllable of his own deity in the center of a yellow earth *maṇḍala*. The syllable *om* represents coming, *āḥ* represents abiding, and *hūṃ* represents going, while the seed syllable of his personal deity represents freedom from these three. The practitioner is to visualize emanating these elemental *maṇḍalas* out of his body through his nostrils (different nostrils and different amounts of force are specified for each *maṇḍala*), drawing them back in, and then holding, along with the exhalation, inhalation, and holding of the breath and the syllables *hūṃ*, *om*, and *āḥ*, respectively. This recitation practice is said to bring about “a wisdom that is free from drawing in, abiding, and letting go.”⁵³ Following a slightly unclear (to me) series of mathematical explanations, it is stated that for a great yogin, this recitation is performed constantly, and thus takes place 21,600 times each day. This number is standard in later tantric literature as the number of movements of the internal winds that occur in the body on a daily basis.⁵⁴ Performing such recitation is said to bring the yogin to the realization of all phenomena as illusory and to “share the fortune of the lords of the tenth *bhūmi*,” thus linking the abilities gained through this practice with the accomplishment of the highest bodhisattva *bhūmi* accomplished through exoteric Mahāyāna practice.⁵⁵ This “natural recitation” is said to have been taking place since beginningless time, but without reliance upon a guru the practitioner is unable to realize it.⁵⁶ The *Dvītyākrama* distinguishes the “natural recitation” of *vajrajapa* from “external recitation,” and states that it is unnecessary for a yogin who abides within the reality of the natural recitation to practice external recitation, which is described as an “obstacle to meditation.”⁵⁷ Vaidyapāda explains further that external recitation, involving focusing upon making the sounds of mantras and counting them, is an obstacle to his practice because it is a distraction for the yogin.⁵⁸ However, the *Dvītyākrama* later notes that once he “abides within that reality” it is not a contradiction for a yogin to also engage in external recitation.⁵⁹ Taken together, these statements suggest that “external” (i.e. ordinary!) mantra recitation may be considered an obstacle to the yogin’s full realization of suchness, because it distracts him from the focus on the more internal practices through which he cultivates that suchness, but once he has realized it to the degree that he “abides in that reality,” external mantra recitation is no longer an obstacle to his practice.⁶⁰ Remaining in the practice of this ritual is said to “transfer great omniscience” into the mind of the practitioner, and Vaidyapāda adds that this extraordinary result happens in a single lifetime because of traversing an extraordinary path.⁶¹

⁵³ *jug dang gnas dang ldang ba slas// grol ba’i ye shes...* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 229c-d).

⁵⁴ See, for example, Dorje and Kongtrül 2014, 254.

⁵⁵ *Sa bcu pa ’i// dbang phyug rnam dang skal mnyam ste//* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 233, c-d).

⁵⁶ While this point is clear in the *Dvītyākrama* itself (vv. 234-235) Vaidyapāda makes it even more explicit. He writes: “Because **since beginningless time** all sentient beings have arisen together with wind, they remain in the vajra **recitation**. But without being accepted by a teacher one will not realize this.” *thog ma med pa’i dus nas sems can thams cad kyang rlung dang lhan cig tu byung bas na rdo rje bzlas pa la gnas kyang bla mas ma zin pas rtogs par mi ’gyur ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 120b.5-6; P 145b.2-3)

⁵⁷ *Dvītyākrama*, verse 235.

⁵⁸ *Sukusuma*, D 120b.6-7; P 145b.3-4.

⁵⁹ *Dvītyākrama*, verse 238ab.

⁶⁰ See also my discussion in Chapter Three on the rhetoric of non-action in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings.

⁶¹ *Sukusuma*, D 121a.5-6; P 146a.3-4.

The Function of the Indestructible *Bindu*, the “Relative Form” of Nondual Wisdom

Following the *Dvīṭīyakrama*’s presentation of the *bindu* yogas, all three of which, we remember, are also described (though in less detail) in the *Muktililaka*, and the first two of which appear in an abbreviated form in the *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, we find a short excursus on the nature of indestructible *bindu* as the source of the entire relative phenomenal world. As I discussed already in Chapter Three, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* contends that this indestructible *bindu* alone remains when all else is destroyed at the end of an aeon, and then functions as the source for the phenomenal world’s re-emergence. In this passage the *Dvīṭīyakrama* refers to this indestructible *bindu* as the “relative form” of nondual wisdom. As we saw in Chapter Three, Buddhajñānapāda frequently describes nondual wisdom more generally (i.e. not specifically in its “relative form” as the indestructible *bindu*) as both identical to awakening and as the source of the phenomenal world. While the *Dvīṭīyakrama* does not address this point directly, identifying the indestructible *bindu* with nondual wisdom, even just as its relative form, may serve to support the theoretical framework behind the perfection stage yogas. That is, if the *bindu* that is manipulated through these yogic sequences is itself the relative form of nondual wisdom, this would serve to support the contention that such manipulations are effective in bringing about a stabilization of the yogin’s experience of that wisdom, which was first indicated to him during initiation, thus leading to its full realization and thus to awakening. Following this short presentation of this important function of the indestructible *bindu*, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* asserts that for as long as the *bindu* remains embodied, it brings about engagement in all sorts of actions. It is for this reason, the text states, that the meditation upon this indestructible *bindu* is taught.⁶² We can perhaps understand this to mean that since while the *bindu*—nondual wisdom in its “relative form”—remains in the body, an embodied being will engage in karmic activity, and will therefore not escape from *saṃsāric* existence. The practices of the *bindu* yogas are therefore taught in order that through their practice a yogin can transcend the state of an embodied sentient being and thus arrive at the state of awakening.

Repetition of the *Bindu* Yoga with *Maṇḍala* Dissolution

The instructions found in the next section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are not found in Buddhajñānapāda’s other writings on the perfection stage. What is presented here is precisely the same as the earlier description of the indestructible *bindu* practice (the first *bindu* yoga), up until the point when the nectar from the indestructible *bindu* in the hearts of the *tathāgatas* is taken up and emerges from the vajra path. At this point, in the previous version of the practice the nectar was drawn into the practitioner through his nostrils and dissolved into the *bindu*. Here in this second version of the practice, we find instead a dissolution process, similar to those found at the conclusion of many generation stage *sādhana*s. As the nectar from the *tathāgatas* is drawn inwards, it “draws all sentient beings and buddhas along with the inanimate together,” bringing them first into the *vajrapañjara*—the outer protection circle that was visualized earlier in the generation stage practice—which itself gradually dissolves inwardly, until nothing remains but the indestructible *bindu*, within which the yogin should gently hold his mind. Finally, even the *maṇḍala* appearing within that *bindu* is gathered in until the yogin holds the mind—Vaidyapāda specifies that this is done “according to the guru’s instructions”—within the “self-appearing *bindu*,” the *bindu* that is itself “blessed by one’s innate nature.”⁶³ The practitioner is encouraged to meditate on this for as long as possible, bringing the mind repeatedly into the *bindu*. When

⁶² *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 245.

⁶³ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 259-263. *Sukusuma*, D 123b.1-123b.6; P148b.6-149a.4.

the mind emerges from there, the yogin should repeat the process of re-illuminating the whole of the “nested” *maṇḍalas* of the previous visualization, which again gradually dissolve into one another.⁶⁴ As the mind is held within the *bindu*, and the life-force is also held there, the elements gradually dissolve—in the same way as was described above in the meditation on the secret *bindu*—and the five signs that accompany this dissolution occur “because one has entered into Vajrasattva.”⁶⁵ Vaidyapāda specifies that these signs only occur when the practice is done with the secret *bindu*, suggesting that perhaps that these instructions on the dissolution phase can be applied to the practice of both of the *bindu* yogas, but that it is only when applied to the practice of the secret *bindu* that the signs actually unfold.⁶⁶ He explains further that “Vajrasattva”—into which the *Dvīṭīyakrama* says the yogin “enters” by means of this process is the—“fundamental wisdom without reference point.”⁶⁷ When the practitioner who holds his mind in the *bindu* in this way begins to experience signs such as yawning, laughing, trembling, and so forth, the *bindu* should be “emanated, by means of the higher stage, making it pervade everything” which Vaidyapāda explains to mean directing one’s focus from the *bindu* to the symbolic implement, *jñānasattva*, and so forth, emanating light from the *bindu* outwards and making it pervade everywhere, just as before. Vaidyapāda explains that this procedure is done in order to reverse the occurrence of the five signs.⁶⁸ The result that the *Dvīṭīyakrama* says is attained through this practice—great non-abiding *nirvāṇa*—is obtained, according to Vaidyapāda, specifically through repeatedly bringing about and then reversing these signs.⁶⁹ As noted above, under ordinary *samsāric* circumstances these signs accompany the death process, so bringing them about in a controlled way in the yogic context, but also reversing them (such that actual physical death does not take place) is the process by means of which the yogin attains the final result of awakening.

The Blissess and the Branches of Yoga: Precursors of Later Yogic Systems in Buddhajñānapāda’s Writings

While the system of three *bindu* yogas appears to be unique to Buddhajñānapāda’s Guhyasamāja practice system, a number of its individual elements, including the *sūkṣma* yoga and the practice of *vajrajapa* with the visualization of elemental *maṇḍalas*, are very much part of later systems of perfection stage yogic practice. There are also several systems found within Buddhajñānapāda’s perfection stage practices that appear to be precursors to what we find in later yogic systems. In particular, the typology of three blisses mentioned in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and elaborated in Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* and his *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* is one of the earliest such categorizations of the blisses (*dga’ ba*, *ānanda*) associated with sexual yoga, which in later systems were usually typified as four-fold. Additionally, three among the six practices of the “six-branch yoga” (*sbyor ba yan lag drug*, *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) that became important aspects of many later perfection stage practice systems are mentioned in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, though not always by the names that are typically used for them in the later literature. Thus, Buddhajñānapāda’s perfection stage system provides an important window into the early development of these later, more widely known and studied systems of perfection stage practice.

The Three Blissess

⁶⁴ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 264-266.

⁶⁵ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 267-269a.

⁶⁶ *Sukusuma*, D 124a.2; P 149a.8-b.1.

⁶⁷ *rtsa ba’i ye shes dmigs pa med pa* (med pa] P, D om.) *ni rdo rje sems dpa ste/* (*Sukusuma*, D 124a.3; P 149b.2).

⁶⁸ *Sukusuma*, D 124a.4; P 149b.3.

⁶⁹ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 270. *Sukusuma*, D 124a.6; P 149b.5-6.

The typology of “blisses” (*ānanda*) associated with sexual yogic practice is an important feature of most later systems of tantric Buddhist sexual yogic practice. Ronald Davidson has identified Buddhajñānapāda’s typology of blisses set forth in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as the first emergence of such a system in the tantric Buddhist textual record.⁷⁰ As noted in the discussion above, the three *bindu* yogas described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are connected in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings with a system of just three blisses (*dga’ ba gsum*), rather than the four of the later tantric traditions. At the end of the section on the three *bindu* yogas in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* Buddhajñānapāda makes this connection between the three *bindu* yogas and the three blisses explicit:

This was the authentic teaching of the ritual

Of meditating on the three *bindus*

That correspond with the three blisses. |241|⁷¹

The three blisses themselves are listed in verses 290-91 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as bliss (*dga’ ba, ānanda*), middling bliss (*dga’ ba bar ma, *madhyamānanda*⁷²), and the bliss of cessation (*dga’ ba dang bral ba, vīramānanda*).⁷³ While the names of the blisses here are not precisely identical with those in later systems, the three-fold set represented in Buddhajñānapāda’s works does appear to serve as the basis for the later four-fold systems. The later systems of four blisses differentiate between bliss (*ānanda*) and supreme bliss (*paramānanda*), a distinction that is not found in Buddhajñānapāda’s system; lack the middling bliss (**madhyamānanda*) of his system, but instead include something called innate bliss (*sahajānanda*); and correspond with Buddhajñānapāda’s system in their inclusion of the bliss of cessation (*vīramānanda*). There is, with regard to these later systems of four blisses, quite a bit of debate in traditional sources on

⁷⁰ Davidson suggests that “the process of ecstatic differentiation and its eventual association with *sahaja* first emerges in the later writing of Buddhajñānapāda, whose *Dvikramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* shows an evolution in this direction,” (Davidson 2002b, 60).

⁷¹ *de ltar dga’ gsum bye brag gi// thig le rnam gsum bsgom pa yi// cho ga yang dag bstan pa’o//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 241).

⁷² To my knowledge the name of this second bliss in Buddhajñānapāda’s system is not attested in any Sanskrit sources. The first and third blisses from his system, however, have the same name as the first, and the third or fourth (depending on the system) blisses of later tantric systems, which are attested in Sanskrit sources.

⁷³ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 290-91. I speculate (perhaps wildly) that the names for these three blisses and the fact of their being three in number may be related to a line from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* that was incorporated into the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in the verse immediately after the one where the three blisses are, on my reading, first mentioned; both verses describe the culmination of the third initiation. The line from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* reads, “Neither passion, nor dispassion, nor something in between is perceived.” (*‘dod chags chags bral bar ma mi dmigs* (*Dvīṭīyakrama* verse 125b), c.f. *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, 1.3ab. *na rāgo na virāgaś ca madhyamā nopalabhyate*). While the context of this line in the first chapter of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, from which it is drawn, is *not* one of sexual yoga, given the strong parallels between this verse and the names of the three blisses that are given in Buddhajñānapāda’s system, along with the incorporation of this line into the *Dvīṭīyakrama* precisely in the context of sexual yogic initiatory practice in which the three blisses are said to be experienced, I wonder if the line from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* may have served as a scriptural source or inspiration for the classification of the blisses as three-fold, as well as for the names ascribed to them in Buddhajñānapāda’s system. Certainly, Vaidyapāda does not take the line that way, however; he understands it to be a three-fold description of suchness itself, which he says is free from a conceptualization of any of these three aspects (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.7-110a.1; P 132a.5-6). Nonetheless, my suspicion remains. Ronald Davidson has suggested that the source of the three blisses referenced in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* may have been the oral tradition, specifically the teachings of Buddhajñānapāda’s guru Pālitapāda (Davidson erroneously refers to this guru as *Bālipāda as he did not, at the time of writing his article, have access to Sanskrit sources that we now have confirming the name of this guru) (Davidson 2002, 62). My speculation here with regards to a scriptural inspiration for the three-fold system of blisses does not necessarily contradict Davidson’s suggestion that this system may have been passed down to Buddhajñānapāda by means of an oral tradition.

the precise sequence in which the four blisses arise,⁷⁴ and while the sequence of the blisses in Buddhajñānapāda’s system is clear—the so-called “middling bliss” is obviously the second of the three—the precise nature and function of the second and third blisses in his system is not entirely clear. As we shall see, this point may be clarified to some degree with reference to the debates that took place on the sequence of the four blisses in later sources.

There are some indications in both Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings that the second bliss in Buddhajñānapāda’s system, the middling bliss, corresponds with the innate bliss of the later systems. While this latter term does not occur in Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings, Vaidyapāda—who also seems to uphold a system of only three blisses in accordance with Buddhajñānapāda’s presentation—does on at least two occasions use the term “innate bliss” though it is not made entirely clear how (or, indeed, even if) he connects this innate bliss with the three blisses of Buddhajñānapāda’s system. In his commentary on a passage of the *Dvitiyakrama* that instructs the yogin,

Then, with great passion
Engage in physical practice with her;
Practicing this play in an isolated place
You should examine bliss. |105|⁷⁵

Vaidyapāda identifies the “bliss” that the yogin should examine as “innate bliss” (*lhan cig skyes pa’i dga’ ba*) which he says “is composed of the three [aspects].”⁷⁶ The term “innate bliss” appears at least once more in Vaidyapāda’s writings, this time in a citation that he provides (in both the *Sukusuma* and the *Mukttilaka-vyākhyāna*) and ascribes to a work called *The Precious Garland* (*Rin chen phreng ba*).⁷⁷ That citation mentions “innate bliss” (*dga’ ba lhan cig skyes*) as something that arises through practice with a tantric consort. In the passage in the *Sukusuma* where Vaidyapāda provides this citation he indicates that Buddhajñānapāda himself cited this particular passage, though the citation is not found in any of his extant writings.⁷⁸ It is possible that Vaidyapāda is referencing Buddhajñānapāda’s use of the citation in the context of oral instructions, but in any case, none of Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving writings employ the term “innate bliss,” at all.

Although Buddhajñānapāda himself clearly states, as we saw above, that the three blisses are associated with the three *bindu* yogas, we must rely on Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* to specify the details of this association, though it proceeds in a rather straightforward manner. That is, according to Vaidyapāda’s commentary, the first *bindu* yoga of the indestructible *bindu* is associated with bliss, the second *bindu* yoga of the secret *bindu* is associated with the middling bliss, and the third *bindu* yoga of the emanated *bindu* (otherwise known as vajra recitation) is

⁷⁴ See Isaacson and Sferra 2014 (esp. 96-100) for an overview of the different positions on the sequence of the four blisses.

⁷⁵ *de nas rab tu chags ldan pas// de dang lhan cig lus kyi ni// spyod pas dben pa’i gnas su spyad// rol pas dga’ ba bntag par bya// |105|* (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 105).

⁷⁶ *lhan cig skyes pa’i dga’ ba ste gsum gyis bsdus pa’o.* (*Sukusuma*, D 107b.2; P 129a.7). It seems that these three aspects, for Vaidyapāda, are actually the three *kāyas*. In his comments on verse 397 of the *Dvitiyakrama* Vaidyapāda describes the bliss that is experienced during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* as “comprised of the three *kāyas*” (*sku gsum gyis bsdus pa’i dga’ ba*) (*Sukusuma*, D 139a.2; P 167b.3).

⁷⁷ This is the verse that describes the three types of *ācārya* that are mentioned several times in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s works. The verse is cited in both the *Mukttilaka-vyākhyāna* and the *Sukusuma*, but the citation is only identified as a verse from the *Rin chen phreng ba* (phreng ba] P, phrod pa D) in the *Mukttilaka-vyākhyāna* (*Mukttilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47b.5-7; *Sukusuma*, D 88a.6-7). I have been unable to identify this work beyond the title that Vaidyapāda himself provides for it. See note 10 of my translation of the *Dvitiyakrama* for more details on this citation.

⁷⁸ *Sukusuma*, D 88a.6.

associated with the bliss of cessation.⁷⁹ In this way, the practice of the three *bindu* yogas might appear to represent a progression through the blisses, with the “bliss of cessation” of the third *bindu* yoga as the culminating experience. However, it is not entirely clear that this is the case, and there is some indication that the second of the three blisses in Buddhajñānapāda’s system, the middling bliss, is equated with the experience of a glimpse of suchness during the *prajñajñānābhīṣeka*. Precisely how this equation relates to the association of that second bliss with the second yoga is also not completely clear. And, as we shall see below, the third yoga, and therefore the third among the three blisses, is associated in several places in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings with seminal emission, not only in the context of the third initiation (in which emission is, as we will see in Chapter Seven, a standard feature), but also in the context of yogic practice. Moreover, *both* the second and the third yogas are described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in ways that might suggest their supremacy—the five signs that come about through practicing the secret *bindu* yoga are said to result in non-abiding *nirvāṇa*,⁸⁰ and the practice of the third *bindu* yoga of the emanated *bindu* is said to transfer great omniscience into a practitioner’s mindstream.⁸¹ Thus, despite the fact that, in terms of their order, the bliss of cessation clearly comes later, it is not immediately obvious that one of these two blisses is somehow superior to the other.

However, there are some further indications in Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings, and in Vaidyapāda’s, which, when taken in the context of the later debate on the sequence of blisses, and particularly in terms of some helpful observations about that debate that have been made by Harunaga Isaacson and Francesco Sferra, can perhaps bring us a bit closer to an understanding of the three blisses in Buddhajñānapāda’s system. Let us first take a look at one passage in his writings that suggests a connection between the middling bliss of Buddhajñānapāda’s system and the innate bliss of later systems, and that also suggests, as just noted, that this middling bliss may be equated with the experience of a glimpse of “an absence” that is identified with the suchness seen directly during the *prajñajñānābhīṣeka*. That passage—part of which is cited in quite a number of later works precisely in reference to the debate on the sequence of blisses (but with a slightly different reading)⁸²—is found in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in a set of verses on the culmination of the third initiation, where the yogin is instructed to observe and stabilize the blissful experience that comes about through sexual union with a partner:

From the uniting of the realm of space and the vajra, great bliss that has genuine vision arises, which brings about genuine bliss.

⁷⁹ *dga’ ba’i ye shes kyi rang bzhin mi shigs pa’i thig le bsgom pa...* (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.2-3; P 137b.8); *dga’ ba bar ma’i ye shes kyi rang bzhin gsang ba’i thig le...* (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.7; P 140a.3-4); *dga’ bral gyi ye shes kyi rang bzhin sprul pa’i thig le...* (*Sukusuma*, D 118b.6-7; P 143a.4).

⁸⁰ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 200.

⁸¹ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 240.

⁸² Apart from its inclusion, along with most of the rest of verses 124-125 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, the second line (with some variants) is cited alone in a number of other later works: the *Caturmudrānvaya* (attributed, by some authors at least, to Nāgārjuna; p 32), the *Abhīṣekanirukti* (fol. 43 r) Kumāracandra’s *Ratnāvalī* (p. 102), Rāmapāla’s *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (see Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 275), and the *Kriyāsaṅgrahapañjikā* (chapter 6, *prajñajñānābhīṣekavidhiḥ*, st. 13ab). This list of citations is provided in Isaacson and Sferra (2014, 275 n 120) in the notes to their translation of the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, which cites the passage twice. The page numbers that I give here are those provided in their citation, and include sources I, myself, have not looked at. The interested reader is therefore directed to Isaacson and Sferra’s bibliography for further details. I discuss the implication of two of the variant readings below.

Between the [bliss of] cessation and bliss an absence⁸³ is seen and should be stabilized.⁸⁴ Here, in the second line, we find a mention of “bliss” (*dga’ [ba]*), “the bliss of cessation” (*chag bral*⁸⁵), and something that lies “in between the two blisses” (*dga’ gnyis bar du*). I take these three to refer precisely to the three blisses—bliss, the bliss of cessation, and middling bliss—of

⁸³ *dben*] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), *bden* D C P N S) *nyid* (*nyid*] sugg. em. based on parallel verse in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* (see *Yogasapta*, D 71a.3; P84b.4), *gnyis* D C P N S). Here Vaidyapāda states, “The absence of the two blisses should be seen by means of the oral instructions, and [the text] is stating that one should stabilize that.” *dga’ ba gnyis gyis dben pa de man ngag gis mthong ba de la blo brtan par gyis shig ces gdams pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.5; P 132a.2). I have emended the *Dvitiyakrama* here in accordance with Vaidyapāda’s commentary and the *Yogasapta* to read “an absence” (*dben nyid*), rather than the implausible “the two truths,” (*dben gnyis*), found in all recensions of the *Dvitiyakrama* itself. However, Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* (as well as all of the other citations of this line in later Sanskrit sources of which I am aware, on which see note 82 above), instead of “an absence,” here reads “the target” (*lakṣya*). Although after much deliberation I have not chosen to do so, I will note here that it was very tempting to make an even more serious emendation of the *Dvitiyakrama* from *bden gnyis* not just to *dben nyid* following Vaidyapāda, but to *’ben nyid*, “the goal,” to match the Sanskrit (*lakṣya*) of all of the later Sanskrit sources of which I am aware that cite this passage. However, I have resisted doing this because, in addition to the fact that for this more metaphorical meaning of *lakṣya* (i.e. as the “target” of awakening rather than a physical archery “target”) one would prefer *mtshon bya* rather than *’ben* (though *’ben* is attested as a translation of *lakṣya*, at least in the archery target sense), while making the emendation to *’ben* might work in the *Dvitiyakrama* itself, it is much more difficult (though not absolutely impossible) to coherently make the emendation to *’ben* in Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the relevant passages. In the passage from the *Sukusuma* cited above in this note it would not be terribly difficult to make that emendation, but a later passage from the *Sukusuma*—“How is it that there is the absence of two blisses? Neither passion, dispassion, nor something in between are observed means that there is no conceptualization in terms of these three.” (*dga’ ba gnyis kyis ji ltar dben zhe na/ ’dod chags chags bral bar mi dmigs zhes te ’di gsum gyis rtog pa med pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.7-110a.1)—would be rendered significantly less coherent were one to emend *dben* to *’ben*. Thus, the *Sukusuma* reads much more smoothly and naturally without this emendation, and Vaidyapāda’s commentary is several centuries earlier than any of the Sanskrit sources that include this line with the reading of *lakṣya*, so my guess for the moment is that the *Dvitiyakrama* and the *Sukusuma* represent an earlier recension of the line that, in fact, read “an absence” (*dben nyid*; I unfortunately cannot guess what the Sanskrit may have been), and which later underwent some change to the reading of “the target” (*lakṣya*). As further evidence that Buddhajñānapāda’s own text probably did not read *’ben/lakṣya*, the line as cited in Abhayākara Gupta’s *Āmnāyamañjarī*, which reflects the later reading, translates *lakṣya* in a way that is more expected, not as *’ben* but as *mtshon bya* (*Āmnāyamañjarī*, D 67a.1). In either case, however, I understand the verses to be saying more or less the same thing with either reading. That is, in the *Dvitiyakrama* the “absence” is identified several verses later with the perfection stage, which, as we have seen, is for Buddhajñānapāda identified with suchness itself. This is nothing other than the “target” that is referenced in the later recension of the verse.

⁸⁴ This verse has been transmitted (and perhaps also translated) problematically in the *Dvitiyakrama*, but fortunately a parallel verse survives in Sanskrit in Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi*, which, along with the second line as cited in a number of other sources (see note 82 above for a list of these) is helpful in clarifying some, but not all, parts of the verse as it appears in the *Dvitiyakrama*. The parallel verse (actually 1.5 verses) in the *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* reads: *khadhātuvajrasamyogāt saṃsparśac ca mahādbhutaṃ/ sukham utpadyate yat tat paramānandadāyakaṃ// 10// viramānandayor madhye lakṣyam vīkṣya dṛḍhīkuru/* (ed. Sakurai 1996, 418. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for bringing this parallel to my attention). I have relied on the Sanskrit parallel verses in providing a clearer reading of the Tibetan translation of these verses from the *Dvitiyakrama*. For example, *mahādbhutaṃ/ sukham utpadyate yat tat paramānandadāyakaṃ// viramānandayor madhye* is extremely helpful in clarifying the confusing *bde chen ’byung byar ’gyur// gang gang yang dag dga’ byed chags bral dga’ gnyis bar du*, with which it appears to be precisely parallel, but which would otherwise not be naturally read that way just on the basis of the Tibetan. See notes 263-268 in my translation of the *Dvitiyakrama* for more details.

⁸⁵ The Sanskrit from Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* reads *viramānandayor*, and it seems that this is indeed probably what the Tibetan translators were reading here. They seem to have understood *virama* in the compound to mean *viramānanda* (thus they the two members of the compound would be *viram[ānanda]* and *ānanda*), and thus *chags bral* is here a translation of *viramānanda*. The more common translation of *viramānanda*, however, would be *dga’ bral* rather than *chags bral*.

Buddhajñānapāda’s system.⁸⁶ If indeed the reference to “in between” (which could equally well be translated as “in the middle”) does refer to the “middling bliss” in Buddhajñānapāda’s system, this would mean that this middling bliss is also identified with the “absence,” that the verse says is to be seen and stabilized. This absence is identified several lines later in the text with the perfection stage. This seems, then, to refer to the glimpse of suchness that is experienced directly by a disciple in the context of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. It would also therefore suggest that Buddhajñānapāda’s “middling bliss” corresponds to the “innate bliss” of later systems, since, as Isaacson and Sferra have shown, this line is frequently cited by proponents of the view that the innate bliss—which they point to as the referent of the term “in between” here, and which is, for them, the culminating moment of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*—occurs between the supreme bliss and the bliss of cessation.⁸⁷

The recension of the verse cited by later authors in support of the position that innate bliss holds the third, rather than the fourth, place in the sequence of blisses varies slightly from the verse as it reads here in the *Dvītyākrama*, and though the variant is small it may help us to understand Buddhajñānapāda’s verse, and the role of the middling bliss here more effectively. While in the *Dvītyākrama*⁸⁸ and Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*⁸⁹ the line reads: *viramānandayor madhye...*, the line in Rāmapāla’s *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (and apparently also in the *Caturmudrānvaya*, from which Rāmapāla appears to cite the line) reads: *paramavīramayor madhye lakṣyaṃ vīkṣya dṛdhīkuru*.⁹⁰ In both cases the first compound refers to two among the series of blisses that arise in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. In Buddhajñānapāda’s system, in which there are just three blisses, the compound seems to refer to the bliss of cessation (*viramānanda*) and bliss (*ānanda*), the third and first of the blisses, respectively. In the later systems under discussion in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, there are four blisses, among which the compound appears to reference supreme bliss (*paramānanda*; the second) and the bliss of cessation (*viramānanda*; the fourth according to the system upheld by Rāmapāla, who cites the passage). On the one hand this is not a significant difference, given that what is at stake is what lies between the two, and in Buddhajñānapāda’s system there is no division into the first two blisses (*ānanda* and *paramānanda*, respectively) of the later system, so bliss in his system could correspond with

⁸⁶ Following the parallel Sanskrit verse from Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* (see note 84), the three blisses are mentioned in the first *pāda* of the second line, which reads *viramānandayor madhye*. As did the Tibetan translators, I take the two members of the compound to be *viramānanda* (*dga’ bral*), “the bliss of cessation” (see previous note), and *ānanda* (*dga’ ba*), “bliss.” *Madhye*, “in the middle” here, I suggest, refers to **madhyamānanda* (*dga’ ba bar ma*), the “middling bliss,” in Buddhajñānapāda’s system.

⁸⁷ Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 98. As I noted in note 83 above, the later texts that cite this passage have the reading *lakṣya* (*mtshon bya*), “the target,” rather than *dben nyid*, “an absence.” However, again, given the fact that this “absence” is identified in the *Dvītyākrama* with the perfection stage, it seems to me that the difference in terminology here does reflect a difference in the ultimate referent of the two terms.

⁸⁸ This citation of the line in Sanskrit is of course from the *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* rather than the *Dvītyākrama*, given that the latter does not survive in Sanskrit. However, the *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* does appear to precisely parallel the *Dvītyākrama* here at the beginning of the line, and it is easier to use the Sanskrit verse to show parallels with the later verse from the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, which is also extant in Sanskrit.

⁸⁹ While Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* dates to around the 11th century, and he therefore certainly knew systems of four blisses, rather than just three, his initiation manual is devoted to initiation in the Guhyasamāja tradition, and he incorporates not just this single line, but most of verses 124 and 125 from the *Dvītyākrama* (with a few variants). It therefore seems very likely that the *Dvītyākrama* itself was his source for the verses, including this line, and therefore the fact that his recension of this line corresponds with Buddhajñānapāda’s, in whose system there were only three blisses, with no distinction made between *ānanda* and *paramānanda* suggests that the verse may have been modified by later authors to read *paramavīramayor*, in order to more clearly uphold their position on the sequence of blisses. The modification to *lakṣyam* from whatever Sanskrit is behind *dben nyid* (a modification that *has* made its way into the *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*) may also be related to this same concern.

⁹⁰ For the line as cited in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* and in the *Caturmudrānvaya* see Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 98.

either (or both) of the first two blisses (bliss and supreme bliss) in the later systems. But on the other hand, the comparison between the two verses makes it even more clear that what occupies the middle place between the two, which corresponds in Buddhajñānapāda’s system to the middling bliss (**madhyamānanda*), and in Rāmapāla’s system to the innate bliss (*sahajānanda*), should indeed be understood as parallel: both function as the “target” (*lakṣyam*) that is to be marked by the practitioner during the initiation. Although the term used in the *Dvītyākrama* here is not “the target,” but rather “an absence” (*dben nyid*), that “absence” is identified several lines later in the *Dvītyākrama* with the perfection stage, which is indeed precisely the “goal” that is glimpsed during the third initiation, so I do not think that the difference in terms in the verses is here reflective of a significant difference in the ultimate referent of the terms.

If the middling bliss of Buddhajñānapāda’s system is indeed effectively parallel to the innate bliss of the later systems, then we might also profitably look to the relationship of the innate bliss to the bliss of cessation in those systems in order to better understand the relationship between the middling bliss and the bliss of cessation in Buddhajñānapāda’s system. Here the issue becomes more complicated, since, as I noted above, there are two different positions on the succession of the four blisses in these later systems, and, according to Isaacson and Sferra’s compelling analysis of the topic, these differences seem to be related precisely to different understandings of what constitutes the bliss of cessation, and therefore how it relates to the innate bliss. In brief, Isaacson and Sferra propose that the difference between the two positions on the sequence of blisses arose on the basis of a distinction in the understanding of the term (and presumably also the function) of the bliss of cessation, *viramānanda*. For the proponents of the sequence that places innate bliss in the third place in the four-fold sequence, *before* the bliss of cessation (i.e. those who cite precisely the line that parallels the one from the *Dvītyākrama*: “Between the [bliss of] cessation and bliss an absence (or, in later versions, “the goal”) itself is seen and should be stabilized”), they argue that the term *virama* in *viramānanda* is understood as “Cessation, as a post orgasmic experience of the descent to a lower state, re-entering the world of conceptual constructions, *vikalpa*,” thus necessitating that the crucial moment of seeing reality directly—the innate bliss—had to come before this descent.⁹¹ Proponents of the other sequence, in which the bliss of cessation is the culmination of the sequence, they suggest, “understood the prefix *vi-* in *virama* or *virama* as having either intensifying sense...or alternatively as expressing diversity.”⁹² Isaacson and Sferra, moreover, suggest that prior to the fully developed debate on the sequence of four blisses, which seems to have arisen in relation to, and perhaps even out of the *Hevajra-tantra*, there were precursors to the two divergent positions on the sequence of blisses. They suggest that the first proto-position, corresponding to the later position in which the bliss of cessation *follows* innate bliss, is exemplified by “the (probably scriptural) passage...quoted in the *Caturmudrānvaya*,” i.e. precisely the line referencing the three blisses

⁹¹ Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 100.

⁹² *ibid.*

that we find in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (with small variations as noted above).⁹³ (The alternative proposition, they note, is attested in the *Guhyasiddhi*.⁹⁴)

Following this proposal, the presence of the line in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, then, might suggest that for Buddhajñānapāda, the middling bliss is the supreme one, and that the bliss of cessation involves a “post orgasmic...descent to a lower state” involving “the world of conceptual constructions, *vikalpa*.”⁹⁵ However, in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* the association of the bliss of cessation with the aspect of a “descent” into conceptuality does not seem to apply, in particular with reference to the explicit link of the bliss of cessation with the third *bindu* yoga, the yoga of the “emanated *bindu*.” While the *Dvīṭīyakrama* corresponds with the first position described by Isaacson and Sferra in identifying the moment of the middling bliss (equivalent here to the innate bliss of later systems), the absence/goal that is to be glimpsed—the perfection stage or the *dharmakāya* itself⁹⁶—as something that precedes the bliss of cessation, the bliss of cessation itself appears to be associated in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* not so much with a descent from the *dharmakāya* as with an emanation from or emergence out of that state.⁹⁷

The bliss of cessation is explicitly associated in several places in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings with seminal emission, which is itself associated with emanation—of the *maṇḍala-cakra*, or of other forms. The verse in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* introducing the practice of the third *bindu* yoga of the “emanated *bindu*” (*sprul pa’i thig le*)—which, as noted above, is linked specifically with the bliss of cessation reads:

Even when it emerges from the jewel
It is made to pervade the three realms—

This is called meditation upon the emanated *bindu*.⁹⁸

Vaidyapāda’s writes: “Then, having performed the meditation on the secret *bindu*, now, in order to indicate the purpose of the meditation on the emanated *bindu* [the text] states, **Even when it emerges from the jewel/ It is made to pervade the three realms**. Thus, after the conclusion of the initiation, due to abiding in the branch of increase,⁹⁹ [there is] the emanated [*maṇḍala*]-*cakra*, the meditation upon the *nirmāṇakāya*; or, alternatively, because of emanating the four *bindus*

⁹³ Isaacson and Sferra (who, it seems, were not aware of this line’s presence in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*) suggest that it may derive from a lost tantra, since the sources that cite it tend to give it the reverence normally attributed to scripture (ibid., 98-99). They note, however, that Abhayākaragupta (who, it should be noted, holds a position on the sequence of blisses that seems to be contradicted by this statement) in his *Āmnāyamañjarī*, casts doubt on its scriptural authority (ibid.). Although Abhayākaragupta does, indeed, as Isaacson and Sferra have noted, cast doubt on the scriptural authority of the line, he does still provide (“in the case that it *is* scriptural...” *lung yin na de’i cha/...*) a way of interpreting the line that does not undermine his position on the sequence of blisses (*Āmnāyamañjarī*, D 67a.1). While Isaacson and Sferra may be correct that this line is a from a lost tantra, it is also possible that the issue of its scriptural authority or lack thereof may be with reference to its presence here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, in a *mukhāgama*, a work that lies precisely on the borderline of scripture and authored commentary. The fact that thus far we are unaware of any earlier attestations of this line, makes this possibility worth considering. It should be noted, however, that while Abhayākaragupta questions the scriptural authority of this particular line, he cites as scriptural—and attributes to the *Paramādyā-tantra*—a verse that is parallel with the very next two lines (124 cd) of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (*Āmyāyamañjarī*, D 68a.1-2)!

⁹⁴ Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 99.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 100.

⁹⁶ I address the issue of whether the *dharmakāya* itself is glimpsed in the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* according to Buddhajñānapāda’s system (I argue that it is!) in Chapter Seven.

⁹⁷ One might say that in this sense it corresponds with the aspect of the second position described by Isaacson and Sferra in construing “the prefix *vi-* in *virama* or *virama*...as expressing diversity” (Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 100).

⁹⁸ *nor bu las ni byung nas kyang// kham s gsum khyab par byed pas ni// sprul ba’i thig le bsgom par bshad//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 214a-c).

⁹⁹ This may be a reference to the fifth among the seven yogas, the branch of unfolding/increasing compassion (*thugs rjes rgyas pa*).

and the rest [it is called the practice of] the **emanated** [*bindu*]. This meditation is [now] explained.”¹⁰⁰ Here the idea of emission—the emergence of the *bindu* from the jewel—is linked to the idea of emanation: the emanation of the *maṇḍala-cakra* (similar, perhaps, to the generation stage practice in which the *maṇḍala-cakra* is emanated precisely from the deities’ point of union as the result of the emission of *bodhicitta* there), or the emanation of the “four *bindus* and so forth,” which may perhaps here refer to the emanation of the four elemental *maṇḍalas* in the practice of vajra recitation, described above, which constitutes the yoga of the emanated *bindu*. Despite the explicit linking of the yoga of the emanated *bindu* with emission in this verse, it seems unlikely that the yoga itself, the practice of vajra recitation, was meant to be performed following seminal emission. Here the association seems to be more in the second sense that Vaidyapāda mentions—the emanation of the four *bindus*, probably the four elemental *maṇḍalas* that characterize the practice of vajra recitation in this tradition.

However, another verse linking the bliss of cessation with emission, found in the middle of the explanation of the secret *bindu* yoga, *does* appear to be an instruction on what the yogin is to do if, while practicing yoga, he (accidentally?) emits semen. Having described a practice in which the yogin is to focus on the *maṇḍala* in the center of a *bindu* at the tip of the vajra, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* makes what appears to be something of an aside:

If while [regarding] that |191|
 One’s mind becomes dull or weary
 And it emerges from the vajra
 Make it remain at the tip of the nose¹⁰¹—
 And examine by means of the bliss of cessation. |192|¹⁰²

The description of the secret *bindu* yoga, the practice of which seems to be contingent upon the yogin’s *not* having emitted the *bindu* of *bodhicitta*, continues in the subsequent verses. In fact, as I mentioned above, the less detailed instructions on the practice of the secret *bindu* yoga in the *Muktilaka* lack this instruction on what to do if the mind becomes tired and the *bindu* emerges from the vajra, and simply proceed with the description of the procedures for the secret *bindu* yoga. This statement then, appears to be an additional instruction specific to the case in which the yogin is unable to continue retaining the *bindu* and emits it from the vajra, and the injunction to “examine by means of the bliss of cessation,” thus seems to associate the third of the three blisses, the “bliss of cessation” specifically with the moment of emission in the context of yogic practice. In this case, examining “by means of the bliss of cessation” seems to be a method for the yogin to also employ the circumstance of emission as part of his practice.

¹⁰⁰ *De gsang ba’i thig le bsgom par byas nas/ sprul pa’i thig le bsgom pa’i dgos pa gsungs pa/ nor bu las ni byung nas kyang// khyams gun khyab par byed pas ni// zhes te dbang gi mthar thugs rjes rgyas pa’i yan lag tu gnas pas sprul pa’i ‘khor lo ste* (‘khor lo ste] D, P om.) *sprul pa’i sku sgom par byed pa’am yang na thig le bzhi la sogs par spros pa’i phyir na sprul pa ste de bsgom pa* (bsgom pa] P, bsgoms D) *bshad do zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 118b.7-119a.2; P 143a.8-143b.2).

¹⁰¹ While looking only at the root verse, one might presume that the “nose” referred to here is (as is often the case) the tip of the yogin’s penis. Vaidyapāda, however, specifies that one is to “**make it remain at the tip of the nose** of the goddess’ lotus.” *lha mo’i padma’i sna rtser rnam par gnas par byas nas/* (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.6-7; P 140b.4). A similar passage in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* is described in Vaidyapāda’s and Samantabhadra’s commentaries as indicating a process by means of which the yogin appears to be instructed to draw the *bindu* which was previously emitted into the lotus of the consort out onto the “nose tip” of her lotus by means of transforming the “prong” of his vajra into hook-like light rays that hook the *bindu* and draw it out to this location. (See *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* verse 130 (D 34b.3), Vaidyapāda’s *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā* (D 168a.2-5), and Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī* (D 38a.1-3; Szántó unpublished 125).

¹⁰² *gal te de la rang gi sems//|191| bying bar song ngam skyo ba na// rdo rje las ni phyir byung ste// sna rtse rnam par gnas byas nas// dga’ bral dga’ bas brtag par bya//|192|* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 191d-192d).

In any case, there is much that still remains unclear about the three blisses in Buddhajñānapāda's system and their relationship to the three *bindu* yogas. While it seems that the second bliss is linked to the direct experience of suchness in the initiatory context and the third to seminal emission in a yogic context (and perhaps also in the initiatory context?), the idea of emission here seems to be understood here not as a type of "descent" out of the state of suchness but rather as an emanation from it, like the emanation of the *maṇḍala* deities in the generation stage. What I have set forth here is only a preliminary look at the topic of the three blisses in Buddhajñānapāda's system, a more detailed examination of which will certainly reward further inquiry. Perhaps a study of the *bindu* yogas of Buddhajñānapāda's system in the later Jñānapāda School literature, or as they continue to be practiced in the living Tibetan tradition, will shed further light on the three blisses, and in particular on the question of the relationship between the second and third blisses, in Buddhajñānapāda's system.

The "Branches" of the Six-Branch Yoga

In addition to providing an early example of a typology of blisses in the context of sexual yogic practice, Buddhajñānapāda's writings also offer early evidence of the inclusion of several "branches" among what came to be the standard set of a "six-branch yoga" (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) in tantric Buddhist perfection stage practice.¹⁰³ Systems of *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* (in addition to another important system of eight-branch yogas (*aṣṭāṅgayoga*)) are found in many different Indic yogic traditions, certainly not limited to Buddhism, and the individual branches that are included in these systems can vary rather widely.¹⁰⁴ The earliest Buddhist system of a six-branch yoga appears to be that found in the *Samājottara* (vv. 141-154).¹⁰⁵ As I have noted before, Buddhajñānapāda's works show no evidence of familiarity with the *Samājottara*, while instead the *Samājottara* appears to show evidence of the influence of Buddhajñānapāda's writings and practice system. Part of the evidence for this relationship can be found in the fact that the *Dvīṭīyakrama* makes reference to the practice of just three among the six yogas of the six-branch yoga as listed in the *Samājottara*, and one of these three yogas is mentioned in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* with a different name than the standard one by which it came to be known from the time of the *Samājottara* onwards. Francesco Sferra has shown the importance of the six-branch yoga as it is presented in the *Samājottara*, by means of the fact that even when the descriptions of the practices differ in later Buddhist systems, those works still hew to the names of the yogas from the list given in the *Samājottara* and frequently cite passages from that scripture even when explaining the yogas in ways that are at odds with their presentation therein.¹⁰⁶ Given the obvious popularity of the *Samājottara* as a source for these yogas, the fact that Buddhajñānapāda's works only reference three among the six practices and use a different name for one of them serves a further indication that his writings likely preceded the *Samājottara*.

The three among the six branches that receive mention in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are the branch of emptying (*gtong pa'i yan lag*), the branch of retention (*zung pa'i yan lag*), and the branch of recollection (*dran pa'i yan lag*). With reference to the *Samājottara*'s classical list of six yogas, these three constitute the third, fourth, and fifth of the six yogas, respectively. Despite the fact that a full set of six yogas is not mentioned anywhere in Buddhajñānapāda's writings, these three practices are nonetheless referred to in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as "branches." At the

¹⁰³ Ryūta Kikuya (2000) has written on the *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* system in the Jñānapāda School, but the article is in Japanese, so I unfortunately have not been able to take Kikuya's work into consideration in my discussion here.

¹⁰⁴ See Sferra 1990 (esp. 11-15) for a comparison of a number of Buddhist and non-Buddhist *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* systems and a discussion of their relationship with various *aṣṭāṅgayoga* systems.

¹⁰⁵ Sferra 1990, 15.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

conclusion of the section on the practice of the secret *bindu* yoga, the section of the text in which all three of these practices are presented, Buddhajñānapāda writes, “In this way, by means of these three branches,/ Meditate upon the secret *bindu*.”¹⁰⁷

The first of these practices, termed in Buddhajñānapāda’s system the “branch of emptying,” is more commonly referred to in the *Samājottara* and later sources as the branch of *prāṇāyāma*.¹⁰⁸ Several pieces of evidence allow us to make this identification. First, the description of the practice of the “branch of emptying” in the *Dvīṭiyakrama* (vv. 186-194) corresponds with the branch of *prāṇāyāma* as described in the *Samājottara* (vv. 147-148). The identification of the branch of emptying with *prāṇāyāma* is also suggested by Vaidyapāda’s *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, his commentary on Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturāṅga-sādhana*, where he mentions that the practice of the *sūkṣma* yoga according to that *sādhana*—which corresponds with the secret *bindu* yoga—constitutes “the branch of emptying, or cessation, the third.”¹⁰⁹ In the traditional list of the six-branch yoga as given in the *Samājottara*—a work with which, Vaidyapāda, unlike Buddhajñānapāda, was definitely familiar (he wrote a commentary on it!)—*prāṇāyāma* is the third. A third piece of (admittedly much later) evidence is found in the writings of Tāranātha, who, in his commentary on the perfection stage practices of Buddhajñānapāda’s system, *Guidance Manual on the Glorious Muktilaka* (*Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*), retains the name “branch of emptying” used in Buddhajñānapāda’s text, but also directly correlates this branch with the branch of *prāṇāyāma*.¹¹⁰ The branches of retention (*dhāraṇā*)¹¹¹ and of recollection (*anusmṛti*) are more easily identifiable as members of the six-branch yoga, as they are referred to in the *Dvīṭiyakrama* by their commonly used names. While the *Dvīṭiyakrama* mentions only half of the classic set of the six-branch yoga given in the *Samājottara*, it remains an important early source for these practices in a Buddhist text.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ *de ltar yan lag gsum gyis ni// gsang ba’i thig le bsgom byas nas//* |213| (*Dvīṭiyakrama*, verse 213c-d).

¹⁰⁸ There appears to be some confusion with regard to the name of this branch in Buddhajñānapāda’s system. While all of the available recensions of the *Dvīṭiyakrama* itself identify the practice as “the branch of emptying” (*stong pa’i yan lag*), Vaidyapāda *Sukusuma* reads “the branch of casting out” (*gtong pa’i yan lag*) (as does Vaidyapāda’s *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, which also mentions the practice). Tāranātha’s later commentary on the perfection stage practices of Buddhajñānapāda’s system follows the *Dvīṭiyakrama* in reading *stong pa’i yan lag* for this practice—Tāranātha calls it the “branch of emptying which stops the breath” (*dbugs dgag stong pa’i yan lag*) (*Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*, 247).

¹⁰⁹ *dgag pa dang gtong ba’i yan lag gsum pa’o* (*Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, D 168a.6).

¹¹⁰ *Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*, 247. Tāranātha’s work generally remains quite faithful to Buddhajñānapāda’s writings in its presentation, including maintaining the unique vocabulary of this particular system. For example, in the case of the branch of *dhāraṇā*, Tāranātha retains the idiosyncratic spelling of *gzung ba’i yan lag* found in the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings—he calls this branch “the branch of retention where the signs appear” (*rtags snang gzung ba’i yan lag*)—when listing the branches as found in the Jñānapāda School practices, but later refers to the same practice using the more common Tibetan translation ‘*dzin pa’i yan lag*’ (*Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*, 247-48).

¹¹¹ This branch is more commonly rendered in Tibetan as ‘*dzin pa*’, though this does not present much of a problem given that *gzung ba* and ‘*dzin pa*’ are simply different tenses—future and present, respectively—of the same verb.

¹¹² If I am correct in suggesting that Buddhajñānapāda did not know the *Samājottara*, the source from which he may have drawn these yogas (apart, of course, from the fact that the entire practical content of the *Dvīṭiyakrama* is asserted to have been revealed to him by Mañjuśrī) remains unknown. However, the first branch that he mentions—the “branch of emptying”—is also described in the *Dvīṭiyakrama* as “stopping the breath” (*dbugs dgag*) (*Dvīṭiyakrama*, verse 194.b). One version the lists of the six-branch yogas from non-Buddhist sources listed by Sferra, includes *prāṇasamrodha*, “stopping the breath” as the name of a branch that in other versions of the list corresponds with *prāṇāyāma*, although the sources that Sferra lists that use this term seem to be later than Buddhajñānapāda, (Sferra 1990, 13). Also worth noting is the fact that Vaidyapāda, though he clearly is familiar with the full set of six branches, having composed a commentary on the *Samājottara*, (the *Samyagvidyakara*), makes no attempt to discuss the other three yogas of the six-fold set in relation to the *Dvīṭiyakrama*.

A Typology of the Tantric Consort and Sexual Practices: The Relationship between Buddhajñānapāda's Writings and *Kāmasāstra*

The passages from the *Dvīṭyākrama* that deal with sexual practices performed with a tantric consort are consistently focused on the soteriological function and aim of the bliss generated through sexual union. However, several passages nonetheless bear evidence of a relationship with the Indian tradition of *kāmasāstra*, which was generally focused on a more worldly type of pleasure. It seems as if the Buddhist tradition of sexual yogic practice adopted some techniques from the *kāmasāstric* tradition and adapted these to the aims of Buddhist practice. However, as we will see, it appears that the influence of these two literary genres was mutual, or at the very least that Buddhist tantric and *kāmasāstric* authors were participating in overlapping textual communities. Daud Ali has explored some of the ways in which Buddhist tantric literature and practice seems to have influenced *kāmasāstra*,¹¹³ and Buddhajñānapāda's writings seem to demonstrate further evidence of a relationship of mutual influence. I will briefly explore here just a few of the instances where we can see evidence of the interplay between these traditions in Buddhajñānapāda's writings: there are instances where his writings appear to rely upon *kāmasāstric* sources, others where his writings may have themselves influenced the *kāmasāstric* tradition, and still other instances where we can turn to *kāmasāstric* sources to clarify otherwise obscure passages in Buddhajñānapāda's and Vaidyapāda's writings.

Buddhajñānapāda's Four-fold Typology of Tantric Consorts and The Four-fold Kāmasāstric Typology of Women

As I showed in Chapter Three, Buddhajñānapāda's writings make it clear that he holds the practice of the sexual yogas of the perfection stage performed with a consort to be an essential component of the path to awakening. Given the importance of a partner for the tantric practices that his writings espouse, it is perhaps not surprising that the *Dvīṭyākrama* includes a passage describing the characteristics and qualities of such a tantric consort. Since, like most (if not all?) Indic Buddhist tantric works, the *Dvīṭyākrama* is written from the perspective of a male practitioner, it is a female partner who is described. However, the passage in the *Dvīṭyākrama* that discusses the tantric consort not only describes the general qualities of an ideal female partner for tantric practice, it goes on to outline four different types of consort that correspond with the four buddha consorts from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra's maṇḍala*. The *Dvīṭyākrama's* presentation of the four-fold typology of the tantric consort begins with a verse that emphasizes the crucial importance of the yogin's relying upon a female partner in order to come to a direct realization of suchness. Because this realization is not possible without practicing with a partner, the text, incorporating a line from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, indicates the superiority of women among all of the myriad types of illusions that make up the practitioner's experience of the phenomenal world:

That which is luminous and joyful, equal to space—¹¹⁴
One will not know¹¹⁵ it any other way.
Thus, a woman, the illusory *mudrā*,

¹¹³ Ali 2011, esp. pp 54-55.

¹¹⁴ Vaidyapāda specifies that this refers to nondual wisdom (*gnis su med pa'i ye shes*) (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.7; P 119a.7).

¹¹⁵ rig] S P V(P), rigs D C N V(D).

Is superior among all illusions.¹¹⁶ |50|¹¹⁷
 Following this statement, Buddhajñānapāda lists and describes the four consort types, which have as their “pure forms” (*viśuddhi*) the four Buddha consorts from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*’s *maṇḍala*: Māmakī, Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, Tārā, and Locanā.¹¹⁸ The four types, called *kamalī*,¹¹⁹ *śāṅkhinī*, *citriṇī*, and *hastinī*, are associated in the text not just with the four buddha consorts, but also with types of animals: *nāgas*, tigers and lions, the wild black antelope, and elephants, respectively. Each of the four types is then described in terms of mostly physical, but in some cases also personality-related, characteristics. I will not cite the full passage here (see verses 50-67 of my *Dvīṭīyakrama* translation) but just to give a sense of the way the consort types are presented, the first of the four types, *kamalī*, is described as follows (and the description of the other three types follows essentially the same structure):

Here, as for *kamalī*

I will explain her shape and characteristics: |53|

She is a girl who is redolent with the scent of lotus

Her face is round, the tip of her nose like a mustard seed,

Her nails are red and her back is bent [out of respect].¹²⁰

The soles of her feet rest flat upon the earth. |54|

Her body hairs coil and she is golden.¹²¹

Her breasts¹²² are like the fruit of the mustard plant.

¹¹⁶ *bud med sgyu ma’i phyag rgya ni/ sgyu ma kun las khyad par ‘phags//*. These two lines have strong parallels with the first two lines of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* 1.4, which read, in Sanskrit, *sarvāsām eva māyānām strīmāyā praviśisyate* |, and in Tibetan translation, *sgyu ma dag ni thams cad pas// bud med sgyu ma khyad par che//* (D 151a.3). The *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* also mentions the woman as a *mudrā* in the last two lines of the immediately preceding verse: *sarvastrīmāya mudreyam advayaṃ yānam uttamam* |; *bud med kun gyi sgyu ma’i rgya// ‘di ni gnyis med theg pa’i mchog//* (D 151a.2). Thanks to Ryan Damron for bringing these *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* parallels to my attention and to Péter Szántó for sharing with me his draft edition of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*. The two lines from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are also paralleled in Śākyamitra’s *Anuttarasandhi*, included as the second stage in Nāgārjuna’s *Pañcakrama*, which reads: *sarvāsām eva māyānām strīmāyaiva viśisyate/* (Mimaki and Tomabechi 20); *sgyu ma dag ni thams cad las/ bud med sgyu ma khyad par ‘phags* (*Pañcakrama*, D 49a.7; Mimaki and Tomabechi 20). Tomabechi (2006, 132n128) has already noticed all of these parallels and additionally notes that a passage identical to that in the *Pañcakrama* is found in the *Vajramāṇḍālamkāra*.

¹¹⁷ *gsal shing rab dga’ mkha’ mnyam pa// gzhan du rig par mi ‘gyur bas// bud med sgyu ma’i phyag rgya ni// sgyu ma kun las khyad par ‘phags// |50|* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 50).

¹¹⁸ The four consort types are described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 50a-67b.

¹¹⁹ All versions of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* read *kamalī*, which is an unusual and unexpected form. *Kamalinī* would be the expected feminine form that would correspond with the names for the other types. It is possible that that Tibetan translators may have simply shortened the form for metrical reasons. Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma*, however, also reads *kamalī*, but this may again simply be because the translators of the commentary were referencing the Tibetan translation of the root text. I have not taken the liberty of changing the text in my edition, however, as this would render unmetrical all verses in which it occurs. In any case this is an unusual term for this particular type. The type, when it is mentioned in later texts, is instead called *padminī* (see below). I am grateful to Mattia Salvini for a helpful conversation on this topic.

¹²⁰ *rgyab sgur* (Skt. **kubjā*?). The term normally means hunchbacked, but Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that here it is meant to indicate a respectful body posture. (Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communication, January 2016).

¹²¹ *ser*] sugg. em. based on V(D and P), sen D C, se P N S. Vaidyapāda makes it clear that this refers to her coloring. Below Buddhajñānapāda states that her skin color is reddish. In the *Cakrasamvara-tantra* the type of woman who corresponds to *kamalī* is described as “reddish-golden” (Gray 2007, 236).

¹²² *dkar ‘chang*. Vaidyapāda makes it clear that this term refers to breasts: “**White** means milk. That which **holds** this are breasts.” *dkar ba ni ‘o ma’o// de ‘chang ba ni nu ma ste/* (*Sukusuma*, D 100a.7; P 120b.6). I believe that this is likely a translation of one of the Sanskrit terms for breasts *payodhara*—literally “that which holds milk.” The

She has three wrinkles at her waist.¹²³

Her chest is lovely and she has the [leisurely] gait of an elephant. |55|

The taste of her blood is sour¹²⁴

Her skin is reddish.

The pure form of this goddess is Māmakī.¹²⁵

The four-fold typology of tantric consorts articulated in the *Dvīṭyākrama*, is found in some later Buddhist sources, including in Chapter 18 of the *Samvarodaya-tantra*,¹²⁶ but it also corresponds precisely with the classic four-fold typology of women found throughout late Indian *kāmasāstra* literature. The presentation of this typology in the *Dvīṭyākrama* is an early one in Buddhist literature, and indeed in Indian literature on the whole. In terms of Buddhist sources, the *Dvīṭyākrama*'s is the earliest mention of such a four-fold classification—either in the scriptural or commentarial literature—with which I am familiar. With regards to non-Buddhist Indian literature, Vātsyāyana's famed 3rd-4th century *Kāmasūtra* does not include a four-fold categorization of women; Vātsyāyana instead has a six-fold schema. Following the composition of this foundational work, there is a significant historical gap from which period, it seems, no *kāmasāstric* sources remain extant. Kokkoka's *Ratirahasya*, and the Buddhist author Padmaśrī's *Nāgarasarvasva* are considered to be the earliest of the "later" *kāmasāstra* works that followed the *Kāmasūtra*,¹²⁷ and the *Ratirahasya* is reported to be the first text to describe women in these classical four types.¹²⁸ That text is difficult to date: its dates are given by some scholars as 9-10th century, by others as the 10-12th century, and by others as late as the 13th century.¹²⁹ The 9th-10th century dates, however, seem to be based on erroneous and/or ambiguous references to the *Ratirahasya* in the works of the 10th century author Somadevasūri, and all that may be said with certainty is that the *Ratirahasya* is cited by commentators beginning only in the 13th century.¹³⁰ In any case, even with the earliest dates posited, it seems that the *Ratirahasya* is certainly later than Buddhajñānapāda's late 8th/early 9th-century *Dvīṭyākrama*. The *Ratirahasya* lists precisely the same four types of women as the types of consorts in the *Dvīṭyākrama* (though as in the *Samvarodaya*, the first type according to Kokkoka is called the more commonly used *padminī* rather than Buddhajñānapāda's unusual term *kamalī*¹³¹). There is one other possibly early but difficult-to-date source for this four-fold categorization: *Surūpa's *Kāmasāstra* (Tōh. 2500),

Tibetan *dkar 'chang* can also be understood to mean this, given that the term *dkar* is often used for milk products, in general. However, I have not been able to find any other uses of the term *dkar 'chang* in Tibetan.

¹²³Vaidyapāda comments: "Below her navel [she has three wrinkles] that look like a *trīśūla*." (*lte ba 'i 'og tu tri shū la* (shū la) D shu la P) *lta bu zhes pa 'o*// (*Sukusuma*, D 100b.1; P 120b.7). This is a classical mark of beauty in Indian literature.

¹²⁴ skyur] C P N S V (D and P), skar D

¹²⁵ *de la ka ma lī yi ni// dbyibs dang mtshan nyid bstan par bya// |53| bu mo padma 'i dri bro zhing// ngo zhum sna rtse til 'dra ste// sen mo dmar zhing rgyab sgur dang// rkang mthil kun gyis sa la reg |54| pa spu 'khyil ldan ser mo can// dkar 'chang til gyi 'bras bu 'dra// gsus pa 'i gnyer ma gsum ldan zhing // brang mdzas glang chen ltar 'gros dang// |55| rākta 'i ro ni skyur ba 'o// sha mdog dmar te lha mo 'dī// mā ma kī yis rnam par dag//* (*Dvīṭyākrama*, verses 52c-56c).

¹²⁶ In the *Samvarodaya* the first type, instead of *kamalī*, is called *padminī*, which is in fact the much more common name for this particular type; the two categories obviously correspond, though, given that both are derived for words meaning "lotus." The *Samvarodaya* passage on the four types appears likely to have been influenced by the *Dvīṭyākrama*, as there are a number of parallels. For the *Samvarodaya* passage see Tsuda 1994, 155-57 and 324-35. The *Samvarodaya* is quite a bit later than the *Dvīṭyākrama*; Harunaga Isaacson has suggested it may date to as late as the 12th century (English 2002, xxi, 384n2).

¹²⁷ Ali 2011, 43.

¹²⁸ Datta 1988, 1203; Ali 2011, 45.

¹²⁹ See Ali 2011, 44 and 44n14; Datta 1988, 1203; and Hopkins 1992, 35 and 35n4.

¹³⁰ Ali 2011, 44n14 and 44.

¹³¹ See note 119.

which, like the *Dvitiyakrama*, is not extant in Sanskrit but is preserved in Tibetan translation (and may therefore not have been considered by Indologists discussing early *kāmasāstric* literature). We know nothing of the author of this treatise, though the homage and one of the concluding verses of the work suggest he was a Buddhist, and he tells us that his work was composed on the basis of Nāgārjuna’s treatise on erotics. Vogel, who has edited and translated the *Kāmasāstra*, suggests that this must be the “tantric” Nāgārjuna, who he dates to the 6th century.¹³² However, if it is indeed a work by this Ārya School author Nāgārjuna on which *Surūpa’s work is based (and this point is itself not entirely certain)¹³³ this author, we now know, was likely writing slightly later than Buddhajñānapāda, in the 9th, not the 6th, century. (A Nāgārjuna, by the way, is also listed as a source in Kokkoka’s *Ratirahasya*.¹³⁴) *Surūpa’s work, then, also appears to be later than Buddhajñānapāda’s, making the *Dvitiyakrama* the earliest known locus, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, of this important four-fold *kāmasāstric* categorization of women.¹³⁵

Sexual Acts in a Yogic Context: Interrelation Between Tantric Buddhist and Kāmasāstric Writings

While the fact that the *Dvitiyakrama* appears to be the earliest extant text to include a four-fold typology of women may indicate the influence of Buddhajñānapāda’s works on later *kāmasāstra*, we cannot be sure that this is the case; it is certainly possible that Buddhajñānapāda himself was relying upon a no-longer-extant *kāmasāstric* source in making a four-fold typology of tantric consorts.¹³⁶ And indeed there are other passages in his writings that suggest he may at times have been relying on *kāmasāstric* sources. A passage from the section of the *Dvitiyakrama* that describes the third initiation, labeled by Vaidyapāda as describing the processes by means of which the initiate couple “physically cultivate passion,” includes some detail on the sexual acts by means of which the yogic partners are meant to arouse one another prior to coitus.¹³⁷ The description of these acts includes a series of five postures, which Vaidyapāda explains as different postures that the partners are to assume in order to gaze upon one another to incite

¹³² Vogel 1965, 4.

¹³³ Vogel, though, notes that “the work admittedly used by Surūpa as his source does not appear to be identical with any of the several known treaties entitled Ratisāstra that go by the name of Nāgārjuna and differ widely from each other.” (Vogel 1965, 5).

¹³⁴ Ali 2011, 60.

¹³⁵ The (much) later Tibetan commentaries on the *Guhyagarbha-tantra* such as Longchenpa’s 14th-century *Phyogs bcu mun gsel* commentary also have a four-fold typology, but it is different from the classical *kāmasāstra* typology (See Dorje 1987, 902). The *Guhyagarbha-tantra* itself, which we can date to the 8th century, only says “discriminating between *devīs*, *nāginīs*, and female *mudrās* of inferior species, or else without discrimination,” at the point where Longchenpa gives his extensive commentary on the four types of consorts (Dorje 1987: 883). Other Buddhist tantras have different schemas of classification of consorts, or of women in general, like the tantras pertaining to the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, including the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* itself and the *Abhidhānottara-tantra*, which have a seven-fold classification (See Gray 2007, 227-29 and Kalff 1979, 237-38, respectively); and the *Samputa-tantra* and *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*, which each have a five-fold one corresponding to the five buddha families (See *Samputa-tantra*, 1.1.42-1.1.45 and *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*, 8.15-8.17).

¹³⁶ Buddhajñānapāda explains that the typology is four-fold precisely due to the fact of the correspondence of the types with the four buddha consorts, writing “ This illusion here in this world,/ Because of having Locanā and so forth as its pure forms, / Is of four types” | *sgyu ma de yang ‘jig rten ‘dir// spyān la sogs par rnam dag pas// rigs ni rnam pa bzhir ‘gyur te//* (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 51a-c). This could be taken as evidence that the classification does indeed spring from the Buddhist tradition, even if not necessarily from Buddhajñānapāda himself, but of course it is also possible that Buddhajñānapāda adopted an already existing four-fold typology because it fit well with the system of the buddha consorts. It seems unlikely that we will be able to determine this question with any certainty.

¹³⁷ *Sukusuma*, D 107b.1; P 129a.5-6. These acts are described in the *Dvitiyakrama*, verses 105-113.

passion (this section of the text occurs before the actual sexual union that constitutes the main part of the third initiation). The verse reads:

First, coming together

Then the [posture] characterized by the elbows

Additionally, the one [characterized by] extending [the legs]

And likewise, the [posture] characterized by lifting up

And then the complete extending [of the legs]—these are the five. |106|¹³⁸

In his commentary on this verse Vaidyapāda writes, “How should one look? Demonstrating the five principal [ways] as taught in the **Sarvasaṃcalaśāstra*(???) (skyod byed thams cad kyi gtsug lag, the “*Treatise on All Kinds of Movement*”???)¹³⁹ the text says **First...**”¹⁴⁰ Vaidyapāda goes on to provide what appear to be citations, in verse, presumably from this text—if indeed the **Sarvasaṃcalaśāstra* is meant to be the name of a text—describing each of the postures mentioned in the verse. The first of these citations reads:

The woman firmly embraces [him] around neck

And the man’s forearms

Are placed against her elbows¹⁴¹

It is also said that her calves should be brought together;¹⁴²

This is [how] to perform the position.¹⁴³

The term “position” (*bsdam pa*) is likely a translation of the Sanskrit term *bandha*, used in *kāmaśāstra* to refer to sexual positions. Indeed, it is possible that Vaidyapāda may be citing a *kāmaśāstric* source (the aforementioned *Skyod byed thams cad kyi gtsug lag*?) here and in his subsequent comments on the positions described in verse 106 of the *Dviṭyākrama*. As I noted above, there seem not to be many (any?) extant *kāmaśāstric* works from the period between the 3rd-4th-century *Kāmasūtra* and the later *kāmaśāstra* texts starting with the work of Kokkoka and Padmaśrī, both dated to no earlier than the 9th century, and quite possibly as late as the 12th. Vaidyapāda’s citations here may thus provide a window into a *kāmaśāstric* source from this intermediary period, which may well have served as an inspiration for the erotological aspects of Buddhajñānapāda’s work. However, there is a reference in one of the passages that Vaidyapāda cites here to “stages of bliss,”¹⁴⁴ which is either a noteworthy reference to stages of bliss in a

¹³⁸ *dang por ‘dus pa byas nas su// de nas gru mo mtshan nyid dang// yang ni brkyang par bya ba dang// de bzhin yar bteg mtshan nyid dang// shin tu brkyang pas lnga ru ‘gyur//|106| (Dviṭyākrama, verse 106).*

¹³⁹ *skyod* (skyod] P, skyed D) *byed* (byed] D, phyed? P) *thams cad kyi gtsug lag*. Harunaga Isaacson (personal communication) suggests the (admittedly rather speculative) possibility that *skyod byed thams cad* could be translating something like *sarvaparvartana*, *sarvasaṃcālana*, or *sarvaprakampaka*, with the sense of “one who makes all (beings in Kāmadhātu) move/act,” as an epithet for Kāma, thus *skyod byed thams cad kyi gtsug lag* would actually be referring to Kāmaśāstra, but if this were indeed the intended meaning, this would assume a rather poor (or at least overly literal) translation on the part of the Tibetan translator. As I note below, it is also not completely clear whether this work is a *kāmaśāstric* source.

¹⁴⁰ *ji ltar blta bar bya zhe na/ skyod* (skyod] P, skyed D) *byed* (byed] D, phyed? P) *thams cad kyi gtsug lag las bshad pa’i gtsbo bo lnga gsungs pas/ dang por zhes pa la sogs pa’o// (Sukusuma, D 107b.2-3; P 129a.7-9).*

¹⁴¹ While holding her head in his hands, as described in the subsequent verse cited by Vaidyapāda?

¹⁴² Presumably with her legs around his body.

¹⁴³ *de’i mtshan nyid kyang ji skad du/ bud med mgul par* (par] D, pa P) *dam ‘khyud de// pho yi dung pa gnyi ga yis// gru mo gnyis la bzhag pa yag// bud med rje ngar ‘dus par bshad// ces te/ bsdam pa’i bya ba’o// (Sukusuma, D 107b.3-4; P 129a.8-129b-1).*

¹⁴⁴ “The woman’s bent knees/ are to be placed on the man’s elbows/ This [posture] is called “knees on elbows”/ These [postures] are asserted to be (to produce?) the stages of bliss./ This is the act of looking closely.” *de nas gru mo mtshan nyid ces pa ni rkang lag gi bya ba ste/ ji skad du/ bud med pus mo bkug pa ni// pho yi gru mor bzhag par bya// bus mo gru mor bshad pa ste// de dag dga’ ba’i rim par ‘dod// ces te/ rnam par lta bar bya ba’o// (Sukusuma, D 107b.4-5; P 129b.1-2).*

kāmasāstric work,¹⁴⁵ or an indication that the text Vaidyapāda cites here is actually *not* a *kāmasāstric* text, but rather a Buddhist one. I have been unable to determine at this point which is more likely to be the case.

However, even in the sections of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that appear to show some influence from the *kāmasāstric* tradition, borrowings from there are directed toward the soteriological aims of yogic practice. Several verses after the one describing the series of postures, cited above, another verse from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*—still in the section that Vaidyapāda identifies as instructions on “physically cultivating passion”—mentions a number of locations on his partner’s body that the yogin should stimulate:

While sucking and making the sound *ṣīt*,¹⁴⁶
 He plays with her breasts, the tips of her fingers,
 Her throat, lower lip, cheeks, and earlobes,
 Her eyes, the crown of her head, and her secret place—
 Kissing these with his mouth. |110|¹⁴⁷

Vaidyapāda explains that the stimulation described in this verse is performed in order to “invoke the places that are the sources of *bodhicitta*,”¹⁴⁸ thus connecting acts that produce erotic pleasure directly with the stimulation of parts of the subtle body related to the soteriological function of sexual yoga. Indeed the lines from this verse (b-d) listing the locations on the body that are to be stimulated are mostly parallel with a verse cited in the only surviving manuscript of Kalyāṇavarman’s later (late 9th century?)¹⁴⁹ *Catuspīṭhapañjikā*, where these lines appear combined together with verses 171-174 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and with some other verses that are not derived from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, but are clearly associated with the practice of sexual yoga.¹⁵⁰ Verses 171-174 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* deal with the practice of *nyāsa*, in which the practitioner visualizes the placement of sixteen syllables on specific places in the body during the yoga of the indestructible *bindu*. The fact that the citation in the *Catuspīṭhapañjikā* combines the verses from these two separate sections of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, the latter of which is clearly related to perfection stage yogic practices, provides further corroboration of Vaidyapāda’s assertion that these physical locations mentioned in verse 110 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, in addition to their function as erogenous zones the stimulation of which incites pleasure in the yogin’s partner, are indeed also connected to yogic practices involving the manipulation of elements of the subtle body.

¹⁴⁵ It seems that a reference to a sequence of blisses in a non-Buddhist *kāmasāstric* work would at the very least be unusual (Harunaga Isaacson and Mattia Salvini, personal communications), but as the passage contains but a vague reference to “stages of bliss” (*dga’ ba’i rim pa*), without any further specifications that would make it clear that this is a reference to the typical progression of blisses from the Buddhist tantric tradition, I think it is difficult to completely rule it out the possibility that this work that Vaidyapāda refers to is a *kāmasāstric* one.

¹⁴⁶ *zid sgra*. A sound used in Indian literature to indicate sexual arousal and pleasure.

¹⁴⁷ *gzhib cing zid sgra brjod nas kyang// nu ma lag rtse mgrin pa dang// ma mchu ‘gram pa rna ba’i rtsa// mig dang spyi bo gsang bar yang// kha yis ‘o byas rtse bar bya// |110|* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 110).

¹⁴⁸ *de nas byang chub kyi sems ‘byung ba’i gnas rnam bskul ba’i phyr* (P + ro) / *nu ma lag rtse zhes pa la sogs pa ‘o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 108a.3; P 130a.1-2).

¹⁴⁹ Szántó (2012a, 15) suggests a late 9th century date for Kalyāṇavarman’s work. The manuscript itself dates to 1012 CE.

¹⁵⁰ The passage from the *Catuspīṭhapañjikā*, which combines verses from these two different sections of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* along with some other verses that are not from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, is cited in that commentary as coming from the “*Aṣṭāṣṭaka*,” (the verses are preceded with the statement “*uktañ ca aṣṭāṣṭake*”) which may perhaps be the title of a text, though this is not certain. Thanks to Péter Szántó for sharing his diplomatic transcript of these verses with me and for pointing out the parallels with the *Dvīṭīyakrama* vv. 171-74. The lines that are parallel with verse 110 (which I was able to notice only because Péter kindly shared the Sanskrit passage from the *Catuspīṭhapañjikā* with me) read: *pīnastane karāgre ca grīvāyāṃ adhare tathā | gaṇḍākṣikarṇamūle ca mūrdhni sarvāṅgam eva ca |* (I have edited the text slightly following Harunaga Isaacson’s suggestions, for which I am grateful.)

In fact, the verses from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that present the list of sixteen locations on the body and the installation there of syllables—the sixteen vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet—are yet another place where we can see evidence of a relationship between Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and *kāmasāstra*, and where recourse to *kāmasāstric* texts can help us to more clearly understand some rather opaque statements in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings. The *Dvīṭīyakrama* describes the sixteen syllables located at the sixteen points in the body as “the sixteen forms of *bodhicitta* in one’s own interior.”¹⁵¹ After listing each of the syllables and their locations in the body, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* states, somewhat cryptically, “These are completed at the time of the sixteenth.”¹⁵² Vaidyapāda explains: “Also, one should know that this is with regard to the stages of the first day [of the month] and so forth. **They are completed at the time of the sixteenth**, means that at the time when the outer moon comes to **fullness**, these are also perfected. One must understand that this is then reversed. Regarding being **perfected at the time of the sixteenth**, the sixteen places that are stirred up through practice also become “the sixteen.” These then [become] the *bindu* and this becomes like the moon, which produces the blissful consciousness. **The previous light rays hook**, means that they **hook** the sixteen syllables and draw them into the *bindu*. By slightly holding one’s mind, like the first wisdom, there for a moment, what happens? [The text then says] **Meditate with determination/ On the great [maṇḍala]-cakra of deities together with its support.**”¹⁵³ This is very similar to some comments that Vaidyapāda made earlier in the *Sukusuma*: “Moreover, through practicing, by means of the agitation of the locations, the sixteen syllables appear, and these, then, become the sun and moon. Having transformed into a *bindu* like that, they go to the tip of the vajra. This itself, in a form which blazes with thousands of light rays, is meditated upon by the yogin in accordance with the ritual that will come below. When this happens, the suchness that has been spoken of will be realized, [and that is the] purpose [of this practice.]”^{154 155}

¹⁵¹ *bdag nyid nang// byang chub sems gzugs bcu drug po//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 170c-d).

¹⁵² *bcu drug dus su rdzogs ‘gyur ba//* [174] (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 174d).

¹⁵³ *de yang tshes gcig la sogs pa’i rim par shes par bya’o// bcu drug dus su rdzogs gyur pa zhes pa ni phyi’i zla ba rdzogs par’i dus su de yang rdzogs pa’o// de ne bzlog ste shes par bya’o// bcu drug dus su rdzogs par ‘gyur ba ni sgrub (sgrub] P, bsgrub D) pas dkrugs pa bcu drug/ de (de] D, ste P) yang bcu drug par ‘gyur/ de yang thig le/ de yang zla ba lta bur song nas/ dga’i ba’i shes pa ‘byung ba’o// gong gi ‘od kyis rnam pa bkug ste zhes pa ni yi ge bcu drug po rnam par bkug nas thig le’i nang du bcug la der rang gi sems dang po’i ye shes ltar bag zhad bzung bas cir ‘gyur zhe na/ lha’i ‘khor lo che/ rten dang bcas pa mos pas bsgom/* (*Sukusuma*, 115a.6-115b.1; P 138b.6-139a.2).

¹⁵⁴ *de yang bsgrub pas gnas rnam dkrugs pa las yi ge rnam bcu drug par gyur/ de yang nyi zlar gyur/ de lta bu’i thig ler gyur nas rdo rje rtse mor ‘gro ba ste/ de nyid ‘od zer stong du ‘bar ba’i gzugs su rnal ‘byor pa rnam kyis ‘og nas ‘byung ba’i cho gas bsgoms nas/ ji skad du gsung pa’i de kho na nyid rtogs par ‘gyur pa’i phyir ro/* (*Sukusuma*, D 88a.4-5; P 105b.6-8).

¹⁵⁵ Tāranātha, who reports having received initiation into and teachings on the Jñānapāda lineage from his master Buddhaguptanātha, in his much later instruction manual on the perfection stage rituals of the Jñānapāda School, gives an ever-so-slightly more clear presentation of this practice that does not seem substantially different from what is already here in Buddhajñānapāda’s text, with Vaidyapāda’s clarifications. He writes, “For the second part, the light from the bindu illuminates the *jñānasattva*, and from that light radiates forth and illuminates the interior of the foundational body. Like holding up a lamp in darkness, one sees clearly the sixteen *bindus*, which are the white substance.... [He lists here the syllables at all of the locations on the body, exactly as they are described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*]...All of these are white and radiate white light. Think of them as being of the nature of bliss. The light from the heart center, either in stages or all at once, as one prefers, dissolves those syllables into the indestructible *bindu* at the heart center, and [it] then blazes with light and causes a strong increase in the essence of bliss. Contemplate thus.” *gnyis pa ni thig le’i ‘od kyis ye shes sems dpa’i sku gang / de las ‘od ‘phros gzhi lus kyi nang gsal zhing gang bar byas/ mun khung du sgron me bteg pa ltar dkar cha thig le bcu drug po rnam gsal bar mthong ba ni/ thams cad kyang kha dog dkar po ‘od zer dkar po ‘phro ba/ bde ba’i rang bzhin can du bsam/ snying ga’i ‘od kyi yi ge de rnam rim pas sam cig car gang mos kyis snying ga’i mi shigs pa’i thig ler bstims pas/ ‘od zer ‘bar zhing/ bde ba’i ngo bo lhag par rgyas par bsam mo//* (*Dpal grol ba’i thig la’i khrid yig*, 243-244).

Vaidyapāda’s comments about the phase of the moon in relation to these syllables in different parts of the body can, I believe, be understood more clearly with reference to the *kāmaśāstric* doctrine of *candrakalā* in which Kāmadeva was understood to dwell in different parts of the body at different points in the moon’s phases.¹⁵⁶ As described in Kokkoka’s *Ratirahasya* and in Padmaśrī’s *Nāgarasarvasva*, this involves Kāma moving gradually through the left side of the body in the moon’s waxing phase, pervading the entire body for two days during the moon’s fullness, and traveling down the right side of the body during the waning phase.¹⁵⁷ A man is meant to stimulate these specific locations on his lover’s body at particular days in the lunar calendar in order to please her, and the texts even prescribe the visualization of the vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet (i.e. precisely the syllables listed in the *Dvītyākrama*), along with a *candrabindu*, at these various places on the body, on the appropriate dates.¹⁵⁸ While the doctrine of *candrakalā* described in these works is several centuries later than the *Dvītyākrama*—as noted above the *Ratirahasya* is likely not earlier than the 10th century, and perhaps as late as the 13th, and the *Nāgarasarvasva* dates to the 12th century—and pertains to the genre of erotics rather than tantric practice, as I noted above, Ali has shown clearly that *kāmaśāstra* authors from this period, including Padmaśrī (who perhaps not incidentally was a Buddhist), were drawing on tantric Buddhist ideas in their writings.¹⁵⁹ A similar practice is described also in *Surūpa’s *Kāmaśāstra*, which may be earlier than the *Ratirahasya* and the *Nāgarasarvasva*, but as I noted above, that work is difficult to date.¹⁶⁰ In any case, as we saw earlier, Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda both appear to show familiarity with *kāmaśāstra*. While the specific association with Kāmadeva is unlikely to be relevant here in the *Dvītyākrama*—the syllables are specified in the *Dvītyākrama* as being present within the yogin’s own body, and the practice of *candrakalā* in a *kāmaśāstric* context seems always to pertain specifically to a woman’s body¹⁶¹—the idea of syllables or *bindus* in the practitioner’s body becoming fully “perfected” at the time of the full moon (and perhaps otherwise individually “perfected” on the waxing or waning days of the moon) may be related to a more widely shared conception of specific areas of the body being associated with the progression of the lunar calendar. Such a conception does indeed appear to be a more broadly Indic idea, as it is also found in Indian medical traditions, where both the life force and the pulse are also said to travel through the body on specific days of the lunar calendar, and are likewise associated with the Sanskrit vowels located at sixteen different places on the body, as described in the *Dvītyākrama*.¹⁶² Moreover, the passage on the syllables at the sixteen places found in Kalyāṇavarman’s *Catuspīṭhapañjikā* that is parallel with *Dvītyākrama* verses 171-174 makes reference to the waxing and waning phases of the moon, and its context is clearly one of sexual yogic practice. While this work is also slightly later than the *Dvītyākrama*, it further confirms the connection between the syllables and locations described in the *Dvītyākrama* and the lunar phases within a sexual (and in this case also a yogic) context.

Thus, in several passages in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings we see further evidence of the relationship between tantric Buddhist writings and *kāmaśāstra* that Ali’s work has already begun to explore. As tantric Buddhist traditions developed and refined the practices of sexual yogas that came to characterize and even define later tantric Buddhism in India, it is only natural that they

¹⁵⁶ See Ali 2011, 47.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 47-48

¹⁵⁹ Ali 2011, esp. pp. 53-54

¹⁶⁰ See Vogel 1965, 24.

¹⁶¹ See Desmond 2011, 26.

¹⁶² Somānanda Dharmanātha, personal communication.

should have drawn on the rich Indian tradition of erotology as a support for such practice. It increasingly appears to be the case, however, that tantric Buddhist traditions themselves may have contributed to the development of *kāmaśāstra*. Further study of the relationship between the these two genres, the authors who wrote both types of texts, and their communities will certainly contribute to our understanding of Buddhist tantra and *kāmaśāstra*.

The Yoga of *Utkrānti*, the Yogic Ejection of Consciousness

One further practice that is connected in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* with the perfection stage is *utkrānti* (*‘pho ba*), the yogic ejection of consciousness at the time of death.¹⁶³ The *Dvīṭīyakrama*’s presentation of *utkrānti* is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, found in a Buddhist work, and appears to have served as an inspiration for the instructions on *utkrānti* given in the *Catuspīṭha-tantra*.¹⁶⁴ In his research on the *Catuspīṭha-tantra*, Péter Szántó has suggested that the technique of *utkrānti* is likely not of Buddhist origin, and he provides a number of references to instances of the practice, or its parallels, in a range of non-Buddhist texts, both Brahmanical and Śaiva.¹⁶⁵ Whatever tradition Buddhajñānapāda may have been drawing on in incorporating these instructions into his work, it is worth noting that in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* the practice of the ejection of consciousness, in addition to being referred to as *utkrānti*, is also called the practice of *svādhiṣṭhāna* (“self-consecration”), a term that is used in a number of tantric works to refer to what seem to be several different types of practices; to my knowledge, the use of the term *svādhiṣṭhāna* to refer to the practice of *utkrānti* is unique to the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.¹⁶⁶ *Utkrānti* is connected in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* with the perfection stage inasmuch as its practice appears to be contingent on a practitioner’s already having received tantric initiation, and having thereby “obtained suchness” from the guru. Indeed, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* prescribes *utkrānti* specifically for a practitioner who has already “obtained suchness” from his guru and “realized the secret and supreme secret,” but who has been unable to train in, and therefore to complete, the other practices taught in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* during his lifetime.¹⁶⁷ Vaidyapāda explains, “Having in this way taught the stages [of practice] for attaining *nirvāṇa* in

¹⁶³ This practice is described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 326-353.

¹⁶⁴ Szántó 2012a, 455-56. Szántó contends that the *Catuspīṭha*, which he asserts clearly draws on the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, is likely the earliest Buddhist scriptural source for the practice of *utkrānti*. See Szántó 2012a, 455-68 for a translation and brief analysis of the passage on *utkrānti* from the *Catuspīṭha*, including its parallels with the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 456-57.

¹⁶⁶ The term *svādhiṣṭhāna* is used in several works of the Guhyasamāja system, as well as in the corpi of later tantras. For example, it is mentioned in the *Samājottara* (verse 77), in reference to what appears to be a practice within the context of the generation stage, and is also used within the literature of the Ārya School to describe the third of the five stages of that tradition’s perfection stage practices, called the *svādhiṣṭhānakrama*, and also termed the practice of the illusory *samādhi* (*māyopama-samādhi*), or of the illusory body (*māyādeha*) (see Wedemeyer 2007, 68 and Tomabechi 2006, 79-81). The *Hevajra-tantra* uses the term in what has been interpreted by commentators as just a reference to *utpannakrama* practice more generally (see Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 267 n 74). None of these usages of the term relates to *utkrānti*. However, the practice of *svādhiṣṭhāna* according to the Ārya School is the method by which the yogin produces the body or form of an awakened buddha (*ibid.*), and indeed, as we shall see below, the *utkrānti* instructions given here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* seem to serve precisely this same function of generating a *saṃbhogakāya* form, which is done here by means of first bringing the mind into the *dharmakāya* at the time of ejecting the consciousness in the moment of death. Once the *saṃbhogakāya* form is achieved, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* contends, one will naturally take birth in the next life in a *nirmāṇakāya* form (see *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 351-353).

¹⁶⁷ I discuss more about the prerequisites for *utkrānti* practice and its function within the structure of the tantric path in Buddhajñānapāda’s practice tradition below.

this life [i.e. the three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage that were explained in the earlier section of the text], now he teaches the stages [of practice] for attaining *nirvāṇa* in the intermediate state with the verse beginning **Now...**¹⁶⁸ The *Dvīṭīyakrama* begins:

Now for the stage of *svādhiṣṭhāna*,
 This will be explained
 To a few yogins
 Who are fortunate due to their actions. |326|
 Someone who has pleased the guru
 And received the vase [initiation] and the others
 Together with the *samayas* and vows given by him
 And has thus obtained the suchness¹⁶⁹ |327|
 That is found through the guru's words,
 And has realized the secret and supreme secret
 [But] is not able to genuinely train by means of the activities
 In the way explained [above]— |328|
 He should train in this stage
 Of suchness, just as it is.
 At some time in the future
 One will see the signs of death. |329|
 When the time of death has arrived
 And one is not completely overcome by illness
 Engage in the yoga of *utkrānti*. |330|¹⁷⁰

The yoga of *utkrānti* is thus, like the yogas of the perfection stage described earlier in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, identified here as a practice of “suchness, just as it is,” which also explains why it is necessary for the practitioner to have first “obtained suchness” from the guru before being able to take up the practice of *utkrānti*. After introducing the yoga in the verses above, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* goes on to describe what happens when consciousness leaves the body at the time of death. The text mentions the various apertures of the body through which consciousness (referred to consistently in the section of the text as “wisdom,” (*ye shes, jñāna*)) might depart at the time of death, and the different realms into which an individual will be reborn if the consciousness departs from those various apertures.¹⁷¹ As the *Dvīṭīyakrama* explains, the egress of consciousness from any of the apertures mentioned will result in rebirth in one among the realms within cyclic existence. The yoga of *utkrānti* is thus intended to prevent this, and instead to bring the consciousness directly into union with suchness at the moment of the body's physical death, resulting in attainment of the three *kāyas* of perfect awakening.

The yoga itself begins with the practitioner's blocking the nine apertures through which he does not wish his consciousness to depart with syllables—the anus and urethra are blocked

¹⁶⁸ *de ltar mthong ba'i chos la mya ngan las 'da' ba'i rim pa bstan nas/ da ni bar ma dor mya ngan las 'da' ba'i rim pa gsungs pa/ da ni zhes pa la sogs pa'o* (*Sukusuma*, D 129b.6-7; P 156a.7-8).

¹⁶⁹ Vaidyapāda specifies that this refers to having received the instructions on suchness together with the *sādhana* for accomplishing suchness via the seven yogas (*Sukusuma*, D 130a.3; P 156b.3-4).

¹⁷⁰ *da ni rang nyid byin brlabs¹⁷⁰ pa'i// rim pa 'di ni rnal 'byor pa// bya bas bskal pa 'ga' zhig la// yang dag tu ni bshad par bya// |326| gang zhig bla ma mnyes byas nas// des gngang dam sdom¹⁷⁰ bcas ba ru// bum pa la sogs rab thob ste// bla ma'i zhal las rnyed¹⁷⁰ pa yi// |327| de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing//gsang dang mchog tu gsang rigs¹⁷⁰ pas// ji skad bshad pa'i bya ba yis// yang dag bsgom ni mi nus pas// |328| ji bzhin pa yi de kho na// rim pa 'di [14b] yis bsgom par bya// gang zhig dus ni phyi zhig la// 'chi ba'i mtshan ma bdag gis mthong// |329| 'chi bar gyur pa'i dus byung na// nad kyis yang dag ma rnyogs par// 'pho ba'i sbyor ba yang dag bya// |330|* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 236-30).

¹⁷¹ *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 331-336.

with *sum* and *kṣum*, respectively, and the crown, forehead, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and navel are all blocked with *hūṃ*.¹⁷² Then the aggregates, elements, and sense sources are to be meditated upon “as they are explained in the Yoga tantras”—which Vaidyapāda clarifies to mean that they should be contemplated being the buddhas, the buddha consorts, and the bodhisattvas of the *maṇḍala*, respectively.¹⁷³ The yogin then generates himself in the form of the deity, following the usual generation stage procedure, and then visualizes a five-colored nine-pronged vajra above the crown of his head. He should then imagine his consciousness in the form of a smaller vajra with a wisdom *bindu* at its center, yellow in color, the size of five chickpeas. He should imagine that all phenomena disappear, focusing only on himself in the form of the deity, and then imagine that he himself dissolves until there is only mind. This mind then shoots up like an arrow and enters into the vajra visualized above his head, and dissolves into the *bindu*, which has the nature of the *tathāgatas* and the goddesses. The practitioner is to hold his mind there until it becomes dissipated. When that happens it emerges from the top of the nine-pronged vajra onto a moon disc on top of a lotus, where it transforms into the body of Vajrasattva,¹⁷⁴ who is unclothed but ornamented, possesses the major and minor marks of an awakened being. Vaidyapāda adds that Vajrasattva is to be visualized embracing his consort.¹⁷⁵ Then, presumably from the point of their union, he is to visualize the emanation and absorption of a great *maṇḍala-cakra* “arisen from the blessings of nondual union.”

The yogin is instructed to engage in this meditation repeatedly, for as long as he is able, by means of which his mind “enters into the [*dharmā*]dhātu” and he “realizes that which is luminous and perfectly joyful, like the sky,” which Vaidyapāda explains is the *dharmakāya*. Then, the yogin accomplishes “the form of a five-year-old child,” which Vaidyapāda explains as the *sambhogakāya*, and “realizes unparalleled perfect bliss.” Finally, when the practitioner moves on to the next rebirth he will “genuinely realize the *nirmāṇakāya*.” Vaidyapāda’s commentary on this section of the text explains the verses that describe the practitioner’s attainment of the three *kāyas* also in terms of their relationship to the ordinary death process for a non-practitioner. He states that that what, for the practitioner, is the attainment of the *dharmakāya* is referred to as the “death state” (*shi ba’i srid pa*) by “proponents of karma who do not know the nature of mind.”¹⁷⁶ Thus, at the time when ordinary beings experience the moment of death the practitioner of *utkrānti* realizes *dharmakāya*; at the time when an ordinary being would be in the intermediate state (for seven days, etc.) the practitioner actualizes the *sambhogakāya*; and at the time when an ordinary being would be reborn into another body the practitioner accomplishes the *nirmāṇakāya*.¹⁷⁷ In this way the ordinary death process is transformed by this yoga into a process for attaining the final accomplishment of perfect awakening. The *Dvītyākrama* praises the yoga of *utkrānti* as a practice by means of which even

¹⁷² My description of the practice here is a summary of *Dvītyākrama* verses 337-353.

¹⁷³ *Sukusuma*, D 131a. 5-6; P 158a.2-4. This equation of the buddhas with the aggregates, the buddha consorts with the elements, and the bodhisattvas with the sense sources is made in Chapter 17, vv. 51-52 of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*.

¹⁷⁴ Generally in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings the term “Vajrasattva” is an epithet used to describe the causal or progenitor deity in generation stage practice, not to refer to any specific deity. In that role as the causal or progenitor deity, “Vajrasattva” may also function as a sort of representative of primordial awakening, an *ādibuddha* of sorts. Here in the context of the practice of *utkrānti* neither the *Dvītyākrama* or Vaidyapāda’s commentary specifies what precisely is meant by Vajrasattva, but given that this practice seems to be about merging the yogin’s mind with suchness itself at the moment of his passing, and that Vajrasattva is described as naked, it seems likely that he is meant precisely as an embodied representation of primordial awakening.

¹⁷⁵ *Sukusuma*, D 132a.5; P 159a.5.

¹⁷⁶ *sems kyi rang bzhin ma shes pa’i las su smra ba* (*Sukusuma*, D 132b.2; P 159a.1).

¹⁷⁷ *Sukusuma*, D 132b.1-4; P 159a.1-5.

someone who has committed the gravest of sins is able to attain accomplishment, and through which the accomplishment of the three *kāyas* is certain. Yet, the text explains, even if one does not accomplish the three *kāyas* (immediately?) by means of its practice, at the very least he will “become the leader of the *vidyādhara*s and gradually transform into the *mahāmudrā*.” Thus even if his accomplishment of awakening through arising in the form of the deity (we must again remember that the term *mahāmudrā* in the 8th and 9th centuries refers to the practitioner taking on the form of the deity) is not immediate, it seems, the final result of awakening is certain to eventually transpire for a practitioner of the yoga of *utkrānti*.

As I noted above, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* appears to be among the earliest Buddhist texts to present and advocate for this unique method of *utkrānti*, specified in this work as a means for bringing about the attainment of the three *kāyas* of perfect awakening during the death process. The function of this particular yoga within Buddhajñānapāda’s system of tantric practice seems to be as a sort of failsafe for a yogin who has received initiation and “obtained suchness,” and thus has all of the prerequisites for taking up the practice of the perfection stage, but has not been able to fully or perfectly do so during his lifetime. However, beyond having received suchness during initiation, precisely what training is needed in order to be able to successfully practice *utkrānti* at the time of death is not made entirely clear in Buddhajñānapāda’s or Vaidyapāda’s writings. As we saw in the passage cited from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* above, Buddhajñānapāda appears simply to suggest that *utkrānti* may be practiced by someone who received initiation and “obtained suchness” from the guru, “and has realized the secret and the supreme secret” but was unable to train (fully?) in the practices set forth in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. Vaidyapāda explains that this refers to a disciple who has received suchness from the guru by means of the seven yogas, but who has been unable to genuinely train in it, meaning that he has begun with the generation stage, but been unable to train in accordance with both stages.¹⁷⁸ Vaidyapāda’s subsequent explanation gives many options for the type and frequency of practice that a yogin who wishes to perform *utkrānti* may have engaged in before undertaking this final practice, but the very fact that he includes such a list indicates that he understood some type of training in suchness by means of the generation and perfection stages as a necessary prerequisite for performing the yoga of *utkrānti* at the moment of death.¹⁷⁹ In this sense *utkrānti* indeed seems to function in Buddhajñānapāda’s system as a “second chance” at awakening during the death process if a practitioner has not managed to awaken during his lifetime by means of the practice of the perfection stage, but it is an option that is only available to a practitioner who has already made a connection with the second stage through “receiving suchness” from his guru during tantric initiation.

Perfecting Awakening: Some Conclusions

As we have seen, Buddhajñānapāda’s writings provide a window into the perfection stage and its practices as they were understood during the early period of their development. For Buddhajñānapāda the perfection stage was equated or identified with suchness itself, and was first recognized through the guidance of the guru during the sexual yogas undertaken in the context of tantric initiation. It was associated with the progression of the three blisses that a practitioner experienced during the sexual yogic practices of Buddhajñānapāda’s tradition. The three *bindu* yogas, performed with the support of a tantric consort, served as the procedures through which the yogin was to cultivate the perfection stage, and the yoga of *utkrānti* served as

¹⁷⁸ *Sukusuma*, D 130a.3-4; P 156b.4-6.

¹⁷⁹ *Sukusuma*, D 130a.4-7; P 156b.6-157a.1.

a sort of fail-safe—as long as he had already “obtained suchness” from his guru—if the practitioner was unable to gain accomplishment by means of these other practices during his lifetime. The systems of yoga that were emerging in this time, including the practice of several among the branches of what came to be an important tradition of the six-branch yoga, as well as the typology of blisses in sexual yogic practice are shown in the early stages of their development in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings. The centrality in Buddhajñānapāda’s perfection stage system of sexual yogic practices performed with a consort appears to have entailed his drawing upon, but also likely contributing to, the rich Indian tradition of *kāmasāstra*. However, even the sexual practices that seem to have been drawn from *kāmasāstric* sources were always tailored to the specific soteriological purposes of the systems of the yogic manipulation of winds and energies in the subtle body that were developing in his time. All of these diverse factors, visible in the *Dvīṭyākrama*’s and *Muktilaka*’s instructions on the practices of the perfection stage, point to a vibrant tradition in which an increasing variety of human experiences—including the intensity of both sex and death—were being drawn into the yogin’s repertoire as techniques for bringing about a direct experience of suchness, and thus put into practice in the service of the soteriological aims of tantric Buddhist practice.

Chapter Seven
Revealing Reality:
Tantric Initiation in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s Writings

In order to accomplish great awakening you must experience great bliss with the girl who liberates and gives joy. Nothing else can bring about buddhahood—this girl is the genuine supreme. Thus, throughout endless *saṃsāra* you must never separate from her.

-Mañjuśrī’s instructions to Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvitiyakrama*

One of the main characteristics that distinguishes the practice of Buddhist tantra from non-tantric paths is that a practitioner is required to receive initiation (*abhiṣeka*) prior to undertaking tantric practice. Unlike in Śaiva traditions, where initiation (*dīkṣā*) was understood to be liberative in and of itself, the Buddhist understanding of karma meant that in Buddhist tantra the ritual of initiation could not be held to function as soteriologically efficacious in that same way.¹ Buddhist tantric initiation is nonetheless understood as an essential prerequisite that prepares the initiate by giving him the necessary permission and blessing to take up tantric practice. But it is only through personally engaging in those practices, for which he has become qualified through the initiatory rites, that a practitioner is able to attain liberation. In the late eighth century, precisely at the time when Buddhajñānapāda was active, the system of tantric Buddhist initiation was developing from an earlier five-fold series of initiations that characterized the Yoga tantras, to the addition of a set of higher initiations that prepared the practitioner for the newly emerged second stage, the perfection stage, of tantric practice. To be permitted to take up the practices of this second stage—the yogic manipulations of the winds and energies of the subtle body through sexual yogas—the initiate had to receive these higher tantric initiations, which were themselves sexual in nature. With the advent of the higher initiations, the first five initiations from the Yoga tantra system, which were associated with the five wisdoms, were collapsed into a single “first” initiation, the *kalaśābhiṣeka* (the “vase initiation”),² to which a second, third, and eventually a fourth initiation were added.³ These “higher” initiations first appear in the literature of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* tradition, and Buddhajñānapāda’s writings serve as an important early description of the rituals for more than one of the higher initiatory sequences.

By Buddhajñānapāda’s time the series of tantric initiations numbered three: the first, the *kalaśābhiṣeka* (the “vase initiation”), which, as just noted, combined the earlier five initiations from the Yoga tantras; the second, the *guhyābhiṣeka* (the “secret initiation”), and the third, the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* (the “wisdom-through-insight initiation”⁴). The *Dvitiyakrama* is important for containing early descriptions of the rituals for both the second and the third tantric initiations.

¹ Isaacson 2010b, 263.

² The *kalaśābhiṣeka* seems to be generally understood to additionally include the *ācāryābhiṣeka*, the so-called “master initiation,” through which an initiate received permission to act as a tantric ritual officiant. I discuss this point in brief below.

³ See Isaacson 2010b and Sakurai 1996 (the latter is in Japanese) on the historical development of tantric Buddhist initiation.

⁴ The name of this initiation is a bit difficult to translate. My rendering here follows the presentation of the term in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, which explains the name of the third initiation as follows: “Because one realizes the not [yet] realized wisdom (*jñāna*)/ Through the actions of the “insight” (*prajñā*; i.e. the consort) it is called [the *prajñājñāna*] initiation.” *Shes rab las kyis* (kyis) P, kyī D) *ye shes te// ma rtogs rtogs phyir dbang yin no//* (*Yogasapta*, D 70b.6; P 84a.7) The term *prajñā* (“insight”) is employed in this verse in the sense of its commonly-used tantric meaning, to refer to the female consort.

In terms of scriptural sources for the higher initiations, there appear to be multiple opinions within even traditional commentarial sources about whether the *guhyābhiṣeka* is already indicated in the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. While Candrakīrti in his 10th-century commentary on the *Guhyasamāja*, the *Pradīpoddyotana*, does claim that Chapter Eight of the tantra sets forth the ritual for the *guhyābhiṣeka*, later commentators on the tantra, like Ratnākaraśānti in the 11th century, show no indication that they read Chapter Eight as referencing the *guhyābhiṣeka* at all.⁵ Indeed, both Vaidyapāda, in the 9th century, and Ratnākaraśānti in the 11th, make statements that suggest they do *not* find reference to the *guhyābhiṣeka* in the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra, but only in the *Samājottara*, which we know to have first circulated separately—and after the root tantra—before being added to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* as its eighteenth chapter. In his commentary to the passage on the *guhyābhiṣeka* from the *Samājottara* (vv. 114-117) Vaidyapāda writes: “Regarding the ritual for the *kalaśābhiṣeka* it is explained in the root tantra. As for the explanation of the ritual for bestowing the *guhyābhiṣeka*, [it is found in the verse in the *Samājottara*] starting with **The wide-eyed one...**”⁶ Ratnākaraśānti, commenting on the same passage from the *Samājottara* writes, “From among these [initiations], the bestowal of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* is set forth quite clearly in the sixteenth chapter [of the root tantra] itself. The second [initiation] is explained [in the verse from the *Samājottara*] beginning with **The wide-eyed one...**”⁷ My own reading of Chapter Eight of the root tantra tends to follow Vaidyapāda’s and Ratnākaraśānti’s, in not finding the *guhyābhiṣeka* there. The *guhyābhiṣeka* is, however, found clearly in the *Samājottara*. Likewise, in terms of scriptural sources, it is only in the *Samājottara* that we find the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*.⁸ As I have already mentioned, and will present in more detail in the next chapter, while Buddhajñānapāda knew the full seventeen chapters of the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra, his writings appear to precede the circulation of the *Samājottara*. This makes the *Dvīṭyākrama*’s description of the ritual for both the second and the third initiations the earliest with which I am familiar.⁹

⁵ See *Pradīpoddyotana*, pp.112-19. and *Kusumāñjali*, D 271a-276b. Ratnākaraśānti not only makes no mention of the *guhyābhiṣeka* anywhere in his comments on Chapter Eight of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, but he characterizes the chapter as a whole as describing an extensive ritual for worship (*pūjā*) (*de la mchod pa’i cho ga rgyas pa yang dam tshig yin la de ni le’u ‘di’i don yin no//* (*Kusumāñjali*, D 271a.7)), and glosses the single mention in the chapter of the “guru” as referring to the “form of one’s own *cakravartin*,” (*bla ma zhes bya ba ni rang gi ‘khor los sgyur ba’i gzugs so//* *ibid.*, D 276b.1), a term that he has earlier in the chapter equated with the form of the practitioner’s *yidam* deity (*bdag po’i phyag rgya zhes bya ba ni dkyil ‘khor gyi bdag po ste rang gi ‘khor los sgyur ba’i phyag rgya chen po’o//* *ibid.*, D 276a.1). Modern scholars have similarly made both observations on the presence or absence of the *guhyābhiṣeka* in Chapter Eight of the root tantra. Isaacson (2010b 264n13) notes, with reference to Chapter Eight of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, that the *guhyābhiṣeka* may have been originally performed as a separate ritual sequence, suggesting that he may read the *guhyābhiṣeka* there, while J. Dalton (2004, 16n41) suggests that Chapter Eight describes only a *pūjā*, rather than an initiatory rite. Dalton goes into further detail on his arguments that Chapter Eight does not include the *guhyābhiṣeka*, and that Candrakīrti’s reading of the chapter “runs against the grain of the tantra” in his forthcoming study of tantric ritual manuals at Dunhuang (Jacob Dalton, personal communication).

⁶ *bum pa’i dbang bskur ba’i cho ga rtsa ba’i rgyud du bshad nas/ gsang ba’i dbang bskur ba’i cho ga gsungs pa/ mig yangs zhes pa la sogs pa’o//* (*Samyagvidyākaraṇa*, D 192a.2-3)

⁷ *de la bum pa’i dbang bskur ba ni le’u bcu drug pa nyid du yongs su gsal bar mdzad pa yin no// gnyis pa ni mig yangs zhes bya ba la sogs pa gsungs pa la...* (*Kusumāñjali*, D 106b.3). It is worth noting, though, that the term “the wide-eyed one” (*viśālākṣm*) used in verse 114 of the *Samājottara* may be alluding to the use of the same term in Chapter Eight, verse 26 of the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, where the term is employed to refer to the consort in the ritual described there.

⁸ Isaacson 2010b, 264. I am not aware of any traditional commentators, or modern scholars, who suggest that the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* is found in the root tantra.

⁹ There is some evidence suggesting the presence of the *guhyābhiṣeka* in manuscripts from Dunhuang (see ITJ579, ITJ754, and especially PT321) which reflect a period of ritual development similar to that of Buddhajñānapāda’s time. However, none of the manuscripts contains an especially clear reference to this initiation (Jacob Dalton,

In this chapter I will examine the topic of tantric initiation as it occurs in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, which provide us with a helpful snapshot, as it were, of the state of development of tantric Buddhist initiation in the late 8th and early 9th centuries when he was writing. The *Dvīṭyākrama* in particular appears to have been very influential as the source of a set of popular liturgical verses for the ritual of the third initiation (and the accompanying *vidyāvratā*¹⁰) that were incorporated into at least fourteen (!) later scriptural and authored works.¹¹ I will first give an overview of the initiatory sequences found in the *Dvīṭyākrama*, focusing on several features of this section of the text, including the question of the ritual context of the initiatory sequence in Buddhajñānapāda’s tradition, particularly in terms of the relationship of the lower and higher initiations, respectively, to the two stages of tantric practice, as well as the function of the higher initiations. I will then take up the question of the pointing out of suchness in the context of initiation, which I discussed briefly already in Chapter Three. I examine this topic here as it is found in Buddhajñānapāda’s works, as well as in Vaidyapāda’s short composition on tantric initiation, the *Yogasapta*. I consider both the role of the seven yogas in this process, as well as the use of the term “the fourth,” to refer to this pointing out of suchness and the relationship of this procedure to what eventually became known as a fourth initiation. As we shall see, Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, as well as those of his immediate disciples, capture a moment in the development of tantric Buddhist initiation where the higher initiations had recently been added on to the set of earlier initiations from the Yoga tantras, and served to provide the disciple with the crucial direct experience of suchness that provided the basis for its cultivation and full realization on the path of the perfection stage.¹²

Tantric Initiation in Buddhajñānapāda’s Writings: Initiatory Ritual in the *Dvīṭyākrama*

Initiatory Ritual Sequence: Lower and Higher Tantric Initiations, Together or Apart?

Despite the fact that tantric initiations in Buddhajñānapāda’s system numbered three, the section of the *Dvīṭyākrama* that sets forth initiatory rituals describes only the rituals for the two higher initiations: the second, the *guhyaḥbhīṣeka*, and the third, the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. The *Dvīṭyākrama*’s presentation of these rituals appears, in terms of the text’s narrative structure, following a general presentation of the nature of suchness and a description of the qualified guru,

personal communication). Likewise, it is possible that there may be some reference to the *guhyaḥbhīṣeka* in Chapter Ten of the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*, but although later commentators are clear about its presence there, the reference in the tantra itself is not clear (J. Dalton 2004, 22 and 22n59).

¹⁰ I address the topic of the *vidyāvratā* in relation to the third initiation below, with reference to a paper by Christian Wedemeyer delivered at a conference on Buddhist tantra at UC Berkeley in 2014. An updated version of that paper is in the process of publication (Wedemeyer forthcoming).

¹¹ I discuss these verses and the later sources that incorporate them below.

¹² This chapter would certainly be much improved if I were able to read Munenobu Sakurai’s 1996 publication, *Indo Mikkyō Girei Kenkyū: Kōki indo Mikkyō no Kanchōshidai (A Study on the Ritual of Indian Esoteric Buddhism: Initiation Procedures in Late Indian Esoteric Buddhism)*, in Japanese, as well as his 2007 article, also in Japanese, on the seven yogas in the Jñānapāda School. The table of contents of the 1996 book, which is given there in English translation, indicates that Sakurai has done a significant amount of research on the development of the ritual of tantric Buddhist initiation, and quite a lot of it with specific reference to the Jñānapāda School. Unfortunately, I do not read Japanese and therefore could not take Sakurai’s research into consideration in writing this chapter. I have, however, benefitted from the Sanskrit edition of Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* included in his 1996 publication, which also contains a Tibetan edition of the section of the *Dvīṭyākrama* on initiation. Unfortunately, I had already completed my own edition of the whole *Dvīṭyākrama* before I became aware of Sakurai’s partial edition in this book, and I was therefore unable to take his edition of this section of the text into consideration in my own.

disciple, and consort—all three of whom are necessary in order for a disciple to come to a direct encounter with suchness. The initiatory sequences described thus appear to set forth the process by which the pointing out of suchness takes place, and then the text later goes on to describe the superiority of the view of suchness gained through initiation, and then the yogas by means of which the disciple should train in the cultivation of the suchness that was first encountered during the initiatory sequence. In fact, neither of the two initiations whose rituals are found in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are referred to by their names (or even as initiations at all) in the text itself, but the rituals described are clearly those for the *guhya*- and the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*, as known from later works, and Vaidyapāda explicitly identifies them as such in his commentary.

The fact that only the rituals for the second and third initiations are described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* suggests a specific relationship between these two initiations and the second stage of tantric practice that is the *Dvīṭīyakrama*'s primary topic. However, it also raises the question of the ritual structure for the initiatory sequence in the early Jñānapāda tradition: since the first initiation is not explicitly mentioned at this point in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, should we understand that it was to have been conveyed in a separate ritual context? In later traditions, it appears that there may have been options for bestowing the ritual for the *kalaśābhiṣeka* either separately from or together with the higher initiations,¹³ and this may have been the case in the early Jñānapāda tradition, as well.

Buddhajñānapāda mentions the first initiation, the *kalaśābhiṣeka*, in a verse in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that seems to reference tantric initiations as a set, and the receiving of suchness in that context,¹⁴ which suggests that he did understand the group of tantric initiations from the *kalaśābhiṣeka* up to the higher initiations during which suchness was “received” to constitute a unified set (as was definitely the understanding of the later tradition),¹⁵ but in the passage of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that actually sets forth initiatory rituals for the second and third initiations, the *kalaśābhiṣeka* receives no direct mention. Vaidyapāda, however, adds a rather extensive explanation of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* in his commentary on that passage. And yet several features of Vaidyapāda's comments suggest that he may still have had a separate ritual context in mind for the bestowal of the *kalaśābhiṣeka*. The point in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* where this issue arises is in regard to the first verse describing the ritual for the *guhya*abhiṣeka. It follows the text's description of the tantric consort (which I discussed in Chapter Six), and the claim that it is by means of practicing with such a female partner that a yogin is able to attain accomplishment. The *Dvīṭīyakrama* then begins the description of the ritual for the *guhya*abhiṣeka stating,

Additionally, together with the ordinary,

Perform the *gaṇapūjā*

Then, having searched for a girl [who fits the description] that has been taught,

¹³ See, for example, Vāgīśvarakīrti's 11th-century *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi*, where it is mentioned that the culminating rituals for initiation, the *anujñā* and so forth, may optionally be bestowed following the five initiations that constitute the *vidyābhiṣeka* or after the fourth initiation. *amī cānujñādayaś catvārah paṃcasekānantaram caturthasekānantaram va dīyante* (ed. Sakurai 1996, 416). Presumably the former option would be for a disciple who was only to receive the first set of initiations, and not (or only later?) to receive the higher initiations. I am grateful to Harunaga Isaacson for drawing my attention to this passage.

¹⁴ “Someone who has pleased the guru/ And received the vase [initiation] and the others/ Together with the *samayas* and vows given by him/ And thus obtains the suchness/ |327| That is found through the guru's words/...”
gang zhig bla ma mnyes byas nas// des gnang dam sdom bcas ba ru// bum pa la sogs rab thob ste// bla ma'i zhal las rnyed pa yi// |327| de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing// (Dvīṭīyakrama, verses 327-328a).

¹⁵ There is also a set of three verses at the conclusion of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 395-97, that refer to the three initiations in sequence. The reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka* there, though, is somewhat veiled. I discuss these verses below. See also note 28.

She must be offered to the guru. |83|¹⁶
 Vaidyapāda explains that the referent of “the ordinary” here is, in fact, the *kalaśābhiṣeka*.¹⁷ According to Vaidyapāda the ritual for the *guhyābhiṣeka* begins only in the second line of the verse, with the instructions to engage in the *gaṇapūjā*. He works the presentation of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* into his commentary on this verse from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as follows: first Vaidyapāda explains “the ordinary” (*thun mong*), in the first line, to refer to “that which is attained through [the vows of a] bodhisattva, and so forth, and through the ordinary vows, that is to say the *vidyābhiṣeka*.”¹⁸ The term *vidyābhiṣeka* refers to the set of five (or six) initiations known from the earlier Yoga tantra tradition.¹⁹ Vaidyapāda goes on to interpret the next part of the first line of this verse, “together with that” ([*de*] *dang bcas pa*) to mean “the extraordinary,” and explains that this refers to “that which is obtained by means of the extraordinary vows—the irreversible *ācārya* initiation,”²⁰ a tantric initiation authorizing the practitioner to serve as a tantric ritual officiant. He then gives a rather extensive explanation of the ritual for purifying the land in preparation of making an initiatory *maṇḍala* (*sa dag par bya ba 'i cho ga*), followed by a rather detailed description of the rituals of the *vidyābhiṣeka*, and the *ācāryābhiṣeka*, which rites he takes together to constitute the *kalaśābhiṣeka*.²¹ In short, then, Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the first line of this verse from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* includes a presentation of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* with respect to a verse that does not, on the surface of things, appear to refer to that ritual. It is, of course, possible that the term “the ordinary” would have been an obvious reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka*, though I am not familiar with the use of the term precisely in that way. Vaidyapāda in his *Yogasapta* makes a reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka* as being “given in order to render [oneself] an appropriate recipient/ Of the ordinary and other vows,”²² so perhaps in this period the term “the ordinary” (**sādhāraṇa?*, **sāmānya?*) was indeed commonly used with reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka*.²³ Yet even if it were the case that the term “the ordinary” was a

¹⁶ *de yang thun mong dang bcas pa// tshogs kyi mchod pa yang byas te// gang gsungs bu mo btsal nas kyang// bla ma la ni dbul bar bya// |83| (Dvīṭīyakrama, verse 83).*

¹⁷ Another possible reading is that “together with the ordinary” in the first line of the verse ought to be read as meaning “together with the ordinary [offerings/worship].” This reading would make sense when one takes the second line of the verse, in which the noun *mchod pa*, “offerings/worship (*pūjā*),” is supplied, into account. This is clearly not, however, how Vaidyapāda reads the line, and in the *Yogasapta* Vaidyapāda also makes a reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka* as being “given in order to render [oneself] an appropriate recipient/ Of the ordinary and other vows/. *de yi thun mong gzhan pa yi// sdom pa snod du rung phyir sbyin// (Yogasapta, D 69b; P 83b).*

¹⁸ *thun mong zhes pa ni byang chub sems dpa' la sogs pa dang thun mong du gyur pa 'i sdom pas thob pa ste/ rig (rig] D, rigs P) pa 'i dbang ngo// (Sukusuma, D 102b.6; P 123b.5-6).*

¹⁹ Abhayākara Gupta uses this term to encapsulate six consecrations, beginning with the garland consecration, which determines the buddha family to which the disciple is connected, along with the five consecrations from water to name that are correlated with the five families (Mori, n.d, 100).

²⁰ *de dang bcas pa ni thun mong ma yin pa 'i sdom pas thob pa ste/ rdor je slob dpon phyir mi ldog pa 'i dbang ngo// (Sukusuma, D 102b.6; P 123b.6-7),*

²¹ At the conclusion of the descriptions of the rituals for the *vidyābhiṣeka* and the *ācāryābhiṣeka*, Vaidyapāda writes that he has just given a brief description of the *kalaśābhiṣeka*, and that more detailed ritual procedures should be obtained from elsewhere. This comment suggests that he takes the *vidyābhiṣeka* and the *ācāryābhiṣeka* (which he refers to sometimes as the “irreversible *ācāryābhiṣeka*” (*phyir mi ldog pa 'i slob dpon gyi dbang*) and other times just as the “irreversible *abhiṣeka*” (*phyir mi ldog pa 'i dbang*)) together as the *kalaśābhiṣeka* (*Sukusuma, D 104b.5; P 126a.3*). The rituals for these initiations are described in *Sukusuma D 102b.6-104b.5; P 123b.6-126a.4*. The consideration of all of the initiations up to, and also including, the *ācāryābhiṣeka* as the *kalaśābhiṣeka* also appears in the *Vajrāvalī* and the *Kriyāsammucaya* (Sanderson 1994, 90).

²² *De dag dang ldan pa 'i slob ma la gsang dbang bskur bar gsungs pa/ (Sukusuma, D 104b.6; P 126a.4).*

²³ There appears to be at least some evidence for a use of *sādhāraṇa* in a somewhat similar way in a later work, Kṛṣṇa/Kāṇha’s *Yogaratanmālā* on the *Hevajra-tantra* (...*kriyātantrādisādhāraṇāvavartikābhiṣekalābhamātrena...*; see Snellgrove 1959, 108), and *sāmānya* is attested for vows in the 11th-century *Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009, Vol. 2, 429).

commonly used and obvious reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka*, the allusion to the first initiation in this verse of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is at best a cursory one.

Moreover, Vaidyapāda's presentation of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* at this point in his *Sukusuma* also seems to indicate that he may have had a separate ritual context in mind for that initiation. He ends the description of the ritual for the *kalaśābhiṣeka* with the series of rites, such as the *vyākaraṇa*, *anujñā*, and *āśvāsa*, that normally conclude an initiatory sequence, and he mentions these same rites again at the conclusion of his presentation of the third initiation later in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, suggesting that he may understand these as two separate ritual sequences.²⁴ He also begins his explanation of the *guhyābhiṣeka*, by noting that it is to be given to “a disciple who [already] has those [earlier initiations].”²⁵ Vaidyapāda even states in the *Sukusuma* that his presentation of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* there has been made “quickly, just in order to uphold/remember it (*skyus kyis 'dzin tsam du smros*),” with the advice that the details for the ritual should be found elsewhere.²⁶ These comments suggest that despite the fact that he has included a presentation of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* in his commentary on the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, Vaidyapāda may not—or at least not necessarily—have intended this first initiation as part of the same ritual sequence of the *guhya*- and *prajñājñānābhiṣekas*, which are clearly detailed in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and appear intended to be bestowed as a pair.

Given that the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is concerned primarily with the perfection stage, its lack of an explicit (or at least a detailed) mention of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* in conjunction with the ritual sequence for the *guhya*- and *prajñājñānābhiṣekas*, is suggestive of several things. First, as I have showed here, it may indicate that in the early Jñānapāda tradition the *kalaśābhiṣeka* was (or at least optionally could be) bestowed in a separate ritual sequence from the higher initiations; that is, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* may assume a student who has *already* received the *kalaśābhiṣeka* separately—we may here recall Vaidyapāda's statement that the *guhyābhiṣeka* is to be given to “a disciple who [already] has those [earlier initiations]”²⁷—and is thus now ready to receive the *guhya*- and *prajñājñānābhiṣekas* in order to begin the practice of the second stage of tantric practice. But also, as I have noted above, the fact that the *Dvīṭīyakrama* only outlines the rituals for the *guhya*- and *prajñājñānābhiṣekas* clearly indicates a special relationship between the higher tantric initiations and the second stage of tantric practice, which is the *Dvīṭīyakrama*'s main focus. This special relationship, as we will see below, entails the pointing out of suchness

Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson both for the suggestions of possible Sanskrit terms for *thun mong* and for the references to similar usages of the term in the *Yogaratanmālā* and the *Vajrāvalī*.

²⁴ *Sukusuma* D 104b.6; P 126a.4 and *Sukusuma* D 110a.5. In the later tradition, at least, it seems that these concluding rituals were to be given after the *kalaśābhiṣeka* only in the instance where the ritual sequence ended with that initiation; if the initiatory sequence were to combine both the lower and higher initiations, these concluding rituals would be given only at the very end. See note 13.

²⁵ *de dag dang ldan pa'i slob ma la gsang dbang bskur bar gsungs pa!* (*Sukusuma*, D 104b.6; P 126a.4).

Vaidyapāda's commentary on Dīpaṃkarabhadra's *Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi* identifies the candidate for the *guhyābhiṣeka* as “the very one who received the *vidyābhiṣeka* and the irreversible [*ācārya*] *abhiṣekam*,” (*rig pa'i dbang dang phyir mi ldog pa'i dbang thob pa de nyid*) which might be taken to suggest a single ritual sequence, but in that same work he also mentions that the *maṇḍala* for the *guhyābhiṣeka* could be “either the very same *maṇḍala* as previously [employed] or another one,” (*sngar gyi dkyil 'khor 'di nyid dam gzhan yang rung*) suggesting perhaps the possibility of both the option of a single ritual sequence for all of the initiations or a separate sequence for the higher initiations (*Guhyasamājamāṇḍalopāyikā-ṭikā*, D 110a.5). A study of Dīpaṃkarabhadra's ritual manual and Vaidyapāda's commentary on it would be a tremendous contribution to our understanding of initiation in the early Jñānapāda School. The doctoral dissertation of Daisy Cheung of Hamburg University on Dīpaṃkarabhadra's work is thus very much awaited.

²⁶ *De rnams ni bum pa'i dbang bskur ba'i cho ga bsdus pa ste/ rgyas par ni gzhan du shes par bya ste/ 'dir ni dkyus kyis 'dzin tsam du smos so//* (*Sukusuma*, D104b.5; P 125a.3).

²⁷ *de dag dang ldan pa'i slob ma la gsang dbang bskur bar gsungs pa!* (*Sukusuma*, D 104b.6; P 126a.4).

in the context of these higher initiations, such that the practitioner is able to experience it directly, and thus knows what to train in during the subsequent cultivation of the perfection stage through the practice of the *bindu* yogas.

With the development of the higher consecrations that were associated with the second stage of tantric practice, it seems that the *kalaśābhiṣeka*, as a “lower” set of initiations thus began to be associated with the first stage, the generation stage, of tantric practice. Indeed, the association of the five initiations of the Yōga tantra tradition with the five wisdoms, and the similar association of the five stages of the process of deity generation according to the *pañcākarābhisambodhi* with the five wisdoms makes such a connection quite logical. While neither Buddhajñānapāda’s nor Vaidyapāda’s works mention the *kalaśābhiṣeka* as a ritual that gives the practitioner permission to train in the generation stage, specifically, there is one verse in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that appears to associate the *kalaśābhiṣeka* with the first stage of tantric practice.²⁸ The later tradition did come to make the association of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* with the generation stage more explicit, and to specify that the function of this first initiation was to give permission for the practice of the generation stage.²⁹

²⁸ This is verse 396, which is part of the final dedication at the end of the work. This verse is the first of a series of three verses focusing on each of the three initiations. The association of verses 396 and 397 with the *guhya-* and *prajñājñānābhiṣekas*, respectively, while not mentioned in Vaidyapāda’s commentary, is very obvious; even the language of these verses closely mirrors the language used to describe those two initiations in the earlier section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. The first line of verse 395 clearly references the *ācāryābhiṣeka*, and Vaidyapāda explains (perhaps precisely because it is less obvious than the association of the subsequent two verses with the subsequent two initiations!) that final line of this verse is a reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka*. The penultimate line mentions the first stage of tantric practice, but the verse seems to make reference to having already realized the first stage of practice, rather than to being initiated in such a way that one receives permission to practice it. The verse reads: “When one has been cleansed and sprinkled and made pure, and thus become a great *ācārya*! Who holds all of the tantras, and brings others to connect with all tantras,/ And having perfectly realized the first stage and purified all stains,/ May the yogin become a suitable vessel for illusory wisdom!” |395| *blugs dang gtor dang dag par byas pas slob dpon cher ‘gyur te// thams cad kun kyi rgyud ‘dzin gzhan rnams rgyud kun la sbyor ba ‘i// dang po ‘i rim pa rab rtogs dri ma rnams ni dag byas te// ye shes sgyu ma ‘i snod du rung bar rnal ‘byor de ‘gyur shog//* |395| (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 395). Vaidyapāda explains that becoming a “suitable vessel” for wisdom is a reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka*—clearly referencing the fact that a *kalaśa*, a vase, is a type of vessel (*Sukusuma*, D 138b.4). In his *Yogasapta* Vaidyapāda bases his description of the etymology of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* on precisely this verse from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. He writes: “Because [it makes one into] a suitable vessel it is [called] the “vase.”/ Because one is sprinkled, consecrated, and purified it is [called] “initiation.”/ |13| *snod du rung phyir bum pa ste// blugs gtor dag par byed pas dbang//* |13| (*Yogasapta*, D 70a; P 83b).

²⁹ See, for example, Lakṣmī’s *Svādhiṣṭhānakrama*: *phyir mi ldog pa ‘i dgang bskur ba yang bskyed pa ‘i rim pa ‘i dbang bskur ba yin te/* (cited in Tomabechei 2006, 147n190). The later Tibetan tradition likewise makes the association of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* with the generation stage and the role of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* as a ritual giving permission to practice that stage even more explicit, and further specifies the different aspects of perfection stage practice that are associated with the higher initiations. An 18th-century Tibetan liturgy that includes a description of the function of each of the four initiations states, with respect to the *kalaśābhiṣeka*: “Having in this way received the *kalaśābhiṣeka* the stains of the body are purified, one is empowered to train in the path of the generation stage, the wisdom that perceives everything just as it appears as the divine *maṇḍala* is actualized, and one gains the fortune to attain the resultant [state] of the *nirmāṇakāya*.” (*de ltar bum pa ‘i dbang bskur bas lus kuyi dri ma dag/ lam bskyed rim bsgom pa la dbang/ ji ltar snang bat hams cad lha ‘i ‘khor lor ‘char ba ‘i ye shes mngon du byas/ ‘bras bu sprul pa ‘i sku thob pa ‘i skal pa can du byas pa ‘o//* (*Rdo rje theg pa sngags kyi gso sbyong bdud rtsi ‘i rol mtsho zhes bya ba bzhugs so*, 69a.3-6). The same manual also associates the second, third, and fourth initiations with different aspects of the practices of the perfection stage but this is not the place to get into those distinctions. (A brief aside on the remarkable continuity of tradition: this same 18th-century Tibetan liturgy includes—not as a citation, but simply as part of the liturgy to be chanted as part of this extensive group *sādhana* practice—a section on the fourteen root downfalls of the tantric *samayas* that is also found in Vaidyapāda’s 9th-century *Samyagvidyākara*, his commentary on the *Samājottara*. I do not know the source of the passage—I imagine it is likely a scriptural one—but nonetheless I do find the continuity of tradition across the centuries worth remarking on!)

However, as we saw already in Chapter Four, in Buddhajñānapāda’s tradition the generation stage and the perfection stage seem not to have been completely separated out from one another in a practical sense. Indeed, Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, generally known as the generation stage *sādhana* in his Guhyasamāja practice system, includes several practices that appear to be connected in some way to the perfection stage. Thus, although the passage from the *Dvītyākrama* dealing with tantric initiation and Vaidyapāda’s commentary on it both suggest the likelihood that in their tradition the *kalaśābhiṣeka* was, or at the very least could be, given in a separate ritual context from the two higher initiations, the fact that the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* includes practices that seem likely to have been permitted only for a practitioner who had also obtained the second and third initiations raises some questions. That is, if the *kalaśābhiṣeka* was already, at the turn of the 9th century, associated specifically with permission to practice only the generation stage, and if it were bestowed in a separate ritual from the higher initiations, simply on the basis of the Guhyasamāja-related practice texts that survive in Buddhajñānapāda’s own *oeuvre*, it is not clear what ritual manual would have been suitable for practice by a disciple who had received only the *kalaśābhiṣeka* and not the higher initiations. Given that there seems to be some evidence pointing in both directions, it may not be possible to resolve the question of the ritual context of the higher initiations in the early Jñānapāda School with certainty.³⁰

The Dvītyākrama’s Initiatory Sequence: The Guhyābhiṣeka

The *Dvītyākrama*’s presentation of the ritual for the *guhyābhiṣeka* is quite brief, and yet it is clear and direct both with respect to the ritual procedure, as well as to the function of this initiation. Later manuals for bestowing tantric initiation like Abhayākara Gupta’s *Vajrāvalī* provide more detail about the ritual procedures for the *guhyābhiṣeka*. But that manual, for example, outlines the details of the ritual as it was practiced at the turn of the 12th century, several centuries after its practice seems to have emerged. The *Dvītyākrama*, dating to the turn of the 9th century, is, as I noted above, the earliest work of which I am aware to clearly set forth procedures of the ritual for bestowing the *guhyābhiṣeka*,³¹ and thus provides us with an important early picture of this initiation.

The ritual for the *guhyābhiṣeka*, along with some comments about its function and purpose, is presented in the *Dvītyākrama* in just three verses:

Additionally, together with the ordinary,
Perform the *gaṇapūjā*

³⁰ There is also some evidence from the later Jñānapāda tradition that the higher initiations may have been given in a separate ritual context. In Kṣitigarbha’s *Daśatattva*, only these two initiations are described, and included as one among the ten fundamentals that are the principal topic of this text. The absence of a presentation of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* in this work may also indicate that it was bestowed in a separate ritual context. And, in fact, just like Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the *Dvītyākrama*, the *Daśatattva* also specifies the candidate for the two higher initiations as someone who has already received the *vidyābhiṣeka* and the *ācāryābhiṣeka*. The text itself gives the following explanation for its presentation of only these two initiations (in Klein-Schwind’s translation): “Now the two initiations will be explained in detail. [The dual form] “two initiations” refers to the secret and the wisdom [-gnosis initiation], which are explained because they are the foremost. It is precisely (*eva*) these two that are explained in the form of fundamentals (*tattvarūpeṇa*), since the other [initiations] are subordinated to them/function as their limbs (*etadaṅgabhūtatvāt*) in that they are exoteric in as much as they purify the body. The *mantrin* who has received the [five] *vidyā*-initiations and the initiation to become an officiant duly worships an excellent teacher...” (Schwind 2012, 282).

³¹ As I noted above this is the case if one considers, like Vaidyapāda and Ratnākaraśānti seem to, that the ritual procedure described in Chapter Eight of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* is not the *guhyābhiṣeka*, and if I am correct in my assessment that Buddhajñānapāda’s works precede the *Samājottara* (See Chapter Eight).

Then, having searched for a girl [who fits the description] that has been taught,
 She must be offered to the guru. |83|
 Then, when the guru is pleased,
 He engages in union with her
 Due to which the *sugatas* melt and become the sixteenth part;
 This is dropped in the mouth of the disciple, |84|
 And having descended, it enters the lotus at his heart.
 Through this the field is purified
 And the twelve [experiences]—[perceiving] all phenomena as illusions, and so forth—
 Are realized in actuality. |85|³²

We have already examined the first line of this verse, which Vaidyapāda explains as a reference to the *kalaśābhiṣeka*. The ritual for the *guhyābhiṣeka* thus appears to begin with the performance of a *gaṇapūjā*.³³ As the *Dvītyākrama* straightforwardly explains, in this initiation, the guru engages in sexual union with the consort, and the resultant *bindu* of *bodhicitta*, described in the text as the “sixteenth part,”³⁴ is dropped into the mouth of the disciple, and descends to his heart.³⁵ The text follows this direct presentation of the ritual procedure with some comments on the function of the *guhyābhiṣeka*—it is through the ritual of consuming this *bindu* of *bodhicitta* received from the guru, which is identified as the embodiment of the *sugatas*, that the disciple’s “field is purified.” Vaidyapāda explains that “the field” here means the disciple’s own aggregates.³⁶ As we saw earlier, in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* the five aggregates are identified

³²*de yang thun mong dang bcas pa// tshogs kyi mchod pa yang byas te// gang gsungs bu mo btsal nas kyang// bla ma la ni dbul bar bya// |83| de nas bla ma de mnyes nas// de dang snyoms par zhugs pa yis// bde gshegs zhu gyur bcu drug char// gyur pa slob ma'i kha ru ltung// |84| ltung bas snying gi padma zhugs// de yis zhing ni dag byas te// chos kun sgyu ma la sogs pa'i// bcu gnyis don du rtogs par 'gyur// |85| (Dvītyākrama, verses 83-85).*

³³In his commentary on the *Samājottara* and his commentary on Dīpaṅkarabhadra’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, Vaidyapāda likewise states that a *gaṇapūjā* is to be performed at the outset of the *guhyābhiṣeka*. In that commentary Vaidyapāda describes the ritual as follows: “Having offered the wide-eyed one together with the *gaṇapūjā* to the guru, he bestows the initiation, as [will be] described, upon the disciple” (*de yang ji skad du gsungs pa'i mig yangs tshogs kyi mchod pa dang bcas te bla ma la phul nas des ji skad du gsung pa'i dbang bskur ba slob ma la sbyin par bya'o//*) (*Samyagvidyākara*, D 103a.3). The ‘wide-eyed one’ is a term used to refer to the consort in Chapter Eight of the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, as well. That chapter is interpreted by some commentators as describing initiatory practices. See also Vaidyapāda’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā* D 110a.6.

³⁴The term “the sixteenth part” *bcu drug cha* and *bcu drug phyed cha* is used at several points in the *Dvītyākrama* (see also verse 1 and verse 122) to indicate the *bindu* of *bodhicitta* in the context of initiation and sexual yogic practices. I believe *bcu drug cha* may be a translation of *ṣoḍaśakalā*, understood in each of these contexts as “the sixteenth part,” referencing the sixteenth phase of the moon in the lunar month, the day when the fullness of the fifteenth phase is perfectly complete, and is here in all three verses used to indicate the *bindu/bodhicitta* drop. Alternatively, the term could be *ṣoḍaśakala*, referring more generally to the moon itself as “that which has sixteen parts.” In either case the association with the drop of *bodhicitta* remains relevant, as the moon in general is frequently used as a metaphor for *bodhicitta*. See note 9 in my translation of the *Dvītyākrama* for further discussion of this point.

³⁵Vaidyapāda clarifies this statement: “Having become fully impassioned, [the guru] enters into union [with her]. The *sugatas*, who have been invoked by the seed [syllable], enter into the mouth and one should think that having melted as the moon they become the sixteenth part, that is, the essence of the *bindu*.” *rjes su chags pa'i mtha' la thug pas snyoms par zhugs te/ sa bon gyis bskul ba'i bde bar gshegs pa rnam zhal du zhugs te zla bar zhu bar* (zhu bar) D, P om.) *gyur nas bcu drug cha zhes te thig le'i ngo bor gyur bar bsam mo//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105a.5-6; P 126b.4-5). He further explains the visualization for this procedure: “That [drop] itself is dropped into the disciples’ mouth means that from the *bindu* comes a syllable and from that arises a *maṇḍala* and that [*maṇḍala*] itself, which has melted due to the heat of great passion, is [then] given into the mouth of the disciple.” *de nyid slob ma'i kha ru ltung/ zhes te thig le las yi ge/ de las dkyil 'khor de nyid 'dod chags chen po'i mes bzhus pa slob ma'i khar sbyin pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D105a.6; P 126b.5-6).

³⁶*de yis zhing dag byas te/ zhes te zhing ni de'i phung po la sogs pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105a.7; P 126b.7-8).

with the five buddhas, a doctrine that is ritually re-enacted in Buddhajñānapāda's generation stage *sādhana*. Here in the *guhyābhiṣeka* the drop of *bodhicitta* that the disciple receives from his guru is identified with the buddhas, and its ritual consumption thus serves as a method for purifying the disciple's aggregates. The effect of this purification, the *Dvītyākrama* continues, is that the disciple realizes, in actuality, the illusory nature of phenomena.³⁷

This presentation in the *Dvītyākrama* of the function of the second initiation thus indicates that the ritual serves to both purify the disciple as well as to bring him or her to an experience that *approaches* the direct experience of suchness (the actual direct experience of which, as we will see, will take place only in the third initiation). In Mahāyāna scriptures the post-meditative experience of a bodhisattva is often said to entail a perspective in which he perceives everything as illusory or dream-like, while the meditative equipoise of suchness itself—the direct experience of emptiness—is a state is described as space-like.³⁸ Here, the *Dvītyākrama*'s description of the function of the second initiation parallels that of the bodhisattva's post-meditative experience; the initiation brings the disciple into a state that is similar to a direct experience of suchness, or at least closer to that experience than is his ordinary perception of reality. Indeed, Vaidyapāda's comments on this passage link the experience of the disciple directly to that of the bodhisattvas. He writes that having received this initiation and having his “field” thereby purified, the disciple “attains equal fortune to bodhisattvas such as Maitreya, and will thus travel from buddhafield to buddhafield. Thus, having entered this path he will swiftly attain accomplishment.”³⁹ Vaidyapāda's comments here appear to be echoing verse 396 in the *Dvītyākrama*, which is a summary of the *guhyābhiṣeka* in the form of a dedicatory verse.⁴⁰ Certainly the transgressive nature of the rite for the *guhyābhiṣeka*—involving both sex, which would in and of itself have been transgressive, along with the ritual consumption of impure substances—was part of what was meant to bring the disciple into a state that would transcend his ordinary perceptions of reality. Indeed, the use of transgressive and antinomian acts as a method for cultivating states of nonduality or nonconceptuality is an important feature of Buddhist tantric practice.⁴¹ However, the way that the *guhyābhiṣeka* is described in the *Dvītyākrama* suggests that the experience that this ritual evoked was only a step in the direction of an experience of genuine reality, not yet the full experience. This second initiation, however, is then followed by the third, the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*, which, according to the *Dvītyākrama*, brings the disciple even further, to a direct experience of suchness or *dharmakāya* itself.

The Dvītyākrama's Initiatory Sequence: The Prajñājñānābhiṣeka

³⁷ Vaidyapāda clarifies that the twelve experiences mentioned in the root text are the twelve examples that show phenomena to be illusory: an illusion, a mirage, an echo, a spinning firebrand, a delusion, a dream, a city of *gandarvas*, a bubble on water, a flash of lightning, an emanation, a rainbow, and a cloud (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.1-2).

³⁸ See, for example Subhūtiḥoṣa's *Sarvayānālokakaravaibhāṣya*: *rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes kyis nam mkha' dkyil ltar rtogs la, rjes thob kyis sgyu ma ltar rtogs te/* (*Sarvayānālokakaravaibhāṣya*, D 313a.3) and Jñānavajra's *Lankāvatāra-vṛtti*: *byang chub sems dpa' rjes thob kyis gnas skabs su 'khor gsum sgyu ma lta bur rtogs pas 'I shes rab kyis...* (*Lankāvatāra-vṛtti*, D 32b.2-3).

³⁹ *de byams pa la sogs pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnam dang skal pa mnyam pas na sangs rgyas kyi zhing nas sang rgyas kyi zhing du 'gro ste/ de'i lam la 'jug pa mnyur bar thob par 'gyur ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.2-3; P 127a.2-3).

⁴⁰ That verse reads: “Through respectfully [serving at] the feet of a compassionate guru/ And by means of that which has the rabbit-holder's form, may one's mindstream be perfectly ripened/ So that the field is purified, and one perfectly realizes the reality of phenomena to be illusory and the like:/ In this way may all beings, like Maitreya and others, arrive [in that state].” [396] *snying rje ldan pa'i bla ma'i zhabs la gus par rab ldan pas// ri bong 'dzin pa'i gzugs kyis rang rgyud rab tu smin byas te// zhing dag byas pas chos kun sgyu sogs don du rab rtogs nas// byams pa la sogs bzhin du sems can kun gyis 'gro bar shog//* [396] (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 396).

⁴¹ See Wedemeyer 2012 (especially chapters 5 and 6) on the tantric Buddhist use of transgression as a method to evoke states of nonduality and nonconceptuality.

The *Dvīṭīyakrama*'s presentation of the ritual for the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* is much more extensive than that of the *guhyābhīṣeka*, comprising thirty-nine verses compared to the *guhyābhīṣeka*'s three. While the ritual procedure for the third initiation as it is described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is also more complex than that of the *guhyābhīṣeka*, thus necessitating a longer presentation, this attention to the third initiation is also indicative of the crucial importance of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, in particular, in Buddhajñānapāda's practice system. The section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that sets out this ritual is also noteworthy in that it contains the earliest instance of which I am aware of a set of quite popular liturgical verses for the bestowal of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* as well as the *vidyāvratā*, the so-called "consort observance." The liturgical passage includes verses spoken by the guru as he gives the female consort to the male disciple with the command never to separate from her for the duration of *samsāra*, along with a set of verses recited by the initiate partners to one another, as a sort of dialogue. Several lines from a later passage describing the culmination of the third initiation likewise appear to have been quite popular. Parts of the section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* on the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* were thus incorporated into quite a number of later tantric works, both scriptural and authored,⁴² including the *Samājottara*,⁴³ the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*, Vaidyapāda's *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, Dīpaṃkarabhadra's *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, Nāgabodhi's *Maṇimālā*, Advayavajra's *Samkṣiptābhīṣekaprakriyā*, Kṛṣṇācārya's *Śrīguhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā*, Prajñāgupta's *Abhīṣekaratnāloka*, Prajñāśrī's *Abhīṣekavidhi*, Vagīśvarakīrti's *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, Kṣitigarbha's *Daśatattvasaṃgraha*, Ratnākaraśānti's *Ratnāvalī*, Abhayākara Gupta's *Vajrāvalī*, and Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgraha*.⁴⁴

⁴² It is of course possible that Buddhajñānapāda incorporated these verses from an earlier source, but the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is the earliest source I am aware of to include these verses.

⁴³ See Chapter Eight for my arguments that the *Samājottara* circulated only after Buddhajñānapāda's writings.

⁴⁴ Some of the works listed here contain only the liturgy for the guru, others contain only the liturgy for the initiate couple, and some contain both (see details below). Given the obvious popularity of these verses from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, I imagine that there are other works that include them, as well. The verses were studied by Christian Wedemeyer in a paper on the *vidyāvratā* presented at a conference at UC Berkeley in 2014. I have Wedemeyer's work to thank for pointing out that these verses are found in Vaidyapāda's *Maṇḍalavidhiṭīkā*, Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, Advayavajra's *Samkṣiptābhīṣekaprakriyā*, Kṛṣṇācārya's *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā*, Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, Prajñāgupta's *Abhīṣekaratnāloka*, and Prajñāśrī's *Abhīṣekavidhi*; I have since discovered parallel passages in the other sources listed above. Wedemeyer was not aware at the time of that presentation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as the source of these verses (all of the works from which he cited these verses in his 2014 paper are later than the *Dvīṭīyakrama*). In our communications since that time, I have shared this fact with him and his forthcoming publication on the *vidyāvratā* has now been updated to include this information. For parallels of the liturgical verses for the guru's bestowal of the consort on the disciple see, for verses 87b-88d of the *Dvīṭīyakrama: Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 444); for verses 87b-89d of the *Dvīṭīyakrama: Daśatattva* V.14 (Klein-Schwind 2012, 209); for verses 87b-88c of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, Dīpaṃkarabhadra's *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi* (verses 365c-366b) and Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* (see Sakurai, 218); and for verse 89 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama: Samājottara* 125c-126d. For parallels with the liturgical verses involving the initiate couple's call-and-response see, for verses 91a-95d from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra* III.26-27; Vaidyapāda's *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, which gives the first part of these verses in a very garbled Sanskrit transliteration, and the second part in Tibetan translation (!) (211a.4-5); Ratnākaraśānti's *Pinḍikṛtasādhanopāyikāvṛtti-ratnāvalī-nāma* (91b.6-7); Nāgabodhi's *Pañcakramaṭīkā-maṇimālā-nāma* (130b.5-7); Advayavajra's *Samkṣiptābhīṣekaprakriyā* (131b.5-7); Kṛṣṇācārya's *Śrīguhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā* (258a.4-6); Prajñāgupta's *Abhīṣekaratnāloka* (299a.7-b.2); and Prajñāśrī's *Abhīṣekavidhi* (48b.4-5). For parallels with verses 91a-94d of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* see Kṣitigarbha's *Daśatattvasaṃgraha* (V.17-20) (Klein-Schwind 2012, 210). Please see also the notes to verses 87-95 of my translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in this dissertation for more details on the parallels, including comments on the variations found within these various parallel passages. I address the works that have parallels with the lines from the verses on the culmination of the third initiation below.

The *Dvīṭīyakrama* begins its description of the initiatory sequence for the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* by clearly stating the purpose of this third initiation.⁴⁵ The text reads:

And then, in order to bring about the realization
Of the self-arisen *dharmakāya*, great joy
That is equal to space, called the **adhideva*,
The girl is given to him [i.e. the disciple]. |86|⁴⁶

If the second initiation was described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as bringing about an experience of phenomena as illusory that parallels descriptions in Mahāyāna texts of the bodhisattva’s post-meditative experience, the third initiation’s function according to the *Dvīṭīyakrama* parallels the traditional Mahāyāna descriptions of the bodhisattva’s experience in meditative equipoise—a direct experience of emptiness, or suchness, that is, precisely as it is described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, “equal to space” or sky-like.⁴⁷ As I discussed in Chapter Three, in this verse Buddhajñānapāda uses a term, the **adhideva*, that describes the result of awakening in a uniquely tantric way, and which he links here with the *dharmakāya*, the fundamental and formless “body” of a buddha’s awakening. It is in order to bring about this realization—that is to say a direct, unmitigated experience of suchness, the result of awakening itself—that the consort is given to the initiate for the ritual of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. In his commentary, Vaidyapāda makes the link between the purification achieved through the *guhyaḥbhīṣeka* and the direct experience of *dharmakāya* by means of the third initiation explicit, suggesting that the purification of the disciple’s aggregates by means of the earlier ritual serves as a preliminary foundation for the direct realization of *dharmakāya*.⁴⁸

The ritual for the third initiation as it is described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* begins with the guru’s giving over of the female consort to the male disciple with the instruction that in order to attain awakening he must experience bliss arising from practicing the *maṇḍala-cakra* ritual together with her. The guru specifically tells the initiate that “nothing else can bring about

⁴⁵ In this section I summarize the third initiation ritual as described in verses 86-125 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, and draw attention to the structure of the ritual and some of its key features. My notes to the translation of this section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, however, include quite a bit more information about this section of the text than I have included here; I would direct the interested reader to the translation of and notes to verses 86-125 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

⁴⁶ *de nas de la rang 'byung gi// chos sku rab dga' mkha' mnyam pa// lhag pa'i lha zhes bya ba ni// rtogs bya 'i ched du bu mo byin//* |86|

⁴⁷ This metaphor is repeated during the dialogue between the yogic partners during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. The yogin says to his consort: “Sweet-faced one, come play with me! And [we] will have an experience that is like the sky!” *zhal bzang khyod ni nga dang lhan cig tu// rnam par rtsen pas mkha' 'dra myong bar bya//* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 100ab).

⁴⁸ He writes, “In order that the disciple, whose field has been purified, now comes to realize the *dharmakāya*, the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* is presented.” *da ni zhing dag par byas pa'i slob ma la chos kyi sku rtogs par bya ba 'i phir shes rab ye shes kyi dbang bskur ba gsungs pa/* (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.3; P 127a.3). It is worth noting that the position that the direct experience of the *dharmakāya* itself occurs during the third initiation is explicitly and strongly rejected in the writings of some later tantric authors, like Rāmapāla in his *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*. This position is there refuted as *duḥseka*, a wrong or unwholesome *abhīṣeka*. As Isaacson and Sferra summarize the problem, from Rāmapāla’s perspective, of holding this position, “the error of the *duḥseka* proponents is not just that they claim (or at least imply) the ultimate reality of non-dual mind, but that they claim that reality is directly experienced in sexual union. Such a position, amounting to the reification of sexual bliss as an absolute, is not only philosophically inadequate (in a manner parallel to the Yogācāra position) but is highly dangerous, entailing as it does that sexual intercourse is all that is necessary to experience (at least temporarily) true Awakening, and is also dangerously similar to the views of the Śaiva Kaula tradition, at least as understood by Maitreyanātha and Rāmapāla” (Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 104). While I would argue that these errors do not follow (!) from Buddhajñānapāda’s claim that the *dharmakāya* is experienced directly during the third initiation (though I will resist my impulse to compose a defense of his position in regard to these specific objections here), it is certainly possible that his writings were among those that Rāmapāla considered incorrect, and even dangerous, in this regard.

buddhahood,” and that therefore he is not to separate from his partner until the end of *samsāra*. Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the *Dvīṭīyakrama* specifies that the consort is given to the disciple’s right hand, and later liturgical sequences for this ritual mention this detail explicitly. Several scholars have remarked on the similarity between this practice and the traditional Indian marriage rite, in which the bride and grooms’ hands are joined in this same manner.⁴⁹ When this ritual element is considered together with the guru’s command that the student should not separate from his partner “throughout endless *samsāra*,” the rite is indeed rather evocative of a marriage ceremony. Following the consort’s being handed over to her partner in this way, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* sets forth a series of verses in which the initiate couple address each other directly in a rather playful dialogue. Here, the female consort, addressing the male initiate with a term of endearment (*vatsa*, *bu*), questions her partner about his willingness to engage in the ritual consumption of several *samaya* substances—substances that are ordinarily considered quite impure—and to kiss her *bhaga* (vagina). The yogin, addressing his partner as “goddess” and acknowledging that she is deserving of respect, is to reply—joyfully and with laughter—that he is absolutely ready to do all of these things without a second thought. The consort then directly shows him her “lotus” and recites some verses of praise to the lotus itself, lauding it as the abode of self-arisen great bliss, the place of veneration of all the buddhas, and that which brings about the accomplishment of one’s aims.

Following this spirited exchange between the initiate couple are three short sequences that Vaidyapāda identifies as the processes by which the couple mentally, verbally, and finally physically “cultivates passion” ahead of the sexual union that constitutes the main part of the third initiation. The mental cultivation of passion involves a visualization of circulating the deities of the body *maṇḍala* between both partners. The body *maṇḍala* deities are stimulated by light rays emerging from the seed syllable at the practitioner’s heart, and thus impassioned so that they emerge from the yogin’s vajra into the consort’s lotus. This causes the *maṇḍala* deities within her body to likewise become impassioned and to emerge from her mouth and enter into the yogin’s mouth. Repeating this visualization of the circulation between the two partners is said to bring about intense mental passion in the *maṇḍala* deities, and Vaidyapāda adds that this creates mental passion in both practitioners, as well. The second stage of “impassioning” is a verbal one, in which the initiate couple speak passionate words to each other, calling on each other to “come play” and to “sport” together, in order to bring about a sky-like experience and to realize “that which is not realized by other [means].” In this way, through speaking “illusory

⁴⁹ Klein-Schwind (2012, 291n 1062) cites Isaacson on this point, (noting that *pāṇigrahaṇa*, “taking by the hand” is a common term for marriage); on this point see also Wedemeyer (unpublished 2014 and forthcoming), who likewise remarks on the *pāṇigrahaṇa* element, and Onians (2003, 176), who refers to this ritual of the *vidyāvratā* as a sort of “sacred marriage.” In his 2014 paper at UC Berkeley on the *vidyāvratā*, Wedemeyer examined the relationship between the *vidyāvratā* and the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* and concluded that the literature generally shows one of two ritual paradigms: one in which the *vidyāvratā*, the main element of which is precisely this handing over of the consort to the disciple and the guru’s command for the disciple to remain with her, is conducted separate from the initiations, and another in which it is joined with, or even identical to, the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. The *Dvīṭīyakrama* appears to adhere to the latter paradigm in that a ritual for the bestowal of a *vidyāvratā* is not separated out from the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the *Dvīṭīyakrama* likewise makes no reference to the bestowal of the *vidyāvratā*. However, in his commentary on the *Samājottara*, which *does* make mention of bestowing the *vidyāvratā*, Vaidyapāda identifies the ritual described in verses 124-126 of the *Samājottara* as the “*vidyāvratā* initiation” (*rig pa’i brtul zhugs kyi dbang*) (*Samyagvidyākara*, D 192a.6). Interestingly, a full four *pādas* of those verses from the *Samājottara* are parallel with verse 89 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, which as we have seen Vaidyapāda does not, in his commentary on the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, refer to as the *vidyāvratā*. The passage on the ritual for bestowing the *vidyāvratā* in Vaidyapāda’s commentary includes several liturgical verses, ten *pādas* of which are taken directly from the *vidyāvratā* section of the *Samājottara* (125c-127d), but without attribution (*Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-tīkā*, D 211b.6-212a.1; P 540a.4-7).

words of desire” the couple heighten their passion for one another. The passionate expressions that they are to utter are, however, always clearly soteriologically oriented; the ultimately liberative aim of the practice is never far from mention. The final means for arousing passion in one another is physical. This short section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* reads much like a *kāmasāstric* manual describing different postures of embrace (though all of this is still preliminary to the sexual union that constitutes the main part of the third initiation), and sexual acts, primarily those through which the female partner is stimulated, though the text specifies that performing these acts on his partner should arouse passion in the yogin, as well. Then the consort is to again show her “lotus” to her partner, this time telling him that,

“The king of natural great bliss
Abides in this lotus |114|
Because it is realized by means of the channels and winds
You should search for the *cakra*.”⁵⁰

The yogin is then instructed to use his fingers, in accordance with the oral instructions from his guru, to search for and ascertain several of the subtle channels in his partner’s body; the left, right, and central channels are all mentioned specifically in the text. After this final preliminary step, the partners are to embrace in sexual union.

The process of the yogic partners’ union is described in this section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in terms of its correspondence with the same four branches (*caturaṅga*) that are often used, including in the practice of Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, to describe the stages of generation stage practice. Here the branches of *sevā*, *upasādhana*, *sādhana*, and *mahāsādhana* are linked to the stages of sexual union: the vajra touching the lotus is *sevā*, the vajra entering the lotus is *upasādhana*, moving repeatedly is *sādhana*, and the final moment when the *bindu* of *bodhicitta* remains for a moment at the tip of the vajra, and is then emitted⁵¹ is *mahāsādhana*. The final stage of *mahāsādhana* is described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in a way that clearly references the yogic manipulations of the winds and energies of the subtle body; indeed, Buddhajñānapāda’s is the earliest work with which I am familiar to set forth such techniques, which became an essential part of the perfection stage practices in the later Yoginī tantras. This passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* describes the yogin’s moving the winds in order to bring about a blazing of wisdom fire that melts the elements and causes the dripping of the *bindu* of *bodhicitta*, which is then “offered by unifying the winds.” While it appears not yet to be referred to as such—neither the *Dvīṭīyakrama* nor Vaidyapāda’s commentary uses the term—this practice very much resembles what came to be called the yoga of *caṇḍālī* (*gtum mo*) in the Yoginī tantras, and later commentators do identify it as such.⁵² The final verses from the section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* on the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* explain that the union of the two partners brings about bliss. This is the first reference in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* to the three blisses in Buddhajñānapāda’s system, which were discussed in some detail in the previous chapter and are later in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* linked with the three *bindu* yogas. Here we find the line, already discussed in Chapter Six, describing the culminating experience of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, in which

⁵⁰ *rang byung bde chen rgyal po ni// padma ‘di la⁵⁰ rab tu gnas// |114| rtsa dang rlung gis rtogs ‘gyur bas// khyod kyis rtsa yi ‘khor lo tshol// (Dvīṭīyakrama, 114c-115b).*

⁵¹ The text seems to associate *mahāsādhana* both with the holding of the *bindu* at the tip of the vajra, as well as with its emission, or perhaps just with the precise moment in which the *bindu* begins to be emitted. See note 54 below, note 261 in my translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, and the discussion in Chapter Six with regard to the question of emission in relation to perfection stage practice in Buddhajñānapāda’s system.

⁵² Tsongkhapa identifies this passage as an instance of *caṇḍālī* practice in his commentary on the Five Stages of the Ārya School’s *Guhyasamāja* practice system (Kilty 2013, 324).

“between the cessation of bliss, and bliss, an absence is seen and should be stabilized.”⁵³ This absence, which is observed when “the mind,” that is, the drop of *bodhicitta* is “observed within the jewel,” that is, within the tip of the vajra (the head of the penis), is identified both as wisdom and as the perfection stage.⁵⁴ The experience is also described with a verse that has been incorporated into the *Dvīṭīyakrama* from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* stating that “neither passion, dispassion, nor something in between is perceived.” That wisdom should continue to be experienced, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* advises, for increasingly long periods of time, presumably as the yogin continues to engage in perfection stage practice following the initiation.⁵⁵ Finally, as the conclusion of the ritual, the text states that the practitioner should take up and drink the “liquid nectar that abides in the lotus,” that is the *bodhicitta* that has been emitted there during the act of sexual union. Vaidyapāda’s commentary indicates that it is at this point that the concluding initiatory rituals of the *vyākaraṇa*, *aśvāsa*, and *anujñā* are to be performed, along with the taking of oaths and the performance of a pacifying *homa*.⁵⁶

These final verses from the section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* on the third initiation describe the moment identified in an earlier verse on the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* as the function or purpose of this initiation—the direct recognition of the *dharmakāya*, suchness itself, which, as we have just seen, takes place through the process of union with a consort under the guru’s guidance. It thus appears that the elements of the ritual that precede this crucial moment—the guru’s handing over of the consort to the disciple in a marriage-like rite; the lively dialogue between the initiate couple regarding the practice of transgressive *samayas*; the practices of arousing mutual passion mentally, verbally, and finally physically; and the male partner’s ascertainment of the channels within his partner’s body—serve as preliminaries or supports that allow for this experience to take place. A later verse from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* states clearly that sexual union is one of the natural human experiences in which suchness can be glimpsed:

The *dharmakāya*, perfect bliss equal to the sky,
Is experienced for just an instant
At death, when fainting, falling asleep,
When yawning, and during intercourse.

Therefore, by training in this, embodied beings purify their minds. |355|⁵⁷

Vaidyapāda explains that because these experiences are so short, without the instructions of a guru one is unable to recognize the great bliss that arises in these moments. However, he continues, when one does receive instructions from a guru, and thus comes to recognize and

⁵³ *gang gang yang dag dga’ byed chags bral dga’ gnyis bar du ‘ben nyid mthong byas brtan par gyis// (Dvīṭīyakrama, verse 124b).*

⁵⁴ As noted above, an earlier verse from this section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* appears to identify both the momentary arrest of the *bindu* at the tip of the vajra and the moment of its emission (or perhaps just the precise moment in which emission begins?) as *mahāsādhana*, the culminating moment of the sexual yogic practice in the context of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. See note 51 above and note 261 in my translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. Later discussions of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* would make minute distinctions with respect to the exact location of the *bindu* in relation to the innate bliss glimpsed at this moment (see, for example, the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (Isaacson and Sferri 2014, 104-5)). As we saw in Chapter Six, the bliss of cessation, which certainly is also to be experienced in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, is clearly linked at several places in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings with emission.

⁵⁵ These final two verses on the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* (*Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 124-125) are also found in at least one later source, Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, and several lines from these verses are cited in a number of later sources including the *Caturmudrānvaya*, the *Abhīṣekanirukti*, the *Ratnāvalī*, the *Abhayapaddhati*, the *Amnāyamañjarī*, the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, the *Kriyāsaṅgrahapañjikā*, the *Yamāritantraṃḍalopāyikā*. For further details of these correspondence see notes 263, 268 and 273 of my translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

⁵⁶ *Sukusuma*, D 110a.

⁵⁷ *chos sku rab dga’ mkha mnyam pa// shi dang brgyal dang gnyid log dang// glal dang ‘khrig dus skad cig tsam// myong bar ‘gyur bas rab bsgoms na// lus can rnam ni yid ni sbyong// |355| (Dvīṭīyakrama, verse 355).*

habituate oneself to the suchness that is thereby experienced, then the mind becomes purified, leading to realization.⁵⁸ The ritual for the third initiation, then, makes use of the bliss of sexual union, and the natural experience of suchness that is said to occur in that moment. With the guru's guidance this can be ascertained by the student, such that he experiences the wisdom of the nonconceptual state of suchness directly. The transgressive elements—sexual and otherwise—of the ritual sequence of the higher initiations seem intended to create a context within which the initiate couple are already brought outside of their ordinary mental frameworks, and thus perhaps made even more ready to experience and ascertain the moment of suchness that occurs during their sexual union. The aspects of the ritual directed towards the cultivation of passion—in particular the *kāmaśāstra*-like passage of the *Dvitiyakrama* on the “physical cultivation of passion,” detailing sexual postures and acts to increase the couple's sexual arousal—are clearly intended to intensify the passion experienced in union, presumably as a means to heighten the sexual bliss and therefore sharpen the wisdom that is ascertained during sexual union. However, as I discussed in the previous chapter, there are also indications that some of the acts described in this section of the text are connected with the stimulation of specific points in the body associated with the channels and *bindus* of the subtle body and therefore connected to the yogic manipulations of the winds and *bindus* in the context of the initiation ritual, as well as in post-initiatory perfection stage practice.⁵⁹ In any case, in the context of the ritual for the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, all of the elements of the ritual appear to be focused upon supporting the disciples' coming to a direct realization of suchness in reliance upon the conditions of both sexual union and the guru's instructions. The *Dvitiyakrama* itself does not elaborate further on the ritual procedures of the higher initiations beyond what I have summarized here. However, as we have seen briefly already in Chapter Three, in the context of examining the structure of the tantric path according to his writings, Buddhajñānapāda's work does have more to say about the process of the disciple's coming to a direct experience of suchness in the initiatory context by means of the guru's oral instructions. Let us take a closer look at this issue now.

Initiation in The Early Jñānapāda Tradition: Obtaining Suchness Through the Third Initiation, the Issue of “The Fourth,” and the Seven Yogas

Obtaining Suchness

As we already saw in Chapter Three, Buddhajñānapāda's writings repeatedly mention the process of a “transference” of suchness, which is “obtained” or “received” by the disciple from the guru. Several passages indicate that this takes place in the context of initiation, with the third initiation specifically suggested by a verse from the *Muktilaka* which states, with respect to the “inner yoga” of suchness that:

It is only said to come from elsewhere
Though [in fact] it is realized by self-aware bliss,

⁵⁸ *Sukusuma*, 132b.6-7; P 159b.8-160a.1.

⁵⁹ The practices for cultivating passion are mentioned in the *Dvitiyakrama* only in the context of the third initiation, and not in the context of post-initiatory sexual yogas. It is therefore unclear whether they are meant to be practiced also in that context, as well. The first verse of the section on physically cultivating passion, however, may suggest that they are meant also to be practiced in a post-initiatory context. That verse reads, “Then, with great passion/ Engage in physical practice with her;/ Practicing this play in an isolated place/ You should examine the joys./ |105| *de nas rab tu chags ldan pas// de dang lhan cig lus kyi ni// spyod pas dben pa'i gnas su spyad// rol pas dga' ba brtag par bya//* |105| (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 105).

It is thus explained as “bestowing initiation.”⁶⁰ Again, it is the “self-aware bliss” mentioned in this verse that specifically suggests the context of the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* as the initiation in which suchness is directly realized. And, as we just saw above, the *Dvītyākrama*’s presentation of the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* describes the third initiation as having precisely the function of bringing the disciple to a direct realization of *dharmakāya*, or suchness itself. Thus there are multiple indications in Buddhajñānapāda’s work that the third initiation provides the context for the disciple’s “obtaining” of suchness. Certainly, as we just saw in the description of the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*, this is related to the blissful experience of sexual union with a partner during that initiation, and the fact that, according to the *Dvītyākrama*, the *dharmakāya* is anyway naturally experienced briefly during sexual union, even outside the context of initiation. But, as Vaidyapāda’s comments cited above indicate, without the instructions of a guru one is unable to recognize as one’s innate nature the great bliss that arises in that moment, and thus the guru’s instructions are crucial to the recognition of suchness that takes place during initiation.

Indeed, as I discussed in Chapter Three, Buddhajñānapāda’s writings mention, on several occasions, the fact that suchness is “received” specifically through, or by means of “the guru’s words.” As we saw in the account of Śākyamuni Buddha’s awakening from the *Muktilaka* that parallels the process of tantric initiation, Buddhajñānapāda does not even mention the sexual aspects of initiation—though, we may remember, Vaidyapāda does bring in Śākyamuni’s being “blessed by the *sahaja ācārya*,” that is, uniting with a tantric consort, and Buddhajñānapāda’s account very likely also implies Śākyamuni’s sexual union with a consort. But his account of the awakening narrative directly states only the essential aspect of Śākyamuni’s being shown the suchness of “nondual profundity and luminosity” by his gurus, all of the *sugatas*, and thus highlights the guru’s role in indicating suchness as the most crucial element in the process of a disciple’s being brought face-to-face with that reality. Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, however, do not state precisely how the communication of suchness in the context of tantric initiation takes place, or the details of its content, and this is certainly a purposeful omission. The transference of suchness is specifically identified as being conferred by means of the oral instructions of a master who holds the lineage,⁶¹ and such pithy instructions, passed on “from ear to ear” within the context of a direct and personal relationship between guru and disciple, are not something generally committed to writing. In fact, we see many references in tantric texts to crucial information on tantric practices being conveyed by the guru’s oral instructions, making it quite clear that the textual record alone is an incomplete source for a study of these traditions, and

⁶⁰ *ming tsam gyis ni logs* (logs] P, log D) ‘byung yang// rang rig bde bas rtogs byas na// dbyang bskur shes ni bshad pa yin// (*Muktilaka*, D 50b.2; P 60b.4)

⁶¹ On the importance of the master who conveys suchness holding the lineage see the *Muktilaka*: “By constantly revering a lineage guru/ Who knows this reality/ Occasionally, like the [appearance of] the *uḍumbara* flower,/ Those with merit will know it in an instant.” ‘di yi don shes brgyud pa yi// bla ma dam pa rtag bkur bas// u duḁ bar (u duḁ bar] P, u dumbār D) *ltar brgya lam na// bsod nams can gyis skad cig shes//* (*Muktilaka*, D 48b.6; P57a.7-8); the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*: the student should please “a sublime guru who knows nondual reality and possesses the great pith instructions of the lineage that has been passed from ear to ear” *gnyis su med pa’i don shes shing rna ba nas rna bar brgyud pa’i man ngag chen po dang ldan pa’i bla ma dam pa* (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, 50a.5-6; P 336a.2-3); the *Dvītyākrama*: “He [i.e. the disciple] should please a guru who is genuine and venerable,/ Who possesses the lineage of supreme oral instructions” *de yis rje btsun yang dag pa/mchog gi gdams ngag rgyud la ldan//* (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 45a-b), and “Through relying upon a genuine lineage teacher,/ And one’s own previously gathered accumulation of merit—/ One will come to realize this [reality].” |389| *brgyud pa’i bla ma yang dag rab bsten dang// rang gi bsod nams tshogs ni sngon bskyed pas// rtogs par rab tu ‘gyur ba ma gtogs par//* |389| (*Dvītyākrama*, verse 389).

certainly for their practice; the latter, it seems, is precisely the reason for the omission of such instructions from the textual record, or at least one important reason behind it.⁶²

However, despite the fact that the instructions on this crucial point are passed on orally, in this case the textual record does still have more to tell us about this process of the communication of suchness. A passage from the *Dvitiyakrama* mentions both the receiving of suchness in an initiatory context and the receiving of suchness “through the guru’s words:”

Someone who has pleased the guru
And received the vase [initiation] and the others
Together with the *samayas* and vows given by him,
And thus obtains the suchness |327|
That is found through the guru’s words...⁶³

As I noted already in Chapter Three—but I will recapitulate the key points here in order to frame the ensuing discussion—in this passage Buddhajñānapāda singles out “obtain[ing] suchness that is found through the guru’s words” as something particularly important that takes place in the initiatory context. In his comments on this passage, Vaidyapāda makes the distinction between the receiving of initiation and the obtaining of suchness even more strongly, adding the phrase “and then...” between his comments on initiation and vows and his comments on obtaining suchness. With regard to the latter, Vaidyapāda writes, “And then, **And thus obtains the suchness/ That is spoken by the guru**,⁶⁴ means that the **suchness** of the seven yogas, together with the method for accomplishing that, is received.”⁶⁵ While the verse cited above from the *Dvitiyakrama* does not explicitly ritually separate out the pointing out of suchness to a disciple from the earlier initiatory sequence, the indication of suchness to a disciple *after*, and thus ritually separately from, the bestowal of the third initiation is mentioned explicitly in Buddhajñānapāda’s direct disciple Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi*, which says: “having bestowed the *guhya* and *prajñā* [initiations], suchness should be fully pointed out.”⁶⁶ Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, a short treatise on tantric initiation, gives even further details about this pointing out of suchness after the third initiation.

The Seven Yogas and “The Fourth”

⁶² The fact that in this case the instructions being conveyed have to do with suchness, something which is frequently described in Buddhist texts as ineffable, also suggests that in addition to their being kept out of the textual record in order to keep them secret so that they cannot be practiced without having been received directly from a guru (and even to prevent any attempt to do so), it may not even be considered *possible* to convey these particular instructions outside of the context of a personal interaction with a guru. Vaidyapāda’s comments on the topic of “the fourth,” which I address below, indeed suggest something along these lines.

⁶³ *gang zhiḡ bla ma mnyes byas nas// des gnang dam sdom bcas ba ru// bum pa la sogs rab thob ste// bla ma’i zhal las rnyed pa yi// |327| de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing// (Dvitiyakrama, verse 327a-328a).*

⁶⁴ *Bum pa la sogs pa’i dbang gong du gsungs pa ltar rab tu thob par byas te/ de nas/ bla ma’i zhal nas gsungs pa yi// de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing// zhes pa ni sbyor ba bdun gyis de kho na nyid sgrub pa’i thabs dang bcas pa rnyed pa... (Sukusuma, D 130a.3; P 156b.4-5).* Vaidyapāda’s commentary preserves a slight variant on one line from the *Dvitiyakrama*. The *pādas* as found in the *Sukusuma* read: *bla ma’i zhal nas gsungs pa yi// de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing// (Sukusuma, D 130a. 3; P 156b.4)* as opposed to *bla ma’i zhal nas rnyed pa yi// de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing//* in the *Dvitiyakrama*. However, in his comments on these two lines Vaidyapāda mentions the word “received” (*rnyed pa*) which is absent in the verse as translated in his commentary but present in the verse as translated in the *Dvitiyakrama*, so I suspect the variant arose in the context of translating the *Sukusuma* into Tibetan, rather than in the citation of the verse in Vaidyapāda’s commentary itself.

⁶⁵ *de nas/ bla ma’i zhal nas gsungs pa yi/ de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing/ zhes pa ni sbyor ba bdun gyi (gyi) P, gyis D) de kho na nyid bsgrub pa’i thabs dang bcas pa rnyed pa [/] (Sukusuma, D 130a. 3; P 156b.4).*

⁶⁶ The full verse reads, *maṇḍalam devatātattvamācāryaparikarma ca | saṃkathya guhyaprajñābhyāṃ siktṅvā tattvam samuddiṣet | (Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhi, v. 367.)*

As we just saw, Vaidyapāda explains that the “suchness that is found through the guru’s words” mentioned in the *Dvitiyakrama* refers specifically to the suchness of the seven yogas and the method for their accomplishment. Vaidyapāda’s comment, like Dīpaṅkarabhadra’s statement about suchness being fully pointed out after the bestowal of the second and third initiations, appears to refer to a set of oral instructions that are given to the disciple following, and with reference to the experience encountered within, the third initiation. Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, which incorporates a number of verses directly from the *Dvitiyakrama*, describes these instructions in much more detail. In that text, Vaidyapāda identifies the seven yogas—perfect example-less bliss (*dpe med bde rdzogs*), nonduality (*gnyis su med pa*), great bliss (*bde ba chen po*), lacking nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), unfolding compassion (*thugs rjes rgyas pa*), unbroken continuity (*rgyun mi chad pa*), and non-cessation (*’gog pa med pa*)—both with the state of perfect awakening itself, and with what he refers to simply as “the fourth.” “The fourth” (*caturtha*) is a term found in the *Samājottara* (which text, we will recall, Vaidyapāda certainly knew—he composed a commentary on it—although it seems that Buddhajñānapāda did not) in a rather perplexing passage on tantric initiation where it is explicitly stated that initiation is three-fold, but after listing the three initiations the work then makes a rather cryptic reference to “the fourth.” This passage, despite the opacity of its final two *pādas*, is the much-cited *locus classicus* of the three (or four!) initiations, and the source, it seems, of a significant amount of debate on the topic of what might constitute “the fourth.” As I noted already in Chapter Three debates on the topic of a “fourth initiation,” which took place over a number of centuries, seem to have centered on—and indeed probably sprung from—the meaning of precisely this reference to “the fourth” (*caturtha*) in the *Samājottara*.⁶⁷ Isaacson and Sakurai have argued, partly on the basis of the absence of a fourth initiation in early Jñānapāda School and early Ārya School works, that a separate fourth initiation was not likely intended in the passage on initiation in *Samājottara*, but arose later out of the debate on the what was indeed meant by “the fourth” in that passage.⁶⁸ Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, which is one of the earliest works to address the topic of “the fourth”—indeed, to my knowledge it is the earliest extant work that does so—appears to confirm Isaacson’s and Sakurai’s suspicions with respect to the way that “the fourth” was understood in the earliest period of the circulation of the *Samājottara*. That is, in this work Vaidyapāda certainly holds “the fourth” as something separate from the three initiations, and indeed something absolutely essential—he equates it there with the suchness of the seven yogas that is bestowed upon the disciple by means of an oral instruction after the *prajñāñjñānābhīṣeka*—but he does not appear in the *Yogasapta* to hold it to be a separate initiation.⁶⁹

The passage from the *Samājottara* that served as the source of so much debate on the topic of “the fourth” reads:

⁶⁷ Isaacson 2010b, 268-271.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 269.

⁶⁹ As I mentioned already in Chapter Three, Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta-nāma-caturabhīṣekaprakaraṇa*, *The Seven Yogas: An Explanation of the Four Initiations* (*Sbyor ba bdun pa zhes bya ba dbang bzhi’i rab tu byed pa*), mentions the “four initiations” in the title, but throughout the work itself the term “fourth initiation” is never used; the first three initiations are clearly called initiation but “the fourth” is only ever referred to as simply “the fourth” (*bzhi pa*). Given this fact, along with the unreliability of the Sanskrit titles in the Tibetan canon, some of which (like *Dvikrama* for the **Dvitiyakrama*!) appear to be incorrect Sanskrit reconstructions made by the redactors of the Tibetan canon, we may be inclined to raise doubts about the “fourth initiation,” mentioned in the title of the *Yogasapta*. However, the Tibetan translation of the title likewise makes reference to “four initiations” (*dbang bzhi*). Moreover, in his *Guhyasamājamāṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā* Vaidyapāda does indeed refer to a “precious fourth initiation” (*dbang bskur ba rin po che bzhi pa* [pa] P, D om.) that consists of the guru’s oral instructions with respect to union (*Guhyasamājamāṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*, D 211b.3-4; P 539b.6-7). The issue of whether Vaidyapāda considered “the fourth” an initiation or not therefore appears to be a slippery one. I address this point briefly below.

Initiation in this tantra
 Is understood as three-fold:
 The *kalaśābhiṣeka* is the first,
 The second is the *guhyābhiṣeka*
 The *prajñājñānā* is the third
 And the fourth is again like that. |113|⁷⁰

Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, provides a short synopsis of the different tantric initiations in which he incorporates this passage from the *Samājottara*, but adds a crucial final line explaining that “the fourth” is to be known from the words of the guru.⁷¹ He later elaborates on the meaning of “the fourth,” which he identifies both with perfect awakening and with the seven yogas, which are the main topic of his work. In his discussion of “the fourth” in the *Yogasapta*, not only does Vaidyapāda not ever refer to “the fourth” as an initiation (he refers to it only as “the fourth”), he even specifically states that in the context of the fourth “there is no initiation.” However, in another one of his works, the *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-tīkā*, Vaidyapāda *does* refer to the guru’s oral instructions on union as a “precious fourth initiation,”⁷² and even in the *Yogasapta* he discusses “the fourth” very much in relation to his discussion of the three initiations, suggesting that he views it in similar terms. It is difficult to understand Vaidyapāda’s presentation of “the fourth” in the *Yogasapta* without reference to the manner in which he presents the first three initiations, since, as we shall see below, he describes the fourth in a way that is essentially an inversion of the presentation of the previous three initiations. Thus, in order to provide the crucial context for this important early passage on “the fourth,” and also because the earlier part of the text gives an excellent overview of the first three initiations and their functions as Vaidyapāda understands them, I will give a somewhat lengthy citation consisting of the first few pages of Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*:

I pay homage to the omniscient one!
 To he who is incomparable
 Nondual, great bliss, natureless,
 With vast compassion, free from obstruction, and unceasing—
 I pay homage to the buddha.⁷³|1|
 To that which pervades all that moves and does not,
 And remains in the center of the lotus at the heart,
 The indestructible *bindu*, abiding at the center—
 I pay homage to the dharma that cannot be overcome. |2|
 To the one who teaches this,
 Whose mind is placed in suchness,
 The great *saṅgha* who liberates [beings] from the treacherous path—
 I bow at the feet of my sublime guru. |3|
 The preliminary stages of the path
 Are the *maṇḍala*, *samayas*, initiation, and the rest.
 I will explain [here] a little bit about the different initiations

⁷⁰ *abhiṣekaṃ tridhā bhedaṃ asmi tantrā prakalpitaṃ/ kalaśābhiṣekaṃ prathamam dvitīyam guhyābhiṣekataḥ/ prajñājñānam tritīyam tu caturtham tat punas tathā/ (Samājottara, verse 113; Matsunaga 1978, 121).*

⁷¹ See the passage, which I cite at length, below.

⁷² *de nas des rgyas btab nas dbang bskur ba rin po che bzhi pa (pa] P, D om.) bla ma’i man ngag gis mkha’ gnyis kyi sbyor ba’i bshad pa sbyin par bya ste/ (Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-tīkā, D 211b.3-4; P 539b.6-7).*

⁷³ This first verse references each of the seven yogas—perfect example-less bliss (*dpe med bde rdzogs*), nonduality (*gnyis su med pa*), great bliss (*bde ba chen pa*), lacking nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), unfolding compassion (*thugs rjes rgyas pa*), unbroken continuity (*rgyun mi chad pa*), and non-cessation (*’gog pa med pa*)—identifying all seven as characteristics of the buddha.

[Conveyed] by means of the vase (*kalaśa*) and the rest. |4|
 [To say that] by means of the *maṇḍala* ritual and so forth
 Great liberation [is accomplished] is deceptive.
 I will correctly explain the reality of the fourth,⁷⁴
 Since without suchness [great liberation] is not accomplished. |5|
 The omniscient one
 Taught the Mahāyoga tantras
 And explained in this tantra
 That initiation is three-fold. |6|
 The *kalaśābhiṣeka* is the first;
 The second is the *guhyaḥbiṣeka*;
 The third is the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*;
 And in that way, likewise, the fourth, as well,
 Should be known from the words of the guru.⁷⁵ |7|
 With respect to the initiations
 I will first explain a little bit about their distinctions.
[The *Kalaśābhiṣeka*]
 It is asserted that the [first initiation] is given
 By the great causal *ācārya*⁷⁶ |8|
 One's lands, palaces, home, cattle, and so forth
 Are suitable [offerings] and should be offered to him.
 This is given in order to render [oneself] an appropriate recipient
 For the ordinary and other vows. |9|
 That [initiation] is obtained within the
 Drawn[-*maṇḍala*], and the body-*maṇḍala*
 The rituals for the *vidyā* [initiations] and their cause,⁷⁷ the *ācārya* initiation,
 Are explained in other⁷⁸ [texts]. |10|
 Its essence is
 The nature of vajra body.⁷⁹
 The [negative actions of body] like killing and the rest, past and present,

⁷⁴ *bzhi pa'i don*

⁷⁵ This is a direct parallel of the *Samājottara*'s verse on initiation, but here Vaidyapāda crucially adds an extra line explaining that “the fourth” is known from the words of the guru.

⁷⁶ The “causal *ācārya*” is described in both Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* and *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* by means of a citation that I have been unable to trace, but which Vaidyapāda identifies as a text called *The Precious Garland* (*rin chen phreng ba* (phreng ba) P, phrod pa D). That citation explains that the causal *ācārya* is the guru who gives vows and commitments and who purifies the disciple's mind by means of the stages of initiation, beginning with the water initiation (*Sukusuma*, D 88a; *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47b). See Chapter Three, note 149 for more details on the three *ācāryas*.

⁷⁷ This statement is perplexing, but the text as it reads now does seem to say this. There are a number of textual problems in the *Yogasapta*. A more comprehensive study of the work would surely improve some of the readings here.

⁷⁸ gzhan du] P, bzhin du D. This and other instances of variation in the Tibetan translations sometimes make it appear that scribes for translators were sometimes taking dictation, rather than copying from a written source.

⁷⁹ *de yi rang gi ngo bo ni// sku yi rdo rje'i rang bzhin no//* I am tempted to emend these, and the parallel lines below, to read *de yis rang gi ngo bo ni// sku yi rdo rje'i rang bzhin no//* and to read them as “By means of this [initiation] one's own essence// [Is recognized] as having the nature of vajra body.” This is certainly the way that these first three initiations are understood to function in the later Tibetan tradition. However, none of our sources reads *yis* in this or any of the parallel lines below (for vajra speech and mind) so I have, for now, held back from emending the text in this way, despite the fact that the translation of the *Yogasapta* is generally somewhat problematic and does require emendation in a number of other instances.

Are purified and their negativities will not transpire.⁸⁰ |11|
 Because of superior methods
 This is explained as [placing the initiate at the level of?] the eighth *bhūmi*.⁸¹
 The [first?] three yogas and their branches⁸²
 Are to be explained here. |12|
 One comes to realize that appearance and existence
 Are free from objects, like form and the rest.
 Because [it makes one into] a suitable vessel it is [called] the “vase.”⁸³
 Because one is cleansed, sprinkled, and purified it is [called] “initiation.”⁸⁴ |13|
 This is explained definitively
 In the scriptures that have been passed down through the lineage.⁸⁵
 Having explained the distinctive [features] of the first one
 I will explain the second [initiation], as well. |14|
[The *Guhyābhīṣeka*]
 The initiation is given by the causal and conditional *ācāryas*.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ I am unsure of the meaning of this line, and the parallel lines with regard to the *guhya-* and *prajñājñānābhīṣekas* below. Does it mean that the negative results of past actions will not come about or that the negativity associated with such acts will not transpire because the acts themselves have been purified?

⁸¹ The corresponding verse with respect to the second initiation says, “One abides on the ninth and tenth *bhūmis*.” (*dgu dang bcu la yang dag gnas*) (*Yogasapta*, verse 17d), and for the third that “One abides in the vajra-like [*samādhi*],” (*rdo rje lta bur yang dag gnas* //) (*Yogasapta*, verse 25b), referring to the final meditation at the end of the tenth bodhisattva *bhūmi* prior to attaining awaking in the Mahāyāna. For “the fourth” the text says, “[Since] it is the state of a vajra-holder, there is no *bhūmi*” (*rdo rje ‘dzin gnas sa med de* //) (*Yogasapta*, verse 30d), but the attainment is nonetheless associated with the state of a vajra-holder. Since in the Buddhist tradition initiation is not taught to have a directly liberative function, these lines may suggest that by means of the practices that these specific initiations permit an initiate to practice, he or she can swiftly progress to the levels that are mentioned in *Yogasapta* with respect to each of these initiations. The *Dvīṭīyakrama* includes several references to a practitioner arriving at different bodhisattva *bhūmis* by means of the practices outlined in that text. A practitioner of the third *bindu* yoga, also known as *vajrajapa*, is said, through that practice, to “share the fortune of the lords of the tenth *bhūmi*,” (*sa bcu pa ‘i/ dbang phyug rnam dang skal mnyam ste* //) (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 233, c-d)), and, as we saw in Chapter Three, another passage from *Dvīṭīyakrama* associates the progressive stages of sexual union in a yogic context with each of the ten *bhūmis*, and identifies the result of tantric practice with the thirteenth *bhūmi* (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 298-313). Tomabechi (2006, 146-47; 147n190) notes that a statement in the *Pañcakrama* to the effect that “through the practice of a beginner one attains the eighth *bhūmi* and the one who has a vision of the three lights is established on the tenth *bhūmi*” (*adhikarmikayogena cāṣṭamīṃ bhūmim āpnuyāt/ ālokatrayadarśī ca daśabhūmyāṃ pratiṣṭhitah* //) may also be understood in terms of the initiatory sequence, in the sense that the “practice of a beginner” may refer to the generation stage practices, which one is permitted to practice by means of the *kalaśābhīṣeka*, which itself culminates with the *ācāryābhīṣeka*, also known as the “irreversible *abhīṣeka* (*avaivartikābhīṣeka*). (As we saw above, Vaidyapāda even uses the two terms together: “irreversible *ācāryābhīṣeka*” (*phyir mi ldog pa ‘i slob dpon kyi dbang*)). Tomabechi points out that in traditional Mahāyāna theory according to the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, the eighth bodhisattva *bhūmi* is the stage at which the bodhisattva reaches a stage on the path that is, precisely, “irreversible.” Thus, the connection between the “irreversible *ācāryābhīṣeka*” and the eighth bodhisattva *bhūmi* may be made in relation to this particular feature of the eighth *bhūmi*. Note that the passage in the *Pañcakrama* with respect to which Tomabechi makes these observations is, however, stating that it is through the “beginner’s” practices—i.e. those associated with the *kalaśābhīṣeka*—that the yogin attains the eighth *bhūmi*, not by means of the initiation itself. As I have suggested, it may be best to read the references to the various *bhūmis* in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* in this way, as well.

⁸² The grammar of this line is unclear. It is difficult to make sense of function of the particle *ru* at the end of the line.

⁸³ ~C.f. *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 395d.

⁸⁴ ~C.f. *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 395a.

⁸⁵ rgyud] sugg. em. based on parallel verses below, rgyu D P.

⁸⁶ On the causal *ācārya* see note 76. The conditional *ācārya* is identified in the same source mentioned in note 76, *The Precious Garland*, as the “great goddess” with whom one engages in play and who purifies the field of one’s mind by means of the “sixteenth part” (*Sukusuma*, D 88a; *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47b). In this case it seems that

And is thus genuinely obtained.
 To him⁸⁷ the appropriate [offerings] [70b]
 Of gold, silver, and the rest are to be offered. |15|
 It is given in order to make one a suitable vessel
 For the common vows regarding [not] killing and the rest.⁸⁸
 This [initiation] is obtained
 In the *maṇḍala* of superior *bodhicitta*. |16|
 The particulars of what to imagine
 During the ritual for conferring this [initiation] are explained elsewhere.⁸⁹
 Its essence is
 The nature of vajra speech.⁹⁰ |17|
 The [negative deeds of speech], lying and so forth, past and present,
 Are purified⁹¹ and their negativities⁹² will not arise.
 Because its methods are powerful⁹³
 One abides on the ninth and tenth [*bhūmis*].⁹⁴ |18|
 By means of the essence of *vajrajāpa*
 The *māyopama samādhi* is to be taught.
 One realizes appearance and existence to be free of
 The eyes and the rest of the inner phenomena. |19|
 Since it is not to be [widely] proclaimed it is [called] “secret”
 Because one is cleansed, sprinkled, and purified, it is [called] “initiation.”⁹⁵
 This, as well, is explained in the
 Scriptures that have been passed down through the lineage. |20|
[The *Prajñājñānābhīṣeka*]
 Having taught about the second one
 I will now explain about the third.
 It is obtained by means of
 The causal, conditional, and *sahaja ācāryas*—all three.⁹⁶ |21|

the term refers to the consort in her role as the guru’s partner in the *guhyābhīṣeka*. See Chapter Three, note 149 for more details on the three *ācāryas*.

⁸⁷ Although the text mentions both *ācāryas* as the means by which the initiation is given, the offering (*gurudakṣiṇa*) is made presumably just to the causal *ācārya*, the guru who is bestowing the initiation. However, in Kṣitigarbha’s *Daśatattva*, the passage on the *guhyābhīṣeka* notes that after offering the consort to the guru for the purposes of this initiation, the disciple “worships the guru and the consort in manifold ways of worship” (*nānāpūjayā saprajñam gurum pūjayitvā...*) (Schwind 2012, 283; 208), so it is possible that some kind of offering is made to the “conditional *ācārya*,” as well, in this context.

⁸⁸ This seems to be a repetition of the verses for the *kalaśābhīṣeka* above. I imagine that this is an error in the text, and that something else is intended with regard to the *guhyābhīṣeka*.

⁸⁹ gzhan du] P, bzhin du D.

⁹⁰ See note 79.

⁹¹ dag] sugg. em. ngag D P

⁹² nges pa] P, nyen pa D

⁹³ *rab tu phye ba*, **prabhāvita*? (see Negi).

⁹⁴ See note 81.

⁹⁵ ~C.f. *Dvīṭīyakrama*, verse 395a.

⁹⁶ See notes 76 and 87 on the causal and conditional *ācāryas*. The *sahaja ācārya* is identified in the same source mentioned in notes 76 and 86, *The Precious Garland*, as the one from whom one receives that (*bindu*?) and by means of whom and through whose blessing one realizes innate joy (*Sukusuma*, D 88a; *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47b). In this case it seems that this term refers to the consort in her role as the disciple’s partner in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. In Buddhajñānapāda’s system it seems that the conditional *ācārya* and the *sahaja ācārya* are, in fact, the same individual—that is the same consort is the guru’s partner in the *guhyābhīṣeka* and the disciple’s

Rubies, amber⁹⁷ and so forth, as appropriate [for this initiation]
 Are offered to him.⁹⁸
 Drawing the *maṇḍala* and so forth are stopped
 And the supreme vow is given. |22|
 This [initiation] is obtained
 Within the *maṇḍala* of the “completely pure *bhaga*.”
 The stages of the ritual for the *prajñā* initiation and the *jñāna* initiation
 Are explained elsewhere.⁹⁹ |23|
 Its essence is
 The nature of vajra mind.¹⁰⁰
 The [mental negative acts] of covetousness and the rest, past and present,
 Are purified and their negativity will not arise. |24|
 Because the methods are unique
 One abides in the vajra-like [*samādhi*].¹⁰¹
 In order to accomplish the supreme *siddhi*
 The *vrata*¹⁰² ritual is taught here. |25|
 One realizes that all phenomena are free
 Of the essence of subject and object.
 Because one realizes the not [yet] realized *jñāna*
 Through¹⁰³ the actions of the *prajñā* it is [called the *prajñājñāna*] initiation. |26|
 This, as well, is explained in the scriptures¹⁰⁴
 That have been passed down in the lineage. |27|
[The Fourth]
 Now, I will present that which is to be correctly explained,
 The fourth, perfect awakening,
 That which is obtained from the mouth of the guru,
 The suchness of the seven yogas. |28|
 Since it abides naturally there is no *ācārya*.
 Since it is priceless there is no offering.
 Because it is beyond binding, there is no vow.¹⁰⁵
 Since it is [bestowed within] the *maṇḍala* of suchness, there is no *maṇḍala*. |29| **[71a]**
 Since it is obtained by power, there is no initiation.

partner in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*—so this is perhaps why it is stated that the third initiation is received on the basis of all three *ācāryas*. In other later initiation manuals it is mentioned that the disciple’s partner for the third initiation can be the same or a different consort as the one offered to the guru in the context of the *guhyaḥbhīṣeka* (Isaacson 2012b, 262). See Chapter Three, note 149 for more details on the three *ācāryas*.

⁹⁷ *pursha*. This term occurs in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings as an offering for the third initiation, but it is unclear what it refers to. Khenpchen Chodrak Tenphel suggested amber (personal communication, February 2016).

⁹⁸ Although the text mentions all three *ācāryas* as the means by which the initiation is given, the offering is made presumably just to the causal *ācārya*, the guru who bestows the initiation. See also note 87.

⁹⁹ gzhan du] P, bzhin tu D

¹⁰⁰ See note 79.

¹⁰¹ This is the final meditative state that a practitioner enters after the tenth bodhisattva *bhūmi* and before the final moment of awakening according to the Mahāyāna system. See also note 81.

¹⁰² Presumably this refers to the *vidyāvrata*, which often accompanies the third initiation, as, for example, according to Vaidyapāda’s *Guhāsamājamāṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*.

¹⁰³ kyis] P, kyi D

¹⁰⁴ lung] D, lus P

¹⁰⁵ *sdom pa bas ni sdom pa med//*

Since it is universal, it has no essence of its own.
 [Since] it is the antidote to all things, there is no antidote.
 [Since] it is the state of a vajra-holder, there is no *bhūmi*.¹⁰⁶ [30]
 Since there is no nature, there is no ritual,
 And no view, and no etymology—
 It is correctly explained by the guru to be like this.
 The wisdom (*jñāna*) that arises from the *prajñā*
 Should be understood as the fourth. [31]¹⁰⁷

The first part of this passage from the *Yogasapta* provides a clear and helpful overview of the first three initiations, and this passage (along with the entirety of this text), certainly deserves

¹⁰⁶ See note 81.

¹⁰⁷ *thams cad mkhyen pa la phyag tshal lo// gang zhid dpe med tshul ldan pa// gnyis med bde chen rang bzhin med// thugs rje rgyas shing bar chad med// 'gog med sangs rgyas de la 'dud// |1| rgyu dang mi rgyu kun khyab pa// gang gi snying gi pad dbus su// mi shigs [D 70a] thig le dbus gnas pa// gzhom med chos la phyag 'tshal lo// |2| de 'dra rab tu ston phyed pa// sems ni de nyid la bzhag pa// g.yang sa'i lam sgrol dge 'dun che// bla ma dam pa'i zhabs la 'dud// |3| lam gi rim pa sngon 'gro ba// dkyil 'khor dam tshig dbang sogs te// bum pa la sogs rim pa yis// dbang gi dbye ba cung zad brjod// |4| dkyil 'khor la sogs cho ga (cho ga] P, rim pa D) yis// thar chen yang dag slu ba ste// de nyid med pas mi 'grub pas// bzhi pa'i don ni yang [P83b] dag bshad// |5| thams cad mkhyen pas ji skad du// rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud bstan la// dbang ni rnam pa gsum dag tu// rgyud 'di las ni rab tub shad// |6| bum pa'i dbang ni dang po ste// gnyis pa la ni gsang ba'i dbang// gsum pa shes rab ye shes dbang// de ltar de bzhin bzhi pa yang// bla ma'i bka' las shes par bya// |7| dbang ni dang po dbye pa yang// cung zad kyang ni bzhad bya ste// rgyu yi slob dpon chen po yis// de ni yang dag bskur bar 'dod// |8| yul mkhar khyim dang glang po sogs// rjes mthun de la dbul bar bya// de yi thun mong gzhan pa yi// sdom pa snod du rung phyir sbyin// |9| ri mo dang ni lus kyi ni// dkyil 'khor du ni de nyid thob// rig dang 'di rgyu slob dpon dbang// cho ga'i rim pa gzhan (gzhan] P, bzhin D) du bshad// |10| de yi rang gi ngo bo ni// sku yi rdo rje'i rang bzhin no// srog gcod la sogs snga phyi yi// dag dang nyes par mi 'gyur ro// |11| thabs kyiis khyad par 'phags pa'i phyir// sa brgyad pa ru yang dag bshad// sbyor gsum yan lag bcas pa ru// de la yang dag bstan par bya// |12| gzugs la sogs pa'i yul rnam kyi// snang srid dben par rtogs pa'o// snod du rung phyir bum pa ste// blugs gtor dag par byed pas dbang// |13| 'di ni yang dag rgyud (rgyud] sugg. em. based on parallel verses below; rgyu D P) rim pa'i// /lung gis nges par bshad pa'o// dang po'i dbye ba bstan nas ni// gnyis pa yang ni bshad bya ste// |14| rgyu dang rkyen gyi slob dpon gyis// dbang bskur de ni yang dag thob// gser dang dngul la sogs pa [D 70b] yi// rjes mthun de la dbul bar bya// |15| srog gcod la sogs thun mong pa'i// sdom pa snod du rung phyir sbyin// lhag pa byang sems zhes bya ba'i// dkyil 'khor du ni de nyid thob// |16| blo yi bye brag gis bskur ba'i// cho ga'i rim pa gzhan (gzhan] P, bzhin D) du bshad// de yi [P 84a] rang gi ngo bo ni// gsung gi rdo rje'i rang bzhin no// |17| brdzun (brdzun] D, rdzun P) la sogs pa snga phyi yi// dag (sugg. em., ngag D P) dang nyes (nyes] P, nyan D) par mi 'gyur ro// thabs kyiis rab tu phyed ba'i phyir// dgu dang bcu la yang dag gnas// |18| rdo rje bzlas pa'i ngo bo yis// sgyu 'dra'i ting 'dzin bstan par bya// mig sogs nang gi chos rnam kyi// snang srid dben par rtogs pa'o// |19| bsgrags min phyir na gsang ba ste// blugs gtor dag pas byed pas dbang// 'di yang brgyud pa'i rim pa yi// lung gis yang dag bshad pa'o// |20| gnyis pa'i dbye ba bstan nas su// gsum pa yang ni bstan par bya// rgyu dang rkyen dang lhan cig byed// slob dpon gsum gyis thob pa'o// |21| padma rā ga pur sha sogs// rjes mthun de la dbul bar bya// dkyil 'khor bri ba la sogs 'gog/ sdom pa mchog ni sbyin pa'o// |22| bha ga rnam dag ces (ces] D, zhes P) bya yi// dkyil 'khor du ni de nyid thob// shes rab dbang dang ye shes dbang// cho ga'i rim pa gzhan du bshad// |23| de yi rang gin go bo ni// thugs kyi rdo rje'i rang bzhin no// brnab sems la sogs nga phyi yi// dag (dag] D, ngag P) dang nyes (nyes] sugg. em., nye D P) bar mi 'gyur ro// |24| thabs kyi khyad par phyed ba'i phyir// rdo rje lta bur yang dag gnas// mchog gi dngos grub sgrub (sgrub] D, grub P) pa'i phyir// brtul zhugs cho ga de la bstan// |25| gzung dang 'dzin pa'i ngo bo yis// chos kun dben (dben] D, dbyen P) par rtogs pa'o// shes rab las kyiis [kyiis] P, kyi D) ye shes te// ma rtogs rtogs phyir dbang yin no// |26| 'di yang brgyud pa'i rim pa yi// lung (lung] D, lus P) gis yang dag bshad pa'o// |27| da ni yang dag bshad bya ba// bzhi pa mngon par byang chub pa// bla ma'i zhal nas nges thob pa// sbyor ba bdun gyi de nyid bshad// |28| rang bzhin gnas phyir slob dpon med// rin thang med phyir yon med de// [P 84b] sdom pa bas ni sdom pa med// de nyid dkyil [D71a] 'khor dkyil 'khor med// |29| stobs kyiis thob phyir dbang med de// spyi pas rang gi ngo bo med// chos kun gnyen po gnyen po med// rdo rje 'dzin gnas sa med de// |30| rang bzhin med phyir cho ga dang// lta ba nges tshig med ba ru// bla ma yis ni yang dag bshad// shes rab las skyes ye shes ni// bzhi pa yin par shes par bya// |31| (*Yogasapta*, D 69a.7-71a.2 ; P 83a.5-84b.3).*

further consideration, but now is not the occasion to get into those details.¹⁰⁸ I would like to focus here on Vaidyapāda’s presentation of “the fourth,” which, as is quite clear from simply reading the text itself, is made very much in contradistinction to his presentation of the first three initiations. Using the sort of apophatic language preferred in many Buddhist traditions—like the literature of the Prajñāpāramitā, Madhyāmaka, and also the Great Perfection and Mahāmudrā traditions—as a way of describing suchness, awakening, or ultimate reality, Vaidyapāda sets “the fourth” apart from the three initiations, stating that not a single one of the features that characterize the three initiations pertains to “the fourth,” which he identifies as “perfect awakening” itself. We can see in his presentation precisely why, for him, “the fourth” is not, and indeed in some sense cannot be, “an initiation” (though we should remember that Vaidyapāda does call it the “precious fourth initiation” in his *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*); it is identical with the result of awakening, and therefore goes beyond the boundaries of such ordinary characterizations. However, each of the negations that Vaidyapāda applies here is also complemented by positive language describing “the fourth” as more exalted than the earlier initiations—it “abides naturally,” is “universal,” “priceless,” “the state of a vajra-holder.”

Vaidyapāda’s use of language that is parallel to, but contrasts with, the language that he uses to describe the three initiations indicates that, while he is not—in the *Yogasapta*, at least—willing to call it an “initiation,” Vaidyapāda does regard “the fourth” as something that is more or less parallel with initiation. Nonetheless, partly for the doctrinal reasons described above, and perhaps partly because he did not have a scriptural basis to do so—precisely because, it seems, the *Yogasapta* captures the fourth initiation in the process of emerging—Vaidyapāda says that “there is no initiation” when it comes to “the fourth.” In stating this in the way that he does, though, within the framework of its (non)parallels with the three initiations, Vaidyapāda is essentially acknowledging “the fourth” as something that is on par with initiation, and, as we saw above, he also uses language that shows “the fourth” to be superior, even, to the three initiations. Regarding his lack of a scriptural source for the ritual that he describes in this work—and, for that matter, for referring to “the fourth” as an initiation—Vaidyapāda appears to be aware that he is recording in the *Yogasapta* instructions that are not part of a previous scriptural tradition, but were previously passed down only in an oral lineage. He explicitly states, with respect to each of the first three initiations, that their rituals have been “explained in the scriptures that have been passed down through the lineage.”¹⁰⁹ But with regard to “the fourth,” he instead writes—at a place in the text that is precisely parallel to his statements about the scriptural sources for the rituals of the three initiations—simply that the fourth “is correctly explained by the guru to be like this.”¹¹⁰ And, indeed, there *were* scriptural sources for the rituals of the first three initiations at the time that Vaidyapāda was writing: Chapter Sixteen of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* describes the *kalaśābhiṣeka* and the *Samājottara*—the circulation of which, I will argue in the next chapter, follows Buddhajñānapāda’s writings but precedes Vaidyapāda’s—describes the rituals for the *guhya*- and *prajñājñānābhiṣekas*. But despite the fact that the *Samājottara* mentions “the fourth,” there is no explanation in that tantra of what “the fourth” might mean (or even be!), nor any indication of what its ritual might entail.

Vaidyapāda’s presentation of “the fourth,” in the *Yogasapta*, however, culminates with a very clear and specific statement about what “the fourth” is: “The wisdom (*jñāna*) that arises

¹⁰⁸ I tried to draw brief attention to just a few points of interest in the notes to the translation here. I have nearly completed a draft translation and edition of the complete *Yogasapta*, which I hope to publish, along with a short study of the text, once it is completed.

¹⁰⁹ See *Yogasapta* verses 14 (with respect to the *kalaśābhiṣeka*), 20 (with respect to the *guhyābhiṣeka*), and 27 (with respect to the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*).

¹¹⁰ *Yogasapta*, verse 31.

from the *prajñā* should be understood as the fourth.” This final statement employs a sort of word play, in which the term *prajñā* can be—and I would suggest that it was indeed meant to be—taken in two ways. The term *prajñā* generally has the meaning of insight, and the statement taken in this sense thus identifies the fourth with wisdom—the wisdom, we will remember, that is identical with awakening itself—that arises based on insight. Presumably this wisdom, the direct knowing of suchness itself, is brought about through the essential oral instructions of the guru that are given in this initiatory context, immediately following the third initiation. However, in a tantric context the term *prajñā* is very commonly used to refer to the tantric consort herself. Thus, just like in the earlier statement from the *Yogasapta* about the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, where it was stated that

Because one realizes the not [yet] realized *jñāna*

Through¹¹¹ the actions of the *prajñā* it is [called the *prajñājñāna*] initiation |26|¹¹² here in describing “the fourth” as “the wisdom (*jñāna*) that arises from the *prajñā*” Vaidyapāda is directly linking “the fourth” with the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. Taken in this second sense, this description of the fourth as “the wisdom (*jñāna*) that arises from the *prajñā*” identifies it as wisdom that arises in reliance on uniting with the tantric consort (the *prajñā*), which takes place during the third initiation. “The fourth,” then, is not only intimately connected with the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, it is in some sense the very outcome of that initiation—suchness, or awakening itself, which is realized in reliance upon union with the consort. But, in this same passage Vaidyapāda also identifies the fourth as “that which is obtained from the mouth of the guru” and as the seven yogas. So, at the same time that “the fourth” is the outcome of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, a wisdom that arises in reliance upon the tantric consort, it is also something obtained from the guru’s words, and something that is, or consists of, the seven yogas.

The next verses of the *Yogasapta* (continuing on in the text from the end of verse 31, where we left off above) elaborate on the relationship between the fourth, the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and the guru’s oral instructions, incorporating a number of verses from the section of the *Dvītyākrama* on the third initiation (I italicize the verses incorporated from the *Dvītyākrama*, just to make it easier to see the correspondences) :

Having joined the two spaces¹¹³

Suchness is examined [through] the oral instructions.

When realized through effort

In reliance upon a well-practiced *mudrā*¹¹⁴ |32|

*Desire, freedom from desire, and something in between—*¹¹⁵

The characteristics of the seven yogas—[are realized] |33|

¹¹¹ kyis] P, kyi D

¹¹² *shes rab las kyis* [kyis] P, kyi D) *ye shes te// ma rtogs rtogs phyir dbang yin no//* |26| (*Yogasapta*, verse 26cd).

¹¹³ *mkha’ gnyis*. Presumably this refers to the union of the two sexual organs. The more commonly used term is, precisely, the union of the “two organs” (*dbang po gnyis*). Vaidyapāda also uses the term *mkha’ gnyis* in this same way in his description of the “precious fourth initiation” in the *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*, (D 211b.3-4; P 539b.6-7).

¹¹⁴ *Mudrā* is understood here as (yet another!) term referring to the consort. The term *legs par goms pa* (*svabhyasta*), which occurs also in verse 37 of the *Yogasapta*, is also used in Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *maṇḍalavidhi* to describe the *yoginī* in the second initiation, who is there consecrated as a *mudrā* (*Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, verse 362). These statements suggest that the success of the initiation is understood to be in some measure reliant on the consort’s having practice experience.

¹¹⁵ As I have noted earlier, the phrase “desire, freedom from desire, and something in between” is excerpted from a line of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* that Buddhajñānapādada incorporates into the section on the third initiation in the *Dvītyākrama* (see also *Dvītyākrama*, 125b and my notes on the translation at that point).

¹¹⁶From uniting the realm of space and¹¹⁷ the vajra
 Great bliss that has genuine vision arises
 Which brings about genuine bliss.
 Between bliss and the bliss of cessation an absence is seen.¹¹⁸ [34]
 In the lotus maṇḍala the jewel
 And the heart of the lotus join
 And in vajra posture
 The mind is observed within the jewel, [35]
 And that itself is wisdom.
 This explained by the guru
 As the perfection stage;
 This is known as the fourth,¹¹⁹
 The stage of¹²⁰ the seven yogas. [36]¹²¹

Here, in incorporating verses from the *Dvitiyakrama* on the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, Vaidyapāda directly links the wisdom discerned during the third initiation, described in the *Dvitiyakrama* as “the perfection stage,” with “the fourth,” and with the seven yogas. The subsequent section of the *Yogasapta*, which makes up the majority of the text, addresses each one of these seven yogas in some detail, presenting each yoga both in terms of the way it is experienced seen during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and then in terms of its being fully actualized during post-initiatory practice. Buddhajñānapāda himself makes reference to the seven yogas twice in the *Muktilaka*, once equating them with the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,”¹²² and once in reference to their being realized instantaneously during the yogin’s post-initiatory practice.¹²³ Although Buddhajñānapāda’s writings do not mention the seven yogas in the initiatory context, the

¹¹⁶ The next eleven lines are incorporated from the *Dvitiyakrama*, verse 124a-125a. However, either the text transmission is corrupted here in the *Yogasapta*, as several words or short phrases have been omitted, or Vaidyapāda has rephrased the *Dvitiyakrama*. I surmise that he may have rephrased the passage, because there is only one instance where the *Yogasapta*’s version has been rendered unintelligible. Parallel verses are extant in Sanskrit in Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, which allow us to understand the sometimes opaque Tibetan of the *Dvitiyakrama*’s verses, and thus also those of the *Yogasapta*, more clearly, though there are places where the *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* does clearly differ from the *Dvitiyakrama*. See also notes 263-274 in my translation of the *Dvitiyakrama*.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Dvitiyakrama*, verse 124, which has *dang* where the *Yogasapta* reads *ni*.

¹¹⁸ *gang gang yang dag dga’ byed chags// dga’ gnyis rab tu dben nyid mthong//*. When compared with the parallel line from the *Dvitiyakrama* (*gang gang yang dag dga’ byed chags bral dga’ gnyis bar du dben nyid mthong byas brian par gyis//*, *Dvitiyakrama* 124b), the first of these two lines in the *Yogasapta* omits the word *bral*, thus significantly changing the meaning of the line. Given that Vaidyapāda clearly upholds Buddhajñānapāda’s system of three blisses in his writings, I presume this omission is an error and though I have not re-edited the *Yogasapta* to add in this syllable, since it would render the verse unmetrical, I have translated as if the line read *chags bral*, like it does in the *Dvitiyakrama*. This line also survives in Sanskrit in Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, which confirms the reading of *chags bral* (here = *vīramānanda*). See note 263 in my translation of the *Dvitiyakrama* for the full citation from Vāgīśvarakīrti’s text.

¹¹⁹ *bzhi pa*] P, *bzhin pa* D

¹²⁰ *gyi*] P, *gyis* D

¹²¹ *mkha’ gnyis rab tu sbyor ba yis// man ngag tu ni de nyid brtag/ legs par goms pa’i phyag rgya las// ‘bad pa’i bya pas rtogs pa na//* [32] *‘dod chags chags bral bar ma ste// sbyor ba bdun gyi mtshan nyid do//* [33] *rnam mkha’ khams ni rdo rje sbyor// yang dag spyen can bde chen ‘byung// gang gang yang dag dga’ byed chags// dga’ gnyis rab tu dben nyid mthong//* [34] *padma’i dkyil du rdo rje nor// pad snying la ni ‘byor ba ste// rdo rje’i skyil mo krung nang sems// nor bu bar du* (bar du] P, rab tu D) *mthong byas pas//* [35] *gang de nyid ni ye shes te// ‘di nyid rdzogs pa’i rim par ru// bla ma’i zhal lnga nas kyis bshad// de la sbyor ba bdun gyi* (gyi] P, gyis D) *ni// rim pa bzhi* (bzhi] P, bzhin D) *pa shes par bya//* [36] (*Yogasapta*, D 71a.2-4; P 84b.3-6).

¹²² *Muktilaka*, D 52a.2.

¹²³ *Muktilaka*, D 51b.

“perfection stage of the perfection stage,” with which he does explicitly equate them in the *Muktilaka*, is itself identified with suchness, which is precisely what the initiate is meant to realize directly as part of the third initiation and/or by means of the oral instructions of the guru which are given as part of or subsequent to that. As such, although Vaidyapāda’s presentation of each of the seven yogas and their relationship to initiation—specifically their being experienced in the third initiation—as well as their perfection in post initiatory practice, is much more elaborated than what we find in Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings, Vaidyapāda’s presentation of the seven yogas in the *Yogasapta* and in his *Sukusuma* and *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* does correspond precisely within the way in which we find the seven yogas referenced, though more briefly, in Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings.

A discussion of each of the seven yogas according to the *Yogasapta* is beyond the scope of the present chapter, but it will not take us too far afield, I think, and will provide a better sense of what the seven yogas are in this system, to include here the passage on just the first yoga from the *Yogasapta*. This passage continues directly from where we left off above, at the end of verse 36, where Vaidyapāda identified the wisdom experienced through the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* with “the fourth” and with the seven yogas. (Again, we find here several lines incorporated from the *Dvītyakrama*’s section on the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, which I have again italicized to make them easy to identify.) Vaidyapāda continues,

So, what is that like?

Together with a well-trained [consort]¹²⁴

Following the instructions that have been given

One should ascertain the *cakra* from the interior

And come to know it a bit with one’s fingers.¹²⁵ |37|

¹²⁶*The heart quivers¹²⁷ and attentiveness wanes*

The hair on the crown falls loose and garments are cast off

Beads of sweat cover the whole body

Losing steadiness, |38|

Even all of one’s [body] hairs stand on end,¹²⁸

Looking with bloodshot eyes

The wisdom of bliss genuinely arises

And one becomes adorned with the complexion of Vairocana—¹²⁹ |39|

That is perfect example-less bliss.

The space-like *kāya*

Adorned with the major and minor marks

Is luminous like a rainbow; |40|

When one takes up this great body [i.e. the *sambhogakāya*],

Which is luminous and yet unoriginated,

The *dharmakāya* and *nirmaṇakāya*, as well,

Come about due to [its] strength. |41|

This excellent body of the great vajra holder,

¹²⁴ See also verse 30 of the *Yogasapta* which mentions a well-practiced *mudrā* (i.e. consort) (*legs par goms pa’i phyag rgya*). This term *legs par goms* (*svabhyasta*) is also used in Dīpaṅkarabhadra’s *maṅḍalavidhi* to describe the *yoginī* in the second initiation, who is there consecrated as a *mudrā* (*Maṅḍalavidhi*, verse 362).

¹²⁵ See *Dvikrama*, verse 118.

¹²⁶ C.f. *Dvītyakrama*, verse 120b-121a. I have again italicized the lines incorporate directly from the *Dvītyakrama* simply to make them easier to identify here.

¹²⁷ ‘dar] P, ‘dir D. *Dvikrama* verse 120b supports ‘dar

¹²⁸ g.yo. Literally, they “move.”

¹²⁹ The intent of this line remains unclear to me.

Which one never tires of seeing,
 Appears with three faces and six arms,
 Embraced by the *vidyā*, who is endowed with all supreme [qualities]. |42|
 At the time of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*
 One abides with those features.
 [Later] the [yogin] who has brought wisdom under control,
 Abiding in that state during the practice of the *vratas* and the rest, |43|
 [Fully] accomplishes that reality.
 At that time one [fully] obtains this [perfect example-less bliss] |44|

This was the first chapter on the attainment of perfect example-less bliss.¹³⁰

The initial part of the description of the first among the seven yogas, the yoga of perfect example-less bliss, closely follows the description of the union of the yogic partners during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* in the *Dvītyākrama*, again incorporating verses directly from that text. Vaidyapāda then identifies the arising of the wisdom of “bliss” (*ānanda*), the first of the three blisses according to Buddhajñānapāda’s system, in the context of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* as the first yoga of “perfect example-less bliss.” As he goes on to explain, this corresponds with the yogin’s remaining self-visualized in the form of the deity during the sexual yoga of the third initiation. Later, a yogin “who has brought wisdom under control”—this is a reference to a yogin who has achieved the third among three (or four) stages of progress in practice¹³¹—actualizes this

¹³⁰ *ci lta zhes na/ legs par bsgoms dang lhan gcig tu// ji skad bshad pa’i cho ga yis// nang nas ‘khor lo gsal bya ste// sor mo cung zad go byas te// |37| snying ‘dar (‘dar) P ‘dir D) dran pa nyams pa dang// spyi bor skra grol gos kyang ‘dor// rngul chu thigs pas lus kun khyab// brtan pa’i ngang tshul shor nas ni// rang gi ba sbu kun kyang g.yo// mig dmar phra bas rab bltas pa’i// dga’ ba’i ye shes yang dag ‘byung// rtag pa’i mdog gis yang dag brgyan// de ni dpe [P 85a] med bde (bde) P, bda D) rdzogs so// nam mkha’ lta bu’i sku la ni// mtshan dang dpe byad kyi brgyan pa// ‘ja’ tshon lta bur rab gsal ba// gsal ba nyid ni (ni) D, na P) ma skyes pa’i// sku chen dang du blangs gyur na// chos kyi sku dang sprul sku yang// stobs kyi ‘byung bar ‘gyur pa’o// rdo rje ‘dzin pa chen po yi// sku che blta bas mi ngoms pa’i// zhal gsum phyag drug ltar snang ba// mchog kun ldan pas rig mas ‘kyud// [D 71b] // shes rab ye shes dbang dus su// mtshan nyid de yi tshul du gnas// ye shes dbang du gyur pa yis// brtul zhugs la sogs rim pa yis// gnas nas de yi don sgrub tshe// de y idus su de ‘thob pa’o// dpe med bde rdzogs kyi le’u ste dang po’o// (Yogasapta, D 71a.4-71b.1; P 84b.6-85a.4).*

¹³¹ This refers to the third of three (or four) stages of a yogin’s progress that are referenced in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings. In his *Muktililaka-vyākhyāna* Vaidyapāda writes of “the instant blazing of nondual wisdom due to the observance of post-initiatory practices (*vratacaryā*) at the time when one [has reached the state of being a] third [-level] yogin.” *rnal ‘byor pa gsum par ‘gyur pa’i tshe/ brtul zhugs kyi spyod pas skad cig tsam la gnyis su med pa’i ye shes ‘bar bas... (Muktililaka-vyākhyāna, D 51b.1; P 337b.2-3).* Such a “yogin of the third level” is explained later in the *Muktililaka-vyākhyāna*, commenting on a verse in the *Muktililaka* that likewise indicates “the occasion of being a third[-level] yogin,” as the time when one should engage in the various post-initiatory practices described in the text. Vaidyapāda there explains the “third[-level] yogin” as someone who has not only gone beyond being a beginner (the first level), but also having gone beyond the intermediate level of a yogin who has “control over limited wisdom,” (the second level) to the level of a yogin who has “control over the wisdom that brings oneself and others to behold the illusory *maṇḍala*” (*Sukusuma*, 57b.2-3). The fact that here in the *Yogasapta* the yogin who has “control over wisdom” refers to the third, rather than the second, of these levels is indicated by the fact that in the context of several among the seven yogas the “third-level yogin” is explicitly mentioned, along with the fact that all of the references in the *Yogasapta* that mention a practitioner at this level of progress are made in the context of the practice of the *vratas*, and, as we have just seen, both Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings repeatedly indicate that it is specifically a third-level yogin who is to engage in these kinds of practices. This three-level schema of the development of a yogin’s meditative progress, mentioned at several places in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s works, seems to either have been later expanded into four levels of progress in later works of the Jñānapāda School or (perhaps more likely?) simply have been mentioned only in an abbreviated form in these earlier works. (In any case I have seen no reference to a fourth level in any of Buddhajñānapāda’s or Vaidyapāda’s writings). Sabine Klein Schwind writes of the distinctive practice instructions included in Kṣitigarbha’s *Daśatattvasamgraha* that are connected with generation stage practice for the yogins on each of four levels, and also references the four-fold schema also in Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s

state of the *sambhogakāya* (which, as this passage explains, naturally brings about the actualization of the *dharmakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*, as well) by means of the procedures of the post-initiatory *vratas*, at which point he fully obtains this aspect of the result of awakening.¹³² While the individual characteristics of each of the seven yogas differ, their presentation in terms of an experience in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* which is then perfected or fully actualized at the time of post-initiatory practice is consistent throughout. For example, with regard to the second yoga, non-duality, Vaidyapāda writes:

For the illusory male and female,
 At the time of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* |48|
 When the wisdom of bliss [is experienced]
 A unique self-arisen nonduality comes about—
 That is explained as nonduality. |49|
 [Later] when the yogin of the third [level]
 Is practicing the *vratacāryā*
 He likewise [experiences] nonduality,
 And [at that time] this [experience] is said to be fully resolved.¹³³

In this way, Vaidyapāda consistently sets forth each of the seven yogas in reference to their being experienced at the time of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* and fully obtained, resolved, or fully manifested by means of the practice of the post-initiatory conduct of a yogin of the third level. This moment of the full manifestation or full realization of the seven yogas by means of post-initiatory practices is mentioned in Buddhajñānapāda's *Muktitilaka*, as well:

The one who engages in these [types of] practices
 Realizes the seven yogas in a single instant.
 And for as long as existence persists
 He will have the eight characteristics of the taste.¹³⁴

This passage seems to describe the moment of awakening itself, since the “eight characteristics of the taste,” are listed and identified in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as eight characteristics of the awakened state; these eight are further elaborated in several of Vaidyapāda's works, including the *Yogasapta*, as well.¹³⁵

Based on the way they are presented in both Buddhajñānapāda's and Vaidyapāda's writings, taken together, it seems that in the early Jñānapāda tradition the seven yogas are experiences that take place during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, which are pointed out orally by the guru's instructions immediately following that initiation, and finally realized all at once in the moment of awakening, which takes place during post-initiatory practice. They are different aspects of the state of suchness, or awakening itself, and as such are glimpsed directly during

Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi, and in Ratnātaraśānti's works (Klein-Schwind 2012, 87-92). According to Schwind's work there is some degree of variation in the terminology used to refer to yogins on the varying levels of progress.

¹³² While a more thorough investigation into the works addressing the seven yogas would further clarify this issue, it appears from Vaidyapāda's work that this first yoga is connected both with the experience of a moment bliss and the practitioner's self-visualized form as the deity in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and, at the time of awakening, with his experience of (presumably lasting) bliss along with manifesting in the form of the *sambhogakāya*.

¹³³ *sgyu ma'i skye bu bud med las// shes rab ye shes dbang dus su// dga' ba'i ye shes dus su ni// khyad par gnyis med rang 'byung ba// [P 85b] gnyis su med bar de la bshad// rnal 'byor gsum pas brtol zhugs kyi// spyod pa'i tshes ni de bzhin du// gnyis med 'gyur bar 'gyur ba ru// nges pa nyid du bshad pa yin// (Yogasapta, D 71b.5-6; P 85a.8-85b.1).*

¹³⁴ *de 'dra'i spyod pa la gnas pa// skad cig gis ni sbyor ba bdun// rtogs nas ji srid bar du ni// ro myang mtshan nyid brgyad ldan par// (Muktitilaka, D 51b. 5-6; P 62a.5-6).*

¹³⁵ The eight are listed in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as: permanent, free from torment, cool, singular, blissful, stainless, joyful, and mentally joyful (*Dvīṭīyakrama*, verses 292-3). Vaidyapāda elaborates them in the *Sukusuma* (D 127a.4-7) and gives a similar presentation in the *Yogasapta* (*Yogasapta*, D 74a.1-3; P 88a.2-5).

initiation, but not fully perfected until the completion of post-initiatory practices. However, it is only in Vaidyapāda’s works that the relationship of the seven yogas and tantric initiation is made explicit, and where they are also referred to as “the fourth;” Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving writings do neither of these. Even within Vaidyapāda’s works, it is only in the *Yogasapta* that the dual relationship of each of the seven yogas to both initiation and the final moment of awakening is made clear.

While Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings do not make direct reference to the seven yogas in an initiatory context, as noted above, he does identify them in the *Muktilaka* with “the perfection stage of the perfection stage,” suchness, which is precisely what is pointed out by the guru and realized by the student in the context of the third initiation. Buddhajñānapāda also clearly references suchness being pointed out by an oral instruction, most likely one following the third initiation. This suggests that Vaidyapāda’s presentation of the seven yogas in the *Yogasapta* most likely represents a system that was already in practice in Buddhajñānapāda’s lifetime. Why, then does the *Dvītyakrama* not make direct reference to these seven (or to “the fourth”) in its rather detailed instructions on the higher initiations? Perhaps this is because, as a set of essential oral instructions given in the initiatory context, Buddhajñānapāda did not see fit to describe, or even reference, them in a written text. Why Vaidyapāda chose to write about these ritual details is not clear—and as I noted above he seems to be conscious of the fact that he was putting into writing something that had not been previously recorded—but his work certainly gives us a much fuller picture of initiation in the early Jñānapāda School, and indeed a much clearer picture of the issue of “the fourth” in this early period, than we would otherwise have.

“The Fourth” versus “The Fourth Initiation:” Points of Continuity and Divergence

As for the relationship of this early tradition of the seven yogas and “the fourth” to later tantric initiatory traditions, which did come to assert a “fourth initiation,” it appears that there is quite a bit of continuity. Regarding what eventually came to be the standard idea of what constituted the “fourth initiation,” in both the systems of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* and the later Yoginī tantras, Isaacson has written that this position¹³⁶

holds that the Fourth empowerment is one which is bestowed verbally, i.e. by the initiating guru giving a verbal instruction to the initiand. Now some texts seem to indeed refer to this consecration as only verbal—Vāgīśvarakīrti in his *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, calls it the *vacanamātrābhīṣeka* (cf. Sakurai 1996, 419, l. 11 and l. 13), and in this text at least does not indicate that anything more is involved than this speech by the guru. But it is also clear that in fact usually, if not always, the Fourth empowerment was seen as having, theoretically at least, another component as well. Indeed, had it been otherwise, that which as the final one one expects to be the culminating or crowning empowerment or consecration could well seem an anti-climax. This no doubt was as clear to these tantric authors as it is to us. The way that this added element is sometimes expressed is that the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* and the Fourth empowerment are said to be related to each other as mark/characteristic and that which is marked, or ultimate goal. In theory, the verbal instruction received from the guru is supposed to cause the bliss experienced, for an instant, without sensation of duality in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* to become strong or steady.

¹³⁶ Note that Isaacson here explains that what he is here expressing as a single position is indeed two slightly different positions, and he refers the reader to Sakurai’s 1996 book (in Japanese) on a tentative distinction between the two (Isaacson 2012b, 270).

Treating the Fourth empowerment as representing or being, in some way, the ultimate goal, means that explanations of its nature may vary according to just how that goal is envisaged. In the—as far as I can tell at present very influential—works of Vāgīśvarakīrti, the transcendental or goal-aspect of the Fourth empowerment is explained as being seven-fold or having seven aspects, the so-called seven *aṅgas* of *mahāmudrā*.¹³⁷ Based on this description of the way that the fourth initiation was presented in works of the later tradition—Isaacson is referencing works from around the eleventh century—we can see that quite a number of its features are already found in the system of “the fourth” as described in Vaidyapāda’s writings, and which, as I have argued above, I believe we can take to be reflective of Buddhajñānapāda’s own tradition. This includes “the fourth” being a verbal instruction; something that follows, as the fourth initiation does, the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*; and its “representing, or being in some way, the ultimate goal.” Given all of these similarities, we may not be surprised to discover that the seven *aṅgas* of *mahāmudrā* that Isaacson mentions are set forth in Vāgīśvarakīrti’s writings as the “transcendental or goal-aspect” of the fourth initiation are none other than the same seven aspects described in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings as the “seven yogas.”¹³⁸ The only aspect of the fourth initiation that Isaacson highlights in his article that is not explicitly found in Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings (though without a closer reading of the entire *Yogasapta* I am hesitant to completely rule out its being there) is the relationship between the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* as the mark or characteristic and the fourth initiation (or “the fourth”) as what is marked, the goal of awakening itself. Indeed, as I read Buddhajñānapāda’s works, he states rather clearly that what is experienced during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* is precisely suchness itself—or “the perfection stage” itself, as Buddhajñānapāda refers to it in the *Dvītyākrama*’s final verse on the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*—and not just an example of it. And yet, this very suchness is also said in his writings to be received from the words of the guru. In other words, there does not appear, in Buddhajñānapāda’s or Vaidyapāda’s writings, to be a clear distinction between what is experienced in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* and what is pointed out after it (during “the fourth”), apart from the simple fact that without its being pointed out by the guru’s words, the disciple would be unable to recognize the experience in the third initiation as suchness.¹³⁹ In the *Yogasapta*, while Vaidyapāda describes “the fourth” as something “known from the guru’s words,” he also identifies it with the seven yogas, and the individual descriptions of the yogas, as we have seen, consistently specify both a particular experience within the context of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* and the full realization of that aspect of awakening in the moment of obtaining the final result of perfect awakening. While the experience in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* is certainly not the full experience of awakening itself, it does not seem to be distinguished qualitatively from the aspect of the result, nor, as is more directly relevant to the discussion at hand, does it appear to be

¹³⁷ Isaacson 2012b, 270-71.

¹³⁸ A citation from Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Saptaṅga* listing the seven *aṅgas* is found in Rāmapāla’s *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*. The seven *aṅgas* are listed in that citation from Vāgīśvarakīrti’s work as *sambhoga*, *samputa*, *mahāsukha*, *niḥsvabhāva*, *kāruṇyanirbhara*, *nirantara*, *aniroda* (Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 271). This list is almost identical with Vaidyapāda’s list: *dpe med bde rdzogs*, *gnyis su med pa*, *bde ba chen po*, *rang bzhin med pa*, *thugs rjes rgyas pa*, *rgyun mi chad pa* and *’gog pa med pa*. Only the second member of the list of seven bears a different name—but *samputa* seems to be understood in this context to refer to union, and it is not such a stretch to understand union and nonduality (*gnyis su med pa*) as referring to a similar idea. In any case a fuller study of Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Saptaṅga* alongside Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* would certainly be illuminating.

¹³⁹ We may also recall here verse 355 in the *Dvītyākrama*, cited above, where it is mentioned that the *dharmakāya* is experienced briefly when falling asleep, during sexual union, and at other moments, but Vaidyapāda specifies that these moments are so brief that without a guru’s instructions a disciple is unable to recognize them as such (for Vaidyapāda’s comments on this point see *Sukusuma*, D 132b.6-7; P 159b.8-160a.1).

distinguished from the “suchness” that is transferred in the verbal communication from guru to disciple that constitutes “the fourth.”

There is, however, in the *Dvitiyakrama*, a passage that mentions the yogin’s remaining within the three blisses “in the manner of the mark (*mtshan nyid*)” (or the “characteristic” to use the other term that Isaacson mentioned above) during what does appear to be a reference to the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. But this “remaining in the manner of the mark” in the three blisses during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* is contrasted there, not with an experience of “the goal” (or “that which is marked”) during “the fourth,” but rather with the full attainment of the three blisses—which Vaidyapāda equates with the three *kāyas*—at the time of the yogin’s complete awakening by means of post-initiatory practice.¹⁴⁰ In his comments on this passage, Vaidyapāda links the three blisses not only to the three *kāyas*, but also to the seven yogas, and notes that the yogin remains in these “in the manner of the mark” during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and that they will “in their own time” be fully attained as explained in the tantras.¹⁴¹ Even though the terminology that is used here—that of remaining in the three blisses “in the manner of the mark” during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*—could possibly be interpreted to mean that what is experienced in the third initiation is not identical with result of awakening itself—even if experienced only momentarily—I think the preponderance of the evidence in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings suggests that we should not read the passage that way. He has clearly stated that the purpose of the third initiation is to bring the disciple to a direct experience of the *dharmakāya*

¹⁴⁰ That passage reads, “Just as the yogin of the higher stage/ |289| Having put forth tireless effort/ Remained there [in the consort’s lotus] for a moment / In the manner of the example / In bliss, middling bliss, / |290| And the bliss of cessation, / [Likewise,] in time, he will attain, just as has been taught, / The three blisses just as they are. / 291| Then until *saṃsāra*’s end/ He will remain, free from torment, / Cool, singular, / Blissful, stainless, / |292| Joyful, and mentally joyful—/ These are the eight [signs] of having tasted great bliss.” *gong ma’i rim pa rnal ‘byor pas//* |289| *’bad pa che thang rab byas pas// de ltar de ru mtshan nyid kyi// tshul du cung zad rab gnas pa’i// dga’ dang dga’ ba bar ma dang//* |290| *dga’ dang bral ba’i dus su yang// ji bzhin gnas pa’i dga’ ba gsum// ji skad gsungs pa thob par ‘gyur//* |291| *de nas mtha’ med ‘khor ba’i bar// rtag pa dang ni mi gdung dang// bsil ba dang ni gcig pa dang// bde ba dang ni dri med dang//* |292| *dga’ ba dang ni yid dga’ ba// ‘di ni bde chen ro myang brgyad//* (*Dvitiyakrama*, verses 289d-293b). The context of this passage in the *Dvitiyakrama*, just after a description of post-initiatory practices, makes clear that this is the context in which the full realization described in the passage will take place. See also *Sukusuma*, D 128a.1-4; P 153a.1-6. Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* mentions both the “actual” and the “example wisdom” in commenting on an earlier passage from the section of the *Dvitiyakrama* on the third initiation, which has been incorporated into many later liturgies as part of the *vidyāvratā* ritual. The lines from the *Dvitiyakrama* state: “Thus, throughout endless *saṃsāra*/ You must never separate from her,” *de bas mtha’ med ‘khor ba’i bar// khyod kyis ‘di dang bral mi bya//* |89| (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 89cd). Vaidyapāda comments: **You must never separate from her** means that since she is the seal of the perfection of wisdom you must examine the actual and the example wisdom together with her in order that the continuity of wisdom is not severed.” *khyod kyis ‘di dang ‘bral mi bya/ zhes pa ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i phyag rgya bas na de dang lhan cig tu mngon sum dang dpe’i ye shes brtag par bya ba ste/ ye shes rgyun mi ‘chad pa’i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106a. 3; P 107b.4-5). While this passage could be understood to refer to the “example wisdom” of the third initiation and the “actual wisdom” of the fourth, as would be common in the later tradition, given the passage in the *Dvitiyakrama* just cited that contrasts the remaining in the three blisses “in the manner of an example” in the third initiation with their full attainment in post initiatory practice—rather than with their direct experience in “the fourth”—I would suggest that it makes more sense to read Vaidyapāda’s comments about the “example wisdom” and “actual wisdom” in a similar way. This is especially the case since I have thus far not seen any indication of such a relationship between the third initiation and “the fourth” evidenced elsewhere in Buddhajñānapāda’s or Vaidyapāda’s writings. The question, though, should remain an open one, as I have not read all of Vaidyapāda’s *oeuvre*.

¹⁴¹ *Sukusuma*, D 128a.1-4; P 153a.1-6. Vaidyapāda here links bliss with two of the seven yogas, middling bliss with two, and the cessation of bliss with one. He does not specify which yogas are linked to the different blisses. He makes this same link in his *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* (D 58a.1), and there also notes that the remaining two of the seven yogas pertain to all three blisses, but in that statement he also does not identify which of the yogas pertain to which of the blisses. I imagine that this point is clarified in the *Yogasapta*, but did not yet have the opportunity to check this.

(*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 86); that what is experienced in the third initiation is “bliss,” “wisdom,” (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 124), and the “perfection stage” itself (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 125), which as we have seen in Chapter Six, Buddhajñānapāda repeatedly equates with suchness itself; and even that the *dharmakāya* is experienced briefly during the non-initiatory contexts of falling asleep, fainting, yawning, and during intercourse (*Dvitiyakrama*, verse 355), though Vaidyapāda is careful to specify that it is not recognized in those moments due to lack of oral instructions from a guru. Thus, I still contend that for Buddhajñānapāda what is experienced in the third initiation with the guidance of the guru’s oral instructions (and therefore as part of, or by means of “the fourth,”) is nothing other than a direct glimpse of the result of awakening itself, but an experience that is brief, and therefore must be cultivated and stabilized through training in the practices of the perfection stage, in order that it is fully realized during post-initiatory practice.

It is also worth emphasizing, I think, that despite the fact that I believe “the fourth”—in the sense of the bestowal of an oral instruction on the suchness of the seven yogas by the guru to the disciple in the context of the third initiation—to have been a feature of Buddhajñānapāda’s own system, it is clear that Buddhajñānapāda, at least, did not understand this to be a separate initiation. As I have shown above, he does appear to separate out this verbal communication of suchness as an important aspect within the initiatory context, but even though it seems likely that this instruction was referred to as “the fourth” in his lifetime (though, again, this term does not appear in his extant writings), such an oral instructions was, for him, still intimately connected with, and not fully separated out from, the third initiation. In the concluding section of the *Dvitiyakrama*, Buddhajñānapāda includes precisely three verses that summarize the three initiations; there is no fourth verse representing a fourth initiation, and the term “great oral instruction” (*man ngag chen po*) is included in the verse on the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*. These three verses, which make reference to the three initiations, the *kalaśābhiṣeka* (including the *ācāryābhiṣeka*), the *guhyaḥbhiṣeka*, and the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*, respectively, in the form of a dedication read:

When he has been cleansed and sprinkled and made pure, and thus become a great *ācārya*
 Who holds all of the tantras, and brings others to connect with all tantras,¹⁴²
 And having perfectly realized the first stage and purified all stains,
 May the yogin become a suitable vessel for illusory wisdom!¹⁴³ |395|
 Through respectfully [serving at] the feet of a compassionate guru
 And by means of that which has the rabbit-holder’s form,¹⁴⁴ may one’s mindstream be
 perfectly ripened
 So that the field is purified,¹⁴⁵ and one perfectly realizes the reality of phenomena to be
 illusory and the like:

¹⁴² Vaidyapāda here specifies that all the tantras refers to “the Kriyā, Cārya, Yoga and Yoganiruttara mantras and tantras” (*bya ba dang / spyod pa dang/ rnal ‘byor dang/ rnal ‘byor bla na med pa’i sngags dang rgyud*) (*Sukusuma*, D 138b.3; P 167a.2-3)

¹⁴³ Here Vaidyapāda associates the vessel mentioned here with the vase (*kalaśa*) initiation, and identifies this passage as referring to the receiving of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* (*Sukusuma*, D 138b.4). The next two verses refer to the *guhya*- and *prajñājñānābhiṣekas*, respectively.

¹⁴⁴ This is a reference to the moon, and therefore a metaphor for the *bindu* of *bodhicitta*.

¹⁴⁵ I believe this is yet another instance in which Buddhajñānapāda takes a Mahāyāna concept—here the concept of *zhing sbyang ba*, the “cultivation/purification of the [buddha]field,” and reenvisions it according to a tantric paradigm. Vaidyapāda explains the *zhing* here as referring to the aggregates of the yogin himself (*Sukusuma*, D 138b.6-7). Thus the field that is purified here is indeed the body of the yogin himself. This is an internalization of the concept of the purification of the field, directing it towards the locus of the yogin’s body—the macrocosm having become microcosm. This supports Jacob Dalton’s (2004) analysis of the interiorization of ritual during precisely this period.

In this way may all beings, like Maitreya and others, arrive [in that state]!¹⁴⁶ |396|
Through the blessings of the *sahaja* [*ācārya* and] the great compassionate revered
master,¹⁴⁷

[One] encounters bliss, through which one [realizes] the undeciving truth, just as it is,
The supreme, great pure essence of all things, the drop which is the sixteenth part,
Achieved through resting,¹⁴⁸ the great instruction —may you come to encounter this!
|397|¹⁴⁹

Initiation in the Early Jñānapāda School: Concluding Reflections

While further study of Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings (as well as those of other direct disciples of Buddhajñānapāda, like Dīpaṃkarabhadra) will certainly reveal more about initiation in the early Jñānapāda tradition, this brief and preliminary study of initiation in their writings indicates that in Buddhajñānapāda’s system of tantric initiation, the details of which are made clearer in Vaidyapāda’s writings, we find not only an early presentation of the *guhyābhiṣeka* and the *prajñājñānābhiṣekas*, but also an early instance of the ritual that eventually came to be known as the “fourth initiation,” but at this time seems to have been referred to more commonly simply as “the fourth,” and to have still been very closely connected with the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*. Vaidyapāda’s list in the *Sukusuma* of Buddhajñānapāda’s compositions, in fact references a work of Buddhajñānapāda’s called *The Method for Engaging in the Fourth* (*bzhi pa la ‘jug pa’i thabs*). Most unfortunately this work seems not to be extant in either its original Sanskrit nor in Tibetan translation (as we saw in Chapter One, many of the works in this list *are* extant), but the possibility that Buddhajñānapāda may have composed a work on “the fourth” remains a very interesting one. Despite the fact that this work is not extant, Vaidyapāda does seem to be quite a reliable witness of Buddhajñānapāda’s system, and I see little reason to doubt him with respect to his list of Buddhajñānapāda’s compositions. Yet, the fact remains that we have no reference at all in any of Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving writings to the use of that term. And despite the fact that in his *Yogasapta* Vaidyapāda is careful not to describe “the fourth” as an initiation, there are indications that already by Vaidyapāda’s time the term “the fourth initiation,” rather than just “the fourth,” had already begun to be used. As I noted above, in his *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*, a commentary on Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *Maṇḍalavidhi*, Vaidyapāda makes a brief reference to the bestowal of a “precious fourth initiation” (*dbang bskur ba rin po che bzhi pa*) consisting of the guru’s oral instructions with respect to the union of the third initiation.¹⁵⁰ If we take seriously Vaidyapāda’s claim that Buddhajñānapāda himself

¹⁴⁶ This line is a bit grammatically unclear. Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that the basic sense is the aspiration for all beings to follow in Maitreya’s footsteps (Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communication, March 2016).

¹⁴⁷ Vaidyapāda explains that this refers to the causal guru, which in this system is the guru from whom one receives initiation and instruction (*Sukusuma*, D 139a.1-2).

¹⁴⁸ Vaidyapāda clarifies that it is “attained through resting” since it is encountered through the winds resting in the central channel (*Sukusuma*, D 139a.3-4).

¹⁴⁹ *blugs dang gtor dang dag par byas pas slob dpon cher ‘gyur te// thams cad kun kyi rgyud ‘dzin gzhan rnam rgyud kun la sbyor ba’i// dang po’i rim pa rab rtogs dri ma rnam ni dag byas te// ye shes sgyu ma’i snod du rung bar rnal ‘byor de ‘gyur shog// |395| snying rje ldan pa’i bla ma’i zhabs la gus par rab ldan pas// ri bong ‘dzin pa’i gzugs kyi rang rgyud rab tu smin byas te// zhing dag byas pas chos kun sgyu sogs don du rab rtogs nas// byams pa la sogs bzhin du sems can kun gyis ‘gro bar shog// |396| lhan cig byed pas byin brlabs rje btsun thugs rje chen po yis// dga’ ba brnyed pas chos kun dag pa’i ngo bo chen po mchog// ji bzhin gnas pa’i don la mi slu bcu drug thig le cha// ngal gso las thob man ngag chen po rab tu rnyed par shog// |397|* (*Dvīṭyākrama*, verses 395-97).

¹⁵⁰ *de nas des rgyas btob nas dbang bskur ba rin po che bzhi pa* (pa) P, D om.) *bla ma’i man ngag gis mkha’ gnyis kyi sbyor ba’i bshad pa sbyin par bya ste/* (*Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*, D 211b.3-4; P 539b.6-7).

wrote a text on “the fourth,” then we can say that there seem to be, in the early 9th century, a circle of texts around Buddhajñānapāda, Vaidyapāda, and the *Samājottara* in which the term “the fourth” was common parlance; in the communities using these texts we presumably also find the practice of the bestowal of this essential oral instruction closely connected with the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*. The observations on the topic of “the fourth” and its status in the early Jñānapāda tradition that I have set forth here are, however, far from conclusive, and a more extensive examination of Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings on this topic will surely reward further study.

Buddhajñānapāda was writing in a vibrant time for tantric Buddhist traditions, when the higher initiations had been newly added to the set of Yoga tantra initiations in order to prepare practitioners for the second stage of tantric practice. As we have seen, his writings provide us an early window into the initiatory sequences for the second and third initiations, and even a glimpse of what came to be known as “the fourth,” though there we need to turn to Vaidyapāda’s works for more clarification, and the topic still deserves further study. What these writings do suggest, however, is that already by Buddhajñānapāda’s time—the late 8th and early 9th centuries—the basic features of the initiatory sequence that would characterize tantric Buddhism all the way through its late period in India were already in place, even if certain aspects had yet to be fully fleshed out, as it were, into their more mature forms. As I have noted, the material that I have presented in this chapter constitutes just a preliminary inquiry into this topic. A more thorough study of initiation in Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, and perhaps even more so a careful study Vaidyapāda’s and Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s works on initiation, will certainly shed more light on initiation in the early Jñānapāda School, and indeed on the development of tantric Buddhist initiatory practices on the whole.

Conclusion

Chapter Eight Buddhajñānapāda and Beyond: Buddhajñānapāda's Thought Moving into the Later Tradition

The dharma taught by the buddhas
Abides authentically in two stages:
The generation stage
And the perfection stage.
-Buddhajñānapāda, *Muktilaka*

The dharma taught by the vajra-possessors
Is taught authentically in two stages:
The generation stage
And likewise the perfection stage.
-*Samājottara*

As we have seen in the earlier chapters, the 8th and 9th centuries marked a period of creativity and development in which new methods and techniques found their way into tantric Buddhism, and the practitioners and exegetes of the time incorporated these into the already rich tapestry of rituals and doctrines pertaining to that tradition. Buddhajñānapāda appears to have been at the forefront of many of these developments, as he set forth an integrative system of tantric theory and practice inspired not only by his many human teachers, but also by a vision of Mañjuśrī himself, whose instructions, delivered during their visionary encounter in a forest near Vajrāsana, constitute the core of Buddhajñānapāda's practice tradition. The ideas and practices found in Buddhajñānapāda's writings would go on to influence and inspire the tantric Buddhist tradition as it continued to develop in India and spread to other regions of Asia. In this final chapter I would like to look briefly to some of the pathways through which his thought spread and influenced later tantric traditions. A comprehensive study of that influence would certainly require more than a short chapter; here I will just focus on the relationship of Buddhajñānapāda's writings with what I believe to be one of the earliest vehicles by means of which his thought made its way into later tantric traditions: the *Samājottara*. In earlier chapters, I have already referenced a number of instances in which it appears that Buddhajñānapāda's writings have influenced the *Samājottara* rather than the other way around, and here I will provide some of the evidence behind those claims. I have not been able to complete a full study of the *Samājottara*, which I imagine would likely turn up further evidence of this relationship (and could, of course, turn up evidence contrary to what I present here!).¹ Nonetheless, I will examine in this chapter several passages that I believe suggest that Buddhajñānapāda's works likely preceded, and indeed influenced, the *Samājottara*.

The Samājottara: The "Eighteenth Chapter" of the Guhyasamāja-tantra

The *Samājottara* is widely known as the eighteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, though it appears to have first circulated separately from the seventeen chapters of the *Guhyasamāja* root tantra, and was only later appended as its final chapter.² To wit, the *Samājottara* itself is comprised of a series of questions posed by a group of bodhisattvas to all the *tathāgatas* that address a number of topics presented in the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. In their

¹ I am currently preparing a translation of the *Samājottara* for the 84000, Translating the Words of the Buddha project, and hope to complete that translation and study of the *Samājottara* in the coming months.

² The first to have made this observation seems to have been Matsunaga (1977b, 116).

answers to these questions, the *tathāgatas* reference the first seventeen chapters of the root tantra by their chapter numbers,³ and the *Samājottara* even appears to refer to itself as an *uttaratantra*, a “supplementary tantra,” to the *Guhyasamāja* tantra.⁴ The text also very much appears to have been understood by Indian commentators as a separate work from the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra*; among the sixteen extant Indic⁵ commentaries on the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* of which I am aware, eight address only the root tantra (chapters 1-17), while four are dedicated exclusively to the *Samājottara*, and four address all eighteen chapters in a single commentary.⁶ However, all of the commentaries that address *both* the root tantra and the *Samājottara* together make a clear break between their comments on the two, and use the terms “root tantra” (*rtsa ba’i rgyud*) and “supplementary tantra” (*rgyud phyi ma*) to distinguish the two sections. Two of the commentaries that address the full eighteen chapters even begin their comments on the *Samājottara* with a separate homage. What is more, the *Samājottara* is still preserved as an independent text in the Derge edition of the Tibetan Kangyur (where it is entitled the *Rgyud phyi ma* (Tōh. 443)), and the translation of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* preserved at Dunhuang lacks the *Samājottara*.⁷ Thus it seems clear both that the *Samājottara* was composed later than the

³ *Samājottara*, vv. 25-28. Technically speaking these verses only reference Chapters 2-17 by chapter number, but my point—that the text references the full root tantra—remains the same.

⁴ “That which is spoken in accordance with Bodhivajra/ Is called the supplementary tantra.” *sahoktir bodhivajrasya sottaram tantram isyate/ (Samājottara, 36cd)*. Vaidyapāda explains: “Because of being said to be similar to the words that were spoken by Bodhicittavajra, who is the teacher in the context of the root tantra, [this] is called the supplementary tantra” *rtsa ba’i rgyud la ston pa byang chub kyi sems rdo rje yis gsungs pa’i tshig dang ‘dra bar gsungs pas de rgyud phyi mar ‘dod ces te/ (Samyagvyākaraṇa, D 184b.6-7)*.

⁵ The commentary by Viśvamitra (Tōh. 1844) is included in the Tibetan canon as a translation from the Sanskrit, but several of its features have led me to conclude that it is mostly likely a Tibetan composition. In addition to lacking both a Sanskrit title at the beginning and a translator’s colophon at the end (which would not in and of itself preclude its being an Indic text), the commentary, which deals only with the *Samājottara* and not with the root tantra, is nearly twice the length of most Indic commentaries on the tantra and shows a number of linguistic features that I believe could only have arisen in an indigenous Tibetan composition commenting on a Tibetan translation of the *Samājottara*, rather than on the Sanskrit text.

⁶ The sixteen commentaries are: Nāgārjuna’s *Śrīguhyasamājanatrasya-tantraṭīkā* and his *Aṣṭādaśapaṭalavistaravyākhyā* (the two are preserved together as Tōh. 1784, though they present themselves as two separate texts with separate titles); Candrakīrti’s *Pradīpoddyotana-nāma-ṭīkā* (Tōh. 1785), which also survives in its original Sanskrit, Yaśobhadra’s *Sarvaghyapradīpaṭīkā* (Tōh. 1787) (this commentary is sometimes attributed to Nāropa, but the colophon says Yaśobhadra); *Prasāntajñāna’s *Upadeśaniścaya-nāma-śrīguhyasamājavṛtti* (Tōh. 1843); Viśvamitra’s **Śrīguhyasamājanatropadeśasāgarabindu* (Tōh. 1844); Thagana’s *Śrīguhyasamājanatraparivaraṇa* (Tōh. 1845); Cilupa’s *Ratnavṛkṣa-nāma-rahasyasamājavṛtti* (Tōh. 1846); Jayadatta *Śrīguhyasamājanatrapañjikā* (Tōh. 1847); Vimalagupta’s *Śrīguhyasamājālamkāra* (Tōh. 1848); Vimalagupta’s *Aṣṭādaśapaṭalavyākhyāna* (Tōh. 1849); Vaidyapāda’s *Samyagvidyākāra-nāma-uttaratantravyākhyāna* (Tōh. 1850); Ratnākaraśānti’s *Kusumāñjaliguhyasamājanibandha* (Tōh. 1851); *Pramuditākaravarman’s *Śrīguhyasamājanatrarājaṭīkā-candraprabhā* (Tōh. 1852); Vajrahāsa’s *Tantrarājaśrīguhyasamājāṭīkā* (Tōh. 1909); Vilāsavajra’s **Guhyasamājanatranidānagurūpadeśabhāṣya* (Tōh. 1910); Smṛtijñānakīrti’s *Śrīguhyasamājanatrarājavṛtti* (Tōh. 1914); and Ānandagarbha’s *Śrīguhyasamājapañjikā* (Tōh. 1917). Of these sixteen the commentaries by Nāgārjuna (he wrote two; one on the root tantra and one just on the *Samājottara*), Candrakīrti, Prasāntajñāna, Cilupa, Vimalagupta (he also wrote two separate commentaries, one on the root tantra and another just on the *Samājottara*), Pramuditākaravarman, Vajrahāsa and Ānandagarbha address only the root tantra (chapters 1-17); the commentaries by Nāgārjuna, Viśvamitra, Vimalagupta, Vaidyapāda are dedicated exclusively to the *Samājottara*, and those by Thagana, Jayadatta, Ratnākaraśānti, and Smṛtijñānakīrti address all eighteen chapters in a single commentary.

⁷ Regarding the *Samājottara*’s translation into Tibetan, while the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* was translated during the early translation period, it appears that the *Samājottara* was not translated until the later translation period. The *Rnying ma rgyud ‘bum* translation of the *Samājottara* states, confusingly, that it was translated by the translators Buddhaguhya, who lived in the 8th century, and Drogmi Palgyi Yeshe (**Brog mi dpal gyi ye shes*) who lived in the 11th—while the translation of the *Samājottara* preserved in the Derge Kangyur states that it was translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rinchen Zangpo (*Rin chen bzang po*) (958-1055), of the later translation period.

Guhyasamāja-tantra and with reference to it, and that even after the *Samājottara* was appended to the root tantra it was considered a separate but connected work by Indian commentators.⁸ What is unclear, however, is how long of a period passed between the circulation of the complete root tantra and the circulation of the *Samājottara*. The evidence that I will present below suggests that this may not have been a very long period. The root *Guhyasamāja-tantra* is known to have reached its final form in the last half of the 8th century, and I believe the *Samājottara* likely began to circulate in the early to mid 9th century, perhaps some time between 830-850.

Relating Buddhajñānapāda's Works and the Samājottara

Though Matsunaga has argued convincingly that even the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra* appears to have compositional layers,⁹ Buddhajñānapāda seems to have known the full *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, as he incorporates several verses from the seventeenth and final chapter of the tantra into the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.¹⁰ Importantly, these verses from Chapter Seventeen of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* are adopted quite faithfully—that is, without any alteration—into Buddhajñānapāda's *sādhana*.¹¹ However, while it thus seems that he knew the full *Guhyasamāja* root tantra, there is no clear evidence in Buddhajñānapāda's writings that he knew the *Samājottara*. In fact, a careful comparison of several passages in his writings with parallel passages in the *Samājottara* seems to show that Buddhajñānapāda's writings likely preceded that tantra.

The first piece of evidence for this relationship is a passage in the *Muktītilaka* that is parallel with the important verse from the *Samājottara* distinguishing the two stages of tantric practice.¹² Harunaga Isaacson has identified the verse in the *Samājottara* as the scriptural *locus classicus* of the two stages—which, even if I am correct that the *Muktītilaka*'s verse is earlier, remains the case, as the *Muktītilaka* is, of course, an authored work rather than a scriptural one.¹³ Isaacson has further remarked on the undoubtedly intentional parallels between the *Samājottara* verse and Nāgārjuna's well-known verse from the *Mūlamadhyāmakakārikās* that sets forth the distinction between the relative and ultimate truths.¹⁴ If we accept Isaacson's suggestion that the author(s) of the verse on the two stages were consciously evoking Nāgārjuna's statement about the two truths, as I believe we should, a comparison with the verse from the *Mūlamadhyāmakakārikās* while keeping this point in mind can provide a small clue that suggests

⁸ Perhaps the more interesting question is not whether it was originally or continued to be considered a separate work, both of which seem clearly to be the case, but how the *Samājottara* gained the distinction of being appended to the root tantra as a final chapter. There are quite a number of supplementary or explanatory tantras of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, but the *Samājottara* is the only one that came to be considered, in some way, a part of the tantra itself.

⁹ Matsunaga 1980. I discussed this point also in Chapter One.

¹⁰ Matsunaga 1980, xxv.

¹¹ See *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, 17.72-75 and *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, 46-49. The Sanskrit for these verses in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* fortunately survives and is edited in Kano 2014, allowing for a careful comparison of the verses in question.

¹² The argument about these verses that I present here is based on a paper that I gave some years ago at a conference at UC Santa Barbara (C. Dalton 2014).

¹³ Isaacson 2002a, 468-9.

¹⁴ *ibid.* Building on Isaacson's work, Christian Wedemeyer (2007, 40-41) has interpreted the parallelism between Nāgārjuna's verse and the *Samājottara*'s as an attempt to link the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* with the Madhyamaka tradition and its commentators, a central project of the Ārya School of *Guhyasamāja* exegesis, which is generally recognized by scholars to be later than the Jñānapāda School. Jacob Dalton (2004, 24) also suggests that the *Samājottara* may have been a later composition associated with the Ārya School and its legitimizing project. However, given the presence of this verse in Buddhajñānapāda's *Muktītilaka*, and the close association of the *Samājottara* with Buddhajñānapāda's writings, this seems unlikely to be the case.

a philological basis for establishing Buddhajñānapāda's verse about the two stages as closer to Nāgārjuna's text, and thus potentially earlier than the *Samājottara*'s parallel verse. Let us take a look at all three verses. The Sanskrit is extant for both Nāgārjuna's and the *Samājottara*'s verses, but with the verse from the *Muktilaka* we have to make do with only the Tibetan translation. I provide the Tibetan translations of all three verses here, though, as an additional tool in our comparative endeavor. Here is Nāgārjuna's verse on the two truths:

dve satye samupāśritya buddhānām dharmadeśanā/
lokasamvṛtisatyam ca satyam ca paramārthataḥ//¹⁵

sangs rgyas rnams kyis chos bstan pa//
bden pa gnyis la yang dag brten//
'jig rten kun rdzob bden pa dang//
dam pa'i don gyi bden pa'o//¹⁶

The buddhas taught the dharma in reliance upon the two truths
The relative truth of the world and the ultimate truth.

Here is the verse from the *Muktilaka* on the two stages:

sangs rgyas rnams kyis chos bstan pa//
rim pa gnyis la yang dag gnas//
bskyed pa yi ni rim nyid dang//
rdzogs pa'i rim pa kho na'o//¹⁷

The buddhas taught the dharma
[As] abiding in two stages:
The generation stage
And the perfection stage.

And here is the *Samājottara*'s verse on the two stages:

kramadvayam upāśritya vajriṇām dharmadeśanā/
kramam autpattikaṃcaiva kramam autpannakam tathā//¹⁸

rdo rje can gyis chos bstan pa//
rim pa gnyis la yang dag brten//
bskyed pa yi ni rim nyid dang//
de bzhin rdzogs pa'i rim pa'o//¹⁹

The vajra-holders taught the dharma in reliance upon the two stages
The generation stage and the perfection stage.

¹⁵ I cite Nāgārjuna's verse as given in Isaacson 2002a, 469.

¹⁶ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, D 14b.7-15a.1.

¹⁷ *Muktilaka*, D 52.1-2; P 61b.1-2.

¹⁸ I here cite the verse as provided by Isaacson (2002a), which he has emended slightly from Matsunaga's edition.

¹⁹ *Rgyud phyi ma*, D 152.2

An examination of these three verses shows that there are essentially two places where they differ significantly from one another—apart, of course, from the fact that Nāgārjuna’s verse is about the two truths while the later verses concern the two stages of tantric practice. One is in the verb used in the first *pāda* of the Sanskrit verse (which is rendered, in all three cases, as the second *pāda* in the Tibetan translation). In Nāgārjuna’s verse the verb is *samupāśritya*, and in the *Samājottara*’s verses, *upāśritya*. These verbs are synonymous—both mean “rely,” and are even translated identically into Tibetan as *yang dag brtan*; the variation in the Sanskrit appears to be based just on metrical considerations. The *Muktilaka* verse varies slightly here, using the verb *yang dag gnas*, “abide,” rather than *yang dag brten*, “rely.” We unfortunately do not have the original Sanskrit of this verse, but I suspect that *yang dag gnas* may actually be a translation of *samupāśritya* (the longer verb would be necessary here for metrical purposes), given that this verb can also mean “to abide in.”²⁰ Even if that is not the case, and if the *Muktilaka* did use a different verb here, this minor difference does not significantly alter the meaning of the passage.²¹

The second difference that we notice in the verses pertains to who it is that taught the dharma in terms of the two truths or the two stages. Buddhajñānapāda’s verse follows Nāgārjuna’s verse in its use of the subject “the buddhas” (*buddhānām, sangs rgyas rnam*) rather than the “vajra-possessors” (*vajriṇam, rdo rje can*) mentioned in the *Samājottara* verse. This difference is more significant and, supposing that one of the verses on the two stages is directly derived from the other,²² it would suggest that the *Samājottara* verse derives from Buddhajñānapāda’s, and not the other way around. Assuming that the original intent of the author(s) of this verse was to evoke Nāgārjuna’s words, leaving “the buddhas” as the agent of the dharma teaching, is significant. Moreover, making the change of the agent to the “vajra-possessors” can be seen as an increased “tantrification” of the verse. If one of the two verses on the two stages of tantric practice derives from the other, it is unlikely that the derivative verse would change the agent of the proclamation about the two stages *from* “the vajra-possessors” *to* “the buddhas;” the other way around is much more likely.

Additionally, the *Samājottara* is a tantra, meaning that it is a scriptural source, considered within the tradition to be *buddhavacana*, the word of the buddhas, and therefore not something that a tantric exegete would be likely to willfully alter. Buddhajñānapāda does not hesitate to incorporate lines and verses from tantras directly into his writings without attribution. We see instances of the incorporation of lines from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*²³ and the

²⁰ While *yang dag brten* is certainly a more expected translation of (*sam*)*upāśritya*, the *Yogācārabhūmi* attests to *yang dag par gnas pa* as a translation of *samāśraya*, which derives from the same verbal root, √śri, as *samupāśritya*. Thanks to Ryan Damron for pointing out this attestation to me.

²¹ The fact that this difference is so minor is more difficult to show in the English translation, because the use of the verb *gnas* has forced me to change the structure of the English in a way that makes this verse appear less parallel than it actually is. That is partly why I provided the Tibetan translation—even someone who does not read Tibetan can nonetheless see the parallels between the verses more clearly there than in my English translations. If indeed, as I suspect, *yang dag gnas* is translating *samupāśritya*, the English translation of the first two lines of the *Muktilaka* would be precisely parallel with those lines from the *Mūlamadhyaṃikakārikās*; they would then read: “The buddhas taught the dharma/ In reliance upon the two stages.”

²² It is, of course, possible that both the *Muktilaka* and the *Samājottara* are relying upon an earlier source—either written or oral—that was itself based on Nāgārjuna’s verse. While this is not impossible, it seems preferable to try to work out the relationship between the materials at hand without positing a third, no-longer-extant source. And, indeed, I think we can presume it to be likely that one of these two verses on the two stages is based upon the other, and that whichever was the earlier of the two—which I take to be Buddhajñānapāda’s—was composed based on Nāgārjuna’s verse.

²³ See *Dvīṭyākrama* verses 50, 125, and 313 and my notes on these verses for the incorporation of lines from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*.

*Guhyasamāja-tantra*²⁴ directly into the *Dvīṭyākrama* and the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, respectively. What Buddhajñānapāda does not do, however, is *change* those lines or verses that he incorporates—he may add to their meaning by preceding or following them with a line of his own that provides a different context than the one from the original tantra, but he does not alter the lines that he incorporates directly from these tantras.²⁵ This fact, combined with the fact that there *is* a significant variant in the verses on the two stages in the *Muktītilaka* and the *Samājōttara*, suggests that it is unlikely that the verse on the two stages in the *Muktītilaka* represents an instance where Buddhajñānapāda incorporated a verse from a tantra he already knew into his writings. Rather, it seems much more likely that the *Samājōttara*’s verse came about on the basis of Buddhajñānapāda’s.

Moreover, there is another passage in his *oeuvre* suggesting that Buddhajñānapāda may have enjoyed composing verses that echoed important verses from earlier non-tantric authored works, but with some modifications that made the verses more tantric. In his *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*, Buddhajñānapāda writes, with respect to the practice of deity yoga:

*tasmān nirastasaṃkalpaṃ samantaspharaṇatviṣaṃ/
Samantabhadram ātmānaṃ bhāvayann eva bodhibhāḥ/*²⁶

Therefore, he who meditates upon himself as Samantabhadra, shining with full radiance,
Having abandoned concepts, he *alone* partakes in awakening.

This seems to be an intentional echo of the first verse of Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika*:

*vidhūtakaḥpanājālagambhīrodāramūrtaye/
namah samantabhadrāya samantasphuraṇatviṣe/*²⁷

Homage to Samantabhadra who shines with full radiance
And whose form, vast and deep, has cast off the net of thought.

While the parallels here are not quite as striking as they are with Nāgārjuna’s verse above, it is nonetheless clear that they are intentional.²⁸ Again, this suggests that Buddhajñānapāda may have had a proclivity for echoing earlier authored verses, with modification. Combined with the other evidence given above, this therefore makes it even more likely that Buddhajñānapāda himself composed the verse on the two stages of tantric practice on the basis of Nāgārjuna’s verse.

²⁴ As I noted above, verses 46-49 of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, faithfully incorporates verses 72-75 from Chapter Seventeen of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. The Sanskrit for these verses in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* fortunately survives and is edited in Kano 2014, allowing for a careful comparison of the verses in question.

²⁵ See also, for example, Vaidyapāda’s incorporation of the verse on the three initiations (and the fourth!) from the *Samājōttara* into his *Yogasapta*. Vaidyapāda incorporates the *Samājōttara*’s verse wholesale, but then *adds* a final *pāda* which clarifies how he understands the final *pāda* of the *Samājōttara*’s verse. Again, he does not alter the verse from the tantra itself. *dbang ni rnam pa gsum dag tu// rgyud ‘di las ni rab tub shad// |6| bum pa’i dbang ni dang po ste// gnyis pa la ni gsang ba’i dbang// gsum pa shes rab ye shes dbang// de ltar de bzhin bzhi pa yang// bla ma’i bka’ las shes par bya// | 7|* (*Yogasapta*, D 70a.3-4; P 103b.1-2)

²⁶ Szántó unpublished, 147. I am grateful to Péter Szántó for sharing his draft Sanskrit edition of the *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra*.

²⁷ *Pramāṇavārttika*, 1.1.

²⁸ I am grateful to Harunaga Isaacson for drawing my attention to the echoes of the *Pramāṇavārttika* in this verse.

Another verse from Buddhajñānapāda’s writings, this time from the *Dvītyākrama*, has a parallel in the *Samājottara*, and yet again a comparison of the two suggests that Buddhajñānapāda’s is likely earlier. This verse occurs in the section of the *Dvītyākrama* on the third initiation, and in the section of the *Samājottara* on the ritual for the *vidyāvratā*.²⁹ Again we have only the Tibetan translation of the *Dvītyākrama* verse to compare with the Sanskrit from the *Samājottara*. The verse from the *Dvītyākrama* reads:

gzhan kyis sangs rgyas mi nus pa//
 bu mo ‘di ni yang dag mchog//
 de bas mtha’ med ‘khor ba’i bar//
 khyod kyis ‘di dang bral mi bya// |89|

Nothing else can bring about buddhahood
 This girl is genuinely supreme
 Thus, throughout endless *samsāra*
 You must never separate from her.” |89|

The parallel passage from the *Samājottara* has an intervening two *pādas* between the first and second half of the *Dvītyākrama*’s version of the verse:

Nānyopāyena buddhatvaṃ tasmād vidyām imāṃ varāṃ// |125|
 Advayāḥ sarvadharmās tu dvayabhāvena lakṣitāḥ/
 Tasmād viyogaḥ saṃsāre na kāryo bhavatā sadā// |126|

Nothing else can bring about buddhahood, therefore this consort (*vidyā*) is the most excellent.
 All phenomena are nondual but they are marked by duality
 Therefore you must never separate from her [throughout] *samsāra*.

As we can see here, apart from the addition of the two intervening *pādas* on nonduality, the main difference between the *Dvītyākrama*’s verse and the one in the *Samājottara*, is, like in the passage we examined above on the two stages of tantric practice, simply the use of a different noun. (The other, quite minor, differences are, I believe, easily attributable simply to the translation of the verse from Sanskrit into Tibetan.) The *Dvītyākrama* mentions a “girl” (*bu mo*, **kanyā*³⁰) who is genuinely supreme, while the *Samājottara* uses the term “consort” (*vidyā*).³¹ While the latter is no doubt related to the fact that these verses in the *Samājottara* are part of the *tathāgatas*’ answer to a question about the *vidyāvratā*, the “consort observance,” posed by the *bodhisattvas* in the earlier part of the text,³² just like in the case of the use of “vajra-possessors” rather than “buddhas” in the verse we examined above, the use of the term “consort” (*vidyā*) rather than “girl” (**kanyā*) amounts to a sort of “tantrification” of the verse. As such, it is more likely that the “more tantric” version of the verse is the later of the two. Also, as we saw above,

²⁹ As we will recall from Chapter Seven, the *Dvītyākrama* adheres to the paradigm suggested by Wedemeyer (in his 2014 paper at Berkeley, an updated version of which is forthcoming for publication in 2019) in which the *vidyāvratā* is not separated out from, but occurs as an integral part of, the third initiation. The *Samājottara* follows the paradigm where the *vidyāvratā* constitutes a separate ritual.

³⁰ *Bu mo* is attested as a translation of *kanyā*. See Negi.

³¹ *Vidyā* literally means knowledge, but in tantric Buddhist texts it is frequently used as a term for the female consort. See Wedemeyer (forthcoming) for a helpful discussion of the development of the use of this term, especially with reference to the *vidyāvratā*.

³² “And likewise, what of the *vidyāvratā*?” *kathaṃ vidyāvratam tathā/ (Samājottara, 19b).*

if Buddhajñānapāda were incorporating a verse from a tantra that he knew, like in the case of the lines and verses he incorporates from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* and the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, he would be likely to do so faithfully, without making a change to the text. In this case, moreover, the presence of an intervening two *pādas* about the nondual nature of reality in the *Samājottara* also suggests that if one of these passages is based upon the other³³ the *Samājottara*'s passage is probably later than Buddhajñānapāda's, as it is unlikely that Buddhajñānapāda would incorporate only part of a scriptural passage, leaving out the middle two *pādas*.³⁴

A third piece of evidence that I believe suggests that Buddhajñānapāda was writing prior to the circulation of the *Samājottara* comes not in the form of a parallel passage, per se, but rather in the inclusion in Buddhajñānapāda's writings of only *part* of a set of practices that are listed in full in the *Samājottara*: the practices of the six-branch yoga (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*). I have already discussed this point in brief in Chapter Six, but I will review those arguments here. The *Samājottara* (vv. 141-154) appears to be the Buddhist *locus classicus* for the six-branch yoga, though versions on this system are found in many non-Buddhist traditions, as well.³⁵ Francesco Sferra has shown the importance of the *Samājottara*'s presentation of the six-branch yoga in later Buddhist tantric literature by demonstrating that those works frequently cite the *Samājottara* and invariably draw the list of six yogas from that source, even when they describe the actual practice techniques for the yogas differently than their presentation in the *Samājottara*.³⁶ Buddhajñānapāda's presentation in the *Dvitiyakrama* of the second of the three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage makes reference to just three—the third, fourth, and fifth—among these six yogas that are listed in the *Samājottara*, and refers to one of them by a different name than the standard term for that yoga used in the *Samājottara*. Given the popularity of the *Samājottara* as a source for these yogas that Sferra's work has demonstrated, it seems unlikely that Buddhajñānapāda would have taught only three of its six branches, which usually come as a full set, had he known *Samājottara*. The three are, however, referred to in the *Dvitiyakrama* as “branches,”—they are even once mentioned as a set, “the three branches”—which may suggest that Buddhajñānapāda was familiar with a larger set of practices to which they pertained. But the fact that he refers to the first of the three branches that are mentioned in his system (which corresponds with the third among the six branches according to the *Samājottara*) with the unusual term, the “branch of emptying” (*gtong pa'i yan lag*),³⁷ rather than the its more common name used in the *Samājottara* and later tantric literature, “breath control,” (*prāṇayāma*),³⁸

³³ That is, if they are not both drawing from some separate earlier source. Again, as I noted before, I believe it is better to try to understand the relationship of the sources that are available to us rather than to posit the existence of a theoretical third source.

³⁴ These verses are included in a number of later sources—they are part of the section from the *Dvitiyakrama* many verses from which, as I documented in Chapter Seven, have been incorporated into many tantric liturgies for the third initiation and/or the *vidyāvṛata*. Interestingly, most of the sources that cite this verse appear to follow the *Dvitiyakrama*, rather than the *Samājottara*, in the sense that they lack the two *pādas* on nonduality.

³⁵ Sferra 1990, 15.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ As I noted in Chapter Six, there appears to be some confusion with regard to the name of this branch in Buddhajñānapāda's system. While all of the available recensions of the *Dvitiyakrama* itself identify the practice as “the branch of emptying” (*stong pa'i yan lag*), Vaidyapāda *Sukusuma* reads “the branch of casting out” (*gtong pa'i yan lag*) (as does Vaidyapāda's *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā*, which also mentions the practice). Tāranātha's later commentary on the perfection stage practices of Buddhajñānapāda's system follows the *Dvitiyakrama* in reading *stong pa'i yan lag* for this practice—Tāranātha calls it the “branch of emptying which stops the breath” (*dbugs dgag stong pa'i yan lag*) (*Dpal grol ba'i thig le'i khrīd yig*, 247).

³⁸ I have already given in Chapter Six the reasons behind my identification of Buddhajñānapāda's “branch of emptying” (*gtong pa'i yan lag*) with the yoga of *prāṇayāma*, so I will not repeat them here.

suggests that he was unfamiliar with the *Samājottara* as a scriptural source. Had he known it, it seems quite likely that he would have chosen to hew to its terminology.

Possible Evidence to the Contrary

As far as I have been able to determine, there is but a single piece of evidence in his writings that might suggest that Buddhajñānapāda *did* know the *Samājottara*. That is a statement in the *Muktilaka* made in reference to the arising of the signs that come about during the practice of the perfection stage yoga of the secret *bindu*. Buddhajñānapāda writes:

Then, from the illuminated *bindu*,

Following the previous procedure emanate, absorb, and [then] hold.

When you reach this [realization]

The five [signs] described in the tantra[s?] will occur.³⁹

It is the final statement here, that mentions “the five signs described in the tantra[s?]” that might be interpreted as a reference to the *Samājottara*. These five signs that appear to the yogin as the elements dissolve into one another as a result of his perfection stage practices are not listed in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, but they are found in the *Samājottara*, and I am unfamiliar with their being set forth in a Buddhist tantra prior to the *Samājottara*. However, the five signs are also outlined in the *Dvītyākrama*, where they form part of Mañjuśrī’s instructions to Buddhajñānapāda on the practice of the perfection stage. The question, then, comes down to what Buddhajñānapāda meant here in the *Muktilaka* by “the tantra[s?]” Vaidyapāda seems to take this to refer to the *Samājottara*, or at least he explains it by citing the passage in the *Samājottara* that sets forth these five signs.⁴⁰ This is not surprising; we know that Vaidyapāda knew the *Samājottara*—he composed an entire commentary on it. We also know that Vaidyapāda seems to have a preference for citing the *Samājottara* over Buddhajñānapāda’s works in places where they have parallel content, and where we know that Vaidyapāda knew both texts, since he wrote commentaries on both. For example, Vaidyapāda cites the passage from the *Samājottara* on the two stages in his *Sukusuma* (a commentary on Buddhajñānapāda’s own *Dvītyākrama*!), even though we know that Vaidyapāda knew the *Muktilaka* passage on the two stages, since he also wrote a commentary on the *Muktilaka*.⁴¹ However, it makes sense that Vaidyapāda would give preference to a scriptural citation over a non-scriptural one when he had a choice between two passages with the same content. Therefore, even Vaidyapāda’s citation of the *Samājottara* in reference to Buddhajñānapāda’s statement about the “five signs described in the tantra[s?]” does not necessarily constitute evidence that the *Samājottara* was indeed Buddhajñānapāda’s referent here.

Were this passage from the *Muktilaka* the single indication of a relationship between Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and the *Samājottara*, I would indeed probably take the passage as a reference to the five signs as set forth in the *Samājottara*, specifically, and understand that text to be the referent of “the tantra[s?]” here. However, given the other evidence I have cited above suggesting that the *Samājottara* circulated only after the period when Buddhajñānapāda was writing—evidence that I myself, at least, find convincing—I believe it is unlikely that this

³⁹ *de la snang ba’i thigs pa las// gong gi rim pas spro bsdu bas// bzung ste de la reg ‘gyur bas// rgyud gsung lnga po yang dag ‘byung// (Muktilaka, D 49a.6; P 69a.4)*

⁴⁰ *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 53b.2-3.*

⁴¹ Vaidyapāda’s *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, though, makes no mention of the *Samājottara*’s parallel passage on the two stages in commenting on that passage in the *Muktilaka*. He simply introduces it by saying, “Now, in order to teach the distinction between the two stages he writes... **The buddhas taught the dharma...**” *da ni rim pa gnyis kyis dbye ba bstan par byas pa’i phyir sangs rgyas rnam kyis zhes pa la sogs pa’o// (Muktilaka-vyākhyāna, D 58b.2-3).*

reference to “the tantra[s?]” in the *Muktilaka* is, in fact, a reference to the *Samājottara*. I am at a loss, however, for providing a satisfying answer regarding the work to which Buddhajñānapāda may have been referring here.⁴²

Some Initial Conclusions

Despite this one perplexing passage from the *Muktilaka*, I still believe the preponderance of the evidence suggests clearly that Buddhajñānapāda did not know the *Samājottara* and that his writings preceded, and indeed influenced, the *Samājottara*. If true, this would give a rather narrow window for the circulation of that tantra, given that Vaidyapāda, who did know the *Samājottara*, was likely a direct disciple of Buddhajñānapāda’s. As I discussed in Chapter One, I believe that Vaidyapāda likely became Buddhajñānapāda’s disciple when the latter was already well on in years and Vaidyapāda was still young, since it seems that Vaidyapāda was also a disciple of some others among Buddhajñānapāda’s direct disciples, including Dīpaṃkarabhadra and perhaps also Praśāntamitra. Nonetheless, we are speaking of just a matter of decades in the early-to-mid part of the 9th century as a window for the initial circulation of the *Samājottara*, perhaps some time between 830 and 850.

If my contention that Buddhajñānapāda did not know the *Samājottara* is true, this would mean that many elements already found in his writings made their way into the later Buddhist tantric tradition through their articulation as *buddhavacana* in that tantra. This includes the two stages of tantric practice, the rituals for the *guhyābhiṣeka* and the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* (and for the *vidyāvrata*, for that ritual was separated out from the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* in the *Samājottara*), the practice of “the fourth,” and perhaps even the inclusion of the five signs in connection with perfection stage practice. I certainly do not mean to argue that all of these are Buddhajñānapāda’s own innovations, simply that they are elements that seem both not to be found in the extant tantric literature prior to his writings, and to have first entered Buddhist scripture in the *Samājottara*. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, I have not yet completed a study of the *Samājottara*. A full study of that work in comparison with Buddhajñānapāda’s writings will certainly turn up more evidence—one way or the other—on the relationship between the two. Nonetheless, I feel that the passages I have analyzed here provide enough evidence to essay these initial conclusions on the direction of influence, and to suggest that it was through the *Samājottara* that many important elements found in Buddhajñānapāda’s thought and ritual systems began to make their way onwards and outwards into the world of later Buddhist tantric systems.

⁴² Could it be that he is referring to Mañjuśrī’s speech as recorded in the *Dvītyākrama* itself as a “tantra”? This seems implausible, but perhaps not impossible?

Concluding Reflections

Through the blessings of the *sahaja ācārya* and the great compassionate revered master, one encounters bliss, through which undeceiving truth is realized, just as it is: the supreme, great pure essence of all things, the drop which is the sixteenth part, achieved through resting, the great instruction—may you come to encounter this!

-Buddhajñānapāda, *Dvītyākrama*

Over the course of these chapters we have met and gotten to know—at least a little bit—the yogin and tantric exegete Buddhajñānapāda, whose extraordinary autobiographical record in combination with his other surviving writings have enabled us to behold a much more intimate portrait of an 8th-9th century Indian figure than is ordinarily available to us, and to open a window into a period of tantric Buddhist history that has otherwise remained obscure. As we have seen, his life was both ordinary and extraordinary. Buddhajñānapāda's travels throughout the Indian subcontinent meeting and receiving instruction from different teachers and putting their teachings into practice hint at the perhaps ordinary life of a mendicant tantric Buddhist yogin of the time. However, his visionary encounter with his most exalted guru, who was none other than Mañjuśrī, and Buddhajñānapāda's recording and passing on in the *Dvītyākrama* of the instructions received from that master—within an autobiographical frame narrative, no less—indicate his life as something beyond the ordinary. Making use of the unique genre of a *mukhāgama* and recording Mañjuśrī's instructions directly as they were delivered, in Mañjuśrī's own words, allowed Buddhajñānapāda to set forth a system of doctrine and practice that essentially had scriptural legitimacy. Mañjuśrī's command to Buddhajñānapāda to compose further related works gave nearly that same seal of authenticity to the remainder of Buddhajñānapāda's *oeuvre*.

The contents of his writings, as we have seen, include many of the major doctrinal and ritual developments of the early period of what is often referred to as “late,” or “mature,” Indian Buddhist tantra, thus shining light on the still obscure period in which these traditions began to emerge. Aspects of the vocabulary, ideas, and ritual practices in his works show that Buddhajñānapāda was writing in an eclectic milieu in which he had contact with and knowledge of both non-Buddhist philosophical and religious systems, like the Sāṃkhya and Śaiva traditions, as well as secular traditions like that of *kāmasāstra*. Buddhajñānapāda's writings are among the early tantric works to place a strong emphasis on nondual wisdom, which came to hold a major doctrinal role in later tantric traditions. He gave the term a tantric resonance, describing it as the “wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous,” the empty aspect of the mind integrated with its expression as the illusory form of the deity. This nondual wisdom was, for Buddhajñānapāda, the very identity of the mind and of all phenomena, and even served as the source of the phenomenal world. Nondual wisdom, identified with the awakened state, suchness itself, was something that could be—and indeed had to be—“transferred” by a guru to his disciple during the higher tantric initiations, so that a disciple could experience it directly and cultivate it by means of yogic practice, in order to come to the final state of perfect awakening. Because of the unique methods that allowed the disciple to directly “receive,” during initiation, and train in suchness by means of the sexual yogas of the perfection stage, this second stage of Buddhist tantra was, for Buddhajñānapāda, a superior path that led to a result higher than that

attainable through the practice of the exoteric Mahāyāna, or even through the practice of the lower tantras. In advocating non-action, while simultaneously composing elaborate ritual liturgies for the lower stage of tantric practice, Buddhajñānapāda appears to have understood the path of non-action to pertain specifically to the perfection stage, in which the complex outer rituals of the earlier stage of tantric practice were set aside. However, he may also have been referencing the conceptual non-action of the “perfection stage of the perfection stage,” identified by Vaidyapāda with the “great perfection,” nonconceptual wisdom itself, free from any sort of activity or elaboration. Though the use of the term “the great perfection” (*rdzogs pa chen po*) in the Tibetan translations of his writings most likely does not represent Buddhajñānapāda’s use of a semantically equivalent Sanskrit term, many of the doctrinal claims in his works are indeed parallel with the doctrines evident in early works of the Great Perfection. His writings therefore represent an Indic system that accords in many ways with the early tradition of the Great Perfection that was emerging around the same time in Tibet.

As an early author to make the division of tantric practice into two stages, and perhaps the earliest to have composed still-extant manuals of practice for both, Buddhajñānapāda’s writings provide us an invaluable window into the early ritual articulations of both the generation and perfection stages. His generation stage *sādhana*s, the most important of which, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, also includes practices connected to the perfection stage, indicate that for Buddhajñānapāda the generation stage served both the function of achieving desired worldly aims, as well as the soteriological function of acting as a framework and support for the liberative practices of the perfection stage. A distinctive feature of the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, in which the constituent aspects of world and beings are purified through consecration in the *maṇḍala* and re-emerge in the form of *maṇḍala* deities indicates that Buddhajñānapāda not only employed generation stage *sādhana* in its usual function as a method of reconstructing personal identity in the purified form of the deity, but also as a ritual re-enactment of doctrines set forth in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* that viewed the entire phenomenal world as divine.

For Buddhajñānapāda, though, it was only through the yogas of the second stage, or the perfection stage—terms that he used synonymously with suchness itself—that a yogin could reach the final fruition of perfect awakening. The three *bindu* yogas of the perfection stage, trained in with a consort, were the means by which a practitioner of Buddhajñānapāda’s system of the perfection stage came to repeatedly experience the three blisses in sexual yogic practice, and therefore to repeatedly cultivate the nonconceptual experience of suchness itself, leading to final awakening. Several passages from Buddhajñānapāda’s writings on these perfection stage sexual yogic practices suggest that he was familiar with *kāmaśāstric* traditions, and the *Dvītyakrama*, in its discussion of the types of tantric consort, contains what appears to be the earliest instance in an extant Indian text of the classical four-fold typology of women so important in later *kāmaśāstra*. For a yogin who was not able to awaken in this lifetime by means of the perfection stage *bindu* yogas, Buddhajñānapāda’s system provides the “failsafe” option of the practice of *utkrānti*, the yogic ejection of consciousness at the moment of death.

Engaging in the liberative practices of the perfection stage, including the yoga of *utkrānti*, was only possible for a practitioner who had received the higher tantric initiations through which he was first introduced to the “suchness of the second stage” that was cultivated by means of perfection stage practice. These initiatory rituals themselves involved sexual practice, and therefore necessitated the participation of a consort. Buddhajñānapāda’s writings include early descriptions of the rituals for several of the higher initiations, including probably the earliest extant description of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, in which a yogic couple were introduced to the suchness of the perfection stage by means of sexual yogic practice conducted

under the tutelage of a guru who held the lineage of these special liberative oral instructions. Buddhajñānapāda's writings hint at the practice of bestowing a verbal instruction on suchness immediately after the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and Vaidyapāda's *Yogasapta* gives much more detail on this bestowal of what seems, at the time, to have been primarily referred to just as "the fourth," an instruction on the so-called seven yogas that constitute seven different aspects of the state of awakening. The experiences of these seven aspects during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* were intensified or stabilized through the sexual yogic practices of the perfection stage until, for a yogin who had progressed to the "third level" of post initiatory practice, they were fully realized in the moment of perfect awakening. In including the *guhyaḥbhīṣeka*, the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and quite possibly also "the fourth," Buddhajñānapāda's initiatory system already contained all of the main elements of the higher initiations that came to characterize the initiatory sequence of the "mature" form of late Indian tantric Buddhism.

This study of his writings and thought shows that Buddhajñānapāda was, I believe, an even more influential figure than has been heretofore acknowledged. In addition to the fact that his works serve as source texts for the Jñānapāda School of *Guhyasamāja* doctrine and practice, the early exemplars of many of the ritual practices and ideas found in his work seem to have formed the basis for their later iterations in quite a number of later systems of tantric practice. We see verses from his writings incorporated into no less than fourteen later tantric works, both authored works and scriptures, and in particular the ritual structures that appear in early forms in his writings are found throughout later tantric Buddhist literature. The *Samājottara*, it seems, may have been an early vehicle through which many of these ritual and practical frameworks made their way into the later tantric tradition.

Buddhajñānapāda's writings are therefore important both for showing us a picture of this unique individual, as well as giving us a window into his world—the world of Indian tantric Buddhism at the close of the 8th century and the opening of the 9th. Yet what I have been able to show here, both of the individual and of his world, is just a preliminary glimpse at both. As I have emphasized repeatedly throughout the dissertation, essentially every topic addressed here deserves further inquiry and analysis. As the first book-length study of Buddhajñānapāda's life, writings, and thought, what I have written here cannot be more than a first look into these matters, and it is my hope that this dissertation will serve as the basis for further study of Buddhajñānapāda and his *oeuvre*. There are a several specific points brought up in my study, however, that I would like to mention here as particularly worthy, or in need, of further research. I have only been able to barely touch on Buddhajñānapāda's philosophical perspectives, and these—especially when taking into consideration his non-tantric writings, which I have not considered at all here—certainly warrant further study. There are also surely other aspects of his doctrinal positions that I did not think to mention, as I only selected for discussion a few of the points that stood out to me, personally, as particularly interesting and worthy of comment. An inquiry into Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in relation to other early generation stage *sādhana*s, and indeed a study of the early development of *sādhana* as a *genre* would give scholars a much-enhanced perspective on tantric ritual. But it is particularly in terms of his perfection stage system and the related higher tantric initiations where I believe further study of Buddhajñānapāda's writings is needed. In trying to understand these practice systems, which—like all of the material studied in this dissertation—I wanted to present in the context in which they were understood in Buddhajñānapāda's own time, I strove not to be unduly influenced by the presentations of these systems according to the later tradition, in which they had certainly undergone some development and change. However, it has become increasingly clear to me that without reference to the later tradition we simply do not have enough materials to fully understand and appreciate these earlier traditions. Further study of these materials with more

reference to the later developments in perfection stage and initiatory practices will certainly shed further light on the early iterations of these practices and ritual systems. In particular, with reference to the early understanding of what constituted “the fourth,” an in-depth study of Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* will certainly be illuminating.

Buddhajñānapāda’s world, that of tantric Buddhist north India at the turn of the 9th century, was one in which we find the intricacies of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka philosophy right alongside visionary encounters with Mañjuśrī and the practice of sexual yogas. Buddhajñānapāda’s writings resist our tendencies to categorize, including philosophical analysis right in the middle of practical ritual sequences, and even blurring the boundary between scripture and authored treatise. His works reveal to us a world where reality itself could be received from the words of a guru, with the assistance of the bliss that arose in union with a tantric consort, and where that very suchness itself could be cultivated and actualized, bringing about a uniquely tantric experience of Buddhist awakening. The yogic practices that were being newly developed in his time—cutting edge techniques involving the manipulation of internal winds and energies—were viewed as important, crucial even, to the attainment of that final awakening. Buddhajñānapāda draws us into this world in a direct and personal way through his use of autobiography, allowing us unusual access into a very human dimension of a world that might otherwise seem very remote, opening a door for us and making—for a moment at least—his world our own.

Part II:
Tibetan Edition and English Translation of
Buddhajñānapāda's *Dvītyakramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*

**The **Dvīṭīyakramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* of Buddhajñānapāda:
A Critical Edition of the Tibetan Translation
by Kamalaguhya and Lha Yeshe Gyaltzen**

This Tibetan critical edition is based on all available recensions of the Tibetan translation of the **Dvīṭīyakramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama*, from the Cone, Derge, Narthang, Peking, and Sertrima Tengyurs. Significant variants are noted in the footnotes, whereas insignificant variants have been relegated to the endnotes. Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* (again available only in Tibetan translation) sometimes, but not always, provides direct citations of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. I have recorded variants in *direct citations* of passages in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that appear in Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* (from both the Derge and Peking editions of the *Sukusuma*) *only* when 1. there is a significant variant in at least one recension of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* itself, *and* Vaidyapāda's commentary includes a direct citation of the passage (i.e. dzā] D C V(D), dza P N S, 'dza' V(P)); or 2. there are no variants in the recensions of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, but I suggest emending the text based on its *direct citation* in Vaidyapāda's commentary (i.e. bar du] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), rab tu D C P N S). There are other cases where Vaidyapāda does not *directly cite* a particular passage, but I suggest an emendation based on the way he comments on, or glosses, that passage. In those cases I provide the passage from the commentary upon which I based my suggestion emendation (i.e. rgyu] sugg. em., rgyur D C P N S. Vaidyapāda's commentary seems to support this reading: *rgyu ba dang mi rgyu ba ni snod dang bcud do/*). There are a number of lines and verses from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* that are incorporated from earlier works and/or incorporated into later works, both scriptural and commentarial. I have referenced the parallels of which I am aware (certainly there are more, of which I am not yet aware) in the notes to my translation, rather than the notes to this edition.

Abbreviations:

- D Derge Tengyur
- C Cone Tengyur
- P Peking Tengyur
- N Narthang Tengyur
- S Sertrima Tengyur
- V Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* commentary on the *Dvīṭīyakrama*
- V (D) Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma*, Derge Tengyur
- V (P) Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma*, Peking Tengyur

/rgya gar skad du/ dvi^a kra ma ta ttva bhā^b wa^c na^d nā ma mu khā^e ga^f ma^g/ bod skad du/ rim pa
gnyis pa'i^h de kho na nyid sgomⁱ pa zhes bya ba'i zhal gyi lung/

thams cad mkhyen pa la phyag 'tshal lo//

dpal ldan bde rdzogs zab gsal gnyis med 'od zer ldan//
de yi rang bzhin zhi ba bcu drug phyed cha 'bar//
don dam snying po de ston bla ma gsum po rab//
de la bya byed gsum mnyam pa yis rtag tu 'dud// |1|

'jig rten gsum gyi sgron ma kun gyis rab bsngags pa//
chos rnam kun gyi snying po dngos po'i de bzhin nyid//
srid pa'i dug chu zlog byed gsum khong wam^j steng 'bar//
'jam dbyangs bla ma'i lung gis rtogs phyir bshad par bya// |2|

dbu kyi yul chen kha pir^k grong khyer rdo 'jog tu//
bzang po seng ge zhes byar grags pa rab thob pa//
bla ma de ni mnyes byas^l lung thob gzhung mang thos//
de la mnam dpyad rig 'byung shrī^m na lāndarⁿ// |3|

yon tan^o bshes gnyen zhes bya rigs can de yi ngor//
blun blos^p rab tu byed pa phyogs 'ga' rtsom byed pa'i//
brod pas der gnas rnam la gzhung des phan gdags par//
bsams nas der gnas rtsom dang ston sogs rab tu byas^q// |4|

de nas yon tan kun 'byung u rgyan^r yul du bgrod//

^a dvi] P N S, dva D C. I believe that this is likely a mistaken Tibetan back-translation of the Sanskrit title of the work, which should have here read *dviṭīya*, rather than *dvi*. See Note 3 in my *Dviṭīyakrama* translation, and Chapter Two, where I discuss this point in more detail.

^b bhā] D C, bha P N S

^c wa] D C, ba P N S

^d na] D C, sa P N S

^e khā] D C S, khī P N

^f ga] D C, saddhya P N S

^g ma] D C, nya P N S

^h pa'i] P N S, ba'i D C

ⁱ sgom] P N S, bsgom D C

^j wam] D C, dam P N S

^k pir] D C S V (P), bir P N V (D)

^l byas] D C P N, S *om*.

^m shrī] P N S, shī len D C; The reading from S, P, and N is unmetrical, but more correct Sanskrit. The readings from D and C are metrical, but otherwise unsatisfactory.

ⁿ lāndar] P N S, lendrar D C

^o Here and in a number of places S, as is common with manuscript versions of texts, uses abbreviations. Since these abbreviations are obviously indicating the same reading as the other recensions, I will not continue to note them. Moreover, there is not anyway, to my knowledge, a convention for transcribing such abbreviations using roman letters—the Wylie system does not really work for doing so, and even Tibetan typing programs will not allow one to stack a *ya* upon a *ta* capped by a *na* and followed by *na*—all as a single syllable (*yton?*)—which is the abbreviation used here for *yon tan*.

^p blos] D C, bro P N S

^q byas] D C, bya P N S

^r S abbreviates to *oyan*.

‘jo sgeg rdo rje zhes byar mtshan gsol rab tu grags//
de la mang thos nam par dpyad cing de nyid du//
gu ne ru^a grags bla ma de yang mnyes byas te// |5|

lung thob gnas de’i byang phyogs chab sgo bdag//
dzā^b thig dzā^c lā^d zhes bya’i bu mo bcu drug pa//
lakṣmī chen mo mnyes byas zla ba brgyad kyi bar//
de yi lung ni rab thob mnon^e nas^f grub pa thob// |6|

de nas dzā lendha^g rar grong khyer ko no dzer//
phyin nas bā li pā da^h zhes byar grags pa rab thob gang//
mnyes byas gzhung thos lung ni mang du thos gyur nas//
lho phyogs nam mkha’ shing ldan kong kaⁱ na ru bgrod// |7|

grub pa’i dbang phyug bā li pā tar^j rab grags pa//
rdzu ‘phrul ldan pa’i slob ma’i tshogs dang rab tu bcas//
de kun yo byad gos zas nor rgyun gyis sbyor ba//
bla ma dam pa de drung lo dgu rab tu btud// |8|

‘dus pa’i rgyud chen ‘grel bcas bco brgyad bar du^k mnyan//
bdag gis ma rtogs bla ma chen pos de^l bzhin gsungs//
‘di^l ma rtogs par gzhan ni don med par bsams nas//
glegs bam mgul btags byang phyogs yul du rab bgrod de// |9|

rdo rje gdan rgyab ku ba rtsa^m zhes bya ba’i tshal//
stag dang dred sogs mang zhing shin tu ‘jigs pa’i sar//
zla ba drug gnas pa yisⁿ chos rnams de nyid rtogs//
sprul pa’i dge slong bla ma gnyis dang bcas dang phrad// |10|

mgo dang lag gnyis yol dang tshes^o brgyad rgyal la bab//
ston zla ra ba’i tho rangs skya rengs shar dus su//
‘jam dpal² dbyangs kyi^p dkyil ‘khor ‘khor lo^a sprul ba la//

^a ru] S P V(D and P) , nu D C N.

^b dzā] D C V (D), dza P N S, ‘dza’ V (P)

^c dzā] sugg. em. based on V (D); dza D C P N S, dzva V (P)

^d lā] sugg em; la D C P N S

^e mnos] D C, gnon P N S

^f nas] D C, gnaP N S S

^g lendha] D C, lāndha P N S

^h bā li pā da] D C, ‘ba’ mo pa ta P N S. Vaidyapāda’s commentary has the name translated as *byis pa chung ba’i zhabs* which supports the reading from D and C.

ⁱ ka] D P N S, kam C

^j bā li pā dar] D C, ba li pa tar P N S. We now know from Sanskrit sources that this guru’s name is Pālitapāda, but to include his full name would be problematic for the meter so I have left it here.

^k bar du] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), rab tu D C P N S.

^l ‘di] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), ‘dir D C P N S.

^m rtsa] D C, tswa P N S

ⁿ yis] D C, yi P N S

^o tshes] C P N S, ches D

^p kyi] P N S, kyis D C

bdag gis don ‘di blang phyir gsol ba rab tu btab^b// |11|

khyod ni sems can kun gyi yab ste yum yang yin//
khyod kyis bdag la sogs te ‘jigs pa che las skyobs//
‘gro³ ba’i dbang po rje btsun khyod kyis sdug bsngal sel//
kham s gsum stong byed che^c ba che khyod skye bo skyongs// |12|

thog ma med khyod nga ro thigs pa’i steng cha med//
je btsun yig^d me bdud rtsi rab dga’ bde stong^e byed//
‘gro la phan phyir bde ba^f sangs rgyas rnams kun la//
rab dgyes bde ba^g mgon chen khyod kyis gtong^h bar mdzod// |13|

skyon gyes ma gos bla na med pa’i byang chub lam//
sna tshogs sdug bsngal zhi mdzad skom pa ngoms mdzad cing//
‘khor ba dba’ⁱ klong thar mdzad bde la ‘god mdzad pa’^j//
dngos kun rgyal bas mi dpogs lam ‘di bstan par mdzod// |14|

zhi ba’i zhi ba rdul dang rab bral ‘jungsk pa spangs//
bsgom pa las ‘das mkha’ ‘dra dri mas ma gos pa//
sgyu ma kun ‘das ‘dod pa kun la rgyab kyis phyogs//
de ‘dra’ⁱ rje btsun khyod la bdag ni skyabs su ‘chi// |15|

dregs med ‘jigs med byang chub chen po thob kyis bar//
‘khor bar ‘tsho bar ‘jig rten dmyal rtsub ma ltung^l bar//
khyod gsung dam tshig sdom pa thun mong ma yin rnams//
bdag la sogs pas rtag tu rab tu bkyangs bar bgyi// |16|

gar chen nam par rol pas gar mdzad cing//
sna tshogs phyag ni gcu^m dang bsgrimsⁿ pa yis//
padma’ⁱ lo ma ‘jam pa brgyad phye nas//
gnyis med bde rgyu rdo rje gzhag par mdzad// |17|

gsang ba’i de nyid mi nyams gsal bar ‘gyur//
rdo rje ‘dab skyes zla ba’i yang dag ‘du//
thabs shes las byung chos kun de nyid mchog//
rje btsun [3a] bdag la phan phyir sbas pa shod// |18|

^a lo] P N S, lor D C

^b btab] D C, gdab P N S

^c che] N V, chi D C, cha S P

^d yig] P N S, yid D C

^e stong] sugg. em based on V (D and P), gtong P N S, btang D C

^f ba] sugg. em based on V (D and P), ba’i P N S D C

^g ba] sugg. em based on V (D and P), ba’i P N S D C

^h gtong] P N S V (D and P), btang D C

ⁱ dba’] D C, rba P N S

^j pa] D C S P, cing N

^k ‘jungsk] P N S V (P), ‘jum D, ‘dzum C; ‘jums, V (D)

^l ltung] P N S V lhung D C

^m gcu] V, bcu D C P N S

ⁿ bsgrims] P N S V, bskyings D C

de nas 'jam dbyangs byang chub sems dpa' chen po yis//
bdag la 'dzum pa'i bzhin bltas legs zhes lan gsum gsungs//
rol pa'i gar dang chos kun de bzhin nyid//
sgra brnyan lta bur rdo rje glu yis bdag la bstan// |19|

a bi yaṃ raṃ baṃ laṃ hūṃ^a a la la la^b ho//
rje btsun thugs rje che rnams kyis//
'di rtogs pa yis bde gshegs kyi//
phun sum tshogs pa 'thob 'gyur pa'i// |20|

'das dang da ltar ma byon pa'i//
rdor rje 'dzin pas snod 'ga' la//
gsungs shing gsung dang gsung 'gyur ba//
yang dag don rab rab rtogs phyir// |21|

nga yis khyod la bstan par bya//
yid gcig bsdu la mnyan par gyis// |22|

chos rnams gszugs la sogs pa rnams//
kun mkhyen bar gyi rang bzhin^c ni//
nam mkha' dkyil ltar rnam dag pa'i//
zab gsal gnyis med ye shes te// |23|

de ni dngos med bsgom dngos med//
dngos po thams cad dang bral ba'i
khams dang skye mched kyis ma zin//
rang bzhin gyis ni 'od gsal ba// |24|

'dod nas dag pa nam mkha' bzhin//
med nas chos rnams mtshan nyid spang//
chos dang chos nyid yang med de//
dngos po med pas mkha' dang mtshungs// |25|

tshig dang yi ge kun las grol//
de ni dus dang phyogs rnams dang//
chos kun gyi ni ngo bor song//
lus ma yin te ngag dang ni// |26|

yid kyang ma yin 'dod khams dang//
gzugs dang^d gzugs med khams ma yin//
'byung chen bzhi yang ma yin te//
de bas de ni gang na yang// |27|

^a +// S P D

^b a la la la] P N S V(D and P), a la la D C

^c bzhin] P N S C, gzhan D

^d S om.

mi gnas pas na mnyam pa nyid//
de 'dra rdo rje 'chang chen po//
chos rnams kun gyi chos nyid mchog//
thabs kyis bsgrub par bya ba'i dngos// [28]

brtag pa kun las rab dben pa//
phun sum tshogs rgyu dpag dka' ba//
phyag rgya chen por rab snang ba'i
zer gyis rang gzhan^a smin byed pa^b// [29]

de gnyis med pa'i rang bzhin mchog//
rdo rje 'dzin pa chen pos kyang //
brjod du med pa'i sku chen po//
de nyid rgyal sras zhing bcas dang// [30]

srid gsum rgyu dang mi rgyu^c bcas//
thams cad kun gyi bdag nyid de//
dngos kun gtso bo [3b] rang sems kyi^d//
ngo bo nyid de de rtogs na// [31]

sangs rgyas byang chub de nyid do//
'jig rten gsum yang de nyid do//
'byung chen rnams kyang de nyid do//
ci yi phyir na chos thams cad// [32]

sems la gnas te de nyid kyang//
nam mkha' la gnas nam mkha' ni//
gang du min gnas 'od gsal ba//
gzod nas rnam dang stong pa'o// [33]

sangs rgyas mya ngan 'das pa'i khams//
skye med rdo rje mngon byang chub//
bder gshegs kun kyi snying po mchog//
gnyis med rtog bral don chen te//
rim pa gnyis par rab tu bshad// [34]

de 'dra'i don des dngos po kun//
rnam par khyab ste^e rnam gnas kyang//
thog med dus nas de las kyang
rnam rtog chen po tshul byung ste// [35]

^a gzhan] D C V(D), nyid S P V(P). Vaidyapāda's comments on the verse (*rang phul du byung zhing gzhan rgyud dang par byed pa'o*) also make it clear that he was reading *rang gzhan*, despite the fact that the actual citation of the verse in the Peking edition of his commentary reads *rang bzhin* (*Sukusuma*, 95b.7).

^b pa] P N S, pa'i D C. Vaidyapāda's commentary (*Sukusuma*, 95b.7) also seems to support P, N, and S.

^c rgyu] sugg. em., rgyur D C P N S. Vaidyapāda's commentary seems to support this reading: *rgyu ba dang mi rgyu ba ni snod dang bcud do*//

^d kyi] D C, kyis S P

^e ste] D C, te P N S

de las^a yang ni 'byung ba che//
rlung gi dkyil 'khor nyid byung ste//
de las kyang ni me yi khams//
chen po byung nas^b khyab mdzad de// |36|

de las chu khams chen po yang//
byung ste khyab mdzad de las kyang//
sa byung bhzi bsdus ngo bo las//
ri sogs sems can thams cad kyang// |37|

sna tshogs phra ba sbom po dang//
skyes pa bud med ma ning dang//
gzhon nu dang ni rgan po dang//
lha dang klu dang gnod sbyin dang // |38|

gdon dang skar ma gshin rje dang//
chu bdag rgya byin dmyal ba dang//
yi dags dud 'gro dang de kun//
spang dang shes tsam rab brten pa'i
'gro ba kun du rgyas par gnas// |39|

de bas de yi gong ma yi//
gnyis med rtog bral rab bsgribs^c te//
ma rtogs pas na 'gro ba kun//
'khor bar rab tu 'khor bar 'gyur// |40|

de ni 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal che//
dug chu lta bur^d 'khrul pa yis//
rnam bsgrub thag pa'i sbrul lta bur//
snang zhing med pa nyid du 'dod// |41|

de bas gnyis med don chen po//
rang rig dkyil 'khor chen po mchog//
rgyun dang rnam grangs kyis gnas pas//
de yi ngo bo rtogs par bya// |42|

gang zhig de rtogs^e rab 'dun pa//
sems kyi smon lam yang dag can//
sngon du bsod rams mthu bskyed dang//
skyes bu yang dag gzhi^f la brten// |43|

sbro dang gus^a dang bsnyen bkur dang//

^a las] D C, la P N S

^b nas] D C P S, gnas N

^c bsgribs] P N S V(P and D), bsgrims D C

^d bur] D C, bu P N S

^e rtogs] P N S C, rtags D

^f gzhi] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), bzhi D C P N S

‘dun bar ldan zhing sgom pa dang//
brtan po som nyi rnam spangs pa⁴//
rjes mthun gtong phod des shes ‘gyur// |44| [4a]

de yis rje btsun yang dag pa//
mchog gi gdams^b ngag rgyud la ldan//
theg chen lam gyi spyod pa dang//
bsgom pa la ni lhur len dang// |45|

de nyid bcu la sogs pa yi//
gsang dang rab gsang shin tu gsang//
shes shing de yi don gab par//
ston byed bla ma mnyes par bya// |46|

yul dang mkhar dang khyim dang rta//
glang po che sogs mal stan^c dang//
chung ma sdug dang yid ‘ong bu//
bu mo sring mo tsha mo sogs // |47|

gzhan yang gser dang dngul gyi rdzas//
zangs lcags sogs las byas pa yi^d//
mdzes pa’i rdzas dang mu tig gi//
phreng dang padma rā ga dang// |48|

pu shel^e indra nī la dang//
mar gad^f g.yu sogs mchod pa’i tshogs//
zhing ‘di mkhas pas rab bkang ste//
de ‘dra’i rje btsun dbang po mchod// |49|

gsal shing rab dga’ mkha’ mnyam pa//
gzhan du⁵ rig^g par mi ‘gyur bas//
bud med sgyu ma’i phyag rgya ni//
sgyu ma kun las khyad par ‘phags// |50|

sgyu ma de yang ‘jig rten ‘dir//
spyen la sogs par rnam dag pas^h//
rigs ni rnam pa bzahir ‘gyur te//
ming dang mtshan nyid bshad par bya// |51|

^a gus] C P N S, kus D

^b gdams] D C, gdam P N S

^c stan] D C P S, bstan N

^d yi] P N S, yis D C

^e shel] sugg. em., shar D C P N S. This suggested emendation is based on the oral commentary of Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel who suggests that the text should read *pu shel*, “amber,” rather than *pu shar*, which does not yield any sense (Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communication, February 2016). Vaidyapāda’s commentary does not mention the term at all.

^f mar gad] P N S, ma rgad D C

^g rig] P S V(P), rigs D C N V(D)

^h pas] P N S, par D C

ka ma lī^a b dang shangkhī^c nī^d//
 tsi tri^e nī^f dang ha stī^g nī^h//
 dang bo klu mo'i rigs yin te//
 gnyis pa stag dang seng ge'i rigs// |52|

gsum pa ri dwags^k kṛṣṇa^l tsogs^m//
 bzhi pa glang po che rigs so//
 de la ka ma līⁿ yi ni//
 dbyibs dang mtshan nyid bstan par bya// |53|

bu mo padma'i dri bro zhing//
 ngo zlum sna rtse til 'dra ste//
 sen^o mo dmar zhing rgyab sgur dang//
 rkang mthil kun gyis sa la reg |54|

pa spu 'khyil ldan ser^p mo can//
 dkar 'chang til gyi 'bras bu 'dra//
 gsus pa'i^q gnyer ma gsum ldan zhing //
 brang mdzas glang chen ltar 'gros dang// |55|

rākta'i^r ro ni skyur^s ba'o//
 sha mdog dmar te lha mo 'di//
 mā ma kī yis rnam par dag//
 shangkhī^t nī^u yi mtshan nyid dang// |56|

^a lī] D C, li P N S

^b All versions of the text read simply *kamalī*, which is an unusual and unexpected form. *Kamalinī* would be the expected feminine form that would correspond with the other names given in the verse. It is possible that that Tibetan translators may have simply shortened the form for metrical reasons. Vaidyapāda's text also reads *kamalī*, but this may again simply be because the translators of the commentary were referencing the Tibetan translation of the root text. I have not taken the liberty of changing the text in my edition, however, as this would render unmetrical all verses in which it occurs.

^c shangkhī] D C, shang ki P N S

^d nī] sugg. em., ni D C P N S

^e tri] D C, tra P N S

^f nī] sugg. em., ni D C P N S

^g stī] D C, sti P N S

^h nī] sugg. em., ni D C P N S

ⁱ mo'i] D C, mo P N S

^j seng ge'i] D C S N, sengge'i P

^k dwags] sugg. em., dags D C P S, dag N

^l kṛṣṇa] D C, kṛṣṇa P N S

^m sogs] D C V(P and D), tshogP N S S

ⁿ lī] D C, li P N S

^o sen] D C, se P N S

^p ser] sugg. em. based on V(D and P), sen D C, se P N S

^q pa'i] P N S V(D and P), pa D C

^r rākta'i] P N S, rakta'i D C

^s skyur] C P N S V(D and P), skar D

^t shangkhī] D C, shang ki P N S

^u nī] sugg. em., ni D C P N S

dbyibs ni khyod la bstan par bya//
bu mo ba tsha'i^a dri bro zhing//
skra ni ring zhing sna yang ring//
dkar 'chang nā ga ra^b 'dra ba// |57|

'o ma zho la rab tu sred//
rākta'i^c ro ni mngar ba'o//
mdog ni dkar ser gnas pa yi//
gos dkar mo yis rnam par dag// |58|

de bzhin tsi tri nī^d yi^e ni//
dbyibs dang mtshan nyid bshad par bya//
bu mo sha rlon dri bro [4b] zhing//
lus chung brla ni shin tu mdzes// |59|

dkar 'chang shing thog pa la 'dra//
ngo tsha med cing khro 'dod pa//
rtag tu thab mo dag la dga'//
rje ngar bya rog rkang^f 'dra zhing// |60|

mchu^g 'phyang gan rkyal du nyal ba//
phug^h ron skad 'dra sha mdog ni
sngo bsangs rākta'iⁱ ro tsha ba'o//
de ni lha mo sgröl mas dag// |61|

hasī nī^j yi mtshan nyid dang//
dbyibs ni nga yis bstan bar bya//
bu mo chang gi dri bro zhing//
byin sbom sna ni cung zad yo^k// |62|

dri nga zhing ni lus sbom dang//
spyod pa rtsing zhing mdog rdul skya//
dkar 'chang g.yas g.yon du dgye ba//
sha mdog smug cing rākta'i^l ro// |63|

bsngal zhing de 'dra'i bu mo ni//
sangs rgyas spyang mas dag ba'o//

^a tsha'i] D C V(D and P), tshī P S, tshwi(?) N

^b nā ga ra] sugg. em., na ra ga D C P N V(P), ma ra ga S, na ga ra V(D)

^c rākta'i] P N S, rakta'i D C

^d tsi tri nī] sugg em., tsi tri ni D C, tsi tra ni P N S

^e yi] P N S, ya D C

^f rkang] D C, dang P N S

^g mchu] D C P S, chu N

^h phug] D C P S, phu N

ⁱ rākta'i] P N S, rakta'i D C

^j hasī nī] sugg. em. hasī ni D C, hasti ni P N S

^k yo] D P N S, po C

^l rākta'i] P N S, rakta'i D C

da ni de dag thams cad kyī//
rung dang mi rung spyod pa bstan// |64|

rol tshe^a rgyab kyis phyogs pa dang//
khong du dga' zhing tshig mang dang//
bsgo ba bzhin du bka' yang gcog//
'o byas kha ni 'phyi byed de// |65|

bla ma'i yon tan shes 'gyur yang//
gzhan du de la cung zad bsnyad^b//
bla ma ma mthong ltar byed cing//
'ong kyang de⁶ la phyag mi 'tshal// |66|

rje btsun de dang mi mthun pa'i//
mi gzhan dang ni rtse dga' byed//
de sogs rab tu mi rung ste//
mkhas pas rab tu spang bar bya// |67|

rung ba 'di ni mkhas pas btsal//
mig gi rtsa mdangs mig rtsa rgod//
slar zhing skad cig bsam pa dang//
skad cig rgod pa'i 'phro bzhag^c nas// |68|

bsam zhing yang na smra'am 'dzum^d//
rje btsun bla ma mthong gyur na//
dga' zhing mdzes lta 'dzum⁷ par byed//
de yi bka' stsal nyan zhing mos// |69|

steg pa'i tshul⁸ gyis zhe sar ldan//
gzhan du de la snyan par brjod//
de mthong 'grogs^e la 'khyud cing bsnyen//
phag tu 'khri zhing sor tshigs^f nyed^g// |70|

skra ni bkrol nas slar 'ching byed⁹//
gos 'chos shing ni bar bar 'dzum¹⁰//
bla ma ma mthong ltar byed cing//
gos 'chos pa dang lus nyed dang// |71|

rkang pas sa la 'dud^h cing 'driⁱ//
bus pa'i kha la 'o byed cing//

^a tshe C P N S, che D

^b bsnyad] D P N S, bsnyed C

^c bzhag] D C P S, gzhag N

^d 'dzum] D C P S, mdzum N

^e 'grogs] D C P S, 'grog N

^f tshigs] D C, tshig P N S

^g nyed] D P N S, nyid C

^h 'dud] P N S, 'drud D C

ⁱ 'dri] D C, 'bri P N S

nu ma ston cing ske rags ‘gro//
rje brtsun de yis^a ma mthong na// |72|

glu dbyangs len cing mthong bar byed//
de ni gang la^b gnas pa der//
don med bsnyad kyis ‘gro ba dang//
drag tu gad mos rab steg^c ste^d// |73|

lu zhing glal ba bltar byed cing// **[5a]**
mi mo ‘di yang sten^e par byed// |74|

da^f ni gsang gnas dbyibs kyi^g ni//
mtshan nyid rung dang mi rung ba//
nga yis yang dag bstan par bya//
yid gcig bsdus la mnyan par gyis// |75|

gyo mo lta bu kha sbub dang//
khung ring shin tu mi sdug dang //
rtag tu skam por gnas pa dang//
rtag tu zil pa ‘dzag pa dang// |76|

sbal pa’i rgyab ltar rtsub pa yi//
gnas ni spang bya mi rung ngo//
rus sbal rgyab ltar ‘phang mtho zhing//
steng^h mnyam shin tu ‘jam po dang// |77|

ba glangⁱ gi ni ltag pa ltar//
steng mnyam thog gi dbyibs kyang ring//
padma’i snying po bzhin du zlum//
cung zhig ‘dzag min cung zad ‘byung// |78|

spu nyung sgyu ma’i phyag rgya ni//
mkhas pas thabs kyis shin tu btsal// |79|

mtshan nyid de dang mi ldan yang//
rigs dang gzugs dang lang tshor ldan//
rgyan mdzas yid ‘ong bu mo ni//
longs spyod gsum ldan gzung bar bya// |80|

chos zab la mos sems dang ni//

^a yis] D C P S, yi N

^b la] D C, na P N S

^c bstegs] D C, bsteg P N S

^d ste] C, sta D, te P N S

^e sten] D C, bstan P N S

^f da] D, de C

^g kyi] D C, kyiP N S S

^h steng] D P N S, stong C

ⁱ glang] D C, lang P N S

las 'brel gyis 'khyud ma byas dang//
sngon gsungs grogs kyis shes bslus pa'i//
mi mo yang ni mkhas pas bsgrubs// |81|

de ltar de sogs bud med kyi//
sgyu ma'i phyag rgya chen pos ni//
'jig rten gsum du rnyed dka' ba'i//
lhag pa'i lha^a shes bya ba bsgrub^b// |82|

de yang thun mong dang bcas pa//
tshogs kyi mchod pa yang byas te//
gang gsungs bu mo btsal nas kyang//
bla ma la ni dbul bar bya// |83|^c

de nas bla ma de mnyes nas//
de dang snyoms par zhugs pa yis//
bde gshegs zhu gyur bcu drug char//
gyur pa slob ma'i kha ru ltung// |84|

ltung bas snying gi padma zhugs//
de yis zhing ni dag byas te//
chos kun sgyu ma la sogs pa'i//
bcu gnyis don du rtogs par 'gyur// |85|

de nas^d de la rang 'byung gi//
chos sku rab dga' mkha' nmyam pa//
lhag pa'i lha zhes bya ba ni//
rtogs^e bya'i ched du bu mo byin// |86|

lha mo 'di ni khyod dang mthun//
sems chen^f khyod kyis 'dod pa gyis//
yid 'ong bu mo 'di nyid ni//
sangs rgyas kun gyis spyod du gnang^g// |87|

dkyil 'khor 'khor lo'^h cho ga yis//
bu mo sgrol byed dga' byin ma//

^a lha] C P N S V(P and D), lnga D

^b bsgrub] P N S, sgrub D C

^c Verses 83-125 of the *Dvitiyakrama* are edited in Sakurai 1996, 531-35. I only became aware of Sakurai's edition of these verses after completing my own (his book is in Japanese, which I do not read, though of course the Sanskrit and Tibetan editions that it contains remain accessible to me), and have not taken his edition into consideration here.

^d nas] D C, laP N S S

^e rtogs] D C, togP N S S

^f chen] P N S V(P), can D C V(D); Vaidyapāda's commentary also suggests that *sems chen* is the better reading: *sems chen (chen] P, can D) zhes pa ni sems can bsgral ba'i sems gang la yod pa'o//*

^g gnang] D C V(D and P), snang P N S; The Peking edition of Vaidyapādas commentary cites the line from the verse with *snang*, but then in the explanation of the verse uses the correct spelling, *gnang*.

^h lo'i] D C, lo P N S

byang chub chen po bsgrub pa'i phyir//
khyod [5b] kyis bde chen myong bar gyis// |88|

gzhan kyis sangs rgyas mi nus ba//
bu mo 'di ni yang dag mchog//
de bas mtha' med 'khor ba'i bar//
khyod kyis 'di dang bral mi bya// |89|

de nas sems¹¹ chen^a de yis ni//
yid 'ong bu mo blangs byas te//
de yis dam tshig sdom pa'i mchog//
tshig 'dis rab tu smra bar bya// |90|

smros shig bu khyod rdo rje can//
sha khrag khu ba la sogs pa//
dri chen dri chu sogs za'am//
bha ga 'o byed mi rtog gam// |91|

gzungs ma nga la khyod brod dam//
de yis bzhad^b gad dang ldan par//
kye¹² lha mo ci phyir bdag mi brod//
dri chen dri chu sogs za'o// |92|

lha mo khyod la bkur sti dgos//
bha ga 'o¹³ byed nga mi rtog//
de nas bu mos ga sha^c phud//
padma gsal bstan tshig 'dis bstod// |93|

e ma ho bdag gi padma 'di//
bde ba tham cad dang ldan pa//
cho ga'i rim pa gang gis spyad//
de yi mdun na rtag tu gnas// |94|

don byed padma dam pa 'di//
sangs rgyas kun gyis bkur^d b'ai gnas//
rang 'byung bde ba chen po ni//
'di na rtag par bzhugs pa yin// |95|

bhaja^e mokṣa ho//

de nas rang gi sa bon las//

^a chen] P N S, can D C

^b bzhad] D C P S, gzhad N

^c sha] D C, zha P N S

^d bkur] D C P S, bskur N

^e bhaja] sugg. em., bhanydza D C, bhaṃdza P N S. I suggest this emendation based on the *Vajrāvalī* which reads *bhaja* here. This also makes more sense, understood as the second person imperative of *bhaj*: “Grant liberation, *ho!*” Vaidyapāda makes it clear that this mantra is spoken by the disciple to the consort (*Sukusuma*, 106b.6).

‘od zer stug pos nang gsal nas//
lha yi ‘khor lo chags byas nas//
rdo rje nang ne phyir byung ste// |96|

padma’i nang du zhugs byas nas//
rig ma’i lha yi ‘khor lo rnams//
chags pa chen po bskyed nas kyang//
zhal nas zhal zhugs ‘khor lo rnams// |97|

chags chen bskyed nas rdo rjer phyung//
sngon bzhin zhugs sogs rab byas pas//
yang nas yang du lha’i^a dkyil ‘khor//
yid kyis shin tu chags bar bya// |98|

de nas ‘dod pa’i sgyu ma’i tshig//
brjod pas bu mo chags byar bya//
gnyis su med pa bde ba chen po mchog//
lha mo khyod ni sgyu ma’i phyag rgya ste// |99|

zhal bzang khyod ni nga dang lhan cig tu//
rnam par rtse^b pas mkha’ ‘dra myong^c bar bya//
des kyang sgyu ma lta bu yi//
‘dod pa’i tshig gis gsol btab nas// |100|

bdag nyid chags pa chen po yang//
bskyed nas rtsa yi ‘khor lo btsal// |101|

bde mchog rgya chen bdag la dgongs su¹⁴ gsol//
bsam mi khyab pa’i bde chen ngag^d dang ldan//
mi g.yo [9a] tshig dang bral ba’i dbyangs snyan pas//
bdag la khyod kyis rol cig bzheng^e su gsol// |102|

ngo tshar che ba’i rol pas snang mdzad cing//
byang chub snying por ‘gro ba’i¹⁵ lam mchog ‘di//
rgyud rnam yang dag gang la mi rten^f pas
bde chen yid ‘ong nga yis grol bar gyis// |103|

ho ho ho//

^a lha’i] DC, lha P N S

^b rtse] P N S V(P), brtson] D C V(D). Vaidyapāda’s commentary, which glosses the term as *rnam par rol pa* also supports the reading of *rtse* (*Sukusuma*, 107a.2)

^c myong] P N S, myang D C

^d ngag] sugg. em. based on V(D and C); dag D C P N S. Not only do both the Derge and Peking editions of Vaidyapāda’s commentary here read *ngag*, his comments also make it clear that this is his reading: *bsam mi khyab pa’i bde chen te// zhes te thams cad la khyab bdag tu gnas pa’i bde ba chen po ni mi slu bas mtson par byed pas ngag dang ldan zhes bya ‘o//* (*Sukusuma*, 107a.3-4).

^e bzhengs] D C P S, bzhe N

^f rten] D C, brten P N S

rol cig rol cig bdag la rol//
'dod pa gyis shig dga' gsol^a ba//
khyod kyis gzhan du mi rtogs pa//
rtogs pas the tsom ma byed cig// |104|

a la la la^b ho//

de nas rab tu chags ldan pas//
de dang lhan cig lus kyi ni//
spyod pas dben pa'i gnas su spyad//
rol pas dga' ba brtag par bya// |105|

dang por 'dus pa^c byas nas su//
de nas gru mo mtshan nyid dang//
yang ni brkyang^d par bya ba dang//
de bzhin yar bteg mtshan nyid dang//
shin tu brkyang^e pas lnga ru 'gyur// |106|

dpung pa rab tu brkyang^f byas nas//
gru mo mdud pas mgul nas 'khyud//
bcing^g bas dam 'khyud g.yas g.yon skra//
mgo ni mi g.yo zung nas blta// |107|

de nas brla gnyis bar^h bltas te//
bung ba lta bu zid sgra'i glu//
blangs nas mchu yis rtse bar bya// |108|

'gying bag stabs kyis 'khyud nas ni//
g.yon gyisⁱ spyi bo'i^j skra bzung ste//
g.yas kyis lkog ma brten nas kyang//
ma mchu'i sbrang rtsi gzhib^k par bya// |109|

gzhib^l cing zid^m sgra brjod nas kyang//
nu ma lag rtseⁿ mgrin pa dang//
ma mchu 'gram pa rna ba'i rtsa//

^a gsol] D C, gsal P N S

^b la] P N S, om. D C

^c pa] D C, ma P N S

^d brkyang] D C, bskyang P N S

^e brkyang] D C, bskyang P N S

^f brkyang] D C, bskyang P N S

^g bcing] D C P S, cing N

^h bar] D C S, par P N; Although Vaidyapāda's commentary also reads *par* (in both D and P), his comment suggests *bar*: *brla gnyis par bltas te zhes pa ni 'og gi padma la bltas na//* (*Sukusuma*, 108a.1-2).

ⁱ gyis] D C P S, gyi N

^j bo'i] D C, bo P N S

^k gzhib] D C, bzhib P N S

^l gzhib] D C, bzhib P N S

^m zid] D C, sring S, srid P N

ⁿ rtse] P N S V (D and P), rtsa D C

mig dang spyi bo gsang bar yang//
kha yis 'o byas^a rtse^b bar bya^c// |110|

rna ba gnyis dang mchan khung dang//
mgrin pa gnyis dang sum mdo rnams//
sen mo ri mos gdab^d par bya// |111|

nu ma gnyis dang^e mchan^f khung^g gnyis^h//
gtso gnyis dang ni 'gram pa gnyis//
lag mthil gnyis dang rkang mthil gnyis//
mnye pas mdza ba chen po 'grub// |112|

g.yon gyis padma'i dkyil 'khor ni//
mnye zhing lce yis skyod par bya//
steng 'og tu 'angⁱ blta byas nas//
sems kyis de la chags par bya// |113|

de nas dga' ba'i bu mo des//
padma bstan nas 'di skad smra//
rang byung bde chen rgyal po ni//
padma 'di la^j rab tu gnas// |114|

rtsa dang rlung [6b] gis rtogs 'gyur bas//
khyod kyis^k rtsa yi 'khor lo^{l6} tshol^l//
de nas de yis^m sorⁿ mo yis//
nang^{l7} gnas^o rtsa yi 'khor lo che// |115|

padma la gnas snying po lngas//
brgyan^p byas ze'u^q 'bru ge sar dang//
'dab ma brgyad pa gsal byas nas//
ā li kā li mantra dang// |116|

^a byas] D C, bya P N S

^b rtse] D C, brtse P N S

^c bya] D C, yang P N S

^d gdab] D C N, gdag S, gtab P

^e dang] D C P N, S om.

^f mchan] D C N, mtshan P, S om.

^g khung] C P N, khud D, S om.

^h gnyis] D C P N, S om.

ⁱ tu 'ang] P N V(D and P), tu'ang S, tu yang D C

^j la] D C V(D and P), na P N S

^k kyis] P S, kyi D C

^l tshol] P N S, rdzol D, tshal C

^m yis] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), yi D C P N S

ⁿ sor] D P N S, yir C

^o gnas] sugg. em based on V (D and P), nas D C P N S. Vaidyapāda reads *de nas nang na gnas pa'i rtsa'i 'khor lo chen po btsal bar bya'o//* (*Sukusuma*, 108b.1).

^p brgyan] P N S V (D and P), rgyan D C

^q ze'u] D C, ze S N, bre P

kur^a ma ka dang sha^b shāng^c ka//
nā ñi^d gsum po btsal bar bya//
rdo rje dyings kyi dbang phyug rtsa//
gzung ‘dzin bral ba bha ga’i dbus// |117|

bla ma’i man ngag stobs kyis ni//
sor mos go bar bya dgos so//
de nas sa^e bcu dang ldan pas^f//
lha mo de la ‘khyud bar bya// |118|

rdo rje padmar reg pa ni//
bsnyen pa’i de nyid yin par bshad//
rdo rje padmar zhugs pa ni//
nye bar sgrub pa’i de nyid do// |119|

de nas bsgul zhing bskyod tsam gyis//
snying ni ‘dar zhing dran pa nyams//
spyi bo’i skra grol^g gos kyang ‘dor^h//
rngulⁱ gyis lus khyab mdog dmar te// |120|

mig dmar phra bas bdag la blta//
yang du bsgul^j bas sgrub^k pa’o//
de bas sems khral med pa ru//
sdom brtson gzhu dbyibs gyo ba yis// |121|

sum mdo ye shes me^l sbar nas//
khams bzhus^m nas ni bcu drug char//
gyur ba me tog kundaⁿ ‘dra//
rlung gi sbyor bas phul bar bya// |122|

rang bzhin gyis ni rab zhi ba//
chos kun zhi ba de kho na//

^a kur] D C, kun P N S V (D and P)

^b sha] D C, shang P N S V (D and P)

^c shāng] sugg. em based on V (D and P) which read shang (I suggest adding the long ā), sha D C P N S.

^d ñi] sugg. em., li D C P N S

^e sa] D C, P N S om.

^f pas] sugg. em., pa’i D C, pa yi P N S. The reading from P, N, and S gives the correct grammar, but is metrically incorrect, so I have suggested emending to *pas*.

^g grol] D C, ‘grol P N S

^h ‘dor] D C, ‘dor bar byed] P N S

ⁱ rngul] sugg. em., rdul D C P N S V (D and P). This emendation is based on the line from the parallel verse in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* which reads *rngul chu thigs pas lus kun khyab* (Vaidyapāda, D 71a.5; P 84b.7)

^j bsgul] sugg. em. based on V, bskul D C P N S. Buddhajñānapāda’s text here reads *bskul*, but given the fact that earlier the text read *bsgul ba*, as well as the fact that this is glossed in Vaidyapāda’s commentary as *yang dang yang du bskyod pa* suggests that it is *bsgul* that is meant.

^k sgrub] P N S, bsgrub D C,

^l me] D C S, ma P

^m bzhus] D C P S, gzhus N

ⁿ kunda] D C, kun da S N, ku da P

bde ba de nyid nor bur ‘dug//
skad cig dran med g.yo bar byed//
sgrub pa chen po de nyid do// |123|

nam mkha’i khams dang rdo rje sbyor ba las ni yang dag spyan can bde chen ‘byung byar ‘gyur//
gang gang yang dag dga’ byed chags bral dga’ gnyis bar du ‘ben^a nyid^b mthong byas brtan par
gyis//
padma’i^c mkha’ la rdo rje nor bu pad snying gnyis la ‘byor^d dang rdo rje skyil krung sems//
nor bu’i^e bar du mthong byas gang de bde ba ‘byung ba nges par de nyid ye shes te// |124|

‘di ni rdzogs pa’i rim pa yin par bla ma mchog rnams kun gyis yang dag bshad//
‘dod chags chags bral bar ma mi^f dmigs ye she lha ni skad cig de ru gsal^g//
chu tshod brgyad dam nyin gcig dang ni^h zla ba gcig tu a’ m//
lo cig bskal paa’ m bskal pa stong du ye shes de myong bya//
padma la gnas bdud rtsi khu ba blo gros can gyis kha yis blangs nas btung bya’ o// |125|

de ‘dra’i dngos pos [7a] thams cad kyi//
mtha’ yi de nyid zab gsal ba//
thog med dus nas so so yi//
skye bo nga dang ngar ‘dzin pas//
ma brtags par ni bdag tu bzung// |126|

dus las byung dang ‘dod rgyal dang//
gnam gyis bskos dang gyi na dang//
‘dzin pa pos ni sprul pa dang//
khams kun las ni nges ‘byung dang// |127|

dbang phyug dang ni ‘byinⁱ pa’ o//
dus dang gtso bo byed pa dang//
byed pa po ni ma yin dang//
rnal ‘byor dang ni tshad ma dang// |128|

dag pa dang ni ma dag pa//
nang gnas^j brjod du med pa’i bdag//
skyes bu dang ni khyab bdag dang//

^a ‘ben] sugg. em. based on the parallel Sanskrit verse from Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi*, dben V (D and P), bden D C P N S. The *Yogasapta* parallel verse cited in the next note also supports reading *dben*.

^b nyid] sugg. em., gnyis D C P N S. This emendation is likewise based on the parallel verses (precisely these same verse from the *Dvitiyakrama*) in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* where they read *nyid* in both P and D: *dga’ gnyis rab tu dben nyid mthong* (*Yogasapta*, D 71a. 3; P84b.4). In his comments on the *Dvitiyakrama* verse, Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* simply reads *dga’ ba gnyis gyis dben pa*, which also suggests he was reading *dben nyid* rather than *dben gnyis* (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.5).

^c padma’i] D C, padma P N S

^d ‘byor] D C P S, sbyong N

^e bu’i] D C, bu P N S

^f mi] D V (D and P), ma C P N S

^g gsal] P N S V (D and P), bsam D C,

^h dang ni] D C, P N S om.

ⁱ byin] D C, byon P N S

^j gnas] P N S, nas D C

srog dang gang zag rnam shes dang// |129|

kun gzhi dang ni shes pa po^a//
mthong ba po dang gzung 'dzin dang//
shes pa dang ni shes bya dang//
shed las skyes dang shad bu dang// |130|

srog dang gso ba la sogs pa//
mu stegs rnam kyis rnam par rtogs// |131|

nam mkha' dang ni 'gog pa gnyis//
shin tu 'dus ma byas pa ste//
shin tu brtan byas 'dus byas kun//
skag cig ma ste bdag po med// |132|

phra rab rdul las grub pa ni//
blo yi rnam pa med pa ru//
kha che bye brag sma bas rtogs// |133|

rang gi rig pa skyed byed pa//
blta bya sypod yul rnam par ni//
'dus ma byas pa gsum po dag^b//
mo gsham bu bzhin med pa dang// |134|

'du byed thams cad bems sdigs^c dang//
dus gsum rgyu ba ma yin dang//
dman min^d thogs med gzugs su ni//
mdo sde pa yis rab tu rtogs// |135|

yan lag can yang don dam min//
rdul phran dag kyang de bzhin no//
so sor snang ba mi dmigs pa//
rmi lam lta bu mi snang ste// |136|

gzung 'dzin spangs pa'i ye shes te//
don dam shel ltar dag pa ru//
rnal 'byor spyod pas rab tu rtogs// |137|

so sor snang ba'i gzhung thams cad//
don dam min te gcig pa dang//
du ma'i rang bzhin bral ba'i phyir//
rnam mkha'i chu skye bzhin du ni// |138|

^a pa po] D C, pa'o P S

^b dag] P N S, dang D C

^c bsdig P N S S, rig] D C. I am unsure of what this word should be, but all of the texts, including Vaidyapāda, have some form of *bsdigs*, *sdigs*, or *rdeg*, so it seems that the root text in the Derge may have been corrected to read *rig*. The meaning of the passage remains unclear.

^d min] D C V (D and P), med P N S

gnyis med gnyis su med min zhi//
shin tu dri med nam mkha' ltar//
blo ldan dbu ma pa yis rtogs// |139|

de la sogs^a te mtha' yas pa//
don de kho na la gnas nas//
tha dad so sor rtog^b pa'o//
de bas de dag thams cad kyang// |140|

[7b] yang dag min pas bla dang bcas//
'og ma'i 'og ma'i rnal 'byor blo//
gong ma gong ma'i^c khyad par 'phag//
'og ma'i blo ni gong ma yi// |141|

shes rab kyis ni sun 'byin no//
de bas gong ma'i rim pa yis//
lhan cig pa yi slob dpon gyis//
byin gyis brlabs pa yang dag bya// |142|

gsal zhing rab dga' nam mkha' dra//
rang byung¹⁸ lhag pa'i lha chen po//
lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes kyis//
bla ma'i kha las rtogs par bya// |143|

de ltar dam tshig sdom ldan pa'i//
snod du rtse gcig chu 'dra las//
ye shes gzugs brnyan lta bu ru//
rnal 'byor pa yis rab tu brtag// |144|

de thob phyin chad rnal 'byor pas//
khor ba nyid na gnas pa'i tshe//
de yi nyes pas mi gos so//
ji ltar snags dang sman ldan pas// |145|

sbrul dag gsod par byed pa bzhin//
de 'dra'i rnal 'byor dbang phyug che//
ye shes sman gyis rgyas btab pas//
nyon mongs gyis ni ci byar yod// |146|

gang zhig lag na gdugs thogs la//
de la char pas ci byar yod//
de bzhin gnyis med ye shes kyi//
gdugs thogs¹⁹ la ni rtog^d pa yi// |147|

^a sogs] P N S V (D and P), rtogs D P

^b rtog] P N S, rtogs D C, brtags V (D and P)

^c ma'i] D C V (D and P), ma P N S

^d rtog] D C P S, rtogs N

char pa rab tu 'bab 'gyur^a yang//
de la de yis ji ltar gnod//
de 'dra'i^b rab mchog ye shes ni//
so so skye bos ga la shes// |148|

nyan thos rnam kyis mi shes so//
rang sangs rgyas kyis kyang mi shes//
rnal 'byor spyod dang dbu ma pa//
byang chub sems dpas mi shes so// |149|

bla bcas sangs rgyas kun gyis kyang//
'di ni cung zad mi shes so//
'di yi don shes ma 'ongs pa'i//
rdo rje 'dzin pa mnyes byas nas// |150|

rang gi bsod nams chen stobs^c kyis//
yi ge med par rnam par 'pho//
de la dkyil 'khor sbyin sreg dang//
gtor ma bzlas pa bgrang phreng dang// |151|

skyl mo krung²⁰ dang stang stabs sogs^d//
spros bral rnam bar slu^e ba ste//
bya ba ma yin dgag pa min//
lhag pa'i lha yis sprul phyir ro// |152|

bya ba rnam la rnal 'byor pa//
lam chen dag tu yongs 'dzin pa//
ri dwags²¹ smig rgyu snyeg pa ltar//
rtag tu snang yang ma zin no// |153|

bya ba'i nad chen gyis zin la//
ye shes g.yo med sman chen gyis//
gso byed skyes bu dam pa'o// |154|

de bas lus ngag yid gsum gyi//
[8a] sdom pa mchog la gnas byas nas//
nga'o snyam pa'i gzi bskyed la//
rim pa gnyis pa de nyid bsgrub// |155|

dgon pa'm yang na grong gi mthar//
gang rung ci^f rung de lta bur//

^a 'gyur] P S, gyur D C

^b 'dra'i] D C, 'dra P S V (D and P)

^c stobs] D C P S V (D and P), bstobs N

^d sogs]D P N S V (D and P), so C

^e slu] D C, bslu P N S

^f ci] D C N, cing P S

bya bar ‘os pa’i las kun yang//
byas nas bde ba’i stan la ‘dug// |156|

de nas sems can thams cad kun//
tshangs spyod chen po bzhis dmigs²² te//
de la sogs pa rang rgyud kyi//
las kyi sgrib pa dag byas nas// |157|

sems tsam²³ la ni blta bas te//
phi rol rang bzhin stong²⁴ bar bya//
sems tsam de yang stong^a byas nas//
rang rig tsam²⁵ du gnas par bya// |158|

rang rig de yang zla ba sogs//
gdan du brtags nas yi ge yi^b//
smyu gus bsnun byas mtshan mar byur//
de las rang nyid lhar bskyed la// |159|

lha yi nga rgyal dang ldan par//
phyag rgya bzhis ni rgyas btab ste//
dkyil ‘khor lo sprul bar bya//
de mnyes de la goms bslobs pas// |160|

phyi rol lus ni log²⁶ byed de//
sangs rgyas rnam kyi^c spyod yul mchog//
mtha’ yi de nyid bsgom par bya//
rang snying dam tshig phyag rgya yi^d// |161|

thugs kar^e mtshan ma la gnas pa//
de bzhin gshegs kun ye shes mchog//
rim pa dang po pa rnam la//
yi ge gzugs su rab snang ba// |162|

gzhom du med pa rang lha yi//
sa bon ‘od zer lnga ‘bar ba^f//
de yi kha dog rnam lnga yi^g//
‘od zer steng²⁷ gi sgo yi ni// |163|

g.yas nas rnam par spro bar bya//
de yi rtse las^h dkyil ‘khor gyi//
‘khor lo ldan pa’i bde gshegs rnam//

^a yang stong] D C S N, yang stong yang stong P

^b ge yi] sugg. em based on V (D and P) which read yi ge’i, ge’o D C P N S

^c kyi] D C V (D and P), kyiP N S S

^d yi] sugg. em. following V (D and P), yis D C P N S

^e kar] D C P S V (D and P), dkar N

^f ba] D C V (D and P), baP N S S

^g yi] sugg. em. following V (D and P), yis, D C P N S

^h rtse las] sugg. em following V (D and P), rtse la D C P N S

phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten bkang byas nas// |164|

dbugs kyi kun rtog las byung ba'i//
sems can thams cad sangs rgyas skur^a//
bskyed nas zla bar zhu byas ste²⁸//
thim nas rnam par dag byas nas// |165|

de rnams ye shes ngo bo ru//
g.yon pa'i ha sar zhugs par bya//
de yi mtshan ma dbus gnas pa//
sa bon la ni gzhug byas par// |166|

de nyid sangs rgyas thams cad kyi//
yon tan kun bskyed rin po che//
dngos po kun la khyab pa'i bdag//
mi shigs pa yi thig le che// |167|

'od zer lnga dang rab ldan pa'i^b//
tsa na ka yi 'bru tsam²⁹ du //
rang gi sems su chos thams cad//
bsdus nas rnam par bsam [8b] par bya// |168|

de yi 'od zer rim pa yis//
rang gi gnas ni khyab par bya//
de las phyir byung dam tshig rgya//
nang gsal de yis phyi yi lus// |169|

gsal byas dkyil 'khor gsal byas nas//
de yi gnas kyang gsal bar bya^c//
de las phyir byung bdag nyid nang//
byang chub sems gzugs bcu drug po// |170|

mthe ba'i rtsa bar yi ge a//
rje ngar gnyis la de bzhin ā//
brla gnyis la ni i yi gzugs//
gsang ba la ni ī yi gzugs// |171|

lte ba'i rtsa ru u gzugs gnas^d//
de bzhin gsus par ū yi gzugs//
nu ma gnyis su ṛ^e gzugs gnas//
de bzhin lag par r̄^f gzugs te// |172|

^a skur] sugg. em. following V (D and P), sku D C P N S

^b pa'i] P N S V (D and P), pa D C

^c bya] D C S N, ba P

^d gnas] D C P S, pas N

^e ṛ] D C P, ri S N

^f r̄] C N S, rā D, rī P

mgrin pa la ni ! yi gzugs//
de bzhin ma mchur yi ge !//
mgram pa gnyis su e gzugs so//
de yi mig gnyis yang ni ai// |173|

rna ba'i rtsa bar o yi gzugs//
sphyi bor au gzugs yang dag gnas//
am aḥ yi^a gzugs^b tshigs kun la//
bcu drug dus su rdzogs 'gyur ba// |174|

gong ma'i 'od kyis rnam bkug ste//
thig le ru ni gzhug^c bar bya//
de ru sems ni cung zad tsam//
gzung bas lha yi 'khor lo che// |175|

rten dang bcas pa mos pas brgom//
de dbus bdag po thugs ka ru^d//
gong ma'i rim pas mi shig pa'i//
thig le chen po bsgom byas nas^e// |176|

yungs kar tsad tsam de las spro//
rang gi gnas dang phyag rgya yi//
nang gsal kdyil 'khor gsal byas nas//
de yi gnas dang bdag po yi// |177|

nang gsal phyi lus gsal byas nas//
dkyil 'khor rten bcas gsal bar bya//
de nas bcu drug gnas pa yi//
'od zer gzhag pa phyung byas te// |178|

phyi yi lus ni gsal bar bya//
de yis dkyil 'khor 'khor lo dang//
rten dang bcas pa gsal byas nas//
phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten bzhugs pa yi// |179|

bde gshegs kun gyi spyang sngar gshegs//
bdud³⁰ rtsi zhu nas zhal zhugs te//
thig ler bdud rtsi blangs byas nas//
rdo rje'^f lam du byung nas su// |180|

'o ma'i rgyun ltar 'ong^g byas nas//

^a aḥ yi] P N S, aḥ'i D C

^b gzugs] P N S, gzugs su D C

^c gzhug] P N S, bzhug D C

^d ru] D C P S, rus N

^e nas] D C S N, P om.

^f rje'i] D C, rje P N S

^g 'ong] D C, sngon P N S; 'ongs V (D and P)

thabs kyi ye shes g.yas zhugs te//
de bzhin gzhan ni g.yon du zhugs//
de nas ye shes thig le la//
snang ba'i [9a] thigs pas thim par 'gyur// |181|

de ni 'dzag pa'i ngang tshul can//
'od zer lnga 'bar dkar 'tsher ba//
cung zad dmar ba'i nang du sems//
mi g.yo zhing ni gzung bar bya// |182|

de las^a gong ma'i rim pa ltar//
spro pa dang ni bsdus pa dang//
gzung ba yang dag byas gyur pas^b//
'gog pa'i rdo rje sems nyid du// |183|

nam zhig de la reg gyur pas^c//
sangs rgyas kun gyi^d mchog 'dzin pa//
yid bzhin^e dpal dang 'dra ba yi//
rtags mams yang dag skye bar 'gyur// |184|

phung po khams dang skye mched kyi//
lha rnam ye shes me yis su//
thog mar snying gar sdud byed pas^f//
cho ga 'di ni dang por bshad// |185|

de la bsgrub pas byin brlabs pas//
sna yi rtse mor 'gro bas na//
mi shigs^g thig le'i rjes thogs la//
gsang ba'i thig le bsgom par bshad// |186|

gong ma'i ye shes thig le las//
'od zer lcags kyu 'dra ba rnam//
phyog bcur spros pas bde gshegs rnam//
dkyil 'khor 'khor lo dang bcas kun// |187|

bkug nas ye shes ngo bo ru//
rang gi snying gar rab tu btsud//
de rnam zhu nas thig le la//
zhugs pas rdul dang mun pa dang// |188|

snying stobs tshul du thig le yang//

^a las] sugg. em. following V (D and P), la D C P N S

^b gyur pas] D C, 'gyur ba P N S

^c gyur pas] D C, 'gyur ba P N S

^d gyi] P N S, gyis D C

^e bzhin] D C (and *Muktilaka*, parallel verse), byin P N S, sbyin V (D and C)

^f pas] sugg. em. following V (D and P) pa'i D C, pa P N S

^g shigs] D C P S, shig N

snying gi padma las^a babs nas//
rang gi rdo rje nor bu yi//
dkyil du rnam par gnas pa las// |189|

‘byung ba lnga yi gzugs can mchog//
ye shes lnga yi ngo bo nyid//
‘od zer lnga ‘bar rang lha yi//
mtshan ma phra mo rnam^b bsams nas// |190|

de yi bum par^c rten gyi tshad//
yungs kar tsam dbus ‘khor lo che//
thig le^d bcas pa mos par bsgom//
gal te de la rang gi sems// |191|

bying bar song ngam skyo ba na//
rdo rje las ni phyir byung ste//
sna rtse rnam par gnas byas nas//
dga’ bral dga’ bas brtag par bya// |192|

‘di yi thig le rnal ‘byor las//
gong gi rim pas ‘od zer lnga//
steng gi sgo las byung^e ba dang
slar yang bdud rtsi ‘gugs^f pa dang// |193|

de bzhin gzhi la gzhug pa dang//
dbugs dgag stong pa’i yan lag go//
de nas gsang ba’i thig le che//
rab tu phra ba gong ma bzhin// |194|

rang sems dal bu dal bus gzung //
dngo po med pa’i gnas su [9b] ‘gyur// |195|

de yang gzung³¹ ba goms pa yis//
phyin^g log sa ni^h rnam par log³²//
smig rgyu lta bu snang ba ni//
rtags ni dang por shes par bya// |196|

de bzhin du ni chu log pas//
du ba lta bur ‘byung ba niⁱ//

^a las] sugg. em., la D C P N S. The reading *las* seems to have been transmitted in Tsongkhapa’s commentary on the five stages (see Kilty 2013: 174-75).

^b rnam] D C P, rnam S N

^c par] D C, pa P N S

^d le] sugg. em. following V (D and P), ler D C S P N

^e byung] D C, ‘byung P N S

^f ‘gugs] D C P S, ‘gug N

^g phyin] P N S, phyin ci D C

^h sa ni] P N S, ni D C

ⁱ ni] D C P S, nam N

gnyis pa yin par shes par bya//
me ni rnam par log gyur pas// |197|

mkha' snang 'dra ba gsum pa'o//
rlung ni de bzhin log pas na^a//
mar me lta bu^b rab snang bas^c//
rtags ni bzhi par shes bar bya// |198|

de bzhin phyin log rnam par shes//
log pas zab gsal gnyis med kyi//
don 'dra^d sprin med nam mkha ltar//
gsal ba rtags ni lgna pa'o// |199|

mtshan ma lnga po de yis ni//
mi gnas mya ngan 'das thob pas//
rnal 'byor pas ni 'di la 'bad//
gzung ba yi ni yan lag go// |200|

de ltar de la mtshan ma lnga//
mthong byas don des^e khyab bya'i phyir//
rdo rje yi ni lam nas su//
nam mkha'i khams su spro bar bya// |201|

spros pa de las sngon^f mthong ba'i//
so sor snang ba bskyed par bya//
sangs rgyas rjes su dran pa dang//
chos ni yang dag rjes dran dang// |202|

rdo rje rjes su dran pa dang//
rigs ni yang dag rjes dran dang//
khro bo rjes su dran pa ni//
snang mdzad dang ni tshe dpag med// |203|

mi bskyod rin chen 'byung ldan sogs//
gshin rje gshed sogs khro bo yi^g//
dkyil 'khor sku sogs ji rnyed po//
spro bdsu las ni gsal bar bya// |204|

de bzhin dam tshig rjes dran ni//
rjes su chags dang cho ga bzhi//
dang po spro bsdu las gsal bya//

^a na] D C, ni P N S

^b bu] D C P S, bur N

^c bas] D C, ba P N S

^d 'dra] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), dran D C P N S

^e des] D C P S V (D and P), de N

^f sngon] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), mngon D C P N S

^g bo yi] D C, bo'o P N S

dkiyl 'khor rjes su dran pa ni// |205|

cho ga gnyis pa la sogs pa'i//
dkiyl 'khor spro bsdu las^a gsal bya//
sku ni rjes su dran pa dang//
gsung dang thugs ni rjes dran dang// |206|

sems can rjes su dran pa ni//
sku dang gsung thugs bsgoms pa yi//
rdo rje gsum ni spro bsdu las//
rnam par smon^b cing dran pa'o// |207|

de bzhin sngags ni thams cad kyi//
spyi gzugs rjes su dran pa ni//
ye shes lnga yis rdo rje^c sems//
bskyed pa dang ni rang gi lha// |208|

longs spyod bzhi ldan spro bsdu las//
rjes su gsal ba^d rnyad pa'o//
dam tshig rjes su dran pa ni//
bdud rtsi myang ba la sogs pa// |209|

spro bsdu las ni gsal **[10a]** byed pa'o//
shes rab pha rol phyin pa dang//
ma skyes rjes su dran pa ni//
spros ba'i dkiyl 'khor de dag kyang// |210|

ci yang yod pa ma yin te//
de ni gnyis med ngo bo ru//
spro bsdu las ni dran pa'o//
zhe sdang rigs la sogs pa yi// |211|

mchod pa rjes dran sbyor ba ni//
rang gi rigs kyi bu mo mchog//
bar ma'i longs spyod bzhi dag pa//
rjes su chags pas mnyes bya ba// |212|

spro bsdu las ni gsal byed pa'o//
rjes su dran pa'i yan lag go//
de ltar yan lag gsum gyis ni//
gsang ba'i thig le bsgom byas nas// |213|

nor bu^a las ni byung nas kyang//

^a las] D C, la P N S

^b smon] P N V (D and P), smin D C S

^c rdo rje] D C, ye sheP N S S

^d ba] D C, dang P N S

^e + rang gi rigs la sogs pa yi// mchod pa rjes dran sbyor ba ni// P N S

kham s gsum khyab par byed pas ni//
sprul ba'i thig le bsgom par^b bshad//
rang gi spyi bo'i^c dbus su ni// [214]

sku yi rdo rje'i^d thugs ka ru//
mtshan ma la gnas rlung dkyil 'khor//
dud ka 'dra bar zla ba la//
°om dkar 'ong ba'i mtshan nyid bsam// [215]

de bzhin mgrin pa'i dbus su yang//
gsung gi rdo rje thugs ka yi//
mtshan ma'i^f dbus su chu dkyil 'khor//
dkar po dbus su zla ba la// [216]

āḥ^g dmar gnas pa'i rang bzhin bsgom//
thugs kar thugs kyi rdo rje yi//
thugs kar mtshan ma la gnas pa'i//
me³³ yi dkyil 'khor dmar po la// [217]

zla gnas dbus su hūm nag po//
'gro ba'i rang bzhin bsams nas kyang//
nu ma gnyis kyi bar du yang//
dam tshig phyag rgya'i thugs ka ru// [218]

mtshan ma la gnas dbang chen ni//
dkyil 'khor ser po zla ba la//
rang gi lha³⁴ yi sa bon che//
'byung dang 'jug dang gnas pa la//
rnam par grol ba'i sa bon bsam^h// [219]

de ltar phyag rgya bzhi chen dang//
bdag nyid 'brel bar byas nas su//
rim pa 'di yis mi shigs pa'i
rdo rje bzlas pa'i ngo bo bya// [220]

g.yas pa nas ni 'byung ba'i kham s//
rlung gi dkyil 'khor chen po ste//
kha dog dud ka rgyu ba las//
'byung ba hūm gi ngo bo yis// [221]

snang srid chos kun khyab byas nas//

^a bu] P N S V(D and P), du D C

^b par] D C, pa P N S

^c bo'i] C, po'i D, bo P N S

^d rje'i] D C, rje P N S

^e + sa N

^f ma'i] P S, pa'i D C

^g āḥ] D C, ā P S

^h bsam] D C, bsams P S

chos kun dag byas bdud rtsir^a ‘gyur^b//
om̄ gyi ngo bos ‘ong^c byas nas//
rang gi^d rgyud kyi bag chags ni// |222|

bkrus nas dag byas de la zhugs//
āḥ^e yi ngo **[10b]** bos gnas^f byas nas//
de la lha yi de bzhin nyid//
gzung ba dal bus dal bus^g byas// |223|

dn̄gos po med pa’i gnas su ‘gyur//
g.yon pa nas ni ‘byung ba’i khams//
chu yi dkyil ‘khor chen po ste//
kha dog dkar po rab gnas pa// |224|

de las byung ba’i hūm dang ni//
om̄ gyi rang bzhin ‘dus ba dang//
āḥ^h yi rang bzhin gnas pa dang//
de nyid gzung baⁱ snga ma bzhin// |225|

gnyi ga las ni drag tu ‘byung//
me yi dkyil ‘khor nyid yin te//
kha dog dmar po’i ngo bo las//
hum̄ gis spros dang om̄ gyis bsdus// |226|

āḥ^k yis gnas pa de nyid gzung//
snga ma bzhin du shes par bya//
de bzhin gnyis las dal bu ‘byung//
dbang chen gyi ni dkyil ‘khor rgyu// |227|

kha dog gser ltar rab snang ba//
de la hum̄ gis ‘byung ba dang//
om̄ gyis sdud^l dang āḥ^m yis gnas//
de la de nyid rab bzung nas// |228|

‘jug dang gnas dang ldang ba las//
grol ba’i ye shes rnyed ‘gyur ba//

^a rtsir] D C , rtsi P N S

^b ‘gyur] P N S, gyur D C

^c ‘ong] D C, ‘ong P N S S V (P), ‘od V (D)

^d S om.

^e āḥ] D C V (D), a P N S, aḥ V (P)

^f gnas] P N S V (D and P), dag D C

^g dal bus] P N S, dbus lus D C

^h āḥ] D C, āḥ P N S

ⁱ gzung ba] P N S, bzung bas D C

^j po’i] D C, po P N S

^k āḥ] D C, āḥ P N S

^l sdud] D C P sdu S, bsdud N

^m āḥ] D C P N, aḥ S

som nyi yid gnyis ma byed cig// |229|

phyag rgya bzhi ‘brel bzlas pa ni//
nyis brgya nyi shu rtsa nga ste//
de ni dgu brgya rnam pa bsgres//
zhag gcig tu ni nyi shu bzhis// |230|

khri phrag gnyis dang gcig stong dang//
brgya phrag drug tu dus thams cad//
rnal ‘byor dbang phyug chen po yis//
nyin mtshan bzlas brjod grangs byed do// |231|

‘di yis rnam pa’^a chos thams cad//
sgyu ma dang ni smig rgyu dang//
brag ca mgal me’i ‘kho lo dang//
‘khrul pa dri za’i grong khyer dang// |232|

chu bur dang ni mig ‘phrul dang//
gzugs brnyan chu zla la sogs par//
thams cad shes shing sa bcu pa’i//
dbang phyug rnam dang skal^b mnyam ste// |233|

rang bzhin bzlas pa ‘di la ni//
rnal ‘byor bas ni rab tu ‘bad//
‘di ni thogs ma med dus nas//
rang bzhin yang dag rtag zlo yang// |234|

bla ma yang dag ma brten^c bar//
don ‘di rtogs par mi ‘gyur ro//
de ni yang dag shes nas ni//
bsgom pa’i bar chad phyi rol gyi//
bzlas pa yongs su spang bar bya// |235|

bzlas pa’i ngo bo chen po mchog//
rdo rje ‘chang ba brjod med sku//
bsam brjod yul las rab ‘das bas//
ngag gis [11a] ji ltar bzlas pa byed// |236|

de bas glang chen rnyed gyur pas//
rjes kyi de la ci zhig bya// |237|

don de la gnas rnal ‘byor che//
phyi rol yang ni rten mi ‘gal//
glang po che yi stobs kyis ni//
bud shing ‘byung ba lta bu’o// |238|

^a yis rnam pas] P N S, yi mam pas D C

^b skal] D C V (D and P), bskal P N S

^c brten] P N S, bsten D C

de bas rdo rje bzlas pa mchog//
‘bad pas bde gshegs thams cad kyi^a//
byin brlabs gnyid^b ni ‘ong bas na//
phyag rgya chen po ‘grub pa yi//
mtshan ma yang dang yang ‘byung ‘gyur// |239|

de ‘byung^c cho ga la gnas pas//
skad cig gis ni kun mkhyen che//
rgyud la^d rab tu ‘pho bar ni//
the tshom med par nges³⁵ pas na//
cho ga ‘di la rab tu ‘bad// |240|

de ltar dga’ gsum bye brag gi//
thig le rnam gsum bsgom pa yi//
cho ga yang dag bstan pa’o// |241|

da ni gnyis med ye shes nyid//
kun rdzob gzugs la brten nas kyang//
mi g.yo la sogs g.yo dang bcas//
tshangs sogs lha dang lha min sogs// |242|

thams cad rab tu mi snang yang//
thig le ‘gog par mi ‘gyur te//
rgyu dang mi rgyu^e bcas pa kun//
slar yang de las ‘byung bar byed// |243|

de las skye bo rnam kyis ni//
yang dag ma rtogs pa yi phyir//
tshangs pa’i sgo nga las skyes par//
‘khrul pas chos rnam kyis mi bsgul// |244|

gang gis kyang ni mi shigs pa//
ji srid ‘di ni lus gnas pas//
las dang las min rab byed pas^f//
brtan po ‘jigs pa rab spangs pa’i //
mi shigs thig le bsgoms par bshad// |245|

tshangs pa’i spyod pa bzhi po dang//
phyi rol stong byas^g la sogs pa//
rang gi lha ru skyed nas kyang//

^a kyi] D C, kyis P S

^b gnyid] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), nyid D C P N S

^c ‘byung] D C, byung P S

^d la] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), las D C P N S

^e rgyu] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), rgyur D C P N S

^f pas] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), pa D C P N S

^g byas] P N S, bcas D C,

phyag rgya bzhis ni rgyas btab pa// |246|

snga ma bzhin du shes byas nas//
rim pa 'di yis^a thig le la//
rang gi sems ni yang dag bzung^b//
rang gi ye shes sems dpa' yi// |247|

mtshan ma'i dbus gnas sa bon las//
'od zer lnga 'phros de yi rtse//
dkyil 'khor 'khor lo dpag med sprul//
de yis khams kun khyab byas nas// |248|

dbugs kyi rta zhon kun rtog rnams//
rnam par bsal te de dag kyang//
dkyil 'khor 'kho lor rab byas te//
gnyis pa^c dkyil 'khor bsdu [11b] byas nas// |249|

ye shes ngo bo sna bug g.yon//
zhugs byas mtshan ma'i dbus gnas bya//
sa bon la ni thim pas kyang//
de ni phyogs dus gnas pa yi// |250|

sangs rgyas yon tan ci gsungs pa//
yang dag bskyed^d byed mi shig pa'i//
thig le 'od zer lnga 'bar ba//
rnam par gsal byas de las kyang// |251|

'od zer 'byung bas rang gnas kyang//
ye shes sems dpa'i nang gsal te//
de yi phyi³⁶ dang^e dkyil 'khor dang//
gnas^f ni gsal bya de la byung// |252|

mthe bo'i rtsa dang rje ngar dang//
brla gnyis dang ni gsang ba'i gnas//
lte ba dang ni gsus pa dang//
nu ma gnyis dang lag rtse dang// |253|

mgrin pa dang ni mchu gnyis dang//
'gram pa gnyis dang mig gnyis dang//
rna ba'i rgsa dang spyi bo dang//
tshigs kun thig le āḥ^g sogs kyi// |254|

^a yis] P N S V (D and P), yi] D C

^b bzung] D C P N V (P), gzung S V (D)

^c pa] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), pa'i D C P N S

^d bskyed] P N S, skyed D C

^e dang] P N S V (D and P), yi] D C

^f gnas] P N S V (D and P), nang D C

^g āḥ] D C, a P N S

gzugs su gnas pa bkug^a byas nas//
mi shigs thig ler thim par bya//
der ni rang gi sems cung zad//
gzung^b bas rten dang rten^c can gyi// [255]

‘khor lor mos³⁷ byas de dbus su//
mi shigs thig le ye shes la//
snang ba’i ngo bo bsgom par bya//
de yi ‘od gyis rang gnas sogs^d// [256]

gsal byas ye shes thig le yi//
nang gsal gzhag^e pa’i ‘od zer gyis//
phyogs bcu ‘jig rten khams bzhugs pa’i//
spyang ngar bdud rtsi zhu byas nas// [257]

zhal du zhugs nas snying ga yi//
mi shigs thig ler rab song ste//
kṣum^f gzugs bdud rtsi^g rab blangs nas//
rdo rje’i^h lam nas phyung nas su// [258]

‘o ma’i rgyun ltar phyogs bcu nas//
‘ongs pa yis ni sems can dang//
sangs rgyas rnams dang mi rgyur bcas//
yang dag bsdus nas gur sogs zhugs// [259]

de bzhin chos dbyings phyag rgya dang//
rten gyi ‘khor lor zhugs byas nas//
de dag yang ni rab bsdus te//
dkyil ‘khor du ni rab bsdus nas// [260]

de yang bdag la bsdus byas te//
bdag nyid kyang ni mi snang bar//
ye shes sems dpa’i gnas la dmigs//
de yang ‘khor lo ‘khor lo yang// [261]

ye shes sems dpar zhugsⁱ par bya//
ye shes sems dpa’ mi snang nas//
mtshan^j ma ‘ba’ zhig la [12a] dmigs bya//

^a bkug] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), bsgrub D C, sgrub P N S

^b bzung] P N S V (D and P), gzung D C

^c rten] C V (D), rtan D, brten P N S V (P)

^d sogs] D P N S, so C

^e bzhag] P N S V (P), gzhag D C V (D)

^f kṣum] D C P N, kṣu S

^g rtsi] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), rtsir D C P N S

^h rje’i] D C, rje P N S

ⁱ zhugs] D C V (D and P), gzhug P N S

^j + pa N

mtshan ma de yang bsdu byas nas// |262|

mi shig thig ler sems bzung ste//
de las yang ni nang gi tshogs//
kun bsdu rang snang thig le che//
'ba' zhig la sems yang dag gzung^a// |263|

ci ltar nus bzhin bsgom pas der//
sems ni yang dang yang du zhugs//
yang ni de las phyir byung ste//
de yi gnas dang rang gi lus// |264|

dmigs nas dkyil 'khor 'khor lo dang//
rten dang khams gsum snang bar bya//
de nas yang ni gong ma ltar//
rim par^b bcug nas thim byas la// |265|

sems ni thig ler gzhag^c par bya//
rang gi dbang po der bzung nas//
sa yi dkyil 'khor chu la zhugs//
chu de me la de bzhin zhugs// |266|

me yang rlung la rab tu zhugs//
rlung yang sems la zhugs par gyur//
sems ni gnyis med ye shes su//
cung zad zhugs pas rtags^d gnas pa// |267|

smig rgyu 'dra dang du ba dang//
mar me mkha' snang rab 'dra ba//
sprin med nam^e mkha' ltar snang ba'i//
mtshan ma lnga po 'byung bar 'gyur// |268|

rdo rje sems dpa' zhugs phyir ro//
thig le la ni sems bzung ste//
glal zhing dgod^f dang 'dar la sogs//
rnal 'byor de la gang tshe 'byung// |269|

thig le yang dag spro byas nas//
gong ma'i rim pas kun khyab bya//
'di ni yang dag goms byas pas//
mi gnas mya ngan 'das pa che// |270|

^a gzung P N S V (D and P), bzung] D C

^b par] D C V (D and P), paP N S S

^c gzhag] D C V (D), bzhag P N S V (P)

^d rtags] D C, brtagP N S S

^e C om.

^f dgod] D C V (D), rgod P N S V (P)

thabs kun gyi^a ni bsgrub bya mchog//
rdo rje ‘chang ba chen po thob//
‘di ni lhan cig skyes pa yi//
ye shes ‘ba’ zhig dbang byas nas//
rim pa gnyis pa bsgom pa’i thabs//
mi shigs thig le³⁸ bsgom pa’o// |271|

de ltar chos kun de bzhin nyid//
dpag med dam pa’i phun sum tshogs//
de dmigs yang dag skyes ‘gyur ba//
bsgom pa’i cho ga^b nam bshad nas// |272|

rnam grangs dag kyang yongs su bstan//
de bzhin nyid dang yang dag mtha’//
bsam gyis mi khyabs pa yi dbyings//
chos nyid dang ni chos skyon med^c// |273|

stong pa nyid dang mtshan ma med//
smon pa med pa nyid dang yang//
nyon mongs khur chen ‘bor^d byed pa//
skye ba med dang ‘od gsal [12b] ba// |274|

mngon par byang ni chub pa dang//
gzhan gyi sems shes byed pa dang//
lha yi rna ba ster ba dang//
de bzhin lha yi mig ster³⁹ dang// |275|

rdzu ‘phrul dpag med sprul chen dang//
dngos po mthar ni phyin pa dang//
don dam pa yi bden pa dang//
rdzogs pa yi ni rim pa dang// |276|

yongs su dag pa’i sku gtsang dang//
kun gyis^e bsten bya nyid dag dang//
mkha⁴⁰ ltar rnam par dag pa dang//
glo bur dri mas mi gos dang// |277|

gdod nas ‘od gsal ba nyid dang//
gang gis kyang ni mi shigs dang//
dngos po med pa nyid dang ni//
rgyu sogs bcu gnyis ‘byung byed dang// |278|

dpal chen ye shes yongs dag dang//

^a gyi] P N S, gyis D C

^b cho ga] D C P S, mchog N

^c + ngag N

^d ‘bor P N S V (D), ‘dor D C, por V (P)

^e gyis] D C V (D and P), gyi P N S

thig le chen po yongs dag dang//
sangs rgyas kun gyi gsang chen dang//
nam mkha' nam mkha'i spyod yul dang// [279]

bsgom pa med pa nyid dang ni//
rje⁴¹ btsun man ngag chen po dang//
rna^a nas rna bar 'pho byed dang//
nyan thos kyis ni shes min dang// [280]

rang sangs rgyas sogs⁴² mi shes dang//
yi ge med pa nyid dang ni//
tshig dang bral dang brjod med sogs//
de la mdo dang rgyud^b rnam las// [281]

de 'dra rnam pa mtha' yas pa//
gsungs shing yang dag gsung 'gyur ba//
der ni de bzhin nyid 'di las//
gzhan ni ci yang ma gsungs so// [282]

de bas dad pa sngon 'gro ba'i//
sems kyis^c chos kun de bzhin nyid//
zab gsal^d gnyis med don chen po//
rim pa gnyis pa'i^e de kho na// [283]

bla ma'i gsung ni yang dag gzung//
de gzung^f gong ma'i rim pa yis//
rtag tu goms^g byed skyes bu gang//
de la brten^h pa'i rtags skyes nas// [284]

sa nas sar ni 'phar ba ltar//
bloⁱ yi rnam pa gong du 'phel//
rig 'dzin la sogs sprul pa yis//
gzhan ni don de la sbyor byed// [285]

de yis brtan^j 'gyur rnal 'byor pa//
sgrub pa'i bdag nyid can^k du 'gyur//
bdag nyid can des bsgrub pa'i mchog//
ji skad gsungs pa brtsam par bya// [286]

^a rna] P N S V (D and P), sna D C

^b rgyud] D C P S, brgyud N

^c kyis] D C P S V (D and P), kyi N

^d zab gsal] D C, gsal zab P N S V (D and P)

^e pa'i] P N S V (D and P), pa D C,

^f gzung] P N S V (D and P), bzung D C

^g goms] D C S N, gom P

^h brten] D C, brtan P N S

ⁱ blo] P N S V (D and P), de D C

^j brtan] D C, bstan P N S

^k can] D C P S, tsam N

lha mo klu mo gnod sbyin mo//
mi mo mi 'am ci mo'am//
mkha' 'gro ma la sogs pa rnam//
rang gi nus pas brtsam^a par bya// |287|

smyon pa'i brtul zhugs la sogs pas//
zla drug sogs par rab tu 'bad//
de yis rje brtsun [13a] yig^b med pa//
dpal ldan sangs rgyas kun ngo bo// |288|

rdo rje 'dzin pa thams cad gnas//
chos kun de bzhin nyid zab pa//
sangs rgyas rnam kyī bsgrub bya mchog//
gong ma'i rim pa rnal 'byor pas^c// |289|

'bad pa che thang rab byas pas//
ji^d ltar de ru mtshan nyid kyī//
tshul du cung zad rab gnas pa'i//
dga' dang dga' ba bar ma dang// |290|

dga' dang bral ba'i dus su yang//
ji bzhin gnas pa'i dga' ba gsum//
ji skad gsungs pa thob par 'gyur// |291|

de nas mtha' med 'khor ba'i bar//
rtag pa dang ni mi gdung dang//
bsil ba dang ni gcig pa dang//
bde ba dang ni dri med dang// |292|

dga' ba dang ni yid dga' ba//
'di ni bde chen ro myang brgyad//
bdag po rdo rje 'chang^e ba mchog//
rdzogs pa'i rim pa'i rnal 'byor pa^f// |293|

bya ba byas pa byed pa byas//
dbang phyug chen po khur chen bor//
tsher ma dkrugs pa thams cad mkhyen//
skyes bu dpa' bo cang^g shes pa// |294|

^a brtsam] D C P N, btsam S

^b yig] P N S, yid D C. This is also strongly supported by Vaidyapāda's commentary, which provides a gloss of *yi ge med pa* (*Sukusuma*, 126b.7).

^c pas] D C, pa P N S

^d ji] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), de D C P N S

^e 'chang] D C P S, chang N

^f pa] P N S, pas D C

^g cang] D C P N, kyang S

glang po chen po dul ba'o^a//
'khor ba'i mtha' yi^b pha rol son//
don dam dang ni kun rdzob kyil//
bden pa gnyis med rnal 'byor che// |295|

tha ba^c spangs pa'am lam kun rdzogs//
yon tan 'byung gnas kun du bzang//
thams cad 'dus pa'i de kho na//
sku sogs khams kun 'gengs pa'o// |296|

gong na med pa yang dag gnas//
de ltar de sogs rab grags pa//
ming ni rnam pa mtha' yas pa//
gnyis med ye shes mtson pa ste//
mdo dang rgyud rnam thams cad du//
blo ldan rnam kyis rtogs par bya// |297|

sa bcu dang ni rab ldan pas^d//
gong⁴³ ma'i lha mo rdo rje 'dzin//
dge ba bcu gsum la gnas pa//
skad cig gis ni yang dag tu//
sgrib bral de yis rtogs par byed// |298|

phreng pa ha ra nu pur^e sogs//
mdog dang ku tsa la sogs pa//
padma rtags pa'i dga' shes pa//
dang por rab tu shes par bya// |299|

ṣa dzdza rī ṣa ni ṣā^f sogs//
glu byangs bstod dang sid^g sgra yi//
snyan pa'i dbyangs kyis dga' 'gyur bas//
gnyis pa ru ni shes par bya// |300|

tsandan^h la sogs sna tshogs dris//
lus byugs lhan cig [13b] rtse byed tse//
dga' ba yang dag thob byed pa//
gsum pa ru ni shes par bya// |301|

^a pa'o] P N S V (D and P), pa 'o C, pa po D

^b yi P N S, ni] D C. This is supported by Vaidyapāda who glosses the phrase 'khor ba'i mtha'i pha rol son' (*Sukusuma*, D 127b.3)

^c tha ba] P N S V (D and P), thab D C

^d pas] sugg. em., pa'i D C P N S. My emendation here is based on the same phrase used earlier in the text in verse 118.

^e pur] D C, phur P N S,

^f ṣa dzdza rī ṣa ni ṣā] sugg. em. following V (D), ṣa dzdze rī ni ṣā na D, ṣa dzdza rī ni ṣā na C, sha rdzas gri tra gri na P N S, sha rdza gri ta ghri na V (P)

^g sid] P V (D), sing D C S N V (P). This same term is used in verse 110 of the text for a kind of buzzing sound that is made, presumably with the mouth against the partner's body, to produce pleasure.

^h tsandan] D C, tsan dan P S, tsadna na N

ma mchu sbrang rtsi gzhib^a byas pas//
mgor gnas byang chub sems 'ju bas//
ro 'thung dga' bas bdag mnyes pas//
bzhi par rab tu shes par bya// |302|

lus la byug cing sna tshogs kyi//
spyod pas rtsen tshe reg bya yis//
yang dag^b dga' bar byed pas na//
lnga pa ru ni shes par bya// |303|

de yis ye shes rnam pa gsum//
rig par byed cing rang gi yid//
yang dag dga' bar rab byed pa//
drug par shes bya rnal 'byor pas// |304|

de yi lus ni bdag gi ni//
rten du gnas pa sra ba yis//
yang dag dga' bar byed pas na//
bdun pa ru ni shes par bya// |305|

de yi padma'i zil sogs dang//
byang sems rlan gyis rang gi sems//
rab tu dga' bar byed pas na//
brgyad par rab tu shes par bya// |306|

gsang gnas drod sogs tsha ba yis//
bdag gi yid ni yang dag par//
dga' byar byed pa'i mchog yin pas//
dgu pa ru ni shes par bya// |307|

de nas bskyod pas ye shes mes//
phung po khams sogs sreg byed pas//
yid ni yang dag dga' 'gyur pas//
bcu par^c rab tu shes par bya// |308|

bcu po de yis dang po dang//
physis kyi 'bras bu mchog 'gyur ba//
gong^d du gsungs pa rab thob ste//
de bas de 'dra'i don chen la// |309|

yang dag 'jug par mi nus pa'i//
gdul bya rnam la bde gshogs kyis//
rab tu dga' sogs mtshan nyid du//

^a gzhibs] P N, bzhibs S, gzhib D C

^b C om.

^c par] D C P S, pa N

^d gong] P N S, gang D C

bstan nas de yi don zhugs pas// |310|

de yis rtogs kyang bla dang bcas//
de nyid dang po^a rnal 'byor la//
rten dang rten^b can dkyil 'khor gyi//
'khor lo rab tu bstan^c byas nas// |311|

de zhugs de la brtan byas pas//
rtogs kyang don 'di ma shes na//
yang dag sangs rgyas ma yin no// |312|

'di^d ni rang byung^e bcom ldan 'das//
gcig pu rab tu che ba'i lha//
lhag pa'i lha zhes bya ba ni//
bcu gsum sa^f zhes bya bar bshad// |313|

de ltar rim pa gnyis pa yi//
de bzhin nyid ni thabs bcas pa'i//
bdud rtsi mchog 'di rnal 'byor gang//
'thung bar byed pa sangs rgyas kyi// |314|

de yi sras su nges pa ste//
byang chub sems dpa' rnam kyi [14a] grogs//
rig pa 'dzin pa'i dpon po ste//
mkha' 'gro ma yi khyo ru 'gyur// |315|

nyan thos rang 'dren rnams kyi ni//
'dren par byed pa'i gtso bo ste//
sems can phal pa'i rje brtsun no//
de la phyogs bcu khams bzhugs pa'i// |316|

sangs rgyas byang chub sems dpa' dang//
rig pa'i lha dang khro bo sogs//
me tog la sogs mchod par bcas//
zhag gcig skya^g rengs^h dang po dang// |317|

phyed ni dros pa'i dus nyid dang//
chal chil mtshams su nam mkha' las//
mchod pa byas nas sngags brjod cing//
rang gi zhing du 'gro bar 'gyur// |318|

^a po'i] D C, po P N S

^b rten] D C V (D and P), brten P N S

^c bstan] P N S V (P), brtan D C V (D)

^d 'di] D C S N, de P

^e byung] D C, 'byung P N S

^f sa] P N S, pa D C

^g skya] D P N S, skye C

^h rengs] D C, reng P N S

de bas dag pa'i lha rnam kyang//
de bzhin du ni mchod byed na//
ma dag pa yi lha rnam ni//
de la ci yi phyr mi mchod// |319|

sems can phal pa gzhan gyis ni//
me tog snyim pa bkang nas ni//
mgrin pa^a dma' bas zhabs 'dud cing//
rtag tu bkur^b bar shin tu 'o// |320|

de ni skyes bu rkang gnis gtso//
kun mkhyen rnam kyis bzhag pa ste//
phyin log khur chen bor byed pas//
ma 'ongs rdo rje 'chang ba ste// |321|

de la brnyas byed sems can gang//
sgrub pa po de glang dang 'dra//
de yis nga la brnyas byed pas//
ngas ni de kun dus kun spong// |322|

cig shos lus la nga gnas phyr//
mchod cing brjod pas lus rnam kyis//
grib pa de yis dag byed do// |323|

rim pa gnyis 'dir sgrub pa po//
rtse gcig pa yis nam par gzung//
de gzung tshe 'di nyid la yang//
brtul zhugs cho ga nyid kyis ni// |324|

lha mos rkyen ni rab byas te//
phyag rgya chen po rang rgyud la//
'pho bar the tshom mi bya'o// |325|

da ni rang nyid byin brlabs^c pa'i
rim pa 'di ni rnal 'byor pa//
bya bas bskal pa 'ga' zhig la//
yang dag tu ni bshad par bya// |326|

gang zhig bla ma mnyes byas nas//
des gnang dam sdom⁴⁴ bcas ba ru//
bum pa la sogs rab thob ste//
bla ma'i zhal las rnyed^d pa yi// |327|

de bzhin nyid ni rab thob cing//

^a pa] D C P S, par N

^b bkur] D C, bskur P S

^c brlabs] D C V (D), brlab P N S V (P)

^d rnyed] D C P N, rnyes S

gsang dang mchog tu gsang rigs^a pas//
ji skad bshad pa'i bya ba yis//
yang dag bsgom ni mi nus pas// |328|

ji bzhin pa yi de kho na//
rim pa 'di [14b] yis bsgom par bya//
gang zhig dus ni phyi zhig la//
'chi ba'i mtshan ma bdag gis mthong// |329|

'chi bar gyur pa'i dus byung na//
nad kyis yang dag ma rnyogs par//
'pho ba'i sbyor ba yang dag bya// |330|

dpral ba dang ni ste ba dang//
spyi gtsug dang ni mig dang ni//
rna ba dang ni sna dag dang//
chu yi gnas dang chu min gnas// |331|

kha yi gnas dang ye shes kyi//
'gro 'ong gi^b ni rtags shes bya//
dbral ba gzugs kyi khams kyi ni//
rtags skyes ba ru shes par bya// |332|

lte bar 'dod khams lha rnam kyi//
rtags byung de ru skye bar nges//
spyi gtsug gzugs med khams rnam kyi//
rtags byung de ru shye bar 'gyur// |333|

sna^c gnyis ye shes 'pho ba na//
gnod sbyin gnas su skye bar 'gyur//
rna^d gnyis rig pa 'dzin pa yi//
gnas su nges par 'gro ba'o// |334|

mig gnyis mi rnam rgyal por 'gyur//
rtags ni yang dag skye bar 'gyur
kha ru ye shes 'pho ba na//
yi dwags^e rtags su shes par bya// |335|

chu gnas dud 'gro rnam kyi ni^f//
rtags su yang dag rab shes bya//
chu min bu gur ye shes 'gro//
dmyal ba'i^a rtags su shes par bya// |336|

^a rigs] D C, rig P N S

^b gi] P N S, gis D C

^c sna] P N S V (D and P), rna, D C

^d rna] P N S V (D and P), sna D C

^e dwags] sugg. em. , dags D C P N S V (D and P)

^f ni] D C, rtagP N S S

de ltar ye shes ‘pho ba yi//
rnam^b ba’i cha ni shes byas nas//
sgrogs pa lnga yi ye ge yis//
steng gi sgo bdun dgag par bya// |337|

chu yi sgo ru sum^c gis^d dgag//
chu min ksum gis dgag bar bya//
de ltar sgo dgu bkag nas kyang//
rim pa ‘di yis rang sems kyi^e// |338|

gnas ni rab tu btsal byas pas//
dbyings nyid du ni nges par ‘gro//
phung po skye mched khams rnam su//
rnal ‘byor rgyud kyi dpyad pa ltar// |339|

rnam par bsgom byas ye shes gyis^f//
gong na med pa rtogs par ‘gyur//
bdag nyid ji skad gsungs pa bzhin//
lha yi lus su gyur byas la^g// |340|

chos kyi dbyings dang rnam shes dang//
bdag nyid sangs rgyas skur byas pa’i//
gnas ni rin chen sna tshogs pa’i//
kha dog sna lngas rab brgyan pa’i// |341|

rdo rje rtse mo dgu pa mchog//
bdag gi spyi bo’i steng du ni//
bsams nas de ru rang gi sems//
rdo rje dkar po bcu tshal tsam// |342|

rtse lnga bsams [15a] nas brtag byar bya//
yar gyi rtse lnga thabs lnga ste//
de bzhin mar bltas shes rab lnga//
dbus kyi bum bar^h ri bong can// |343|

bsams nas de ru ye shes che//
ser po byang chub sems ‘dra ba//
‘dzag pa’i ngangⁱ tshul dang ‘dra ba//

^a ba’i] D C, ba P N S

^b rnam] D C P N V (D and P), rna S

^c sum] D C V (D), sūm P N S, sum V (P)

^d gis] D C S, gi P N

^e kyi] D C V (D and P), kyiP N S S

^f gyis] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), so D C P N S

^g la] P N S, pa D C. Vaidyapāda also supports this reading: *lha’i lus su gyur par byas la//* (*Sukusuma*, 131a.7).

^h bar] sugg. em. based on Vaidyapāda’s commentary, ba D C P N S. Vaidyapāda reads *dbus kyi bum pa ni de’i dbus kyi bum par ro//* (*Sukusuma*, 131b.4).

ⁱ ngang] D C S, dang P N

thig le tsa na ka yi 'bru// [344]

Inga 'byor tshad du bsgom par bya//
de nas chos kun thams cad kun//
med par bsams nas bdag dmigs te//
bdag kyang bdag la thim byas na// [345]

sems tsam de yang mda' bzhin du//
spyi bor rdo rje 'og cha yi//
sbu^a gur zhugs nas thig ler^b thim//
de ni de bzhin gshegs pa rnam// [346]

lha mo rnam kyi rang bzhin gyi//
gnas su shes par rab tu bya//
de ni gdod nas grub pa'i gzugs//
de ru shes pa rab zhugs pa// [347]

sems de yang dang yang du gzung//
de las sems de yar ba ltar//
rdo rje rtse dgu steng cha yi//
sbu^c gur byung nas sna rtsogs kyi// [348]

padmar zla ba gnas pa la//
rdo rje sems⁴⁵ dpa'i skur gyur te//
mtshan dang dpe byad kun brgyan pa//
rgyan kun brgyan pa'i na bza' dang// [349]

bral nas shin tu gsal dmigs te//
de gnyis med pa'i sbyor ba yis//
byin rlabs^d las byung 'khor lo che//
rnam par 'phro zhing 'du bar bsam// [350]

de ltar rnam par bsgom pa mchog//
yang dang yang du ci nus bsgom//
bsam pa de yi rkyen gyis ni//
bdag sems^e dbyings su zhugs pa'i tshe// [351]

gsal zhing rab dga'^f mkha' 'dra rtogs//
de nas rdzu 'phrul shugs ldan pa^g//
lo lnga lon pa'i byis pa'i gzugs//
'grub tshe dpe med bde rdzogs rtogs// [352]

^a sbu] D C V (D and P), bu P N S

^b ler] D C V (D and P), le P N S

^c sbu] D C, bu P N S

^d rlabs] D C, brlabP N S S

^e + can N

^f dga'] P N S V (D and P), dag D C

^g pa] D C V (D and P), pa'i P N S

de las skye gnas gzhan du ni//
'phen par^a byed tshe sprul pa'i gzugs//
yang dag tu ni rtogs par 'gyur// |353|

de lta bas na sems can gyi//
bsam pa gang dang gang dag gis//
mi rnams yid ni yang dag sbyong//
de dang de ni mdo⁴⁶ bzhin du//
sna tshogs nor bu lta bur 'gyur// |354|

chos sku rab dga' mkha mnyam pa//
shi dang brgyal dang gnyid log dang//
glal dang 'khrig dus skad cig tsam//
myong bar 'gyur bas rab bsgoms na//
lus can rnams ni yid ni sbyong// |355|

cho ga 'di yis sems can gang//
[15b] mtshams med byed cing rmongs pa yi//
skye bo bram ze gsod pa yang//
de yis mi 'grub cung zad med// |356|

de bas bka' lung rab thob nas//
dam sdom rnam par bsrung byas te//
sku gsum 'grub par the tshom med//
gal te sku gsum ma grub na// |357|

rig pa 'dzin pa'i gtsor 'gyur te//
rim gyis phyag rgya chen por 'gyur//
de ltar rnam pa gsum gyis ni//
dngos grub de ni bsgom pa bshad// |358|

gang zhig 'di ni ma rtogs par//
gsang ba smra bar byed pa ni//
de ni^b nga dang de bzhin gshegs//
nam zhig de la sbyar byas pas//
byin gyis rlob par mi byed do// |359|

'di ni don ldan 'ga' zhig la//
nga ni de yi^c lus gnas te//
bsgrub pa gzhan las^d mchod pa len//
de yis de mnyes rang gi rgyud//
las kyi sgrub pa dag byed do// |360|

^a 'phen par] P N S V (D and P), 'phel bar D C

^b ni] D C, la P N S

^c yi] D C P S, yis N

^d las] sugg. em., la D C P N S V (D and P) . I suggest this emendation only to gramatically align with the verb *len*.

‘di don rna bar ‘pho byed pa//
gang gi dus su gnas par der//
sangs rgyas bstan pa rin chen yang//
gnas par^a rab tu bshad pa yin// |361|

brgyud pa’i rim pa ‘di chad nas//
sangs rgyas bstan pa nub pa ru//
kun gyis rab tu shes par bya// |362|

de bas khyod kyī yid gcig tu//
yang dag bsdus la ma ‘ongs pa’i//
gang zag⁴⁷ sngon^b du tshogs bskyed pa’i //
skal ldan ‘ga’ la rnam par brgyud//
sim byed ‘di la sbyor du chug// |363|

‘di sbyor ‘di ni yang dag pa’i//
rnal ‘byor pa ru shes par bya// |364|

khyod kyang zad kyī spyod pa dang//
nga la cung zad ‘khrul rtogs pas//
khyod kyis^c tshe ‘di nyid la ni//
gzugs bcas phung po rang lus ni//
gnas ni yang dag mi ‘gyur te// |365|

rnam par shes pa mi shigs pa//
phyag rgya chen por rab tu ‘grub// |366|

de bas khyod^d kyis yang dag blos//
sangs rgyas kun gyi ‘dus pa’i rgyud//
gsang chen gsang la^e ches gsang ba//
gong na med pa’i lung chen po//
‘di yi rim pa dang po yi// |367|

sgrub pa’i thabs dang sbyin sreg dang//
gtor ma sna tshogs ‘khor lo dang//
bsdus pa dang ni rnam bshad dang//
dkyil ‘khor cho ga^f la sogs pa// |368|

mi shes mun⁴⁸ bsgribs^g sems can gyi//
thur ma lta bur brtsam par gyis// |369|

^a par] P N S, pa D C

^b sngon] D C, mngon P N S

^c kyis] D C S, kyang P, kyī N

^d khyod] D C, chod P N S

^e la] P N S V (P); las D C. V (D) appears to be corrupt and reads *gsal ba*.

^f cho ga] D C P S, mchog N

^g bsgribs] D C V (D and P), sgrib P N S

de bas ma ‘ongs [16a] rnal ‘byor ches//
‘di shes bla mar rab mnyes te//
yang dag ‘dod pas blangs byas nas//
sems ni de nas sbyang bar bya// |370|

sems ni kun rtog^a nam spangs nas//
de sbyor^b de la rig pa skye//
rig pa skyes nas rdo rje ‘dzin//
de^c grub pas na sangs rgyas dang// |371|

pha rol phyin dang gzungs rnams dang//
sa rnams thams cad bde chen po//
rjes las yang dag ‘grub par ‘gyur//
thams cad bde chen las byung phyir// |372|

de bsgoms ci phyir de mi ‘byung//
de bas rab tu ‘bad pa yis//
mchog gi de nyid rab gsang gsang//
smon lam^d gyis kyang tha na ‘grub//
bsgrub pa la ni shin tu ‘bad^e// |373|

a la la^f ho//

de ltar rol pa’i gar bcas sgra brnyan lta bu rdo rje’i glu//
‘khor lor bcas pas de nyid glu bslangs bdag la bstod cing der^g//
nam mkha’i khams su sprin rnams med pa lta bur thim par gyur^h//
dge slong bla ma gnyis bcas de yang de bzhin mi snang gyurⁱ// |374|

rdo rje gdan gyi rgyab^j nas rgyang grags lnga bcu song ba’i sar//
parba^k ta yi phug la brten^l te sems can don bya’i phyir//
‘di bsdu rab tu byed pa thams cad rtsom dang ston sogs byas//
dam^m pas gsol ba rgya chen btab pas bdag ni shin tu brod// |375|

der gnas ‘khor bcas rnams kyis yo byad gos zas nor gyi mdzod//
mchod pa’i yo byad rgya chen sna tshogs ‘khor lo bya ba rnams//
sa bcu’i byang chub sems dpar gyur pa mdzod srungⁿ gnod gnas che//

^a rtog] P N S V (D), rtogs D C V (P)

^b sbyor] D C P S, sbyong N

^c de] D N V (D), nga C P S, V(P) om.

^d lam] P N V (D and P), las D C, la S

^e ‘bad] D C V (D), ‘bod P N S V (P)

^f P N S V(P) +la

^g P om .

^h gyur] D C, ‘gyur P N S

ⁱ gyur] D, ‘gyur C P N S

^j rgyab] D C V (D), ‘gab P N S V (P)

^k parba] D C V (D), ra ba S, par ba P, par pa N, spar ba V (P)

^l brten] C P N S V (D and P), brtan D

^m dam] C P N S, ngam D

ⁿ srung] D C V (D), gsung P N S V (P).

nyin re kārshā^a pa ṅa bdun brgyas rtag tu rab tu sbyor// |376|

de nas bla ma chen po bā li pā da'i^b drung du bgrod//
bdag gis bla ma de yang mnyes bya'i phyir na sgrub pa'i thabs//
cung zad bsdus pas de ru bla ma la sogs kun//
mnyes par byas te sngon gnas bgrod nas^c skal ldan don 'ga'^d byas// |377|

de bas de ltar kun gyis gtam rgyud rgyas par shes byas te//
mkhas pa'i gzu bo dam pa thabs kun gyis ni mnyes bya^e ste//
de yi lung la rab tu byed sogs mnyan^f dang bsam par bya// |378|

de la rab brten dgon sogs rab tu brten byas rang gi sems//
de nyid bsgoms pas ji bzhin rab tu rtogs par byas pa yis//
tshe 'di nyid [16b] la zla ba drug gis byang chub thob pa 'di ni su yis bzlog// |379|

bdud rtsi mchog 'thung 'di ni sems can kun gyis bkur ba'i gnas//
sems chen^g de la rdo rje 'chang dang bde^h gshegs kun gyis bsngags//
de'i phyir log pa'i sgribⁱ pa thams cad sa bon nyams byas te//
'khor bar gnas kyang skyon gyis mi gos pad bzhin rtag tu gnas// |380|

de ru ma thob lan grangs gzhan la yang dag myong ba yi^j//
'bras bu smin byed sngags pa'i yid la yang dag 'byung ba yi//
dngos grub rgya chen thob nas gang gā'^k bye snyed dpag med kyi//
'khor gyis bskor nas 'jig rten khams kun thams cad rab tu bgrod// |381|

de bas chu 'khor drag po khar ltung ltar//
lus dang ngag dang sems kyis^l brtson 'grus bskyed//
rim par sngon bzhin rab tu bsgrub par bya// |382|

dal 'byor lus 'di shin tu g.yo sla^m bas//
ji ltar rlung gis mar me gsod pa ltar//
skad cig tsam du mi sdod dus 'da' byed//
de bas 'dir ni chud gsan mi bya ste//
dngos kun de nyid mchog chen rab bsgom bya// |383|

de nyid spyod pa 'di la blo nges⁴⁹ pas//

^a kārshā] D C V (D), karsha S N V (P), ka rā P

^b bā li pā da'i] D C , bha li pa trī P N S

^c nas] P N S, gnas D C

^d 'ga'] D C V (D and P), dga' P N S

^e bya] D C P S, byas N

^f mnyan] D C, mnyam P N S

^g chen] P N S, can D C

^h bde] D C, bder P N S

ⁱ sgrib] D C P S, sgribs N

^j yi] P S, yis D C

^k gang gā'i] D C, gangā'i P N S V (D and P)

^l kyis] D C, kyis P N S

^m sla] D C P S V (D and P), bla N

ji skad bshad bzhin rab tu ‘gyur bas na//
sems ni yang dag brten^a par gyis shig ces//
bdag ni sems can rnam la gsol ba ‘debs// |384|

gang gi phyir na ‘di ni^b gsang bas na//
bdag gis^c gsal bar ma byas ci yod pa//
des na de shes bla ma yang dag par//
mnyes byas de nyid ‘dod pas yang dag long// |385|

‘di ni rnal ‘byor spyod pas yang dag spyod pa la//
snying po’i snying po ‘bras stsol^d yang dag sbyong^e//
mtha’ yi phar son bla chen yon tan ma lus gter^f//
de las ‘di ni yang dag zhal rnyed byas// |386|

de bas rnal ‘byor chen po rgyud kyi don rnam ni//
mi ‘tsham^g par ni snang yang nyi ma’i dpes//
rang dang gzhan gyi don byed nus pas na//
rnal ‘byor ‘gas ni shin tu ‘bad dgos so// |387|

the tshom som nyi med par dad pa yis//
‘di don grub pas yang dag blangs^h byas nas//
shes rab kyis ni yang dang yang du rangⁱ//
spyad^j pas bdag la gnyis med ye shes che//
chu gtsang nang du zla ba’i dkyil ‘khor ltar//
‘byung ‘gyur ‘di la the tshom ma byed cig// |388|

‘di ni rang bzhin grub pa’i man ngag [17a] las//
brgyud pa’i bla ma yang dag rab bsten dang//
rang gi bsod nams tshogs ni sngon bskyed pas//
rtogs par rab tu ‘gyur ba ma gtogs^k par// |389|

bsod nams chung ba’i mi yis bskal ba dpag med par//
‘di ni rtogs par mi ‘gyur ‘di don ma rtogs na//
rnal ‘byor chen po zhes bya de la mi bya’o// |390|

de ltar rab tu shes par byas nas su//
rdzogs pa chen po ye shes spyi yi gzugs//
yongs su dag sku rdo rje ‘chang chen po//

^a brten] D C, bstan P N S

^b ni] D C, na P N S

^c gis] D C P S, gi N

^d stsol] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), gsol D C P N S

^e sbyong] P N S V (D and P), spyod D C

^f gter] D C rten P N S

^g ‘tsham] D C P S V (D and P), mtsham N

^h blangs] P N S V(D and P), blang D C

ⁱ rang] P N S, rung D C

^j spyad] P N S V (D and P), dpyad D C

^k gtogs] sugg. em., rtogs D C P N S

dpal ldan kun gyi ngo bo rim^a gnyis ‘di^b// |391|

sdug bsngal lam bcas bskal pa gsum du yang//
rang gi rjes mthun byang chub bla dang bcas//
thob nas de bde cung tsam rab chags^c pa//
rnal ‘byor de^d yis ci phyir de mi bsgom^e// |392|

dad dang brtson ‘grus ting ‘dzin shes rab dang//
dran pa’i blo yis gong gi rim par ltar//
yid dga’ gnas brten kun tu⁵⁰ bzang po mchog//
lam ‘di bsgom par bya ba^f kho na’o// |393|

de ltar zhal gyi lung bsdus las byung dge ba dri med pa//
kha ba zla ba’i ‘od ltar rab tu kdar ba de yis ni//
‘di don ma ‘ongs ‘gro ba skal ldan ‘ga’^g dang phrad gyur nas//
rab tu dang ba’i dad pas len cing ‘di mchog rab bsgom^h shog// |394|

blugs dang gtor dang dag par byas pas slob dpon cher ‘gyur te//
thams cad kun kyis rgyud ‘dzin gzhan rnams rgyud kun la sbyor ba’i//
dang po’i rim pa rab rtogs dri ma rnams ni dag byas te//
ye shes sgyu ma’i snod du rung bar rnal ‘byor de ‘gyur shog// |395|

snying rje ldan pa’i bla ma’i zhabs la gus par rab ldan pas//
ri bong ‘dzin pa’i gzugs kyis rang rgyud rab tu smin byas te//
zhing dag byas pas chos kun sgyu sogs don du rab rtogs nas//
byams pa la sogs bzhin du sems can kun gyisⁱ ‘gro bar shog// |396|

lhan cig byed pas byin brlabs rje btsun thugs rje chen po yis//
dga’ ba brnyed pas chos kun dag pa’i ngo bo chen po mchog//
ji bzhin gnas pa’i don la mi slu^j bcu drug thig le cha//
ngal gso^k las thob man ngag chen po rab tu rnyed par shog// |397|

de rnyed de la sems ni yang dag rab tu mgu gyur nas^l//
mgrin pa dma’ bar^m brtags nas rang rig chos kyis sku ni yang dag thob//
sku dang gsung dang thugs dang dpag [17b] med sprul pa’i gzugs kyis ni//
khams gsum bkang nas sems can thams cad srid las sgröl bar shog// |398|

^a rim] D C P S V (D and P), rims N

^b ‘di] sugg. em. based on V (D and C), ‘dis D C P N S

^c chags] P N S V(D and P), tshogs D C

^d de] D C V (D and P), ‘di P N S

^e bsgom] P N S V (D and P), sgom D C

^f bya ba] P N S V (D and P), bya’o D, bya’i C

^g ‘ga’] P N S, dga’ D C

^h bsgom] D C V(D and P), bsgom P N S S

ⁱ gyis] D C, gyi P N S

^j slu] D C, bslu P N S

^k gso] P N S, so D C

^l nas] D C, bas S

^m bar] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), bas D C P N S

rim^a pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa zhes bya ba byang chub sems dpa' 'jam pa'i dbyangs
kyi zhal gyis lung/ dkyil 'khor gyi slob dpon chen po^b sangs rgyas dpal gyi ye shes zhabs kyis
bsdus pa/ zhal nas zhal du brgyud pa rdzogs so//

rgya gar gyi mkhan po chen po ka ma la gu hya dang/ bod kyil lo tsā^c ba chen po mnga'^d bdag^e
lha ye shes rgyal mtshan gyis bsgyur cing zhus de gtan la phab pa'o//

^a rim] D C P N V (D and P), rig S

^b om.] sugg. em., *lha* D C P N S. I suggest omitting *lha* here, though it is present in all recensions of the *Dvitiyakrama*. To call Buddhajñānapāda a *deva* would indeed be a very unusual epithet, and I believe it is more likely that the *lha* from Lha Yeshe Gyaltsen's name was somehow added in front of Buddhajñānapāda's name, as well, in a scribal error.

^c tsā] D C, tsa P N S

^d P N S om.

^e P N S om.

Endnotes:

- ¹ de] C P N S, da D
- ² dpal] D C P N, pa S
- ³ gro] C P N S, 'go D
- ⁴ pa] C P N S, ba D
- ⁵ du] C P N S, tu D
- ⁶ de] C P N S, da D
- ⁷ 'dzum] C P N S, 'jum D
- ⁸ tshul] C P N S, chul D
- ⁹ byed] C P N S, byad D
- ¹⁰ 'dzum] C P N S, 'jum D
- ¹¹ sems] C P N S, sams D
- ¹² kye] C P N S, kya D
- ¹³ 'o] C P N S, 'a D
- ¹⁴ dgongs su] D C S P, dgongsu N. This appears to be *khungs yig* rather than a spelling mistake.
- ¹⁵ 'gro ba'i] D C P N, 'gro'i S
- ¹⁶ 'khor lo] D C S P, 'khor N (This is presumably a form of *khung yig*, which I am not reporting in S, because it has quite a bit, but am reporting, where possible, in other recensions.)
- ¹⁷ nang] C P N S, nad D
- ¹⁸ byung] D C, 'byung P N S
- ¹⁹ thogs] D C S P, thog N
- ²⁰ krung] D C S N V (D and P) grung P
- ²¹ dwags] D, dags C P N S
- ²² dmigs] D P N S V (D and P), 'migs C
- ²³ tsam] C P N S V (D and P), cam D
- ²⁴ stong] D C S P V (D and P), steng N
- ²⁵ tsam] C P N S V (D and P), cam D
- ²⁶ log] P N S V (D and P); ldog D C
- ²⁷ steng] C P N S V (D and P), stang D
- ²⁸ ste] P N S, te C, ta D
- ²⁹ tsam] C P N S, cam D
- ³⁰ bdud] D C S P, dud N
- ³¹ gzung] P N S V (P), bzung D C V (D)
- ³² log] P N S, ldog D C
- ³³ me] D C S N, mi P
- ³⁴ lha] D S S P, lta N
- ³⁵ nges] D C S P, des N
- ³⁶ phyi] C P N S, phya D
- ³⁷ mos] D C S P, mas N
- ³⁸ le] C P N S, la D
- ³⁹ ster] C P N S, star D
- ⁴⁰ mkha'] D C S P, mkhar N
- ⁴¹ rje] C P N S V (D and P), rja D
- ⁴² sogs] D C S N, sogso P
- ⁴³ gong] D C S P, god N
- ⁴⁴ sdom] C P N S, som D
- ⁴⁵ sems] C P N S, sams D
- ⁴⁶ mdo] D P N S, med C
- ⁴⁷ zag] D P N S, za ma C
- ⁴⁸ mun] C P N S, mar D

⁴⁹ nges] D P N S, ngas C

⁵⁰ tu] P N S V (D and P), du D C

Oral Instructions on Training in the Suchness of the Second Stage: A Translation of Buddhajñānapāda's **Dvītyakramatattvabhāvanā- mukhāgama*¹

[1]² In the Indian language: *Dvītya*³*kramatattvabhāvana-nāma-mukhāgama*
In the Tibetan language: *Rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid sgom pa zhes bya ba'i zhal gyi lung*

¹ As the original Sanskrit for the *Dvītyakrama* is not extant, this translation has been made on the basis of my critical edition of the Tibetan translation of Buddhajñānapāda's *Dvītyakrama* by Kamalaguhya and Lha Yeshe Gyaltzen, also included in this dissertation. I have included a critical apparatus in the notes to this English translation only when there was a variant significant enough to be reflected in the translation, or when I chose a reading from the *Sukusuma*, Vaidyapāda's commentary on the *Dvītyakrama*, rather than from any of the extant recensions of the *Dvītyakrama* itself. For the full critical apparatus, see my critical edition. The notes to this English translation also contain a number of translations of passages from Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma*, the only extant Indic commentary on the *Dvītyakrama*, but which is again only available to us in its Tibetan translation. All translated passages of the *Sukusuma* have been transcribed and edited based on the Derge (D) and Peking (P) editions of the Tengyur; these transcriptions and their critical apparatus are included in the notes to this translation. When no edition is specified, page numbers for the *Sukusuma*, are given for the Derge recension. Punctuation in the passages cited from the *Sukusuma* is always given according to the Derge recension; I have not recorded the many punctuation differences in the Peking recension of the commentary in my critical apparatus.

² Page numbers given in brackets correspond to the Derge edition of the *Dvītyakrama*.

³ *dvītya*] sugg. em., *dvi*] P N S, *dva* D C. While the Sanskrit title as given in the Tibetan translations is rendered using the word *dvīkrama*, the "two stages" (or as the nonsensical *dvakrama* in D and C), all of the Tibetan translations render this as *rim pa gnyis pa* (or *gnyis ba*), meaning the "second stage." Indeed, while there is a brief summary of the first, or generation stage, practice in the text (twice, actually, constituting a total of just six verses out of the 399 verses in the text), the content is almost exclusively focused on instruction and practices connected to the second stage, the perfection stage. Given these facts, it seems indeed quite likely that the Sanskrit title of the work is given incorrectly in the Tibetan translations, and that the correct title of the text is **Dvītyakramatattvabhāvana-mukhāgama*. There are many cases in the Tibetan canon where the titles of Sanskrit works have been given incorrectly, so such a confusion of the ordinal (*dvītya*) and cardinal (*dvi*) numbers in the Sanskrit title as given in the Tibetan translation is not terribly unusual or even unexpected. (And indeed, the appearance of the nonsensical "*dvakrama*" in D and C may perhaps suggest something in the direction of *dvītya*, rather than just *dvi*, or at least that there is some confusion with the issue.) There is further evidence in Buddhajñānapāda's and Vaidyapāda's works that suggests that the title of the work to be the *Dvītyakrama*. See, for example, verse 34 of the *Dvītyakrama*, which specifies that the contents of Mañjuśrī's oral instruction presented in this text are focused on the second stage, and verses 283 and 315 of this text, which also use the phrase "the suchness of the second stage," a phrase I address in more detail in Chapter Three of the dissertation itself. What is more, Vaidyapāda uses the phrase "training in the suchness of the second stage" several times in his *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* in ways that clearly distinguish it from the first stage of practice. In one instance he writes, "Upholding, in this way, the *samayas* and vows, in order to [be able to] train in the reality of the second stage, [the text first] teaches, by means of example, the aspects of the first stage that are the basis for this..." *de ltar dam tshig dang sdom pa la rnam par gnas pas rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa'i phyir de'i gzhi'i rim pa dang po rnam dpe'i sgo nas bstan pa...* (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 51b.1-2; P 337b.3). The "aspects of the first stage" that Buddhajñānapāda goes on to explain at this point in the *Muktītilaka* are the practices of the four *brahmavihāras*, which are part of the preliminaries for generation stage practice in his system. At the end of the section Vaidyapāda again repeats the phrase, "Having [first] remained in the generation stage, [now] in order to teach the training in the reality of the second stage..." (*da ni de ltar bskyed pa'i rim pa la gnas pas rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na* (kho na] D, P om.) *nyid bsgom pa bstan pa'i phyir...* (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 52b.3-4; P 339a.1-2). Modern scholars referring to the text have, up until now, consistently given the title of this work as *Dvīkramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* following its rendering as such in the Tibetan translation. However, since the preponderance of the evidence suggests that this is based on a mistake in the Tibetan renderings of the Sanskrit title, I depart with this convention and refer to the work as the **Dvītyakramatattvabhāvana-mukhāgama*.

In the English language: Oral Instructions⁴ on Training in the Suchness⁵ of the Second Stage⁶

[Homage]⁷

Homage to the Omniscient One!

To the Glorious One who has perfected bliss, who is endowed with the radiance
Of nondual profundity and luminosity;⁸
To his nature, which is peace, the blazing sixteenth part,⁹

⁴ Presumably referencing the term *mukhāgama*, “oral instructions,” in the title, Vaidyapāda comments that the text is a “condensation of the words of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī” (*byang chub sems dpa’ ‘jam pa’i dbyang kyi lung bsdu ba*) by “our great guru,” (*bdag cag gi bla ma chen po*) Buddhāśrījñānapāda (*Sukusuma*, D 87a.5-6; P 104b.5-6). Buddhāśrījñānapāda himself, however, seems to understand himself to be representing more or less the entire content of Mañjuśrī’s direct speech (rather than a condensation of such), given that the text even includes second-person references, in which Mañjuśrī directly addresses Buddhāśrījñānapāda as “you” (*khyod*). I discuss the topic of Mañjuśrī’s voice in the *Dvīṭyākrama* in Chapter Two.

⁵ Throughout this translation “suchness” translates the terms *de kho na nyid*, *de kho na*, *de bzhin nyid*, and *de nyid*, which appear to be used synonymously in this work. Though we can not know for certain since the Sanskrit text is not extant, if the translators followed the standard convention, the first two terms are presumably translations of the Sanskrit *tattva*, and the latter two of, *tathatā*, which are often synonymous.

⁶ On the “second stage” please see note 3.

⁷ Section headings within the text are given in brackets, as these are not part of the *Dvīṭyākrama*, but are my own addition, included to provide more clarity and structure to the translation. Occasionally, when Vaidyapāda’s comments to a given section coincided with the heading I wanted to include for that section, the headings are translations of a brief line from his commentary; I have always indicated in the notes when this is the case.

⁸ Vaidyapāda indicates that the first line of this verse refers to the buddha, the second to the dharma, and the third to the *saṃgha*. *de la dpal ldan zhes bya ba la sogs pa’i tshig gis ni mchod pa’i yul go rims bzhin du sangs rgyas dang/ de’i rang bzhin gyi* (gyi] D, P om.) *chos dang / de ston pa’i dgen ‘dun rin po che ston to* (to] D, nyo P)] (*Sukusuma*, D 87a.6-7; P 104a.6-8). The term “nondual profundity and luminosity” (*zab gsal gnyis med*) is a central one for Buddhāśrījñānapāda. He repeats it often, and it seems to be a centerpiece of his understanding and presentation of the nature of reality. I address this phrase in more detail in Chapter Three. In Vaidyapāda’s commentary on this verse he explains that nondual profundity and luminosity refers to the nonduality of the uncompounded and the compounded. *zab gsal gnyis med ces pa ni ‘dus ma byas dang ‘dus byas gnyis su med pa ste/* (*Sukusuma*, D 87b.6-7; P 105a.8-105b.1).

⁹ *bcu drug phyed cha ‘bar*. I have a suspicion that the Tibetan translation may include *phyed cha* (literally “half”) instead of simply *cha*, “part,” simply in order to fill the meter of the verse. In verse 84 of this same text the term *bcu drug cha* is used to refer to the *bodhicitta* drop bestowed on the disciple during the *guhyābhiṣeka*, and in verse 122 *bcu drug char gyur pa* is used to indicate the drop of *bodhicitta* in the context of sexual yogic practices. I believe *bcu drug cha* may be a translation of *ṣoḍaśakalā*, understood in each of these contexts as “the sixteenth part,” referencing the sixteenth phase of the moon in the lunar month, the day when the fullness of the fifteenth phase is perfectly complete, and is here in all three verses used to indicate the *bindu/bodhicitta* drop. Alternatively, the term could be *ṣoḍaśakala*, referring more generally to the moon itself as “that which has sixteen parts.” Perhaps the term could have been in compound allowing for multiple possibilities, given that Vaidyapāda explains this verse multiple times on different levels of analysis, which he calls the general and branch meanings (*spyi don* and *yan lag gi don*), some of which fit better with reading *ṣoḍaśakala* and others with reading *ṣoḍaśakalā*. (Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for his advice on this point.) First Vaidyapāda indicates that in the context of the first three lines of this verse referring to the three jewels, the term refers to the dharma in terms of “that which expresses it,” (*bcu drug phyed cha ‘bar zhes pas ni mtshon byed kyi chos ston to/*), indicating, presumably, that on this level of analysis he understands the sixteen to refer to the sixteen vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet as symbolic of the alphabet as a whole, which is the relative means by which the dharma is expressed or taught (*Sukusuma*, D 87b.2; P 105a.2). (See also the *Samantabhadra/Caturāṅga-sādhana*, verse 29, where the term *ṣoḍaśakalā* is used precisely to indicate the sixteen vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet.) Later, though, on a different level of analysis of the verse Vaidyapāda explains that the “blazing sixteenth part” refers to the *bindu* (*thig le*). The sixteen, he says, are the sixteen vowels, and the “part” refers to the final single *bindu* (*bcu drug phyed cha ‘bar zhes pa ni thig le zhes pa’i don do/ de yang bcu drug ni dbyangs yig rnams so/ de yi phyed cha ni tha ma’i thig le gcig ces pa’i tha tshig go/*) (*Sukusuma*, D 88a.3-4; P 105b.5-6). Here in his commentary on this verse, Vaidyapāda goes on to describe the *bindu* as the very one that is

The ultimate essence; and to the three supreme gurus¹⁰ who teach that
I constantly bow with my three activities [of body, speech, and mind] equally.¹¹ |1|

[Pledge to Compose]

The lamp of the three worlds, praised by all,
The essence of all phenomena, the suchness of things,

manipulated at the tip of the vajra during the perfection stage practices described below in Buddhajñānapāda's text. It is the manipulation of this *bindu* according to the ritual, he explains, that brings about the realization of suchness: "Moreover, through practicing, by means of the agitation of the locations, the sixteen syllables appear. And these, then, become the sun and moon. Having transformed into a *bindu* like that, they go to the tip of the vajra. This itself, in a form which blazes with thousands of light rays, is meditated upon by the yogin in accordance with the ritual that will come below. When this happens, the suchness that has been spoken of will be realized, [and that is the] purpose [of this practice.]" *de yang bsgrub pas gnas rnams dkrugs pa las yi ge rnams bcu drug par gyur/ de yang nyi zlar gyur/ de lta bu'i thig ler gyur nas rdo rje rtse mor 'gro ba ste/ de nyid 'od zer stong du 'bar ba'i gzugs su rnal 'byor pa rnams kyis 'og nas 'byung ba'i cho gas bsgoms nas/ ji skad du gsung pa'i de kho na nyid rtogs par 'gyur pa'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 88a.4-5; P 105b.6-8).

¹⁰ Vaidyapāda explains that these three are the causal, conditional, and *sahaja ācāryas* (*de yang gsum ste/ rgyu dang rkyen dang/ lhan cig byed pa'i slob dpon no//*) (*Sukusuma*, D 88a.6; P 106a.1). The *sahaja ācārya* is mentioned by Buddhajñānapāda himself in verse 142 of the *Dvītyākrama*, and Buddhajñānapāda mentions the "three gurus" in the *Muktītilaka*, as well; Vaidyapāda gives the very same gloss on the identity of these three in his *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*. In both the *Sukusuma* and the *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* Vaidyapāda provides a citation of a passage about the three gurus from a work that he identifies in the *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* as *The Precious Garland* (*rin chen phreng ba* [phreng ba] P, phrod pa D); I have been unable to identify this source). In the *Sukusuma* Vaidyapāda mentions that the passage was cited by Buddhajñānapāda himself on this topic (possibly in the context of oral instructions, since the citation is not found in any of Buddhajñānapāda's surviving writings). There are some slight variations in the transmission of the verse in the *Sukusuma* and *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, but in summary the verse identifies the causal *ācārya* as the master who gives vows and commitments and who purifies one's mind through the stages of initiation, beginning with the water initiation; the conditional *ācārya* as the "great goddess" with whom one engages in play and who purifies the field of one's mind by means of the "sixteenth part;" and *sahaja ācārya* as the one from whom one receives that (*bindu*?) and by means of whom and through whose blessing one realizes innate joy. Vaidyapāda further adds that these three are supreme because they are superior to other gurus (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47b.5-7). The difference between the conditional and the *sahaja ācāryas* is difficult to understand from the passage that Vaidyapāda cites, as both seem to refer to the tantric consort. However, in his *Yogasapta*, Vaidyapāda states that the *kalasābhīṣeka* is bestowed by the causal *ācārya*, the *guhya* initiation is bestowed by the causal and the conditional *ācārya*, and the *prajñājñāna* is bestowed by means of the causal, conditional and *sahaja ācāryas* (*Yogasapta*, D 70a.4; 70a.7; 70b.4). This suggests that the "conditional" guru may be the consort in the role as the partner of the guru for the *guhya* initiation, while the *sahaja* guru is the consort in her role as the disciple's partner in the *prajñājñāna* initiation. Later in the *Sukusuma*, Vaidyapāda clearly states that the *sahaja ācārya* is the consort (*shes rab, prajñā*), and that uniting with her entails receiving her "blessing" (*Sukusuma*, D 111b.3-4; P 134a.6-7).

¹¹ Vaidyapāda notes, in classical fashion, that this praise was composed in order to take refuge in the three jewels as a way of overcoming obstacles and ensuring that the author would be able to complete the task of composing (*Sukusuma*, D 87a.5-6; P 104b.6-7).

Reverser of the poison waters of existence,¹² inside the triangle,¹³ blazing upon *vaṃ*:¹⁴
So that [beings] can realize [it] though the words of guru Mañjuśrī,¹⁵ I will explain this.¹⁶ |2|

[Autobiography, Part I]

¹⁷In a town called Takṣaśilā,¹⁸ in the area of Khapir,¹⁹ in the land of Magadha,
I pleased the guru Haribhadra,²⁰ who had attained great fame.
I received his instruction and studied many scriptures²¹
I investigated those and derived understanding.²² |3|

At Śrī Nālandā,²³ in response to the one of noble birth called *Guṇamitrā²⁴

¹² Vaidyapāda identifies existence as “conceptuality” (*rnam par rtog pa ni srid pa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 88b.7; P 106b.3).

¹³ Vaidyapāda indicates that the triangle represents the “secret lotus,” i.e. the vagina. *gsum ni chos 'byung gi phyag rgya stong ba nyid la sogs pa 'i rang bzhin gru gsum dang ldan pa gsang ba 'i padma 'o// de 'i khong pa ni nang ste/* (*Sukusuma*, D 89a.1; P 106b.5). This triangle is also understood as the letter *e*, which in conjunction with *vaṃ* creates the first word of the first phrase of most *sūtras* and *tantras*, including the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*: *evam mayā śrutam*. Here *e* is understood to be the *dharmodaya*, representing the vagina, while *vaṃ* is understood as the vajra, the penis. Such an explanation is found in many tantric commentaries; one early presentation, and almost certainly the one the Buddhajñānapāda is drawing from, is his guru Vilāsavajra’s commentary to the *nidāna* of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* which reads, *e ni chos kyi 'byung gnas/ vaṃ ni rdo rje ma ni rnam par snang mdzad chen po 'i ye shes kyi sa bon/* (*Śrīguhyasamājanāganurūpadeśabhāṣya*, D 91b.4-5).

¹⁴ Vaidyapāda identifies *vaṃ* as the vajra and that which blazes upon it as the *bindu* of relative *bodhicitta*, that is to say semen. *vaṃ ni rdo rje de 'i steng ni nor bu 'i cha ste/ de na 'od zer 'bar ba 'i kun rdzob byang chub kyi sems ji bzhin pa 'i don la mi slu ba 'i thig le 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 89a.2; P 106b.6-7).

¹⁵ Vaidyapāda notes that Buddhajñānapāda’s indicating that the teachings are the words of Mañjuśrī is meant to contradict the view that Buddhajñānapāda himself had composed the instructions. *'jam dbyangs bla ma 'i lung gi zhes te rang bzo dgag pa 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 89a.3; P 106b.7-8).

¹⁶ Vaidyapāda here explains the topic, purpose, connection, and essential purpose of the text (*brjod bya, dgos pa, 'brel pa, and dgos pa 'i yang dgos pa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 89a.5-6; P 107a.1-3).

¹⁷ Vaidyapāda notes that it is in order to inspire faith in beings that the master himself here gives the “story of his own encounter with suchness.” *da ni 'gro ba rnams dad par bya ba 'i phyir/ rje brtsun bdag nyid kyi de kho na nyid brnyes (brnyes) P; D, mnyes) pa 'i lo rgyus gsungs pa/* (*Sukusuma*, D 89a.6-7; P 107a.3-4).

¹⁸ *Rdo 'jog* is a common translation of Takṣaśilā (see C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming). However, this identification with the town of Taxila is also somewhat problematic. See the next note.

¹⁹ *kha pir] D C S V (P), kha bir P N V (D)*. This may possibly be a corrupted rendering of Kaspīr, i.e. Kaśmīr (see C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming). However, since this Khapir is specified as being in Magadha, such an identification is only possible if Magadha is understood to mean the Indian subcontinent more broadly, rather than the region of Magadha, which is not near Kashmir. Moreover, Vaidyapāda describes Magadha as “in the area of Nālandā,” which again renders the identification of Khapir as Kaśmīr difficult (*Sukusuma*, D 89a.7; P 107a.5). Any certainty about these toponyms may be difficult to ascertain.

²⁰ Haribhadra’s name is here and in Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* given as *Bzang po seng ge*, rather than the more common *Seng ge bzang po*. There is little doubt, however, about the identity of this guru, as Vaidyapāda explains that Buddhajñānapāda studied Prajñāpāramitā with this guru, a well known Prajñāpāramitā scholar, and Buddhajñānapāda himself wrote Prajñāpāramitā works. Later Tibetan histories also corroborate that this guru is Haribhadra.

²¹ Vaidyapāda mentions the Prajñāpāramitā scriptures “and many others” as those studied under Haribhadra (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.1-2; P 107a.6).

²² *rig 'byung*. I am slightly unsure about this reading. Vaidyapāda’s commentary does not address this phrase; he seems to conclude his comments on Buddhajñānapāda’s studies with a gloss of the term *rnam dpyad*, “I investigated.”

²³ D and C read *shī len nalendrar*, adding an extra syllable, which fits the meter. P N and S read *shrī nalāndar*, which is a closer approximation of Śrī Nālandā, but which does not fit metrically.

²⁴ Vaidyapāda refers to her as the *bhikṣuṇī *Guṇamitrā* (*dge slong ma yon tan bshas gnyen*) who lived in the “great dharma school of logic” (*rig pa 'i chos sgrwa chen po*) (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.2; P107a.7). This a valuable reference to the presence of a *bhikṣuṇī* living at Nālandā in the late eighth century. She is described as having stable faith, and being brahmin by birth. (*shrī na le ndrar rig pa 'i chos sgrwa chen po na gnas pa 'i dge slong ma yon tan bshas*

With a [still] ignorant mind²⁵ I composed some treatises²⁶ joyfully,
Thinking to benefit those who live there with those treatises [2a]
[While] I stayed there, I composed and taught. |4|

²⁷Then I travelled to the land of Uḍḍiyāna, the source of all positive qualities,
[Where there lives] someone known as Vilāsavajra²⁸
From him I learned much²⁹ and investigated, as well.
And also in that same place I pleased a guru called Guṇeru³⁰ |5|

gnyen zhes bya ba (ba) P; 'D) / bram ze 'i rigs su skyes pa dad pa brten ba zhig yod pa (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.2-3; P 107a.7-8). In fact the colophon of Buddhajñānapāda's Prajñāpāramitā work the *Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā* mentions Guṇāmitrā by name as the petitioner (*Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*, D 189a.5).

²⁵ *blun blos*. Vaidyapāda notes that this term means that although Buddhajñānapāda was engaged in the practice of the *pāramitās*, he had not yet realized suchness just as it is. *blun blos zhes te ph rol tu phyin pa 'i slos gnas pas de bzhin nyid ji lta ba bzhin* (bzhin) D, nyid P) *du ma rtogs pa 'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.3; P 107a.8).

²⁶ Vaidyapāda says this refers to a synopsis of the Prajñāpāramitā and other texts. (*shes rab kyi ph rol tu phyin pa 'i bsodus don la sogs pa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.3; P 107a.8-b.1). This synopsis likely refers to the **Sañcayagāthā-pañjikā*, mentioned in note 24, a Prajñāpāramitā commentary which does seem likely to have been a composition that Buddhajñānapāda wrote early in his career.

²⁷ Vaidyapāda's commentary to this section of Buddhajñānapāda's text has been translated in Davidson 2002, 311-13. My reading of Vaidyapāda parts ways with Davidson's translation in a number of places, and I have provided a full translation of Vaidyapāda's commentary to the autobiographical sections in Chapter One.

²⁸ *'Jo sgeg do rje*. This master has generally been identified in both traditional and modern scholarship as Vilāsavajra. Vilāsavajra is usually rendered into Tibetan as *Sgeg pa 'i rdo rje*, but *'jo sgeg* is a synonym for *sgeg pa*, so the identification here seems rather certain. However, as Tribe and Szántó have noted, Vilāsavajra cites Buddhajñānapāda's *Mahāyānalakṣaṇasamuccaya* in his commentary on the *Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī*. Szántó points out that this would be an unusual instance of a master citing a work by his disciple (Tribe 1994, 16; Szántó 2015, 541). I concur that this most likely is, in fact, the case here, since the text by Buddhajñānapāda which is cited by Vilāsavajra is a Mahāyāna text which was likely composed by Buddhajñānapāda in his youth, before he moved on to writing tantric treatises. Vaidyapāda (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.5; P 107b.3) mentions that this same master was also called *sna tshogs gzugs*, which Davidson (2002, 311) renders as *Citrarūpa. However, in the colophon to the Sanskrit text of Vilāsavajra's commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*, it is stated that the author was also known as Śrī Viśvarūpa, and that he lived in a place called Ratnadvīpa, exactly as Vaidyapāda states (see Tribe 1994, 19; *Sukusuma*, D 89b.5; P 107b.3).

²⁹ Vaidyapāda mentions that Buddhajñānapāda studied many Kriyā and Yoga tantras with Vilāsavajra (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.5; P 107b.4).

³⁰ *gu ne ru* | S P V (D and P), *gu ne nu* D C N. Vaidyapāda describes Guṇeru as having received instructions on the *bsam gyi mi khyab pa 'i rim pa* (which Davidson (2002, 311) renders as the **Acintyakramopadeśa*) and as a great yoginī who had encountered suchness (*rnal 'byor ma chen mo de nyid brnyes pa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.5; P 107b.4). It is unclear whether the *bsam kyis mi khyab pa 'i rim pa 'i man ngag* is meant to refer to the title of a text or not. A text of precisely this title is extant in the Tengyur (**Acintyakramopadeśa*, *Bsam kyis mi khyab pa 'i rim pa 'i man ngag* Tōh. 2228), where it is attributed to one *Kuddālīpāda (*tog rtse zhabs*). The same work survives in a second Tibetan translation, apparently of a slightly different recension of the Sanskrit text, in a compendium of Sakyapa works; within the Sakyapa tradition the work is understood to represent one among a series of eight subsidiary instructions connected to the Lamdre (*lam 'bras*) root text (Davidson 2005, 194-95). The **Acintyakramopadeśa* is also considered, in the Tibetan tradition, among a set of six Indian *mahāmudrā* works called the *Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* (*Snying po skor drug*) (Krug 2018, 328-9). The Sanskrit of the work, under the title *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*, survives and has been edited (Samdhong and Dwivedi). I have not had the opportunity to compare this against the Tibetan translations and am unaware of any such comparison having been reported in modern scholarship. (Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for first drawing my attention to the existence of this Sanskrit edition.) Regarding its author and period of composition, in his *History of Buddhism in India* Tāranātha mentions a *Kaudālīka/Mahā-koṭali (*tog rtse ba che ba*), who Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya have taken to refer to the same figure as Kuddālīpāda, and who Tāranātha says lived during the reign of King Gopāla, the Pāla king who reigned prior to Devapāla and Dharmapāla, who ruled when Buddhajñānapāda composed his writings (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, 262). However, the work as it survives at present focuses on perfection stage practices and was understood, at least by the 15th-century Tibetan scholar Ngorchen, to be based on the *Samputa-tantra* (though

And received teachings from her.³¹ At the northern gate of that place³²
 I pleased a girl of sixteen years named Jātig Jālā,³³
 Mahālakṣmī.³⁴ For eight months
 I took her instruction, and having received it, I achieved accomplishment.³⁵ |6|

Then I went to the village of *Ko no dze*³⁶ in the area of Jālandhara³⁷
 And met Bālipāda,³⁸ who had attained great renown.
 Having pleased him, I studied the scriptures and received many instructions.
 Then I went to “the place with sky trees”³⁹ in the Koṅkana, to the south. |7|

Davidson (2005, 196) notes that the connection is “only indirect” and Isaacson (personal communication) has also expressed some doubt as to the connection with the *Samputa* (See also Davidson 2005, 195-96; Stearns 2006, 135). It is questionable whether this text is early enough to be the referent here in Vaidyapāda’s commentary. Krug (2018, 341) identifies the work as focused on the generation and perfection stage yogas of the Yoginī tantras. Apart from its content, further clues to the period of the author may be found in a lineage list given in the work itself, culminating in the author’s own guru, who he styles Bhadrāpāda (Krug 2018, 335-6). For now, whether or not Vaidyapāda is referencing this particular work must remain a question. It is possible, as well, that the text as written down was meant to preserve a tradition of oral instructions that had not yet been previously recorded, and that such a set of oral instructions (which of course would have been supplemented over time) could conceivably be Vaidyapāda’s intended referent here (Harunaga Isaacson, personal communication).

³¹ While Buddhajñānapāda does not specify the guru’s gender, and the unusual name gives no indication of gender, either, I have followed Vaidyapāda’s identification of this guru as a great *yoginī* (see previous note) and translated the pronoun in the feminine. Vaidyapāda (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.6) notes that he received instructions on Niruttara tantras (*bla med rgyud*) from this guru. However given that Vaidyapāda has in an earlier passage referred to Yoga tantras and in a later passage of the *Sukusuma* (D 108a.6-108b.1) he explicitly distinguishes between Yoga tantras (*rnal ’byur rgyud*) and Yoganiruttara tantras (*rnal ’byor bla na med pa’i rgyud*) (the latter of which he equates in that passage with Dākīnī tantras (*mkha’ ’gro ma’i rgyud*)), I believe it is likely that Yoganiruttara tantras is what is intended here.

³² See C. Dalton and Szántó (forthcoming) for a differing interpretation of this term where the term *chab sgo* is interpreted as a proper noun. I prefer to read it here as simply “gate,” especially given Vaidyapāda’s reading which includes some grammatical particles omitted for metrical reasons in the *Dvitiyakrama* itself. Vaidyapāda reads: *u rgyan gyi gnas de yi byang phyogs kyi chab sgo na/* (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.7; P 107b.6).

³³ *Dzā* (dzā] D C V (D), dza P N S, ‘dza’ V (P)) *thig dzā* (dzā] sugg. em. based on V (D); dza D C P N S, dzva V (P)) *lā* (lā] sugg em; la D C P N S).

³⁴ Vaidyapāda notes that Jātig Jālā was sixteen-year-old outcaste girl who was actually the *yoginī* Mahālakṣmī, born of noble family. *gdol pa’i rigs dzā* (dzā] D, ‘dza’ P) *thig dzā* (dzā] D, dzva P) *la zhes bya ba la bu mo lo bcu drug lon pa zhig yod kyis/ de ni rigs las skyes pa’i rnal ’byor ma la kshmi chen mo zhes bya ba yin kyis* (*Sukusuma*, D 89b.7-90a.1; P 107b.6-7).

³⁵ Vaidyapāda notes that at this time also Buddhajñānapāda attained accomplishment of Jambhāla. Later in the *Dvitiyakrama* Buddhajñānapāda himself mentions receiving provisions from Jambhāla and he is also credited with composing three Jambhāla *sādhana*s.

³⁶ *Ko no dze*] D C P N S V(P), *ka no dze* V(D). I have been unable to identify this location. At first glance it does seem to be a transliteration of Kannauj, and Davidson (2002, 312) has rendered it as such. However, Szántó (2015) places some doubt on this identification, since modern-day Kannauj is not near the modern-day city of Jalandhar, and C. Dalton and Szántó (forthcoming) note that at the time Kannauj was referred to as Kanyākubja, making the identification even less likely.

³⁷ dzā lendha] D C, dzā lāndha P N S. See previous note.

³⁸ Here D and C read *bā li pā da*, while P, N and S read ‘*ba’ mo pa ta*. Vaidyapāda’s commentary has the name translated as *byis pa chung ba’i zhabs*, which supports the reading from D and C (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.2; P 108a.1). Szántó reconstructs the name as Bālikapāda and suggests that the name may even read Bāhikapāda as reflective of a master from the area of Balkh (Szántó 2015, 542; see also C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming).

³⁹ *nam mkha’ shing ldan*. I am here indebted to Szántó’s work, which suggests—I think convincingly—that the place mentioned here is Kadri, near Mangalore. See Szántó (2015) for the full details of this assessment. I also discuss this further in Chapter One. According to Khenpo Chodrak Tenphel the term “sky tree” (*nam mkha’i shing*) means mangrove (personal communication, March, 2016).

[There] the lord of siddhas, renowned as Pālitapāda⁴⁰
Was surrounded by his disciples who could perform miraculous feats.
All of them regularly received requisites, clothing, food, and wealth.
I bowed at the feet of this sublime guru for nine years. |8|

I listened to the great *Samāja-tantra* together with its commentaries for eighteen [months].⁴¹
[I said] “I have not realized it” and the great guru said the same.
Thinking, “Until I realize this,⁴² anything else is useless,” [2b]
I affixed the volume around my neck and set off to the north. |9|

Behind Vajrāsana is the forest called Kuvaca
Which is full of tigers and bears—a terrifying place.
There I spent six months, and thus realized the suchness of phenomena.
I met an emanated monk together with two gurus. |10|

[Vision of Mañjuśrī and Supplication to Him]

On the eighth day of of the seventh month, during [the constellation] Puṣya
At the time when Mṛgaśīrṣa and Hasta are fading,⁴³ in the early morning, right at dawn,
Towards the emanated *maṇḍala-cakra* of Mañjuśrī⁴⁴
I made a fervent supplication to understand the meaning: |11|

“You are the father and the mother of all beings!⁴⁵
Protect me and others from great danger!
Master, lord of beings, dispel suffering!
Emptier of the three realms, greatest of the great,⁴⁶ you protect beings |12|

⁴⁰ bā li pā dar] D C, ba li pa tar P N S. Vaidyapāda (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.4; P 108a.4) identifies the teacher as *bsrung ba'i zhabs*, which Davidson has rendered as *Rakṣapāda. However, Szántó has recently provided evidence from a Sanskrit manuscript of the *Sāramañjarī*, a commentary to another of Buddhajñānapāda's works, that this teacher's name was, in fact Pālitapāda (Szántó 2015, 542-50; see also C. Dalton and Szántó, forthcoming).

⁴¹ bar du mnyan] sugg. em., rab tu mnyan D C P N S. My suggested emendation is based upon Vaidyapāda's commentary which reads, *bco brgyad bar du mnyan ni zla ba bco brgyad kyi bar du bsgrub pa'o*, which suggests that *rab tu* is just a textual transmission error (*Sukusuma*, D 90a.7; P108a.8).

⁴² 'di] suggested em., 'dir D C P N S. The suggested emendation is based on Vaidyapāda's commentary (*Sukusuma*, D 90b.1; P 108b.1) which reads *di ma rtogs par*.

⁴³ Puṣya is the eighth lunar mansion in Indian astrology; Mṛgaśīrṣa is the fifth; Hasta is the thirteenth.

⁴⁴ 'jam dpal dbyangs kyi (kyi] P N S, kyis D C) dkyil 'khor 'khor lo (lo] P N S, lor D C) sprul pa la.

Here Vaidyapāda explains that this supplication took place subsequent to a question from the emanated monk about whether Buddhajñānapāda had faith in the guru who emanated the *maṇḍala* or in the deity within the *maṇḍala*. After Buddhajñānapāda answered that he placed his faith in the deity of the *maṇḍala*, the monk, along with the woman and dog, departed and entered a small house, and Buddhajñānapāda thus directed his supplication directly to Mañjuśrī in the *maṇḍala*.

⁴⁵ Vaidyapāda explains that he is the father because beings are born from Mañjuśrī's wisdom, and the mother because beings are born from Mañjuśrī's *dharmodaya*. *yab ste zhes pa ni de rnams kyang de'i ye shes las 'khrungs pa'i phyir ro// yum yang yin zhes pa ni de'i chos kyi dbyings las byung ba'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 91a.1; P 109a.2-3).

⁴⁶ *che* (che] N V, chi D C, cha S P) *ba'i che*. Vaidyapāda also concurs with the reading *che* and even explains why Mañjuśrī is to be called the “greatest of the great,” namely, because he has realized the ultimate state, rendering him greater than ordinary beings, *śrāvakas*, *prateyakabuddhas*, and even bodhisattvas of the *pāramitās* (*Sukusuma*, 91a.3-4).

⁴⁷You are beginningless, unvoiced, lacking the upper part of the *bindu*,
 The revered, the letterless,⁴⁸ producer of nectar, the empty⁴⁹ bliss of great joy.
 In order to benefit beings, O you Great Protector,
 Please bestow⁵⁰ bliss—⁵¹ the bliss that is great joy—⁵² upon all the buddhas. |13|

The path to awakening, not stained by faults,
 Which pacifies all types of suffering, and quenches thirst
 Liberates from the waves of *samsāra*, and places one in bliss—⁵³
 Please teach this path, which is not fathomed [even] by those who are victorious over all things.⁵⁴
 |14|

The peace of all peace, perfectly free from impurity, having abandoned avarice,⁵⁵
 Beyond cultivation, unstained like the sky,
 Beyond all illusion, having left all desires behind,
 I take refuge in you, who are like this, Lord! |15|

⁴⁷ This verse is somewhat opaque and is one of the few instances where I have edited the root verse based on its citation in Vaidyapāda’s commentary in a way that differs from all available recension of the root text. The first two lines seem to be identifying Mañjuśrī in various ways with emptiness, and yet noting that he still serves beings. The following lines seem to be requesting him to bestow bliss—which Vaidyapāda identifies as the splendid empty and luminous aggregates (presumably those of the deity)—upon the buddhas, which Vaidyapāda identifies as the aggregates. I here translate Vaidyapāda’s commentary to this verse in full, although again there are a number of opacities in his comments, as well. “Having explained [Mañjuśrī] as the source, now in the second part [he] is taught to be letterless, with [the verse] beginning **You are beginningless... You are beginningless** refers to the profound, which lacks beginning. That being absent, there is [also] no sound (*nga ro*, **svara*) that [appears] in the form of the waxing moon. [Could this perhaps mean the *candra* of a *candrabindu*?] Drop means *bindu*, and the upper part is *om*, and it should [also?] be understood otherwise(?). Since these do not exist [he] is **letterless** lacking the distinctions made by those [aspects that constitute a syllable?]. Although being nonexistent in that way, since he nourishes the realms of beings by means of the wisdom that realizes that [emptiness], he is the **producer of nectar, the empty bliss of great joy**. This is exactly what he teaches **in order to benefit beings**. **Bliss** is supreme joy. **All the buddhas** means the aggregates and so forth. **The bliss that is great joy** [that Mañjuśrī is supplicated to bestow] upon them are the delightful splendid aggregates which are characterized by the profound and the genuinely luminous. **O you great protector** means Mañjuśrī, because he is the refuge of those who abide [in the state] of wandering. **Please bestow** means by means of giving [it] via methods, please bring this about in the minds of others.” *de ltar ‘byung ba’i gnas su bstan nas/ da ni gnyis pa’i chas yi ge dang bral bar ston pa / thog ma zhes pa la sogs pa’o// thog ma med khyod zhes pa ni zab mo ste dang po med pa’o// de med pas zla ba tshes pa’i rnam pa lta bu’i nga ro med pa ste/ thigs pa ni thig le’o// steng cha ni om ste gzhan yang rtogs par bya’o// de rnams med pas yi ge (yi ge) D, yig P) med ces te de rnams kyis khyad par du byas pa rnams med do// de ltar med kyang de rtogs pa’i ye shes kyis sems can gyis kham rnams gso bar byed pas na/ bdud rtsi rab dga’ bde stong byed/ ces so// de nyid gsung pa/ ‘gro la phan phyir zhes so// bde ba ni mchog gi dga’ ba’o// sangs rgyas rnams kun zhes pa ni phung po la sogs pa’o// de rnams la rab dgyes bde ba zhes te zab mo dang/ yang dag par gsal ba mtson pa nyams dga’ ba’i gzi brjid phung po’o// de mgon chen khyod kyis zhes te ‘khyam pa lta bur gnas pa’i skyabs su gyur pa’i phyir na ‘jam dbyangs so// gtong bar mdzod ces pa ni thabs kyis ster bas gzhan gyi rgyud la ‘gro bar mdzad cig ces pa’o// (Sukusuma, D 91a.4-91b.1; P 109a.8-109b.5).*

⁴⁸ *yig (yig) P N S, yid D C) med*

⁴⁹ *stong] sugg. em based on V (P and N), gtong P N S, btang D C*

⁵⁰ *gtong] P N S, btang D C*

⁵¹ *bde ba] sugg em. based on V (D and P), bde ba’i P N S D C*

⁵² *rab dgyes bde ba] sugg em based on V (D and P), rab dgyes bde ba’i P N S D C*

⁵³ Vaidyapāda explains that that which places one in bliss is the great samaya, vajra-like suchness. *dam tshig chen po rdo rje lta bu’i de kho na nyid do// (Sukusuma, D 91b.5; P 110a.3).*

⁵⁴ Vaidyapāda explains that this means is unknown to those who lack the oral instructions of the master. *bla ma’i man ngag dang bral bas mi shes par ston pa (pa) D, pas P) ste/ (Sukusuma, D 91b.6; P 110a.4-5).*

⁵⁵ ‘jungs] P N S V (in P), ‘jum D, ‘dzum C, ‘jums V (in D)

Until I reach great awakening that is without pride and without fear,
 [Though] I may remain in *samsāra*, [in order] not to fall into the unpleasant hells of the world,
 I and others will always maintain
 The vows and uncommon *samayas* that you teach.⁵⁶ |16|

Playfully dancing the great dance⁵⁷
 With your various arms twisting⁵⁸ and holding tight⁵⁹
 You open the eight soft lotus petals
 And insert the vajra, the cause of nondual bliss.⁶⁰ |17|

⁶¹The secret suchness, undefiled, becomes clear.
 The moon that is born from the vajra and petals is perfectly gathered
 This is the supreme suchness of all phenomena born from means and wisdom.
 Revered master, [3a] in order to benefit me, explain what is hidden!” |18|

[Mañjuśrī’s Acceptance of the Supplication]

⁵⁶ Vaidyapāda describes the *samayas* that Mañjuśrī teaches as the things to abandon, like disparaging the guru, and the things to adopt, like consuming the five nectars and killing evil beings. He notes that the vows include avoiding (*spang ba*) an untrained consort and inciting the stopping of the enjoyment of objects (*yul gyi nye bar longs spyod pa’ bkag bskul*) (*Sukusuma*, D 92a.6-7; P 110b.7-8).

⁵⁷ Vaidyapāda notes that the playfully dancing refers to the practice of union, which is the dance renowned in the texts of the “lotus treatises.” realt is unclear to which type of treatises Vaidyapāda might be referring here. *gar chen zhes pa ni dbyugs ‘byin par byed pa’i spyod pa ste/ snyoms par ‘jug pa’o// de yi rnam par rol pa ni padma’i bstan bcos kyi gzhung gis grags pa’i gar te de mdzad cing zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 92.b.1; P 111a.1-2).

⁵⁸ *gcu*] V(D), *bcu* D C P N S V(P). Vaidyapāda’s comments make it clear that *gcu* is the correct reading. “Holding tight while **twisting** (*gcu pa*), rubbing, and embracing...” *gcu pa dang mnye ba dang ‘khyud pa la sogs pas bsgrims nas* (nas] P, rnam D) *zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 92b.2; P 111a.2).

⁵⁹ *bsgrims*] P N S V(D and P), *bskyings* D C.

⁶⁰ Vaidyapāda notes that “The **nondual bliss** is the moon-like *bodhicitta* and its **cause** is the **vajra** from which it emerges. [That **vajra**], blessed with *om*, five-pronged and with the redish white jewel, is to be **placed** there [in the lotus]. Let the moon that emerges from it purify our field, making us equal those who have the wisdom of the ten *bhūmis*!” *gnyis su med pa’i bde ba ni zla ba lta bu’i byang chub kyi sems te/ de ‘byung ba’i rgyu ni rdo rje ste om gyis byin gyis brlabs pas dmar skya’i nor bu ldan pa’i rtse lnga pa ste/ de bzhang par mdzad de de las byung ba’i zla bas bdag cag gi zhing dag par byas nas sa bcu’i ye shes can dang skal ba mnyam par mdzod cig ces pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 92b.3-4; 111a.3-5).

⁶¹ Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the first three lines of this verse details some of the elements of practices involving aspects of the subtle body and, as an example of subtle-body anatomy from an author we can date with some certainty to the 9th century, is worth quoting in full. “This **secret suchness** is the *guhyaḥbhīṣeka*. Because it is the cause for the manifestation of suchness it is **undefiled**. Through that the wisdom that arises from *prajñā* (this is likely a double entendre for the consort, also called the *prajñā*) **becomes clear**. And what is this suchness? [It is explained by the line] beginning with **The moon which is... Vajra** means the secret vajra. **Petals** are clearly mentioned since this is the unique cause, [but here] one must also understand the anthers. What **is born** from these two is **the moon**, which is the jasmine-like seed (i.e. semen). **Gathering** that **perfectly** means inciting through practice the seventy-two thousand channels and gathering [the essences/bindus in these?] into sixteen. These are then **gathered** into three. The **suchness** (*de nyid*) which has travelled to the lotus at the heart center is then invoked and held by means of actions and the winds. This exactly is taught [with the line] starting **This is the supreme suchness...** which is easy to understand.” *gsang ba’i* (*gsang ba’i*] P, *gsang ba’i dbang*] D) *de nyid ces pa ni gsang ba’i dbang ngo// de nyid sngon du song ba’i rgyu bas ni mi mnyams* (*nyams*] D, *nyam*] P) *pa ste/ de las shes rab las skyes pa’i ye shes gsal bar ‘gyur ces so// de nyid kyang gang zhe na/ rdo rje zhes pa la sogs pa’o// rdo rje ni gsang ba’i rdo rje’o// ‘dab ces pa ni khyad par gyi rgyus las bas* (*bas*] D, *las*] P) *nges par mtshon pa ste/ ge sar yang shes par bya’o// de gnyis las skyes pa ni zla ba ces te kunda* (*kunda*] D, *kun da*] P) *lta bu’i sa bon no// de yang dag par ‘du ba ni na di* (*na di*] sugg. em., *na li*] D P) *stong phrag bdun cu rtsa gnyis bsgrubs pas bskul nas bcu drug du ‘dus/ de yang gsam du ‘dus/ de nyid snying ga’i padmar phyin pa bskul nas bya ba dang rlung gis gzung ba’o// de nyid gsung pa/ thabs shes las byung zhes pa la sogs pa’o// de ne go sla’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 92b.4-7 P 111a.5-8).

Then, the great bodhisattva Mañjuśrī⁶²
Looked upon me with a smiling face and said, “Excellent” three times.
With this vajra song, like an echo,⁶³ he taught to me⁶⁴
The playful dance and the suchness of all phenomena. |19|

[Mañjuśrī’s Condensed Teaching/Pledge to Teach]

*A*⁶⁵ *vi yaṃ raṃ vaṃ laṃ hūṃ*⁶⁶ *a la la la ho!*⁶⁷
The great compassionate ones,
Who have realized this,
Those vajra holders of the past, present, and future |20|

Who obtained the excellence of the *sugatas*,
Have taught, teach, and will teach [this truth]
To [only] some worthy [disciples].
In order that they may realize the genuine meaning, |21|

I will teach this to you—
Concentrate your mind and listen! |22|

[Mañjuśrī’s Teaching] [The Nature of Phenomena is Nondual Wisdom]

⁶² Vaidyapāda is keen here to indicate that Buddhajñānapāda’s teacher, the “bodhisattva” Mañjuśrī is fully awakened, not just a bodhisattva on the path. He states, “He is called a **bodhisattva** because he is integrated with awakening (*bodhi*), not because awakening is his goal.” *de nyid byang chub dang ‘dres pa’i phyir byang chub sems dpa’ ste/ byang chub la dmigs pa ni ma yin no//* (*Sukusuma*, D 93a.2; P 111b.3-4).

⁶³ Vaidyapāda’s commentary confirms that *sgra bsnyan* here means echo rather than lute. *sgra brnyan lta bur zhes pa ni brag ca lta bu ste brag* (grag] D, grags P) *kyang ma grub ces pa’i don to//* (*Sukusuma*, D 93a.4; P 111b.6-7).

⁶⁴ Vaidyapāda notes, “With the words **he taught [this] to me**, the great guru makes others feel confident.” *de lta bus bdag la bstan zhes bla ma chen pos gzhan yid brtan par mdzad pa yin no//* (*Sukusuma*, D 93a.5; P 111b.7).

⁶⁵ According to Vaidyapāda, this is the beginning of Mañjuśrī’s direct speech. It is worth noting that the very beginning of Mañjuśrī’s direct speech in the *Dvitiyakrama* as a series of syllables is evocative of the very beginning of Mañjuśrī’s direct speech in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*, which is likewise a series of syllables, starting with *a*. There, however, the syllables in question are the first twelve vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet (see Tribe 1997, 118). Commenting on the syllables here in the *Dvitiyakrama* Vaidyapāda states, “*a* begins the words of Mañjuśrī himself.” *da ni a zhes ba ba la sogs pas ‘jam dbyangs kyi lung nyid gsungs te/* (*Sukusuma*, D 93a.5; P 111b.7-8).

Vaidyapāda’s comments on the first two syllables of Mañjuśrī’s speech are also worth quoting in full here, as they correspond closely with the gnostic cosmogony expressed later in the *Dvitiyakrama* itself. “*A* is the nature of all things because they are unarisen. It is said that “*A* is the gateway to all phenomena.” If we examine that statement, [we can understand that *a* is] the gateway through which all [phenomena] emerge. Moreover it should be known as the nature of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous which is like the *maṇḍala* of space, not arisen from any sort of conceptual imputations, [but] primordially and spontaneously present. That which appeared from its essence as mere knowing is *vi*, the first named syllable which is called ‘awareness.’” *de la a zhes pa ni dngos po thams cad kyi rang bzhin te/ ma skyes pa’i phyir a ni chos thams cad kyi sgo’o zhes pa’i gsung la dpyad na/ thams cad byung ba’i sgo ste/ de yang gsal bzab gnyis su med pa’i rang bzhin nam mkha’ dkyil ‘khor lta bu brtags pa thams cad kyi ma skyes pa dang po nas lhun gyis grub pa nyid du shes par bya ba’o// de yi ngo bo las shes pa tsam lta bur snang ba ni bi ste/ rig pa zhes pa’i ming gi yi ge dang po’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 93a.5-7; P 111b.7-112a.2).

⁶⁶ Here in the context of the *Dvitiyakrama*, Vaidyapāda homologizes the syllables subsequent to *a vi* (which were addressed in the previous note)—*yaṃ*, *raṃ*, *vaṃ*, and *laṃ*, with the four elements in the same way that they are commonly used in the visualization of the gradual emergence and stacking of elements that support the celestial palace in the practice of tantric *sādhana* (*Sukusuma*, 93b). I discuss this further in Chapter Three.

⁶⁷ Vaidyapāda suggests that the rest of Mañjuśrī’s quotation is simply a clarification or an unpacking of these syllables. *da ni ‘jam dbyangs kyi gsung gis de nyid gsal por bstan pa’i phyir/ rje btsun zhes pa la sogs pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 94a.4; P 113a.1).

⁶⁸ The nature of phenomena,
From form and the rest up to omniscience,
Is the perfectly pure wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous⁶⁹
Which is like the center of space. ⁷⁰ |23|

That⁷¹ is not a thing; it is not a meditation object.
Free from all entities,⁷²
Not encompassed by the elements nor the sense-sources,⁷³
It is naturally luminous, |24|

Primordially pure, like space.
Lacking existence, phenomena are free from characteristics.
Since there are neither phenomena nor their nature,
Entityless, it is similar to space. |25|

Free from all words and letters.
This is the essence of all time,
Directions, and phenomena.
It is not body, not speech, nor mind; |26|

Not the realm of desire
Nor the form nor formless realms.⁷⁴
It is not the four great elements.
Therefore, because it does not reside anywhere— |27|

⁶⁸ Vaidyapāda states that at this point Mañjuśrī begins to teach the nondual wisdom that is the nature of all phenomena. *da ni chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin gnyis su med pa'i ye shes gsung pa* (*Sukusuma*, D 94b.1; 113a.7).

⁶⁹ *Zab gsal gnyis med ye shes*. The term *zab gsal gnyis med ye shes* could certainly be translated more concisely as “profound, luminous nondual wisdom.” Yet that phrase, in English, suggests the terms “profound” and “luminous” to be adjectives describing nondual wisdom, which I do not believe to be Buddhajñānapāda’s intent. I have therefore opted for the more lengthy and awkward translation, “the wisdom of the nonduality of the profound and the luminous,” because I feel it reflects the nuance of Buddhajñānapāda’s understanding of the terms *zab* and *gsal* nominally rather than adjectivally. First, Vaidyapāda’s gloss of the phrase parses it exactly in the way I have translated it above: “the **wisdom** of the **nonduality** of the **profound** and the **luminous**” (*zab mo dang gsal ba gnyis su med pa'i ye shes*) (*Sukusuma*, D 94b.2-3; P 113a.8-b.1). And, indeed, Buddhajñānapāda’s use of the term *zab gsal gnyis med* (he does not always include *ye shes*) in a number of other instances, as well, indicates that he is speaking of the nonduality of *the* profound (emptiness) and *the* luminous (the apparent aspect), rather than using the terms “profound” and “luminous” as adjectives describing nonduality.

⁷⁰ Vaidyapāda explains that this first verse is the general explanation and that what follows is an elaboration (*Sukusuma*, D 94b.3; 113a.8-b.1).

⁷¹ Vaidyapāda specifies that “that” refers to “that nature.” *de ni zhes pa ni rang bzhin no//* (*Sukusuma*, D 94b.3; P 113b.1).

⁷² Vaidyapāda specifies these as entities such as the *manu* and *mānava* (*shed can dang shed bu*) imputed by heretics (*Sukusuma*, D 94b.4; P 113b.2-3).

⁷³ Vaidyapāda explains that those elements and sense sources are “understood by the *śrāvakas* as being subject and object (*gzung 'dzin*), and even these do not encompass that nature.” *nyan thos kyi de gzung 'dzin du rtog* (rtog) P, rtogs D) *par byed pa des kyang rang bzhin de la ma zin zhes zo//* (*Sukusuma*, D 94b.5; P 113b.4).

⁷⁴ Vaidyapāda notes that these references to the various realms all refer to the sentient beings who live in them; what follows refers to the outer world—the production of the elements up until the generation of the deity’s celestial palace. *de rnams kyang ma yin zhes bcud kyi sems can ma yin par bstan to// 'byung chen bzhi yang ma yin te zhes rten* (rten) D, P om.) *'brel gyi stobs las rlung skye ba la sogs pa'i rim par lha'i gzhals yas khang grub pa yan chad kyi bar du snod kyi 'jig rten grub pa ste de yang ma yin pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 95a.5; P 114a.6-7).

It is equanimity.
The great Vajradhara who is like this
Is the supreme nature⁷⁵ of all phenomena,
That which is to be accomplished through the method.⁷⁶ |28|

[It] is totally free from all constructs
The cause of excellence, difficult to fathom,⁷⁷
[And yet] appears as the *mahāmudrā*,⁷⁸
Whose light rays ripen oneself and others.⁷⁹ |29|

That is the supreme nondual nature,
The great body which cannot be described
Even by the great vajra-holder,
That itself⁸⁰ is the Victors, their offspring, and their fields of influence,⁸¹ |30|

The three existences, together with the animate and the inanimate.⁸²
That, the identity of everything,⁸³
Is the very essence of one's mind, **[3b]**
Supreme among all things. |31|

When that is realized, this is the awakening of buddhahood.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ *chos nyid*

⁷⁶ Vaidyapāda identifies this method as being comprised of the two stages and the four branches. *rim pa gnyis yan lag bzhis rnam par bsdu pa* (*Sukusuma*, D 95b.2; P 114b.2-3) .

⁷⁷ Vaidyapāda identifies these first two lines as referring to the aspect of the profound, and second two lines of the verse as referring to the aspect of the luminous (*Sukusuma*, D 95b.3-5).

⁷⁸ Vaidyapāda clearly identifies the *mahāmudrā* here as the form of the deity “with a face, hands, and so forth,” the usual use of this term in the 8th and early 9th centuries. *phyag rgya chen por* (*por*] P, *po* D) *rab snang ba/ zhes* (*zhes*] D, *ces* P) *te/ zhal dang phyag la sogs pa dang ldan pa ni phyag rgya chen po 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 95b.6; P 114b.7-8).

⁷⁹ *zer gyis rang gzhan* (*rang gzhan*] D C V(D), *rang nyid* S P V(P)) *smin byed pa* (*pa*] P N S V(P and D), *pa 'i* D C). Vaidyapāda's comments on the verse (*rang phul du byung zhing gzhan rgyud dang par byed pa 'o*) also make it clear that he was reading *rang gzhan*, despite the fact that the citation of the verse in the Peking edition of his commentary reads *rang bzhi* in the citation of the verse (*Sukusuma*, D 95b.7; P 115a.2).

⁸⁰ Vaidyapāda identifies this as nondual wisdom. *de nyid cas pa ni gnyis su med pa 'i ye shes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 96a.2; P 115a.4).

⁸¹ Vaidyapāda identifies the *zhing* as those to be tamed. *de rnams kyi zhing ni gdul bya rnams te/ zhing dang chos mthun pa 'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 96a.2; P 115a.5).

⁸² *rgyu*] sugg. em., *rgyur*] D C P N S. Vaidyapāda's commentary also supports this reading, providing the classical gloss that “the animate and inanimate refer to the world and its contents.” *rgyu ba dang mi rgyu ba ni snod dang bcud do//* (*Sukusuma*, D 96a.3; P 115a.6) .

⁸³ Vaidyapāda identifies this as the fundamental ground that pervades everything. *de thams cad kyi gyi bdag nyid de zhes don gi gzhi* (*gzhi*] P; *bzhi* D) *pos kun la khyab par bstan pa 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 96a.4; P 115a.6).

⁸⁴ Here Vaidyapāda seems to advocate a sort of subitist position on awakening connected specifically to the realization of the nature of the mind. He says, “That which is **supreme among all things** is **the nature of the mind**. Why is that? Because **When one realizes it...** Those who first blaze with diligence, [striving] in the methods through which one realizes that [nature] come, at some point, to experience it directly. When that happens, their lack of knowledge is abandoned, and a **buddha** endowed with the twofold accumulation is **nothing other than that**; it is like a person waking from sleep, or like a water lily(?)” *ngos po kun gyi gtso bo ni/ rang gi sems kyi ngo bo nyid/ ci 'i phyir zhes na/ de rtogs na zhes te/ de nyid dang por rtogs par bya ba 'i thabs la brtson 'grus 'bar ba dang ldan pa rnams kyi nam zhig mngon du gyur na mi shes pa spangs shing tshogs gnyis kyi gang ba 'i sangs rgyas kyang de nyid de/ sbye bu gnyid sad paam/ ku mu da* (*da*] P, *ta* D) *bzhi no//* (*Sukusuma*, D 96a.4-5; P 115a.7-8).

The three worlds also are exactly this.
The great elements also are exactly this.⁸⁵
Why is that? Because all phenomena [32]

Abide in the mind. This, as well,
Abides in space.⁸⁶ Space itself
Abides nowhere;⁸⁷ it is luminous.
It is primordially completely pure and empty. [33]

The sphere⁸⁸ of the buddhas' *nirvāṇa*⁸⁹
The unborn vajra, manifest awakening,
The supreme essence of all *sugatas*,
This great nondual nonconceptual reality⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Vaidyapāda here notes that when the *Dvīṭīyakrama* says the three worlds and the four elements are “exactly this,” it means that the sentient beings who are the contents of the world are that mind nature and the outer vessel-like world itself is also that mind nature, respectively. *de bzhin du* (du] D, P om.) ‘*jig rten gsum ste/ bcud kyi sems can rnams kyang sems de nyid do// ‘byung chen bzhi ste snod kyi ‘jig rten rnams kyang sems de nyid do zhes so//* (Sukusuma, D 96a.5-6; P 115b.1-2).

⁸⁶ Vaidyapāda clarifies that abiding in space means abiding in emptiness. *nam mkha la gnas zhes ste stong pa nyid la gnas so zhes so//* (Sukusuma, D 96b.1; P 115b.5).

⁸⁷ Padmasambhava’s *Man ngag lta ba’i ‘phreng ba* cites a parallel passage, which is attributed in the commentarial literature on the *Man ngag lta ba’i ‘phreng ba* to the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, though Karmay (2007, 158) notes that the passage in question is not found in the *Guhyasamāja*. The passage from the *Man ngag lta ba’i ‘phreng ba* reads: “All phenomena abide in the mind/ The mind abides in space/ And space abides nowhere.” (*chos rnams thams cad ni sems la gnas so// sems ni nam mkha’ la gnas so// nam mkha’ ni ci la yang mi gnas so//* (*Man ngag lta ba’i ‘phreng ba*, 5b.2-3). While Karmay is correct that no such passage is to be found in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, I have identified a passage with very similar content at the end of Chapter 15 of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. The passage from Matsunaga’s edition reads: *atha te sarvatathāgatāḥ sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittavajraṃ tathāgatam evam āhuḥ/ sarvatathāgatadharmā bhagavan kutra stitāḥ kva vā sambhūtāḥ/ vajrasattva āha/ svakāyavākcitta samstītāḥ svakāyavākcitta sambhūtāḥ/ bhagavantaḥ sarvatathāgatā āhuḥ/ svakāyavākcittavajraṃ kutra sthitam/ ākāśasthitam/ ākāśam kutra sthitam/ na kvacit/* (Matsunaga 1980, 85). Fremantle’s edition and translation, however, give a version of the passage from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* that is even closer to the quotation from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and *Garland of Views*. Her edition reads: *atha te sarvatathāgatāḥ sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittavajraṃ evam āhuḥ/ sarvatathāgatadharmā bhagavan kutra stitāḥ kva vā sambhūtāḥ/ vajrasattva āha/ svakāyavākcittasamstītāḥ svakāyavākcittasambhūtāḥ/ bhagavantaḥ sarvatathāgatā āhuḥ/ cittam kutra sthitam/ ākāśasthitam/ ākāśam kutra sthitam/ na kvacit/* (Fremantle 1970, 348; see also Fremantle 1970, 349 for the Tibetan edition of the passage). Fremantle’s English translation of the passage reads: “Then all the Tathāgatas said to the Tathāgata, Vajra Body, Speech and Mind of all Tathāgatas: O Blessed One, where do the dharmas of all the Tathāgatas exist and where do they come from? Vajrasattva said: they exist in your body, speech, and mind, and they come from your body, speech and mind. The Blessed Tathāgatas said: where does mind exist? He answered: it exists in space. They asked: where does space exist? He answered: nowhere.” (Fremantle 1970, 110). While it does seem that this parallel passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and in the *Garland of Views* is related to, or perhaps based on, the passage I have cited here from Chapter 15 of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, it is not drawn directly from that tantra, and yet it appears in both the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and the *Garland of Views*. I discuss the relationship between Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and the early literature of the Great Perfection in Chapter Four.

⁸⁸ *kham*s.

⁸⁹ Vaidyapāda specifies that it is non-abiding *nirvāṇa* that is intended here. *srid pa dang zhi ba la mi gnas pa’i mya ngan las ‘das pa ste/* (Sukusuma, D 96b.4; P 115b.8-116a.1).

⁹⁰ *don*. Throughout this translation “reality” is used to translate *don*.

Is explained as⁹¹ the second stage.⁹² |34|

[How *Saṃsāra* Arises out of Nondual Wisdom]⁹³

The reality which is like that
Is present pervading all entities.
Yet,⁹⁴ from beginningless time, even from this
There was arising in the manner of the great thought.⁹⁵ |35|

And from that also the great elements [arose]:
The *maṇḍala* of wind arose,
And from that also, the great element of fire
Arose and spread. |36|

From that, the great element of water also
Arose and spread, and from that also earth.
From the essence of the gathering of the four [elements]
Mountains, and so forth, and all sentient beings also |37|

In all their variety, subtle and gross:
Men, women, and hermaphrodites,
The young and old,
Gods and *nāgas* and *yakṣas*, |38|

Evil spirits, planets, Yāma,
The Lord of Water, Indra,⁹⁶ hell beings,

⁹¹ *rim pa gnyis par*. This could be translated equally as either “in the second stage” or “as the second stage.” It seems that it is possible also to understand it in both ways. It could be that this truth is explained *in* the teachings on the second stage, or that the truth itself *is* the second stage, as it is the “perfection” stage, in which the truth itself is perfected or manifest.

⁹² Vaidyapāda gives three synonyms for the second stage: the spontaneously arisen stage (*lhan cig skyes pa'i rim pa*), the perfection stage (*rdzogs pa'i rim pa*), and the stage of [things] just as they are (*ji bzhin pa'i rim pa*). He then gives a brief description of the generation stage: “as for the generation stage it is for the purpose of reversing the coarse delusions of the world and its contents. This yoga that involves engaging with the conceptual mind is the first [stage].” *rim pa gnyis par rab tu bzhad zhes pa ni/ lhan cig skyes pa'i rim pa am/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa am/ ji bzhin pa'i rim pa (rim pa)* P; om. D) *rnam grangs so// bskyed pa'i rim pa ni snod bcud rags par 'khrul pa bzlog pa'i phyir ro// blos rnam par gzhaq pa'i rnal 'byor pa ste dang po'o// (Sukusuma, 96b.6-7; P 116a.5).*

⁹³ Vaidyapāda gives this heading for the section: *da ni gnyis su med pa'i ye shes las 'khor ba ji ltar 'byung ba (Sukusuma, D 97a.2-3; P 116b.1-2).*

⁹⁴ Vaidyapāda explains further, “Although that kind of nonduality pervades and remains [as the nature of] all entities, the reason that this is not apparent is explained with the lines beginning, **Yet, from beginningless time...**” *de yang gnyis su med pa de lta bus dngos po kun rnam par khyab ste gnas kyang de mi gsal ba'i rgyu ni thog med dus nas zhes te/ (Sukusuma, D 97a.4; P 116b.2).*

⁹⁵ Vaidyapāda elaborates, “From that time, just as clouds arise within space, **the great thought**, the mind alone, **arose in a manner** [in which it appeared] as if it were endowed with conceptuality.” *de'i dus nas nam mkha' la sprin 'byung pa bzhin du rnam rtog chen po zhes te sems tsam rtog (rtog] P, rtogs D) pa dang 'brel pa lta bu'i tshul du byung ste zhes bya 'o// (Sukusuma, D 97a.4; P 116b.3-4).* See *Muktilaka* verse 101, which is parallel (*Muktilaka*, 50b.4-5). This seems to refer to the cosmogonic moment where conceptuality (seemingly) arises out of a reality that is nonconceptual.

⁹⁶ Vaidyapāda omits references to the Lord of Water and Indra. This is unusual since he otherwise follows the root verses exactly here in this section (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.1).

Pretas, animals, and those who abandon all of this,⁹⁷
Beings who rely upon consciousness alone,⁹⁸
Such beings abide, spread far and wide.⁹⁹ |39|

Therefore, the nondual nonconceptuality
That is higher than that is completely obscured.¹⁰⁰
Because of not realizing it, all beings
Cycle around in *samsāra*. |40|

Due to their delusion they bring about
The great suffering of *samsāra*, which is like poisoned water.
[And yet] it is just like a snake, which is “seen” when looking at a rope
But, in fact, is held not to exist.¹⁰¹ |41|

Thus, this great nondual reality
Is the supreme great *maṇḍala* of self-awareness¹⁰²
Which abides continuously, and in many forms—¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Vaidyapāda identifies these as the *śrāvakas* and so forth. *de kun spangs pa ni nyan thos la sogs pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.1; P 117a.1-2).

⁹⁸ Vaidyapāda identifies these as those beings of the realm of limitless space, and so forth, since they have abandoned form. *nam mkha' tha' yas la sogs pa ste/ gzugs spangs ba'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.1-2; P 117a.2).

⁹⁹ Vaidyapāda comments that the statement that these beings live far and wide means that, “having been produced by conceptuality, they appear in the ten directions.” *de kun rgyas par gnas zhes pa ni rtog pas bzo byas nas phyogs bcu kun du snang ba'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.2; P 117a.2-3) This cosmogony, where beings are said to be produced by conceptuality or thought, is echoed in the perfection stage ritual practices outlined later in the *Dvitiyakrama*; see verse 165.

¹⁰⁰ bsgribs] P N S V(D and P), bsgrims D C.

¹⁰¹ In using the classical Yogācāra metaphor of the “rope-snake,” Buddhajñānapāda here displays the strong Yogācāra bent found throughout his works, which is echoed in Vaidyapāda’s writings, as well. The same metaphor is also used in the *Muktilaka* (D 47a.7). Nonetheless, when providing a doxography of philosophical systems later in this work Buddhajñānapāda places Madhyamaka above Yogācāra. I discuss Buddhajñānapāda’s philosophical views briefly in Chapter Three.

¹⁰² Vaidyapāda notes that, “In the *maṇḍala-cakra* there have never been any *samsāric* phenomena, so despite [their] being produced by conceptuality, they are not [actually] there.” *dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo la 'khor ba'i chos ye mes pa la rtog pas bzo byas kyang de de la med pa yin no//* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.5; P 117a.6-7). At this point in the commentary he gives a supportive citation which he attributes to the *Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra* (*Sukusuma*, D 97b.6-7; P 117a.7-8). Vaidyapāda gives the very same citation from this tantra in his *Ātmārthasiddhikaranāmayogakrama* (D 87a-b) and in his commentary to the *Caturāṅgasādhana* (*Caturāṅgasādhana-ṭīkā*, D 165b). The *Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra* is one of the so-called “Ārya-School” explanatory tantras, which sets out, among other things, the six parameters and four modes that characterize the Ārya School’s unique interpretive framework for the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, so it would be interesting to see it cited by Vaidyapāda, probably the earliest commentator on Buddhajñānapāda, in what is clearly a Jñānapāda-School commentary. However, the citation that Vaidyapāda gives—a teaching from the Lord of Secrets (Vajrapāṇi) on the fact that the apprehension of form, which is a delusion, is due to habit just like the apprehension of a rope-snake—is *not* found anywhere in the *Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra*. I have thus far been unable to locate the citation in any other work, either. In the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* Vaidyapāda likewise makes reference to the *Vajrajñānasamuccaya* (or rather the *Jñānavajrasammucaya*—the title is rendered there as *ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa*—but presumably refers to the same text), but there his reference does not include a citation (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 51a.5)

¹⁰³ *rgyun dang rnam grangs gyis*. Vaidyapāda’s explanation here seems to suggest that he understands this nature to be, in some sense, permanent: “Abides continuously and in many forms means the profound, which is permanent in that its **continuity** is permanent. The wisdom that realizes this is to be seen as permanent due to the permanence of its **many forms**.” *rgyun dang rnam grangs kyis gnas pa zhes pa ni zab mo ni rgyun gyi* (*gyi*] P, *gyis* D) *rtag pas na rgag pa'o// de chub pa'i ye shes ni rnam grangs kyi* (*kyi*] P, *kyis* D) *rtag pas na rtag par blta'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D

One must realize its essence. |42|

[The Individual [i.e. Disciple] Who Undertakes the Path to Realize This]¹⁰⁴

Whoever aspires towards realizing¹⁰⁵ that,
And genuinely holds in mind an aspiration,
Who has previously generated the power of merit,
And relies as his foundation,¹⁰⁶ upon an authentic being, |43|

Who has joy, respect, honor,
And proper intention, who trains,
Is stable, and has completely abandoned doubts,
Who is compliant¹⁰⁷ and is generous—he will understand it. [4a] |44|

[The Guru Who is to be Pleased by Him]¹⁰⁸

He should please a guru who is genuine and venerable,
Who possesses the lineage of supreme oral instructions,¹⁰⁹
Who is intent upon the conduct and training
Of the Mahāyāna path, |45|

Who knows the secret, great secret, and exceptional secret¹¹⁰
Of the ten suchnesses,¹¹¹ and so forth,

98a.3; P 117b.5). Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that *rgyun* here refers to the fact that the nature is continuously present in the context of ground, path, and fruition, and that *rnam grangs* refers to the various enumerations and elaborations that we use to describe this nature, such as the five *kāyas* or the five wisdoms, and so forth (Khechen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communication, February 2016).

¹⁰⁴ Vaidyapāda heads this section in the commentary this way. *da ni rtogs par byed pa'i lam la 'jug pa'i skyes bu gsung pa/* (*Sukusuma*, D 98a.4; P 117b.7-8).

¹⁰⁵ rtogs] P N S C, rtags D

¹⁰⁶ gzhi] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), bzhi D C P N S

¹⁰⁷ *rjes mthun*, Skt. **anurūpa*? Vaidyapāda takes *rjes mthun* here to refer to *dbang gi rjes su mthun pa*, indicating offerings that correspond with the specific initiations for which they are given, which he notes will be explained below (*Sukusuma*, D 98b.2; P 118a.6).

¹⁰⁸ Vaidyapāda gives this headline: *des mnyes par bya ba'i bla ma* (*Sukusuma*, D 98b.3; P 118a.7).

¹⁰⁹ Vaidyapāda elaborates: “[A guru] who possesses the lineage of supreme oral instructions means [a guru] who has ascertained in his own mind the essence of Vajradhara [and] who knows that which has been passed from ear to ear, just exactly as it is.” *mchog gi gdams ngag rgyud la ldan zhes te/ rdo rje 'chang chen po'i ngo bo rang gi thugs la mnga' ba rna ba nas rna bar 'pho ba ji lta ba bzhin du shes pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 98b.3-4; P 118a.8).

¹¹⁰ *sang ba, rab gsang*, and *shin tu gsang*. Vaidyapāda identifies these as the generation stage, (*bskyed pa'i rim pa*), illusory *samādhi* (*sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin*) and the suchness of the **ādhideva* and all phenomena (*lhag pa'i lha dang dngos po thams cad kyi de bzhin nyid do/*), respectively (*Sukusuma*, D 98b.7-99a.1; P 118b. 6-7). The latter two appear to correspond to different levels of perfection stage practice. The first of those mentioned here has the same name, *māyopama-samādhi*, that we find in later Ārya School terminology referring to the fourth of the five stages of Ārya School perfection stage practice. The term is used in verse 19 of Vaidyapāda's *Yogasāpta*, in the context of the practices connected with the *guhyaḥbhīṣeka* (*Yogasapta*, D 70b; P 84a).

¹¹¹ See Klein-Schwind's dissertation on the *daśatattva* (Klein-Schwind, 2012). Vaidyapāda lists the ten suchnesses here as: *de nyid bcu zhes pa ni rgyud thams cad kyi de nyid bcu ni dkyil 'khor dang sbyin sreg dang/ ting nge 'dzin dang/ phyag rgya dang/ stang stabs dang/* (D adds: *la ni lhur len ba zhes pa ni lam la mos/ 'dug stabs dang/ bzlas brjod dang/ mchod pa dang/ las la sbyor ba dang /slar bsdu pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 98b.5-6; P 118b.3-4). The infelicitous addition of the line in the middle of the list of the ten suchnesses in the Derge recension appears simply to be an instance of dittography from the previous line. This list of ten is not consistent, however, with the (admittedly variable) list of ten suchnesses found in other later sources (see Klein-Schwind 2012, 47-8 for a comparative table from several sources) and indeed not even with those among the ten *tattvas* that Vaidyapāda identifies in his *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-tīkā*.

And who will teach
Those to whom such reality is concealed. |46|

[Offerings to the Guru]

One's lands,¹¹² houses, mansions, horses,
Elephants and the like, beds,
Beautiful wife and delightful sons,
Daughters, sisters, and nieces,¹¹³ |47|

Also, gold¹¹⁴ and silver,
Beautiful things made of copper,
Iron, and the like,
Strings of pearls,¹¹⁵ rubies, |48|

Amber,¹¹⁶ sapphire,
Emerald, turquoise, and others, these many offerings—
The skillful person fills this realm with such things¹¹⁷
And offers them to such a venerable teacher.¹¹⁸ |49|

[Descriptions of the Types of Tantric Consort]

¹¹² The offering of land to the guru mentioned here is an important indicator of the changing socio-political climate of Indian religious practice in the late 8th and early 9th centuries. Royal clientele began giving land grants to religious institutions, and this was part of the major shift in political structures that took place in the early medieval period (see, e.g. Thapar 2002, 451). In fact, there are accounts of Buddhajñānapāda's having been patronized by the Pālā kings, mostly in the later Tibetan sources, but such an alliance is also briefly reported by Atīśa (Szántó 2015, 539; the Tibetan accounts include those by Chögyal Phagpa and Tāranātha). Vaidyapāda also, however, refers very briefly to several events from Buddhajñānapāda's life that appear serve as the basis for the accounts that were expanded in the Tibetan histories to describe royal patronage (*Sukusuma*, D 135b). These expanded accounts were presumably based on oral history, as well as on written histories to which we no longer have access. I discuss some of these features of the socio-political context in which Buddhajñānapāda lived, as well as the accounts of his life, in Chapter One.

¹¹³ Vaidyapāda notes that these first substances are what is to be offered for the *kalaśābhiṣeka* (*bum pa'i dbang*) because they accord with that initiation since it "is the foundation" (*gzhir gnas pa'i phyir ro*) (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.2; P 119a.1).

¹¹⁴ Vaidyapāda notes that from here the offerings are for the *guhyābhiṣeka* (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.3; P 119a.2).

¹¹⁵ Vaidyapāda notes that from here the offerings are for the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka* (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.3; P 119a.2). He only mentions offerings connected with three initiations here, suggesting that here he only understands there to be three. However, Vaidyapāda also composed the *Yogasapta-nāma-caturabhiṣeka-prakarāṇa* (Tōh. 1875), in which, as evidenced by its title, he acknowledges a "fourth," as well, though he shies away from calling it a "fourth initiation." I address the topic of "the fourth" briefly in Chapter Three and in more detail in Chapter Seven.

¹¹⁶ pu shel] sugg. em., pu shar D C P N S. This suggested emendation is based on the oral commentary of Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel who suggests that the text should read *pu shel*, "amber," rather than *pu shar*, which does not yield any sense (personal communication, February 2016). Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* does not mention the term, but in his *Yogasapta* Vaidyapāda includes this substance in a list of initiation offerings which he has obviously taken from the *Dvitiyakrama* (*Yogasapta*, D 70b.4). There the term is given as *pur sha*, which also lacks sense.

¹¹⁷ Vaidyapāda offers the possibility of filling all of space with mentally produced offerings here "if one is unable," to offer in the way just described (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.3-4; 119a.3). To substantiate this, he cites Chapter 8, verse 22 of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, in which it is not possible to offer the offerings described physically, so they must be understood as mentally created offerings. This eighth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* has been understood in the commentarial tradition to be referring to the context of initiation, which is exactly the context that Vaidyapāda understands here—offerings made for receiving initiation (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.4; P 119a.4).

¹¹⁸ Vaidyapāda notes that this was the ordinary way of pleasing the guru (*mnyes byed thun mong pa*) (*Sukusuma*, 99a.6).

That which is luminous and joyful, equal to space—¹¹⁹
One will not know¹²⁰ it any other way.¹²¹
Thus, a woman,¹²² the illusory *mudrā*,
Is superior among all illusions.¹²³ |50|

This illusion here in this world,
Because of¹²⁴ having Locanā and so forth as her pure forms,¹²⁵
Is of four types.

¹¹⁹ Vaidyapāda specifies that this refers to nondual wisdom (*gnyis su med pa 'i ye shes*) (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.7; P 119a.7).

¹²⁰ rig] S P V(P), rigs D C N V(D).

¹²¹ Vaidyapāda notes that it cannot be recognized without the seven yogas, a system of yogas connected to the practices of “the fourth,” addressed by Vaidyapāda in his own *Yogasapta-nāma-caturabhiṣeka-prakarana*. Buddhajñānapāda himself references, but does not list, the seven yogas in his *Muktililaka*, and Vaidyapāda in his commentary on that text mentions the seven in reference to their connection with the three joys, but does not list them individually. In Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta*, however, the seven yogas are explained in much greater detail as seven states or experiences that are part of the result of awakening, and which somehow constitute “the fourth;” the seven are perfect example-less bliss (*dpe med bde rdzogs*), nonduality (*gnyis su med pa*), great bliss (*bde ba chen po*), lacking nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), unfolding compassion (*thugs rjes rgyas pa*), unbroken continuity (*rgyun mi chad pa*), and non-cessation (*'gog pa med pa*). The fact that Vaidyapāda discusses, in that text, “the fourth” despite the fact that Buddhajñānapāda’s tradition is known for including just three initiations, is an issue I have taken up briefly in Chapter Three, and in more detail in the discussion of initiation in Chapter Seven. Regarding these seven yogas, here the *Sukusuma* Vaidyapāda writes: “That [nondual wisdom] comes about through training. Regarding its realization, [the text says] **in any other way**, meaning that one **will not know** that [by means of relying upon] any other thing besides the *prajñāpāramitā-mudrā* (i.e. a female consort). Even though [nondual wisdom] pervades all things, since other [things] lack the seven yogas [one can not know it through them].” *de ni bsgom (bsgom] P, bsgoms D) pa las byung la/ rtogs pa de yang gzhan du zhes te shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'i phyag rgya las gzhan pa 'i chos can gyi dngos po gang du yang de rig (rig] P, rigs D) par mi gyur te/ dngos po thams cad la khyab kyang gzhan ni sbyor ba bdun dang bral bas na 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 99a.7-b.2; P 119b.1-3). The same seven factors (with the second called “union” rather than “non-duality”) are addressed in Vāgīśvavarakīrti’s later *Saptaṅga* and his *Tattvaratnāvaloka* and its auto-commentary, where they are called the seven *aṅgas* of *mahāmudrā*, with reference to which see Isaacson (2010b, 271, 271n27) and, with a bit more detail, Isaacson and Sferra (2014, 271), where they are mentioned with reference to a citation from the *Saptaṅga* in Rāmapāla’s *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*. The seven *aṅgas* are listed in Vāgīśvavarakīrti’s work as *sambhoga*, *sampuṭa*, *mahāsukha*, *niḥsvabhāva*, *kāruṇyanirbhara*, *nirantara*, *anirodaḥ*. I discuss the seven yogas in more detail in Chapter Seven.

¹²² Vaidyapāda helpfully defines a woman as someone with a lotus (*padma*, i.e. vagina) and breasts (*dkar 'chang*) (see note 132 for a discussion of the latter term) (*Sukusuma*, 99b.2).

¹²³ *bud med sgyu ma 'i phyag rgya ni/ sgyu ma kun las khyad par 'phags*. These two lines have strong parallels with the first two lines of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* 1.4, which read, in Sanskrit, *sarvāsām eva māyānām strīmāyā praviśisyate* |, and in Tibetan translation, *sgyu ma dag ni thams cad pas/ bud med sgyu ma khyed par che/ (Sarvabuddhasamāyoga, D 151a.3)*. The *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* also mentions the woman as a *mudrā* in the last two lines of the immediately preceding verse: *sarvastrīmāya mudreyam advayaṃ yānam uttamam* |; *bud med kun gyi sgyu ma 'i rgya/ 'di ni gnyis med theg pa 'i mchog (Sarvabuddhasamāyoga, D 151a.2)*. Thanks to Ryan Damron for bringing these *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* parallels to my attention and to Péter Szántó for sharing with me his draft edition of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*. The two lines from the *Dvītyākrama* are also strongly paralleled in Śākyamitra’s *Anuttarasandhi*, included as the second stage in Nāgārjuna’s *Pañcakrama*, which reads: *sarvāsām eva māyānām strīmāyaiva viśisyate/* (Mimaki and Tomabechi 20); *sgyu ma dag ni thams cad las/ bud med sgyu ma khyad par 'phags (Pañcakrama, D 49a.7; Mimaki and Tomabechi 20)*. Tomabechi (2006, 132n128) has already noticed all of these parallels and additionally notes that a passage identical to that in the *Pañcakrama* is found in the *Vajramaṇḍalāmkāra*.

¹²⁴ pas] P N S, par D C.

¹²⁵ Here Buddhajñānapāda is referring to the *viśuddhi*, or “pure forms” of the consorts, who are identified as the four female buddhas from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*. Vaidyapāda further relates this to the fact that the four female buddhas are identified in the tantras as the pure forms of the four elements (*Sukusuma*, 100a.1).

Their names and characteristics will be explained.¹²⁶ |51|

[They are called] *kamalī*¹²⁷ and *śaṅkhinī*

¹²⁶ Buddhajñānapāda's mention of the four consort types, which correspond to the classic four-fold typology of women in Indian *kāmasāstra*, is an early one in Buddhist literature, and indeed in Indian literature on the whole. In terms of Buddhist sources, it is the earliest mention of such a four-fold classification—either in the scriptural or commentarial literature—that I am familiar with. The very same four types of consort mentioned here in Buddhajñānapāda's text are found, however, in later Buddhist tantric literature, including Chapter 18, verse 1 of the *Samvarodaya-tantra* (except there the first type, instead of *kamalī*, is called *padminī*, which is in fact the much more common name for this particular type; the two categories obviously correspond, though, given that both are derived for words meaning “lotus.” The *Samvarodaya* passage on the four types appears likely to have been influenced by the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, as there are a number of parallels. For the *Samvarodaya* passage see Tsuda 1994, 155-57 and 324-35.). The *Samvarodaya*, however, is quite a bit later than the *Dvīṭīyakrama*; Isaacson has suggested it may be of Nepalese origin and date to as late as the 12th century (English 2002, xxi, 384n2). With regards to non-Buddhist Indian literature, after Vātsyāyana's famed 3rd-4th century *Kāmasūtra*, which does not mention such a four-fold categorization of women (Vātsyāyana instead has a six-fold schema), Kokkoka's *Ratirahasya*, and the Buddhist author Padmaśrī's *Nāgarasarvasva* are considered to be the earliest of the “later” *kāmasāstra* works (Ali 2011, 43). The *Ratirahasya* is reported to be the first text to describe women in these classical four types (Datta 1988, 1203; Ali 2011, 45). That text is, however, difficult to date, and its dates are given by some scholars as 9-10th century, by others as the 10-12th century, and by others as late as the 13th century (See Ali 2011, 44 and 44n14; Datta 1988, 1203; and Hopkins 1992, 35 and 35n4). The 9th-10th century dates posited by some scholars, seem to be based on erroneous and/or ambiguous references to the *Ratirahasya* in the works of the 10th century author Somadevasūri, and all that may be said with certainty is that the *Ratirahasya* is cited by commentators beginning only in the 13th century (Ali 2011, 44n14 and 44). In any case, even with the earliest dates posited by scholars, it seems that the *Ratirahasya* is certainly later than Buddhajñānapāda's late 8th/early 9th-century *Dvīṭīyakrama*, which lists precisely these four categories (though as in the *Samvarodaya* the first category according to Kokkoka is *padminī* rather than Buddhajñānapāda's unusual *kamalī*). There is one other possibly early but difficult-to-date source for this four-fold categorization: *Surūpa's *Kāmasāstra* (Tōh. 2500), which, like the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, is not extant in Sanskrit but is preserved in Tibetan translation (and may therefore not have been considered by Indologists discussing early *kāmasāstric* literature). We know nothing of the author of this treatise, though the homage and one of the concluding verses of the work suggest he was a Buddhist, and he tells us that his work was composed on the basis of Nāgārjuna's treatise on erotics. Vogel, who has edited and translated the *Kāmasāstra*, suggests that this must be the “tantric” Nāgārjuna, who he dates to the 6th century (Vogel 1965, 5). However, if it is indeed a work by this Ārya School author Nāgārjuna on which *Surūpa's work is based (and this point is itself not entirely certain; Vogel notes that “the work admittedly used by Surūpa as his source does not appear to be identical with any of the several known treatises entitled *Ratīśāstra* that go by the name of Nāgārjuna and differ widely from each other (Vogel 1965, 5)—this author, we now know, was likely writing slightly later than Buddhajñānapāda, in the 9th, not the 6th, century. (A Nāgārjuna, by the way, is also listed as a source in Kokkoka's *Ratirahasya* (Ali 2011, 60).) *Surūpa's work, then, also appears to be later than Buddhajñānapāda's, making the *Dvīṭīyakrama* the earliest known locus, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, of this important four-fold *kāmasāstric* categorization of women. The (much) later Tibetan commentaries on the *Guhyagarbha* such as Longchenpa's 14th-century *Phyog bcu mun gsel* commentary to the *Guhyagarbha* likewise have a four-fold typology, but it is different from the classical *kāmasāstra* typology (See Dorje 1987, 902). The *Guhyagarbha-tantra* itself, which we can date to the 8th century, only says “discriminating between *devīs*, *nāginīs*, and female *mudrās* of inferior species, or else without discrimination,” at the point where Longchenpa gives his extensive commentary on the four types of consorts (Dorje 1987, 883). Other Buddhist tantras have different schemas of classification of consorts, or of women in general, like the tantras pertaining to the *Cakrasaṃvara* tradition, including the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* itself and the *Abhidhanottara-tantra*, which have a seven-fold classification (See Gray 2007, 227-29 and Kalff 1979, 237-38, respectively); and the *Samputa-tantra* and *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*, which each have a five-fold one corresponding to the five buddha families (See *Samputa*, 1.1.42-1.1.45 and *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa*, 8.15-8.17). I briefly discuss the relationship between Buddhajñānapāda's writings and *kāmasāstra* in Chapter Six.

¹²⁷ All versions of the text read *kamalī*, which is an unusual and unexpected form. *Kamalinī* would be the expected feminine form that would correspond with the other names given in the verse. It is possible that the Tibetan translators may have simply shortened the form for metrical reasons. Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* also reads *kamalī*, but this may again simply be because the translators of the commentary were referencing the Tibetan translation of the

Citriṇī and *hastinī*.

The first is of the class of *nāga* women.

The second is of the class of tigers and lions. |52|

The third is [of the class] of the wild black antelope,¹²⁸ and so forth.¹²⁹

The fourth is of the class of elephants.

Here, as for *kamalī*

I will explain her shape and characteristics: |53|

She is a girl who is redolent with the scent of lotus

Her face is round, the tip of her nose like a mustard seed,

Her nails are red and her back is bent [out of respect].¹³⁰

The soles of her feet rest flat upon the earth. |54|

Her body hairs coil and she is golden.¹³¹

Her breasts¹³² are like the fruit of the mustard plant.

She has three wrinkles at her waist.¹³³

Her chest is lovely, and she has the [leisurely] gait of an elephant. |55|

The taste of her blood is sour¹³⁴

Her skin is reddish.

The pure form of this goddess is *Māmakī*.

I will explain to you the characteristics |56|

And shape of *śāṅkhinī*:

The girl has the scent of sulphur.¹³⁵

Her hair is long, and her nose is long.

root text. I have not taken the liberty of changing the text in my edition, however, as this would render unmetrical all verses in which it occurs. I am grateful to Mattia Salvini for a helpful conversation on this topic.

¹²⁸ *ri dwags kṛṣṇa*

¹²⁹ *sogs*] D C V (P and D), *tshogs* P N S

¹³⁰ *rgyab sgur* (Skt. **kubjā*?). The term normally means hunchbacked, but Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that here it is meant to indicate a respectful body posture. (Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communication, January 2016).

¹³¹ *ser*] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), *sen* D C, *se* P N S. Vaidyapāda makes it clear that this refers to her coloring. Below Buddhajñānapāda states that her skin color is reddish. In the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* the type of woman who corresponds to *kamalī* is described as “reddish-golden” (Gray 2007, 236).

¹³² *dkar* ‘*chang*. Vaidyapāda makes it clear that this term refers to breasts: “**White** means milk. That which **holds** this are breasts.” *dkar ba ni* ‘*o ma*’*o*// *de* ‘**chang** *ba ni nu ma ste*’ (*Sukusuma*, D 100a.7; P 120b.6). I believe that this is likely a translation of one of the Sanskrit terms for breasts *payodharā*—literally “that which holds milk.” The Tibetan *dkar* ‘*chang* could also be understood to mean this, given that the term *dkar* is often used for dairy products, in general, thus including (at least cow’s) milk. However, I have not been able to find any other uses of the term *dkar* ‘*chang* in Tibetan.

¹³³ Vaidyapāda comments: “Below her navel [she has three wrinkles] that look like a *triśūla*.” (*lte ba*’*i* ‘*og tu tri shū la* (shū la] D shu la P) *lta bu zhes pa*’*o*// (*Sukusuma*, D 100b.1; P 120b.7). This is a classical mark of beauty in Indian literature.

¹³⁴ *skyur*] C P N S V(D and P), *skar* D

¹³⁵ *tsha*’*i*] D C V(D and P), *tshī* S P, *tshwi*(?) N. Reading the word as *ba tsha* Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that this refers to the scent, somewhere between pleasant and unpleasant, that comes from natural hot springs. I understood this to be the scent of sulfur.

Her breasts are like oranges.¹³⁶ |57|

Like milk mixed well with yogurt,
The taste of her blood is sweet.
Her color is whitish yellow and
Her pure form is Pāṇḍarāvasiṇī. |58|

Likewise, I will explain the shape
And characteristics of¹³⁷ *citriṇī*¹³⁸
The girl is redolent of the scent of fresh meat.
Her body is small, and her thighs are exquisite. |59|

Her breasts are like bel fruits¹³⁹
She is not shy, and she is keen on anger.
She always likes to quarrel.
Her calves are like the legs¹⁴⁰ of a crow. |60|

Her lower lip protrudes downwards, and she sleeps on her back.
Her speech sounds like a pigeon and her skin is dark.¹⁴¹
The taste of her blood is salty.
Her pure form is the goddess Tārā. |61|

Then, I will explain the characteristics
And shape of *hastīnī*.¹⁴²
The girl smells like beer.
Her calves are thick and her nose is slightly crooked. |62|

She smells foul and her body is thick
Her conduct is crude and her color is a dusty gray.
Her breasts curve to the right and left.¹⁴³
Her skin is purple and

Her blood tastes unpleasant.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁶ nā ga ra] sugg. em., na ra ga D C P N V(P), ma ra ga S, na ga ra V(D). I have translated this as “orange” based on my suggested emendation of the text to *nāraga*, which I derive from the reading in the Derge recension of Vaidyapāda’s commentary, *nagara*, which I then emend to *nāgara*, one of the meanings of which is “an orange.” Neither hell (*naraga* (= *naraka*?)) nor a village (*nagara*) seem to fit well as a description of breasts, and Vaidyapāda anyway clarifies that this is a type of fruit. However, Vaidyapāda’s description of the particular oranges intended here is not exactly what one might expect: “Like a fruit whose top part is large, but whose main part is slack.” *shing tog rtse mo che la rtsa ba zhum pa ste de ‘dra ba’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 100b.2; P 121a.1).

¹³⁷ yi] P N S, ya D C

¹³⁸ tsi tri nī] sugg. em., tsi tri ni D C, tsi tra ni P N S

¹³⁹ *pa la*. In Vaidyapāda’s commentary this is rendered as *dpal*. He specifies that “they **are like the bel fruit** means [that they are] small and round.” *dpal gyi ‘bras bu ‘dra* (‘dra] D, P om.) *zhes bya ste zhum shing chung ba’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D100b.4; P 121a.3-4).

¹⁴⁰ rkang] D C, dang P N S

¹⁴¹ *ngo bsangs*.

¹⁴² *hastī nī*] sugg. em. *hastī ni* D C, *hastī ni* P N S

¹⁴³ *dkar ‘chang g.yas g.yon du dgye ba*. I am unsure about this phrase.

¹⁴⁴ *bsngal*. I am unsure about the meaning of this term.

The pure form of this type of girl is Buddhalocanā.
Now I will teach about the
The acceptable and unacceptable conduct for all of them. |64|

[Unacceptable Conduct for the Consort]

At the time of sporting she turns her back,
She is inwardly lustful¹⁴⁵ and overly talkative,
Breaks the commands that she has been given,
And wipes her mouth when it has been kissed, |65|

Even though she knows the guru's qualities
She relates them only a little to others.¹⁴⁶
She pretends that she has not seen the guru,
And though coming [before him] does not prostrate to him. |66|

She feasts with other people who
Do not get along with the revered [yogin].
These, and so forth, are completely inappropriate [behaviors].
The intelligent [yogin] avoids¹⁴⁷ someone who is like this.¹⁴⁸ |67|

[Acceptable Conduct for the Consort]

The intelligent [yogin] searches for the someone appropriate:
Radiant eyed,¹⁴⁹ with an alert gaze,¹⁵⁰
She repeatedly sets aside passing thoughts,
Or momentary excited distractions, |68|

Thinks [first], and [only then] either speaks or smiles.¹⁵¹
When seeing the venerable guru,
She looks joyfully and beautifully at him and smiles.
She listens to his commands with interest. |69|

She is charmingly respectful.
Moreover, she speaks sweetly to him.
When she sees him she embraces and serves her companion.
She discreetly embraces him, and massages his finger joints. |70|

¹⁴⁵ *khong du dga'*. I here follow Vaidyapāda who explains this to mean desirous (*Sukusuma*, D 101a.2; P 121b.2).

¹⁴⁶ *gzhan du de la cung zad bsnyad*. Vaidyapāda clarifies that this means that she accuses him of having faults that he does not have (*cung zad bsnyad* [bsnyad] D, snyad P) *ces pa ni med pa'i skyon brjod pa'o* (*Sukusuma*, D 101a.2; P 121b.2).

¹⁴⁷ *spang*

¹⁴⁸ Vaidyapāda explains why such a partner is to be avoided: "A disharmonious consort does not bring about the occasion for one's physical or mental happiness." (*rje su mi mthun pa'i phyag rgyas lus sems bde bar byed pa'i skabs med de/*) (*Sukusuma*, D 101a.3; P121b.3-4).

¹⁴⁹ Vaidyapāda comments that this means there is a clear distinction between the white and black parts of her eyes (*dkar nag phyed pa'o/*) (*Sukusuma*, D 101a.4; P 121b.5).

¹⁵⁰ *mig rtsa rgod*.

¹⁵¹ I am not completely certain about the meaning of these few lines. *slar zhing skad cig bsam pa dang// skad cig rgod pa'i 'phro bzhag* (*bzhag*] D C S P, *gzhaḅ* N) *nas// bsam zhing yang na smra 'am 'dzum//*

She loosens her hair and binds it up again.
She mends his clothes, and periodically smiles.
She pretends not to see the guru,¹⁵²
And mends his clothes¹⁵³ and massages his body. |71|

She bows at his feet and is inquisitive
She gives milk¹⁵⁴ to the mouth of her infant;
She shows her breasts and loosens her belt.
When not seeing the revered [yogin], |72|

She sings and makes him visible.¹⁵⁵
Wherever he is
She goes there, making up a pointless excuse
Laughing vigorously, she flirts |73|

And pretends to clear her throat and yawn— **[5a]**
One should rely upon such a human woman. |74|

[Characteristics of the Consort's Secret Place]

Now I will authentically explain
The shape of¹⁵⁶ her secret place,
And its appropriate and inappropriate characteristics.
Listen one-pointedly. |75|

If it is like pot shards, or facing downwards,¹⁵⁷
Very deep, or very ugly,
Or if it is always dry,
Or always damp and dripping, |76|

Or rough like the back of a toad,
This [type of secret] place is to be avoided; it is unacceptable.
Elevated like a turtle's back,
Its upper part symmetrical, and very smooth, |77|

Like the nape of an ox's neck,
Its upper part is even and long;¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² Presumably this time coquettishly, unlike in verse 66 above.

¹⁵³ This is likely dittography from the previous line, but it is preserved in all of the Tibetan recensions.

¹⁵⁴ While 'o byed usually means "to kiss," I believe that based on the context here it refers to giving milk to an infant.

¹⁵⁵ This is, perhaps, an allusion to the section in many generation stage *sādhana*s, including Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* where the goddesses sing to make the main deity appear from a *bindu* of light as part of the generation process; the songs found in Guhyasamāja *sādhana*s are taken directly from the root tantra itself.

¹⁵⁶ kyi] D C, kyis P N S

¹⁵⁷ *kha sbub*. Literally, "upside down." Vaidyapāda notes that this means it is located too (?) low. *kha sbub ni 'og na gnas pa ltar ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 101a.5; P121b.7).

¹⁵⁸ Vaidyapāda comments, "Like the nape of an ox's neck means that the two sides and the anthers (i.e. clitoris) are like the nape of the neck and the shoulders. Moreover, **its upper part is even and long** means that most of it is [located] [towards] the upper [area]." *ba glang (glang) D, lang P) gi ni ltag pa ltar/ zhes pa ni 'gram gnyis dang*

Round like the center of a lotus;
Not dripping at all; protruding slightly¹⁵⁹ |78|

And with little hair¹⁶⁰—such an illusory *mudrā*
Is skillfully and exuberantly searched for by the intelligent [yogin].¹⁶¹ |79|

Even if she does not have these characteristics,
If she has caste,¹⁶² beauty, and youth,
This delightful girl, beautified by ornaments,
Endowed with [these] three enjoyments, should be taken up. |80|

Devoted towards the profound dharma,
And not entangled with karmic relations¹⁶³—
A companion, as described above, who has swayed [the yogin’s] mind—¹⁶⁴
Such a human woman¹⁶⁵ should be obtained by the intelligent [yogin]. |81|

In that way, by means of the illusory great *mudrā*
Of that type of female,
The so-called **adhideva*,¹⁶⁶

ze’u ‘bru ste ltag pa dang dpung mgo ltar gnas te/ de yang steng mnyam zhing thog gi dbyibs kyang ring zhes pa ni thog tu phel che bar gnas pa’o// (Sukusuma, D 101b.1; P 122a.2-3).

¹⁵⁹ Vaidyapāda comments, “**Not dripping** means [it does not drip] when [she is] not practicing. When practicing it should **slightly protrude**.” *‘dzag min zhes pa ni nyams su ma blangs na zhes so// nyams su blangs na cung zad ‘byung ba ste (Sukusuma, D 101b.3; P 122a.4-5).*

¹⁶⁰ Vaidyapāda comments, “**With little hair** means with the hair removed to make it appealing.” *spu nyung zhes pa ni spu langs pa ste yid du ‘ong bar byed pa’i phyr ro// (Sukusuma, D 101b.4; P 122a.5).*

¹⁶¹ Vaidyapāda comments that the yogin’s exuberance in procuring a partner should not, however, involve unseemly conduct. *thabs kyi shin tu btsal zhes pa ni kha na ma mtho ba med pa (Sukusuma, D 101b.3; P 122a.5-6).*

¹⁶² Vaidyapāda, however, notes that her caste is indeterminate (*mi nges pa (Sukusuma, 101b.6).*

¹⁶³ *las ‘brel gyis ‘khyud ma byas dang.* I am unsure of the meaning of this line. Vaidyapāda seems to interpret it to mean that the woman is not held on to too closely by her relatives (her mother, father, brother etc.) such that they would be resentful of the yogin’s relationship with her (*Sukusuma, D 102a.3-4*). It could also mean a girl who has not been sexually involved (*‘khyud pa*) with a person with whom the yogin has a close karmic relationship, like a fellow student, etc.

¹⁶⁴ *sngon gsungs grogs kyi shes bslus pa’i//.* I am unsure about my reading of this line as well as of Vaidyapāda’s comments here. “Such a one **who has swayed the mind** means [the following]. Having reversed [his] first thought by means of [her] pleasant speech [is what is meant by] **swayed**. Then, [he] is placed in the state of [having] trust [in her].” *sngon gsungs grogs zhes pa ni gong du smos pa’i rjes su mthun pa’i phyag rgya gang zhig gis/ shes pa bslus pa zhes te rjes su mthun pa’i gdam gyis dang po’i shes pa rnam par zlog pa ni slu ba ste/ dad pa’i sa la ‘god pa’o// (Sukusuma, D 102a.5-6; P 124a.3-4).*

¹⁶⁵ Vaidyapāda’s comments suggest that Buddhajñānapāda’s text included the word “et cetera” here, thus reading “human woman **etc.**” He writes “The word **et cetera** here is meant to include a *devī, nāginī, yakṣinī, dākiṇī,* and so forth.” *sogs kyi sgras bsdu pa lha mo dang klu mo dang gnod sbyin mo dang mkha’ ‘gro ma la sogs pa rnam so// (Sukusuma, D 102b.1; P 123a.6).*

¹⁶⁶ *lhag pa’i lha.* Buddhajñānapāda uses this term several times in the *Dvītyākrama*. In his usage, the term seems to refer to the final result of tantric practice. See especially verse 314 where the **adhideva* is equated with the thirteenth *bhūmi*. (For further details this point see my notes to verse 314, as well as Chapter Three, in which I discuss this term and its function in Buddhajñānapāda’s work in more detail.) Vaidyapāda’s comments on the term here suggest is he understands this term to refer to Mahāvajradhara. He explains that Mahāvajradhara is present in all beings, presumably as their basic nature, but can only be accomplished using the “higher methods which seal by means of wisdom.” *ci’i phyr lhag pa’i lha zhes bya zhe na/ lha rnam las mchog tu gyur pa ni kha na ma tho ba med pa’o// de las mchog tu gyur pa ni byang chub sems dpa’o// de las mchog tu gyur pa ni sangs rgyas rnam so// de rnam kyi phul du gyur pa ni rdo rje ‘chang chen po sbyor ba bdun dang ldan pa’o// de lta bu sems can thams*

So difficult to encounter in the three realms, will be accomplished. |82|

[Initiation Rituals: The Second Initiation (*guhyābhiṣeka*)]¹⁶⁷

Additionally, together with the ordinary [offerings],¹⁶⁸

Perform the *gaṇapūjā*¹⁶⁹

Then, having searched for a girl [who fits the description] that has been taught,

She must be offered to the guru. |83|

cad la mi slu (slu] D, bslu P) *ba'i tshul du gnas kyang ye shes kyis rgyas btab pa'i thabs gong ma dang bral na mi 'grub pas/ de rnams dang lhan cig tu gyur pa'i lhag pa'i lha zhes bya ba sgrub ces bya'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 102b.3-5; P 123b.2-5).

¹⁶⁷ Buddhajñānapāda never uses the word “initiation” (*abhiṣeka*, *dbang*) in the *Dvitiyakrama*. However, he does describe the ritual procedures for the second (*guhya*) and third (*prajñājñāna*) initiations.

¹⁶⁸ I suggest that the line “together with the ordinary” should perhaps be read as meaning “together with the ordinary offerings.” This makes sense when the two lines *de yang thun mong dang bcas pa// tshogs kyi mchod pa yang byas te//* are read together. The noun *mchod pa*, “offerings/pūjā,” is supplied in the second line and was simply omitted by Buddhajñānapāda and/or his translators in the earlier *pāda* due to metrical considerations. Vaidyapāda, however, uses the opportunity presented by this line, in which the noun to which “the ordinary” refers is not clearly specified, to add in a brief description of the *kalaśābhiṣeka*. I believe that the fact that Buddhajñānapāda himself does not make any mention to the *kalaśābhiṣeka* ritual in his text, as well as the fact that Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the *kalaśābhiṣeka* ends with the concluding initiatory rites like the *vyākaraṇa*, *anujñā*, and *āśvāsa*, indicates that in their tradition the *kalaśābhiṣeka* was likely given on a separate ritual occasion than the second and third initiations which are described here in the *Dvitiyakrama* in the subsequent verses. Presumably, the *Dvitiyakrama* does not mention the *kalaśābhiṣeka* because, given that the text is concerned primarily with perfection stage practices, the *Dvitiyakrama* assumes a student who has already received the *kalaśābhiṣeka*, and is now ready for the *guhya* and *prajñājñāna* initiations. In order to avail himself of the opportunity to present a summary of the *kalaśābhiṣeka*, in the present verse Vaidyapāda reads “ordinary” (*thun mong*) to refer to “that which is attained through [the vows of a] bodhisattva, and so forth, and through the ordinary vows, that is to say the *vidyābhiṣeka*” (*thun mong zhes pa ni byang chub sems dpa' la sogs pa dang thun mong du gyur pa'i sdom pas thob pa ste/ rig* (rig] D, rigs P) *pa'i dbang ngo//*) (*Sukusuma*, D 102b.6; P 123b.5-6). The term *vidyābhiṣeka* was normally used to refer to the consecrations, from water to name, that correspond with the five buddha families in Yoga tantra (Mori n.d, 100). Vaidyapāda then interprets “together with that” ([*de*] *dang bcas pa*) to mean “the extraordinary,” and says that it means “that which is obtained by means of the extraordinary vows—the irreversible *ācārya* initiation.” (*de dang bcas pa ni thun mong ma yin pa'i sdom pas thob pa ste/ rdo rje slob dpon phyir mi ldog pa'i dbang ngo//*) (*Sukusuma*, D 102b.6; P 123b.6-7). He then proceeds to give a rather extensive explanation of the ritual of purifying the land in preparation for making an initiatory *maṇḍala* (*sa dag par bya ba'i cho ga*), followed by a rather detailed description of the various rituals of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* itself—though he himself calls it just a brief description and notes that a more detailed version of the ritual should be found elsewhere (*Sukusuma*, D 104b.5; P 126a.3-4). He finally notes that the subsequent *guhyābhiṣeka* is to be given to “students who [already] have those [earlier initiations]” (*de dag dang ldan pa'i slob ma la gsang dbang bskur bar gsungs pa/*) (*Sukusuma*, D 104b.6; P 126a.4). Despite all of this, Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, which is generally known as the generation stage *sādhana* in his Guhyasamāja practice system includes several practices that appear to pertain in some way to the perfection stage (see Chapter Five for more details on this point). While generally I do believe, as I have just argued here, that the *Dvitiyakrama* and Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* both suggest the likelihood of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* being given in a separate ritual context from the two later initiations, the fact that the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* contains practices that seem likely to have been permitted only for a practitioner who had obtained the later initiations does at least call this position into question. It may not be possible to resolve this point with complete certainty. I discuss this issue in Chapter Seven.

¹⁶⁹ Vaidyapāda identifies this as the beginning of the *guhyābhiṣeka*. Moreover, in his commentary on the *Samājottara* Vaidyapāda uses the same term, *gaṇapūjā*, to refer to the *pūjā* to be performed at the outset of the *guhyābhiṣeka*. In that text Vaidyapāda describes the ritual as follows: “Having offered the wide-eyed one together with the *gaṇapūjā* to the guru, he bestows the initiation, as [will be] described, upon the disciple.” (*de yang ji skad du gsungs pa'i mig yangs tshogs kyi mchod pa dang bcas te bla ma la phul nas des ji skad du gsung pa'i dbang bskur ba slob ma la sbyin par bya'o//*) (*Samyagvidyākara*, D 103a.3). The ‘wide-eyed one’ is a term used to refer to the consort in Chapter Eight of the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, as well. That chapter is interpreted by some commentators as concerning initiatory practices.

Then, when the guru is pleased,
 He engages in union with her
 Due to which the *sugatas* melt and become the sixteenth part,¹⁷⁰
 This is dropped¹⁷¹ in the mouth of the disciple,¹⁷² |84|

And having descended, it enters the lotus at his heart.
 Through this the field is purified¹⁷³
 And the twelve [experiences]—[perceiving] all phenomena as illusions, and so forth—
 Are realized in actuality. ¹⁷⁴ |85|

[The Third Initiation (*prajñājñānābhīṣeka*)]¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁶And then, in order to bring about the realization

¹⁷⁰ See note 9 regarding “the sixteenth part.” Vaidyapāda explains the melting of the *sugatas* following to the guru’s union with the offered girl as follows: “Having become fully impassioned, [the guru] enters into union [with her]. The *sugatas*, who have been invoked by the seed [syllable], enter into the mouth and one should think that having **melted** as the moon they become **the sixteenth part**, that is, the essence of the *bindu*.” *rjes su chags pa’i mtha’ la thug pas snyoms par zhugs te/ sa bon gyis bskul ba’i bde bar gshegs pa rnams zhal du zhugs te zla bar zhu bar* (zhu bar] D, P om.) *gyur nas bcu drug cha zhes te thig le’i ngo bor gyur bar bsam mo//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105a.5-6; P 126b.4-5).

¹⁷¹ *gtung*

¹⁷² Vaidyapāda comments: “**That [drop] itself is dropped into the disciples’ mouth** means that from the *bindu* comes a syllable and from that arises a *maṇḍala* and that [*maṇḍala*] itself, which has melted due to the heat of great passion, is [then] given into the mouth of the disciple.” *de nyid slob ma’i kha ru ltung/ zhes te thig le las yi ge/ de las dkyil ‘khor de nyid ‘dod chags chen po’i mes bzhus pa slob ma’i khar sbyin pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105a.6; P 126b.5-6).

¹⁷³ Vaidyapāda explains that ‘the field’ means the disciple’s aggregates and so forth. *de yis zhing dag byas te/ zhes te zhing ni de’i phung po la sogs pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105a.7; P 126b.7-8).

¹⁷⁴ Vaidyapāda clarifies that these are the twelve examples that show phenomena as being illusory: an illusion, a mirage, an echo, a spinning firebrand, a delusion, a dream, a city of *gandarvas*, a bubble on water, a flash of lightning, an emanation, a rainbow, and a cloud (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.1-2; P 126b.8-127a.2). This, moreover, concludes the second initiation, according to Vaidyapāda. He notes that having received this initiation such that his “field” is purified, the disciple “attains equal fortune to bodhisattvas such as Maitreya, and will thus travel from buddhahfield to buddhahfield. Thus, having entered this path he will swiftly attain accomplishment.” *de byams pa la sogs pa’i byang chub sems dpa’ rnams dang skal pa mnyam pas na sangs rgyas kyi zhing nas sang rgyas kyi zhing du ‘gro ste/ de’i lam la ‘jug pa myur bar thob par ‘gyur ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.2-3; P 127a.2-3).

¹⁷⁵ See note 167 on the use of the term *abhīṣeka* in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

¹⁷⁶ According to Vaidyapāda, this verse begins the explanation of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, which he explains has the purpose of bringing the disciple who has had his “field” purified by the second initiation to a realization of the *dharmakāya* (*da ni zhing dag par byas pa’i slob ma la chos kyi sku rtogs par bya ba’i phir shes rab ye shes kyi dbang bskur ba gsungs pa/*) (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.3; P 127a.3). This section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* contains quite a number of verses that are parallel with at least fourteen later tantric texts, both scriptural and authored, several of which survive in Sanskrit. I have referenced the parallels of which I am aware (I imagine there are more) in the notes to the translation, and done my best to take the readings from the parallel verses into consideration in my edition and translation of the verses from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, but a fuller study of all of the parallels would likely further improve some of the readings here. Many of the verses that follow here correspond with a sequence of verses studied by Wedemeyer in his analysis of the relationship between the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* and the *vidyāvratā* ritual, presented at a conference at UC Berkeley in 2014. (On that relationship, see note 186.) In a number of places, the verses from this section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are identical with those cited by Wedemeyer from Vaidyapāda’s *Maṇḍalavidhiṭīkā*, Vagīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, Advayavajra’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekaprakriyā* (Tōh. 2244), Kṛṣṇācārya’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā* (Tōh. 1819), Kuladatta’s *Kriyāsamgraha*, Prajñāgupta’s *Abhīṣekaratnāloka* (Tōh. 1333), and Prajñāśrī’s *Abhīṣekavidhi* (Tōh 1269), all of which are, however, later than the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. Buddhajñānapāda’s text here appears, then, to be the source of these verses. (It is worth noting here that, although Wedemeyer did not mention this in his presentation, the verses as preserved in the Tibetan translation

Of the self-arisen *dharmakāya*, great joy
That is equal to space, called the **adhideva*,
The girl is given to him [i.e. the disciple].¹⁷⁷ |86|

“This goddess is suitable for you.¹⁷⁸
Great being,¹⁷⁹ *all of the buddhas have given*¹⁸⁰
*This delightful girl to you to enjoy*¹⁸¹
By means of your desire |87|

*Through the ritual for the maṇḍala-cakra.*¹⁸²

of Vaidyapāda’s *maṇḍalavidhi* commentary are given in extremely garbled transliteration of the Sanskrit (*Guhyasamājamandalopāyikāṭīkā*, D 211a.4-6), not in Tibetan translation. They are so garbled that without having the Sanskrit from a later text to compare them to, I doubt that it would have been possible to reconstruct any meaning whatsoever from them. But when one compares with the later versions of the verses in Sanskrit, it is clear that they are exactly those same verses. In this regard we are quite lucky that Wedemeyer was engaging in comparative work and was thus able to see the parallels of these garbled lines of Sanskrit transliteration with the call-and-response verses in other later texts!) In any case, the earliest version of these verses now known to us appears to be the one here in the *Dvītyākrama*. It is unclear whether Mañjuśrī/Buddhajñānapāda himself composed the verses or incorporated them from an earlier source that is unknown to us. In either case, the use of these verses from his writings by many later authors is yet another indication of Buddhajñānapāda’s influence on the later tantric tradition. *In this section I have italicized the lines or verses that are parallel with the later sources in order to make it easier to see what has been incorporated from the Dvītyākrama into the later tradition.*

¹⁷⁷ *de la*. Vaidyapāda clarifies that in response to the disciple’s supplications the guru gives the girl “that he has blessed” to “the disciple’s right hand” and recites the subsequent verses. *De nas* (nas] D, P om.) *yang me tog gis snyim pa bkang ste/ gsol ba ‘debs pa la bla mas byin gyis brlabs pa ‘i bu mo slob ma ‘i lag pa g.yas par sbyin par byas nas lung ‘di bsgo ‘o//* (*Sukusuma*, 105b.6-7; P 127a.7-8). Several scholars have noted this practice of handing over of the consort into the right hand of the disciple (in later liturgies this often serves as part of the ritual for bestowing the *vidyāvratā*) resembles an Indian marriage ceremony, in which the joining of the couples’ hands is an important part of the ritual. Schwind (2012, 291n 1062) cites Isaacson on this point, (noting that *pāṇigrahana*, “taking by the hand” is a common term for marriage); on this point see also Wedemeyer (unpublished 2014 and forthcoming), who likewise remarks on the *pāṇigrahana* element, and Onians (2003, 176), who refers to this ritual of the *vidyāvratā* as a sort of “sacred marriage.”

¹⁷⁸ Vaidyapāda explains that “suitable” here means that, “Since she has what you desire, **she is suitable for you.**” *khyod kyi bzhed pa ‘di la yod pa ‘i phyr na khyod dang mthun zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.7; P 107a.8-107b.1).

¹⁷⁹ *sems chen*] P N S V(P), *sems can* D C V(D); Vaidyapāda’s commentary also suggests that *sems chen* is the better reading: “**Great being** means someone who has the intention to liberate sentient beings.” *sems chen* (*chen*] P, *can* D) *zhes pa ni sems can bsgral ba ‘i sems gang la yod pa ‘o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 105b.7-106a.1; P 107b.1).

¹⁸⁰ *gnang*] D C V (D and P), *snang* P N S; The Peking edition of Vaidyapāda’s commentary cites the line from the verse with *snang*, but then in the explanation of the verse uses the correct spelling, *gnang*.

¹⁸¹ This line could also be understood as “to practice with.” Vaidyapāda explains: “**Given by the buddhas to enjoy** means that the unsurpassed **buddhas give** [a woman] to some suitable disciples **to enjoy.**” *sangs rgyas kun gyis spyod du gnang* (*gnang*] D, *snang* P) / *zhes pa ‘i bla na med pa ‘i sangs rgyas rnam kyis snod du rung ba ‘i gang zag ‘ga’ la spyod du gnang ba ‘o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106a.1; P 127b.1-2).

¹⁸² Vaidyapāda specifies that this means the *ādiyoga-samādhi*—the first of the three *samādhis* that are often connected to generation stage practice—“and so forth.” The *Sukusuma* reads, “**By means of the ritual of the maṇḍala-cakra** means the ritual of the *ādiyoga[-samādhi]* and so forth. Thus, by means of reversing the ordinary, one attains liberation in one life.” *dkyil ‘khor ‘khor lo ‘i cho ga yis/ zhes te/ dang pa ‘i rnal ‘byor* (D adds *pa*) *la sogs pa ‘i cho ga ste/ tha mal pa bzlog pas tshe gcig gis grol ba ‘o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106a.1-2; P 107a.2-3). While a first glance at this statement might suggest that Vaidyapāda takes this ritual to refer specifically to generation stage practices, as I discuss in Chapter Five, it is in the third of these three *samādhis* from the Yoga tantras that we find perfection stage practices being incorporated into Buddhajñānapāda’s system. Vaidyapāda’s reference to the structure of practice using the three *samādhis* here is also, I believe, an indication of the sexual yogas incorporated into the sequence of generation stage practices, rather than being separated out from that structure, as became the case in many (but not all) later tradition. In any case the distinction between generation and perfection stage practices was newly being made at this point, so some overlap is to be expected.

*In order to accomplish great awakening
You must experience great bliss [5a]
[With] the girl who liberates and gives joy.*¹⁸³ |88|

*Nothing else can bring about buddhahood
This girl is the genuine supreme*¹⁸⁴
*Thus, throughout endless saṃsāra
You must never separate from her.*¹⁸⁵ |89|

Then that great being
Should take up the delightful girl.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ 87b-88d ~C.f. *Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 444) and *Daśatattva* V.14 (Klein-Schwind 2012, 209). 87b-88c ~C.f. *Guhyasamājjamaṅḍalavidhi*, vv. 365c-366b, and *Samkṣiptāvhiṣekavidhi* (Sakurai, 417).

¹⁸⁴ These two *pādas* are nearly identical with *Samājottara* 125 c and d. The verse in the *Samājottra*, however, uses the term *vidyā* rather than “girl” (**kanyā*?). This suggests that Buddhajñānapāda’s verses may be earlier. In an earlier conference paper (C. Dalton 2014) I have argued in some detail that the verse on the two stages of tantric practice in the *Samājottara* is likely modeled on Buddhajñānapāda’s verse in the *Muktilaka*, rather than vice versa. In that instance, it appears that the term “buddhas” from Buddhajñānapāda’s earlier verse in his *Muktilaka* was transformed into “vajra holders” in the *Samājottara*. Just like in this verse with the use of the term *vidyā* in the *Samājottara* rather than “girl” (**kanyā*?) in the *Dvītyakrama*, a move towards increased tantrification is much more likely than the reverse. In this case, moreover, the second two *pādas* of this verse in the *Dvītyakrama* are also found in the *Samājottara*, though with an intervening two *pādas* about the nondual nature of reality. Again, the fact that there are two intervening *pādas* in the *Samājottara*’s version suggests that if one text is based upon the other (i.e. if they are not both drawing from some separate earlier source) the *Samājottara*’s is likely later than Buddhajñānapāda’s verse, as it would be unlikely that Buddhajñānapāda would cite from a scriptural source—even unattributed—and not provide the complete citation. I discuss the relationship of Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and the *Samājottara* in Chapter Eight.

¹⁸⁵ Vaidyapāda reports that, “**You must never separate from her** means that since she is the seal of the perfection of wisdom you must examine the actual and the example wisdom together with her in order that the continuity of wisdom is not severed.” *khyod kyis ‘dī dang ‘bral mi bya/ zhes pa ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i phyag rgya bas na de dang lhan cig tu mngon sum dang dpe’i ye shes brtag par bya ba ste/ ye shes rgyun mi ‘chad pa’i phyr ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106a. 3; P 107b.4-5).

¹⁸⁶ In Wedemeyer’s 2014 conference paper on the *vidyāvratā*, he argues that in the *Samājottara* the *vidyāvratā* is conceived as a separate procedure that follows the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* (Wedemeyer unpublished; an updated version of this paper is forthcoming). Indeed, they are two separate questions among those set out in the beginning of that tantra: “How is initiation bestowed? And likewise, what of the *vidyāvratā*?” (*abhiṣekaṃ katham deyaṃ katham vidyāvratam tathā*). Wedemeyer proposes that this is one of two ritual paradigms regarding the *vidyāvratā*: one in which it is separate from the initiations, and one in which it is joined with, or even identical to the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. Vaidyapāda, in his *Guhyasamājjamaṅḍalavidhiṭīkā*, Wedemeyer reports, follows the second paradigm. Likewise, here in the *Dvītyakrama*, the giving of the consort appears to be identical with the ritual sequence of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*. Vaidyapāda likewise explains, “**Should take this delightful girl**, means that by means of that the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* is **recieved**.” (*yid ‘ong bu mo blang bya ste/ zhes pa ni des shes rab ye shes kyi dbang blang zhes* (zhes] D, shes P) *pa’o//*) (*Sukusuma*, D 106a.3-4; P 107b.5). However, in his commentary on the *Samājottara* Vaidyapāda identifies the ritual described in verses 124-125 of that text—which corresponds with the giving over of the girl to the disciple here in verses 89-90b of the *Dvītyakrama*—as the “*vidyāvratā* initiation” (*rig pa’i brtul zhugs kyi dbang*) (*Samyagvidyākara*, 192a.6). This is not unexpected given that the *Samājottara* itself uses the term *vidyāvratā* here, but it is interesting to note that Vaidyapāda seems to refer to more or less the same ritual as the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* in his commentary on the *Dvītyakrama* and as the “*vidyāvratā* initiation” in his commentary on the *Samājottara*. For *Dvītyakrama* verse 89 cf. also the *Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 449). Here we can see that the *Vajrāvalī* verse is modeled on Buddhajñānapāda’s rather than the *Samājottra*’s (i.e. it lacks the two *pādas* on nonduality), but in a slightly “updated” version, as are several of Buddhajñānapāda’s verses that appear in this section of the *Vajrāvalī*. Unlike Abhayākara Gupta, Vaidyapāda cites the version from the *Samājottara* (thus including the two *pādas* on nonduality) rather than from the *Dvītyakrama* in his commentary on Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *Maṅḍalavidhi*. Vaidyapāda does this, as well—i.e. cites the *Samājottara*’s verse over Buddhajñānapāda’s in an instance of parallel verses between the two—when he cites the verse on the two

She¹⁸⁷ speaks to him of the sublime *samayas* and vows,
With these words: |90|

“Speak up, darling, [O] vajra holder
Can you eat flesh, blood, semen,
Feces and urine, and the rest?
Can you kiss [my] bhaga without a second thought?”¹⁸⁸ |91|

Can you delight in me, [your] consort? ”¹⁸⁹
He replies laughingly,¹⁹⁰
“O Goddess, how could I not be delighted?
I will eat feces, urine, and the rest! |92|

Goddess, you require respect:
I have no second thoughts about kissing [your] bhaga!”¹⁹¹
Then the girl throws off her lower garment,
She shows her lotus clearly and speaks these words of praise: |93|

stages (found in both Buddhajñānapāda’s *Muktilaka* and in the *Samājottara*) here in the *Sukusuma*, despite the fact that Vaidyapāda also composed a commentary on the *Muktilaka* and thus certainly knew Buddhajñānapāda’s version of that verse. The fact that Buddhajñānapāda shows no knowledge of the *Samājottara* and yet several components from his writings appear to be included in it (rather than vice versa), in addition to the fact that his main commentator Vaidyapāda, who was likely a direct disciple, cites the *Samājottara* regularly in preference over Buddhajñānapāda’s versions of the parallel passages, seems to narrow down quite considerably the period of the earliest circulation of the *Samājottara*, to very soon after (or possibly even during the latter part of?) Buddhajñānapāda’s lifetime. Vaidyapāda also wrote a full commentary, the *Samyagvidyākara*, on just the *Samājottara* (i.e. not including the root *Guhyasamāja-tantra*). I discuss the relationship of Buddhajñānapāda’s and Vaidyapāda’s writings with the *Samājottara* in Chapter Eight.

¹⁸⁷ *de yis*. Vaidyapāda clarifies that it is the girl who speaks (*de yis zhes te bu mos so//*) (*Sukusuma*, D 106a.4; P 107b.5-6).

¹⁸⁸ *mi rtog*. Literally “without thought.” I have translated the term more colloquially as “without a second thought,” which I think very much represents the question being asked of the yogin here. Nonetheless, the idea of nonconceptuality, and of the transgressive acts described in the verse as evocative of a nonconceptual state, is also very much at play here.

¹⁸⁹ Vaidyapāda reports that the consort’s words here are “easy to understand” (*de rnams go sla ‘o//*) (*Sukusuma*, D 106a.5).

¹⁹⁰ Vaidyapāda clarifies that the yogin is laughing as a sign of his joy to practice the vow, which presumably is a reference to the *vidyāvratā* commitment (*Sukusuma*, D 106a.5; P 107b.7).

¹⁹¹ Quite a number of tantric texts, including at least one tantra, have variants of Verses 91a-93b. C.f.

Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra 3.26-27; Vaidyapāda’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*, where similar verses are given in garbled Sanskrit transliteration (D 211a.4-5); Ratnākaraśanti’s *Piṇḍīkrasādhanopāyikāvṛtti-ratnāvalī-nāma* (D 91b.6-7); Nāgabodhi’s *Pañcakramaṭīkā-maṇimālā-nāma* (D 130b.5-7); Advayavajra’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekaprakriyā* (D 131b.5-7); Kṛṣṇācārya’s *Śrīguhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā* (258a.4-6); Prajñāgupta’s *Abhīṣekaratnāloka* (D 299a.7-b.2); Prajñāśrī’s *Abhīṣekavidhi* (D 48b.4-5), and Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* (Sakurai 1996, 418). Kṣitigarbha’s *Daśatattvasaṃgraha* (V.17-20) incorporates vv. 91a-94d (see Klein-Schwind 2012, 210). Wedemeyer, in a handout from his 2014 lecture at Berkeley gives these call and response verses in proper ungarbled Sanskrit, but does not make it clear which source he draws the Sanskrit from. (I suspect they are from Vāgīśvarakīrti’s and/or Kuladatta’s works. Kuladatta’s is not available to me at the moment.) I have Wedemeyer’s work to thank for pointing out that these verses are found in Vaidyapāda’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā-ṭīkā*, Vagīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, Advayavajra’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekaprakriyā* (Tōh 2244), Kṛṣṇācārya’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā* (Tōh 1819) (minus the *kuru padme* verse), Kuladatta’s *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, Prajñāgupta’s *Abhīṣekaratnāloka* (Tōh 1333), and Prajñāśrī’s *Abhīṣekavidhi* (Tōh 1269). Prajñāgupta’s and Prajñāśrī’s texts have the variant reading of “suck” (**cūṣaṇa?*) rather than “kiss” (*cumbana*), which may have influenced the reading in the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*.

“Ah! This lotus of mine
 Is endowed with all bliss!
 [I]¹⁹² will always remain before
 He who enjoys it according to the ritual.¹⁹³ |94|

This sublime lotus that brings about [one’s] aim,¹⁹⁴
 Is the place venerated by all the buddhas.¹⁹⁵
 Self-arisen great bliss
 Always abides here.”¹⁹⁶ |95|

¹⁹² Who or what remains before the yogin is not specified in Buddhajñānapāda’s text. Vaidyapāda identifies what remains before that yogin as wisdom (*ye shes*): “[I] **always remain before him** means that that which always **remains** directly in the presence of the one who knows the stages of the ritual is wisdom.” *de yi mdun na rtag tu gnas/ zhes pa ni cho ga’i rim pa shes pa* (pa) D, P om.) *de’i mngon sum tu rtag tu gnas pa ste ye shes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.2; P 108a.4-5). However, in the later verses from the *Vajrāvalī*, the word “I” (*aham*) is stated clearly—“I remain before him...” The verse, in the *Vajrāvalī*, reads: *aho madīyaṃ padmaṃ sarvasukhasamanvītaṃ/ yah sevati vidhānena tasyāham agrataḥ sthitā* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 445. I have emended Mori’s *sevayati to sevati*, following the advice of Harunaga Isaacson; *sevati* is indeed reported as the reading in one of Mori’s manuscripts). There is no difficulty in reading Vaidyapāda’s commentary in this way, as well, as the term “wisdom” can easily be understood as a gloss of or reference to the consort (though Vaidyapāda does use the term *ye shes* (*jñāna*), rather than *shes rab* (*prajñā*), which is the usual term referring to the consort). The referent for who or what is remains before such a yogin in the Tibetan translation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* may simply have been left out due to metrical considerations.

¹⁹³ vv. 91a-94d ~c.f. *Daśatattvasaṃgraha*, V.17-20 (Klein-Schwind 2012, 210). Vaidyapāda notes that “**according to the ritual** means the actions of body, speech, and mind, together with the pith instructions on [manipulating] the winds that will be explained below.” *de la cho ga’i rim pa ni ‘og nas ‘byung ba’i lus ngag yid gsum gyi bya ba rlung gi man ngag dang bcas pas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.2; P 108a.4).

¹⁹⁴ *Don byed padma dam pa ‘di*. This line in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is a bit awkward, particularly the description of the lotus as *don byed*—performing a function, or “bringing about [one’s] aim,” as I have translated it based on Vaidyapāda’s commentary. The *pāda* has been modified in the *Vajrāvalī* where it reads, “Perform in the lotus that which is to be done” (*kuru padme yathā kāryaṃ*) (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 445). It would be possible to read the line in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in more or less same way as the *Vajrāvalī*’s reading by making just two small modifications to the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (rendering the verb in the imperative *byos* instead of *byed* and adding a locative (emending ‘*di* to ‘*dir*)). However, it is unlikely that this is what the *Dvīṭīyakrama* intends, given that all of the readings in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and the *Sukusuma*, as well as the verse as it is cited in Vaidyapāda’s *maṇḍalavidhi* commentary (see *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, D 211a.6) are consistent. Moreover, in the *Sukusuma* Vaidyapāda explains: “Thus because it is the cause of the natural, excellent aim, [the text says] “**For bringing about [one’s] aim the lotus is sublime.**” *de bas na rang bzhin gi don phun sum tshogs pa’i rgyur gyur pas na* (na) D, P om.) *don byed padma dam pa ‘o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.2-3; P 128a.5). It therefore seems that the verse as found in the *Vajrāvalī* may have undergone some minor changes from what was found in Buddhajñānapāda’s work.

¹⁹⁵ Vaidyapāda explains that, “In order [that one might] see that performance as proper (*brtsun pa*) [the text says] **the place that is venerated by all the buddhas.**” *byed pa la btsun par blta bas na/ sangs rgys kun gyis bkur ba’i gnas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.3; P 128a.5-6). The version of this line in the *Vajrāvalī* differs here, describing the place as one “where the buddhas are venerated,” but the third case indicating that the buddhas are the ones doing the venerating is clear here in all recensions of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, as well as in both editions of Vaidyapāda’s commentary (P and D) that I have consulted, and also in the verse as rendered in Vaidyapāda’s *maṇḍalavidhi* commentary (*Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, D 211a.6). Again, it seems that the verse as included in the *Vajrāvalī* may have undergone some minor changes from the earlier version from Buddhajñānapāda’s work.

¹⁹⁶ Verses 94-95 are likewise found in all of the sources mentioned above in note 191. That is: *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra* 3.28-89; Vaidyapāda’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, where they, as opposed to the previous call and response verses which were rendered in garbled Sanskrit transliteration, are translated into Tibetan (D 211a.5-6); Ratnākaraśanti’s *Piṇḍīkṛtasādhanaopāyikāvṛtti-ratnāvalī-nāma* (D 92a.1-2); Nāgabodhi’s *Pañcakramaṭīkā-maṇimālā-nāma* (D 131a.7-132b.1); Advayavajra’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekaprakriyā* (D 131b.7-132a.1); Kṛṣṇācārya’s *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikā* (D 258a.6-7) (here the verses are abbreviated); Prajñāgupta’s *Abhiṣekaratnāloka* (299b.2); and Prajñāśrī’s *Abhiṣekavidhi* (D 48b.5) (the verses are also abbreviated here). They are also found in

*Bhaja*¹⁹⁷ *mokṣa hoḥ*

[Mentally Cultivating Passion]¹⁹⁸

Then from one's own *bīja*¹⁹⁹

Dense rays of light illuminate [one's own] interior²⁰⁰

Causing the *maṇḍala* deities²⁰¹ to become impassioned

And thus [they]²⁰² emerge from the vajra |96|

And enter into the lotus.

Thus the consort's *maṇḍala* deities

Become intensely impassioned

And emerge from [her] mouth into [one's own] mouth²⁰³ |97|

The *maṇḍala* deities [again] become impassioned and emerge from the vajra

They enter [the lotus] again, as before, and so forth.

Abhayākara Gupta's *Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 445); The last two *pādas* of verse 94 in Buddhajñānapāda's and Vaidyapāda's readings are a bit confusing, and it appears that a later author like Abhayākara Gupta, or perhaps some other intervening author, cleaned the verse up slightly to make it more understandable, thus also slightly changing the meaning. See notes 194 and 195 for two such changes.

¹⁹⁷ *bhaja*] sugg. em. based on the parallel verses in the *Vajrāvalī* and *Daśatattvasaṃgraha*, bhanydza] D C V(D), bhamdza P N S, bhaga V(P). Vaidyapāda clarifies, "Then the disciple should say '**Enjoy! Liberate! hoḥ!**'" (*bhaga mokṣa hoḥ*), due to his delight [in] the celestial palace of great *nīrvāṇa*." *de nas slob mas kyang bhaga (bha ga]* P., *bhanydza* D) **mokṣa ho zhes brjod par bya ste/ mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i gzhäl yas khang dgyes pa'i phyir ro// (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.3-4; P 128a.6-7). The *Vajrāvalī* and *Daśatattvasaṃgraha* here read *bhaja mokṣa hoḥ* here (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 445; Klein-Schwind 2012, 210), and while this mantra is generally problematic in all of the readings with which I am familiar, I find *bhaja*, found there, more plausible than *bhañja*, which seems to be the reading from all recensions of the *Dvītiyakrama* itself. In either case reading *mokṣa* as an imperative as I have done here is not, of course, in accordance with standard Sanskrit grammar. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for his advice on choosing a reading here.**

¹⁹⁸ This section represents, according to Vaidyapāda, the guru teaching the physical, verbal, and mental practices that are meant to bring about the experience of wisdom in the disciple (*Sukusuma*, D 106b. 4; P 128a.7). He explains that the first set of practices described here are meant to bring a state of mental arousal to oneself, the girl, and the *maṇḍala* deities. *bdag dang bu mo lha'i dkyil 'khor yid kyi shin tu chags pa'o zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.7-107a.1; P 128b.4). It seems that mental arousal is specified here since the subsequent practices are said to bring about a state of arousal through verbal, and finally, physical means. Given that it is not until later that the partners join in the yogic coitus that constitutes the main part of the third initiation, and that what is described here is followed by the partners speaking to each other in arousing ways, it seems that the practices of "mentally cultivating passion" are visualized, rather than entailing actual sexual union.

¹⁹⁹ Tib. *sa bon*; Skt. *bīja*. Vaidyapāda identifies this as the "seed [syllable] of the wisdom being." *rang gi sa pon zhes pa ni ye shes sems dpa'i sa pon las so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b. 4-5; P 128a.8).

²⁰⁰ Vaidyapāda specifies that it is one's own interior that is so illuminated: *de las 'od zer byung ('byung] P, byung D) bas rang gi nang gsal te/* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.5; P 128a.8).

²⁰¹ Vaidyapāda specifies that these are the *maṇḍala* deities of one's own body *maṇḍala*. *de las 'od zer 'byung ('byung] P, byung D) bas rang gi nang gsal te/ des lha'i 'khor lo zhes pa ni des lus kyi dkyil 'khor du gtags pa'i lha rnam so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.5; P 128a.8-b.1).

²⁰² It is slightly unclear in both the root text and the commentary whether it is the deities themselves that emerge from the vajra path or simply the light rays. Vaidyapāda reads *'od zer des rdo rje'i lam nas phyir byung ste/* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.5; P 128b.1).

²⁰³ Vaidyapāda makes this clear: "**From the mouth** means [from] the girl's [mouth]. **Enter into the mouth** means my own [mouth]." *zhal nas zhes pa ni bu mo'i 'o// zhal du zhugs zhes pa bdag gi 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.6; P 128b.2).

Through repeating this again and again,²⁰⁴ the *maṇḍala* deities
Become intensely mentally impassioned. |98|

[Verbally Cultivating Passion]²⁰⁵

Then, one recites these illusory words of desire
And thus the girl becomes filled with passion:
“Nondual supreme great bliss,
Goddess, you are the illusory *mudrā*! |99|

Sweet-faced one,²⁰⁶ come play²⁰⁷ with me
And [we] will have an experience that is like the sky!”²⁰⁸
Then [she] also supplicates
With illusory words of desire, |100|

And one becomes impassioned oneself
And searches for the *cakra*.²⁰⁹ |101|

[She says,] “Vast Supreme Bliss,²¹⁰ pay heed to me!
[9a] Inconceivable great bliss that is vocalized²¹¹ is unshakeable!²¹²

²⁰⁴ Vaidyapāda clarifies, “Again and again means four times with a steady mind.” *yang nas yang du zhes pa ni brtan pa’i sems lan bzhi’i bar du...* (*Sukusuma*, D 106b.7; P 128b.3-4).

²⁰⁵ Vaidyapāda describes this as the “ritual for verbally cultivating passion” *ngag gis chags par byas pa’i cho ga* (*Sukusuma*, D 107a.1; P 128b.4).

²⁰⁶ Vaidyapāda notes that “[He says] **sweet-faced one** because she is charming and so forth, and not scowling.” *zhal bzang khyod ni zhes pa ni steg pa la sogs pa dang ldan zhing ‘dzum gnag pa ma yin pas* (*Sukusuma*, D107a.2; P 128b.5-6).

²⁰⁷ rtsen] P N S V(P), brtson] D C V(D). Vaidyapāda’s commentary, which glosses the term as *rnam par rol pa* also supports the reading of *rtsen* (*Sukusuma*, D 107a.2; P 128b.6).

²⁰⁸ Vaidyapāda explains that “that which is **like the sky** is innate wisdom (**sahaja-jñāna?*), which is also called ‘luminosity.’” *mkha’ mnyam ni ye shes lhan cig skye pa ste ‘od gsal ba zhes rnam grangs so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 107a.2; P 128b.6).

²⁰⁹ Vaidyapāda mentions that this is to be done “subsequent to the physical activity” (*lus kyi spyod pa’i rjes la*), presumably indicating that the yogin should wait until after completing the other preliminaries to sexual union to perform this search (*Sukusuma*, D 107a.3; P 128b.6-7). Indeed such a reference to using his fingers to search for the *cakra* is found again in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in verses 115-18, which occur after the description of a number of preliminary sexual acts (described in verses 105-113) that Vaidyapāda indicates as the methods by which the yogic couple are to “physically cultivate passion” (*lus kyi spyod pas chags par bya ba’i thabs*) (*Sukusuma*, D 107b.1; P 129a.5-6). It is clear that many of the sexual acts described in vv.105-113 do not involve actual coitus, and if we follow Vaidyapāda’s explanation of the five positions described in verse 105 as positions from which the couple are to gaze upon one another, then none of these acts involve coitus. It is not until after the description of these acts that the yogin is instructed to “search for the *cakra*,” (vv. 115a-118b), and only after that to “embrace” his partner in sexual union (v. 118c).

²¹⁰ *bde mchog rgya chen, *vistarasaṃvara?*. Vaidyapāda clarifies that this is, in this instance, a reference to the practitioner who is endowed with relative bliss. *bde mchog rgya chen po ni kun rdzob kyi bde ba ste de dang ldan pa’i sgrub pa po bdag la dgongs su gsol zhes pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 107a.3; P 128a.7-8).

²¹¹ *ngag* (ngag] sugg. em. based on V (D and C); dag D C P N S) *dang ldan*. Not only do both the Derge and Peking editions of Vaidyapāda’s commentary here read *ngag*, his comments also make it clear that this is his reading: *bsam mi khyab pa’i bde chen te/ zhes te thams cad la khyab bdag tu gnas pa’i bde ba chen po ni mi slu bas mtshon par byed pas na ngag dang ldan zhes bya ‘o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 107a.3-4; P 128b.8).

²¹² I am not entirely clear what the referent of this line is in its relation to the rest of the verse. Vaidyapāda comments on the line but does not clearly indicate how it relates grammatically to the rest of the verse. What is clear is that, in his reading at least, the two terms ‘inconceivable great bliss that is vocalized’ and ‘immovable’ refer to the same thing—the great bliss that abides in and pervades all things. *bsam mi khyab pa’i bde chen te/ zhes te thams*

With a beautiful melody beyond words
I ask you to sport with me—rouse yourself! |102|

This supreme path leads to the essence of awakening
And is shown²¹³ by means of marvelous play:
[Even] without relying upon any of the authentic tantras²¹⁴
I, delightful great bliss, will liberate!²¹⁵ |103|

*hoḥ hoḥ hoḥ!*²¹⁶

Sport, sport, sport with me!
Rouse your desire, O you who plead²¹⁷ for bliss!
Have no doubts that you will realize
That which is not realized by other [means]! |104|

A la la la ho!”

[Physically Cultivating Passion]²¹⁸

Then, with great passion
Engage in physical practice with her;
Practicing this play in an isolated place
You should examine bliss.²¹⁹ |105|

cad la khyab bdag tu gnas pa'i bde ba chen po ni mi slu (slu] D, bslu P) *bas mtson par byed pas ngag dang ldan zhes bya 'o// de nyid gzhan gyis mi bskyod pas na mi gyo ba'o//* (Sukusuma, D 107a.3-4; P 128b.8-129a.1).

²¹³ *snang bar mdzad*. Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that this means it is shown to the initiated (Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communication, February 2016).

²¹⁴ Vaidyapāda explains: “**Without relying upon any of the authentic tantras** means without relying upon any of the Yoga or Mahāyoga tantras; those are teachings that are like a raft (i.e. to be left behind upon reaching the destination). Since this is liberation that comes about through the power of knowing, even if someone has various karmic obscurations, he nonetheless enters [into it] instantaneously.” *rgyud* (rgyud] P, rgyu de D) *rnam yang dang gang la mi rten* (rten] P; brten D) *par/ zhes pa ni rnal 'byor dang* (rnal 'byor dang] D, P om.) *rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud gang la mi rten* (rten] P; brten D) *te/ de rnams gzings dang 'dra ba'i chos so// 'di ni ye shes kyis stobs kyis grol ba'i phyir na las kyis sgrib pa sna tshogs dang ldan yang dus gcig par chud pa'o//* (Sukusuma, D 107a.6-7; P 129a.3-4).

²¹⁵ *de chen yid 'ong nga yis grol bar gyis//* The grammar of this line is somewhat unclear. Vaidyapāda comments, “Therefore, may you be liberated together with delightful great bliss!” *de bas na bde ba chen po yid du 'ong ba dang lhan cig tu grol bar gyur cig ces pa'i don to//* (Sukusuma, D 107a.7; P 129a.4-5).

²¹⁶ Vaidyapāda explains that the three syllables here are expressions of joy at the knowing of the three wisdoms that arise from that practice. *ho ho ho zhes pa ni de las skyes pa'i ye shes gsum rig par 'gyur ba la dgyes pa'o//* (Sukusuma, D 107a.7-b.1; P 129a.5-6).

²¹⁷ gso] D C, gsal P N S

²¹⁸ Vaidyapāda notes that from here on the text explains the methods for cultivating passion through physical actions. *de nas lus kyis spyod pas chags par bya ba'i thabs gsungs pa.* (Sukusuma, D 107b.1; P 129a.5-6).

²¹⁹ Vaidyapāda explains that this bliss is “*sahajānanda, which is composed of three [aspects]” (*lhen cig skyes pa'i dga' ba ste gsum gyis bsdu pa'o*) (Sukusuma, D 107b.2; P 129a.7). I discuss the system of blisses in Buddhajñānapāda's system in Chapter Six.

²²⁰ First, coming together²²¹

Then the [posture] characterized by the elbows²²²

Additionally, the one [characterized by] extending [the legs]²²³

And likewise, the [posture] characterized by lifting up

And then the complete extending [of the legs]—these are the five. |106|

Completely raising the shoulders

Elbows bent, embrace [her] around the neck

Holding tight, embracing firmly, [with] the right and the left hands

He holds [her] hair [and] head unmoving and looks [at her]. |107|

Then looking between²²⁴ her two thighs

Singing *śīt* like a²²⁵ bee

²²⁰ Vaidyapāda comments, “How should one look? Teaching the five principal [ways] as taught in “*skyod* (skyod] P, skyed D) *byed* (byed] D, phyed? P) *thams cad kyi gtsug lag* (**sarvasaṃcalaśāstra*?), the text says **First...**” This is a tantalizing reference from Vaidyapāda, as he appears to actually tells us Buddhajñānapāda’s source for some of these sexual practices, but unfortunately, I am unable to understand clearly what he means! *ji ltar blta bar bya zhe na/ skyod* (skyod] P, skyed D) *byed* (byed] D, phyed? P) *thams cad kyi gtsug lag las bshad pa’i gtso bo lnga gsungs pas/ dang por zhes pa la sogs pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 107b.2-3; P 129a.7-9).

²²¹ Vaidyapāda describes the characteristics of this first posture as follows: “The woman firmly embraces [him] around neck/ And the man’s forearms/ Are placed against her elbows (even)/ It is also said that her calves should be brought together (i.e. with her legs around his body).’ This is [how] to perform the position.” *de’i mtshan nyid kyang ji skad du/ bud med mgul par* (par] D, pa P) *dam khyud de// pho yi dung pa gnyi ga yis// gru mo gnyis la bzhag pa yag// bud med rje ngar ‘dus par bshad// ces te/ bsdam pa’i bya ba’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 107b. 3-4; P 129a.8-129b-1). Regarding the term “position” (*bsdam pa*) the Sanskrit term *bandha*, which is likely what *bsdam pa* is translating here, is used in *kāmasāstra* to refer to sexual positions. Vaidyapāda may here and in his subsequent comments be citing a *kāmasāstric* source (perhaps the aforementioned *Skyod byed thams cad kyi gtsug lag*?). As noted above there seem not to be many (any!?) extant such texts from the period between the 3rd-4th-century *Kāmasūtra* itself and the later *kāmasāstra* texts starting with the work of Kokkoka and Padmaśrī, both dated to no earlier than the 9th century, and quite possibly as late as the 12th. Vaidyapāda’s citations here may thus provide a window into a *kāmasāstric* source from this intermediary period. However, there is a reference in one of the passages that Vaidyapāda cites here to a sequence of blisses, which is either a noteworthy reference to stages of bliss in a *kāmasāstric* work, or an indication that the text Vaidyapāda cites here is actually *not* a *kāmasāstric* text, but rather a Buddhist one. See also notes 126 and 222. I briefly discuss the relationship between Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and *kāmasāstra* in Chapter Six.

²²² Vaidyapāda explains that this line refers to the action of the arms and legs and describes the posture with the following verse: “The woman’s bent knees/ are to be placed on the man’s elbows/ This [posture] is called “knees on elbows”/ These [postures] are asserted to be (to produce?) the stages of bliss.’ This is the act of looking closely.” *de nas gru mo mtshan nyid ces pa ni rkang lag gi bya ba ste/ ji skad du/ bud med pus mo bkug pa ni// pho yi gru mor bzhag par bya// bus mo gru mor bshad pa ste// de dag dga’ ba’i rim par ‘dod// ces te/ rnam par lta bar bya ba’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 107b.4-5; P 129b.1-2). The reference to the “stages of bliss” in this verse, which, if it is indeed from a *kāmasāstric* source rather than a Buddhist one, might suggest that perhaps the progression of the “blisses” in tantric texts was developed on the basis of their being such a progression already in the literature on *kāma*, which was then adapted to a soteriological context. However, it is also possible that the reference to the stages of blisses indicates, rather, that this *is* a Buddhist source rather than a *kāmasāstric* one. I have been unable to determine at this point which is more likely to be the case. I briefly discuss the relationship between Buddhajñānapāda’s writings and *kāmasāstra* in Chapter Six.

²²³ Vaidyapāda’s explanation of these positions via quotations from the aforementioned scripture continues. As this and the subsequent descriptions are difficult to understand, I have not translated the remainder of them here. I will note, however, that as Vaidyapāda describes them none of these positions seem to involve actual coitus, but rather to be positions from which the partners are to visually regard one another in order to stimulate passion.

²²⁴ bar] D C S, par P N; Although Vaidyapāda’s commentary also reads *par* (in both D and P), his comment suggests *bar: brla gnyis par bltas te zhes pa ni ‘og gi padma la bltas na/* (*Sukusuma*, D 108a.1-2; P 129b.7).

²²⁵ *zid sgra*. A sound used in works on Indian erotics to indicate arousal and pleasure.

He should play using his lips.²²⁶ |108|

Embracing her in the majestic posture,
With his left hand holding the hair on the crown of her head
And his right hand supporting her throat,
He should suck the honey of her lower lip. |109|

²²⁷ While sucking and making the sound *śīt*,
He plays with her breasts, the tips of her fingers.
Her throat, lower lip, cheeks, and earlobes,²²⁸
Her eyes, the crown of her head, and her secret place²²⁹—
Kissing these with his mouth. |110|

At her two ears and her armpits
The two [sides] of her throat, and the place where the three meet²³⁰
He should make marks with his fingernails.²³¹ |111|

Her two breasts, and two armpits,
Her two main [places],²³² and her two cheeks
Her two palms and the soles of her two feet
By rubbing these places, he creates great affection.²³³ |112|

With his left hand he should massage the lotus *maṇḍala*
And stir it with his tongue.²³⁴

²²⁶ Vaidyapāda explains: “Just as a bee at a flower *maṇḍala* sings and sucks honey, just like that the yogin, as well, should **sing** with the **sound** *śīt* and issue forth a long “*hūm*” as he uses his two **lips** to **play** in the lotus *maṇḍala*.” *ji ltar bung ba me tog gi dkyil ‘khor la glu len cing rtsi ‘jibs pa ltar/ rnal ‘byor pas kyang zid (zid] D, zing P) sgra lta bu ‘i glu len (len] D, P om.) cing (cing] D, P om.) hūm ring po blangs nas mchu gnyis kyis padma ‘i dkyil ‘khor du rtse (rtse] D, brtse P) bar bya zhes so// (Sukusuma, D 108a. 2-3; P 129b.8-130a.1).*

²²⁷ Vaidyapāda explains that the practices described in this verse are done in order to “invoke the places that are the sources of *bodhicitta*.” *de nas byang chub kyī sems ‘byung ba ‘i gnas rnam bskul ba ‘i phyir (P + ro) / nu ma lag rtse zhes pa la sogs pa ‘o// (Sukusuma, D 108a.3; P 130a.1-2).*

²²⁸ *rna ba ‘i rtsa.*

²²⁹ Verse 110b-d is mostly parallel with a verse cited in the only surviving manuscript of Kalyāṇavarman’s *Catuspīṭhapañjikā*, where it appears combined together with verses 171-174 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (which deal with the practice of placing sixteen syllables on specific places in the body during the practice of the *bindu* yoga) and some other related verses. The passage from the *Catuspīṭhapañjikā* is said to come from the *Aṣṭāṣṭaka*, which perhaps may be the title of a text, though this is not certain. Thanks to Péter Szántó for sharing his diplomatic transcript of these verses with me. The parallel verse here reads: *pīnastane karāgre ca grīvāyāmi adhare tathā | gaṇḍākṣikarṇamūle ca mūrdhni sarvāṅgam eva ca |* (I have edited the text slightly following Harunaga Isaacson’s suggestions, for which I am grateful.)

²³⁰ Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that this refers to the secret place (personal communication, February 2016).

²³¹ Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that these are all places where there are particular channels running through her body (personal communication, February 2016).

²³² *gtso*. I am unsure about the meaning of this term here.

²³³ Vaidyapāda clarifies that “**Accomplishes great affection** means that in all three ways (physically, verbally, and mentally(?)) she [experiences] great passion towards oneself.” *mdza’ ba chen po grub ces pa ni rnam pa gsum po (po] D, pa P) des bdag la lhag par chags pa zhes so// (Sukusuma, D 108a.3-4; P 130a.2).*

²³⁴ At this point, Vaidyapāda clarifies, he may only use his vajra to stir it ever so slightly. *‘og sgo lces bskyod par bya zhes te/ rdo rje ni thabs cha tsam gyis bskyod par shes par bya ‘o// (Sukusuma, D 108a.5; P 130a.3).* See also

Looking, moreover, both above and below,
His mind becomes passionate about her. |113|

[Searching For The *Cakra*]

And then that delighted girl
Shows her lotus and recites these words:
“The king of natural great bliss
Abides in this lotus |114|

Because it is realized by means of the channels and winds²³⁵
You should search for the *cakra*.²³⁶
And then with his fingers²³⁷
[He²³⁸ should search for] the great *cakra*, which abides²³⁹ inside. |115|

Having ascertained the anthers, stamen,
And the eight-petaled-one ornamented by the five essences,²⁴⁰
That abide in the lotus²⁴¹
He should search for the *āli* [and] *kāli*;²⁴² [the] *mantra*,²⁴³ |116|

Daśatattvasaṃgraha (V.23), which likewise describes the stimulation of the yogin’s partner with his fingers and tongue immediately before the yogic partners’ union during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* (Klein-Schwind 2012, 210).²³⁵ Here Vaidyapāda clarifies this with reference to the Yoga tantras, which he says focus on winds, and the Yoganiruttara tantras, which he says focus on channels. “It is realized by the oral instructions of the Yoganiruttara tantras, that is to say the Dākiṇī tantras, which focus principally on the **channels**. With regards to the Yoga tantras which emphasize method, since the suchness of the **winds** is primary [there], one is brought to realization through that. That being the case, since *bodhicitta* is attained [through?] the abiding and resting of the winds in the pathways of the channels, you should understand that both are necessary.” *rnal ‘byor bla na med pa’i rgyud rnams kyi man ngag ste mkha’ ‘gro ma’i rgyud rnams rtsa rtso bor byed pa’i rgyud de/ des rtogs pa’o// rnal ‘byor thabs gtso bor byed pa’i rgyud ni rlung gi de (de) P, D adds kho na) nyid gtso bos des (des) P, de D) rtogs par byed pa’o// de lta na yang byang chub sems rtsa’i lam na rlung gi gnas dang ngal gso (gso) P, so D) bas (bas] sugg. em, ba D, P) thob pas na gnyis ka (gnyis ka] D, gnyi ga P) la yang dgos par shes par bya’o zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D108a.6-108b.1; P 130a.6-7).

²³⁶ See notes 209, 237, and 248.

²³⁷ Vaidyapāda comments that he should do this “**using** the three **fingers** of his left hand drawn together.” *sor mo yis zhes pa ni lag pa g.yon pa’i sor mo gsum ‘dus byas pas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 108b.1; P 130a.8). See also notes 209 and 248.

²³⁸ *yis*] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), *yi D C P N S*.

²³⁹ *gnas*] sugg. em based on V (D and P), *nas D C P N S*. Vaidyapāda reads *de nas nang na gnas pa’i rtsa’i ‘khor lo chen po btsal bar bya’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 108b.1; P 130a.8).

²⁴⁰ *snying po*. Vaidyapāda here specifies and names five channels in the body—the central, left, right, front, and back—which he says correspond to the five buddhas and the five elements (*Sukusuma*, D 108b.2-3; P 130b.1-3).

²⁴¹ 116a-c ~c.f. *Daśatattvasaṃgraha*, V.22a-d (Klein-Schwind 2012, 210).

²⁴² While the *āli* and *kāli* traditionally refer to the vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet, Vaidyapāda clarifies that here *āli* and *kāli* refer to “the left and right [channels? respectively].” *de ne ā li kā li zhes pa ni g.yon pa dang g.yas pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 108b.4; P 130b.5).

²⁴³ Vaidyapāda explains that here “Another name for [what is here referred to as] *mantra* is the *lalana* (‘*phyang ma* = *rkyang ma?*), which is the place where the moon descends.” *mantra zhes pa ni rnam grangs ghzan du ‘phyang ma (rkyang ma?) zhes pa ste zla ba ‘bab pa’i gnas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 108b.5; P 130b.5)

The *kūrmaka*,²⁴⁴ and the *śāsāṅka*²⁴⁵—

These three *nāḍīs*.²⁴⁶

The *vajradhatvīśvarī nāḍī*, free from subject and object,
[Abides] in the center of the *bhaga*, [117]

By means of the oral instructions from the guru

One must find²⁴⁷ this using his fingers.²⁴⁸

Then, endowed with the ten *bhūmis*,²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴ kur] D C, kun P N S V (D and P). Above in his list of the five channels Vaidyapāda notes that the right-hand channel is called the *rus sba*, which is probably a translation of *kūrmaka*. Vaidyapāda explains that here “Another name for [what is here referred to as] *kūrmaka* is the *rasana* (*ro ldan ma*), the place where *rakta* descends.” *kur* (*kur*] sugg. em based on root text in D and C, *kun* D P) *ma ka zhes pa ni rnam grangs gzhān du ro ldan ma zhes te/ rakta ‘bab pa’i gnas so//*. (*Sukusuma*, D 108b.5; P130b.5-6).

²⁴⁵ *sha* (*sha*] D C, *shang* P N S V (D and P)) *shāng* (*shāng*] sugg. em based on V (D and P) which read *shang* (I suggest adding the long ā), *sha* D C P N S) *ka*. This Sanskrit term used here, the “hare-marked [one]” is usually a term for the moon, but it is also attested in the *Pradīpoddyotana*, for example, as a term for the central channel, which is clearly what it refers to here. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for both pointing out the correct Sanskrit term and its attestation in the *Pradīpoddyotana*. Vaidyapāda explains here that, “The *śāsāṅka* is that [channel] which is located in the center between those two, and which is also otherwise known as the **mūrdhanī* (*spyi gtsug ma*). It is the place where wisdom descends.” Again, Vaidyapāda’s commentary leaves no doubt that this is a reference to the central channel, which is more commonly termed the *avadhūti*. *shang shang ka zhes pa ni de gnyis kyi dbus te gzhān du spyi* (P +bo) *gtsug* (*gtsug*] D, *gtsugs* P) *ma zhes kyang grags/ de ye shes ‘bab pa’i gnas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 108b.5-6; P 130b.6).

²⁴⁶ *na ḍi*] sugg. em., *na li* D C P N S.

²⁴⁷ *go ba*. Literally “understand.”

²⁴⁸ ~C.f. Vagīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*: *so ‘pi vāmāmbhoruhavāmāpārśvasthitām vajradhātviśvarīnāḍīm gurūpadeśavalād upalabhya vihitotphullabhramarījālādikaraṇasamhāre/* (Sakurai 1996, 418). The procedure of “searching for the *cakra*” appears to involve the yogin’s seeking out, with the fingers, the so-called *vajradhātviśvarī nāḍī* in his partner’s body. Vaidyapāda elaborates, “Moreover, the *vajradhātviśvarī* channel which is beyond subject-object [duality] is located in the center of the *bhaga*, like the string of a lute. You must **find this with your fingers** in reliance upon the instructions of a compassionate guru.” *de yang rdo rje dbyings kyi dbang phyug ma’i rtsa gang gi phyr gzung ‘dzin* (‘*dzin*] P, ‘*don* D) *dang bral ba bha* (*bha*] P, *bu* D) *ga’i dbus na gnas pa’i pi bang* (*bang*] P, *wang* D) *gi rgyud ltar gnas pa ste/ bla ma thugs rje dang ldan pa’i man ngag gis* (*gis*] P, *gi* D) *sor mos go bar bya dgos so zhes te/* (*Sukusuma*, D 108b.6-7; P 130b.7-8). This same procedure is described in the *Piṇḍikṛta* commentary, the *Manimālā*, attributed to Nāgabodhi. Here, just after the call and response between the yogin and consort, and before she recites the verse of praise to the *bhaga*, the girl is to show the yogin the *nāḍī-cakra* inside of her lotus: “Then that *devī* holds the two sides of her lotus with her hands, and thus pulling on the lotus she should show him the *nāḍī-cakra*. Regarding this, she should show him the *nāḍī-cakra* inside her lotus in this way: “Hey, son of noble family! [Here] in the center is a *nāḍī* which, because it is covered by the pleasure *nāḍī* that is similar to a person’s nose, corresponds with the man’s *liṅgam*. This is the central channel, called *vajradhātviśvarī*. It is also called *samantabhadrī*, and from among the thirty-two channels described in the *Vajrāmṛta*, it is the main one where blood and semen are brought together. This itself is that from which the three realms arise, and they also dissolve [back] into this. Since this itself is the essence of the Tathāgata Akṣobhya, it is the *prajñāpāramitā*, the nature of the *dharmadhatu* wisdom, that which produces beings, and which gathers them back...” *de nas lha mo des rang gi lag pa dag gis padma’i ngos gnyis nas bzung ste padma brgyangs* (*brgyangs*] D, *brgyad* P) *nas rtsa’i ‘khor lo bstan par bya’o// de la padma’i nang du rtsa’i ‘khor lo ‘di ltar bstan par bya ste/ kye’o* (*kye’o*] D, *kye’i* P) *rigs kyi bu dbus na gnas pa’i mi’i sna lta bu’i rtsa ra mas g.yogs par gyur pas skyes bu’i linga dang mtshungs pa’i rtsa de ni rtsa dbum ma chos kyi dbyings kyi dbang phyug ma zhes bya ste/ rnam grangs gzhān yang kun tu bzang mo yin zhing dpal rdo rje bdud rtsi las gsungs pa’i rtsa sum cu rtsa gnyis kyi nang nas gtso bor gyur pa rakta dang shu kra dag sdud par gyur pa ste/ de nyid las khams gsum pa skye bar ‘gyur zhing de nyid du thim par ‘gyur ro// de nyid ni de bzhin gshegs pa mi bskyod pa’i ngo bo yin pa’i phyr shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma* (*ma*] D, *pa* P) *dang/ chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes kyi rang bzhin dang sems can thams cad skyed bar byed pa dang sdud par byed pa yin no//* (*Manimālā*, D 130b.6-131a.3; P 122b.4-7). See also notes 209 and 237.

²⁴⁹ See verses 299-312 of the *Dvītyākrama* below where ten stages of sexual union are described in terms of their correspondence with the bodhisattva *bhūmis*.

He should embrace that goddess. |118|

[Union]

²⁵⁰ When the vajra touches the lotus
This is explained to actually be *sevā*.²⁵¹
The vajra entering the lotus
Is actually *upasādhana*. |119|

Then, through moving and stirring a bit,
The heart quivers and attentiveness wanes
The hair on the crown falls loose and garments are cast off
Sweat²⁵² covers the body and it takes on a reddish hue,²⁵³ |120|

And with reddened eyes [she]²⁵⁴ looks at one.
Moving²⁵⁵ repeatedly brings about *sādhana*.
Thus, without concern²⁵⁶
Moving that which is bow-shaped,²⁵⁷ the vow-holder |121|

Causes the blazing of the triangular wisdom fire.²⁵⁸
Thereby the elements melt and the sixteenth part,

²⁵⁰ Vaidyapāda mentions that these verses describe the way in which the master teaches the fourth *tattva*, which according to the list of the ten *tattvas* that Vaidyapāda gave before in the *Sukusuma*, corresponds with the *tattva* of the *mudrā* (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.1-2). In his commentary on Dīpaṃkarabhadra’s *Maṇḍalavidhi* Vaidyapāda similarly notes that presentation of the fourth *tattva* corresponds with the presentation of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* (*Guhyasamājamāṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, 211a.2-3). See note 111 for the list of the ten according to the *Sukusuma*.

²⁵¹ *bsnyen pa’i de nyid*. I understand this to be an instance where Buddhajñānapāda is homologizing terms from non-sexual tantric practices (the four *aṅgas* of *sevā* and so forth, which are usually associated—even in Buddhajñānapāda’s own writings—with phases of generation stage *sādhana* practice) with perfection stage sexual practices, and thereby asserting sexual practice to be the actual identity or suchness (*de nyid*) of those terms and practices. Vaidyapāda says the term suchness is used in each of these instances in order to indicate that it represents the “unchanging” *sevā* and so forth, because it unflinchingly brings about non-abiding *nirvāṇa* (*bsnyen pa zhes pa ni rdo rje dang padma zhes sngon gyi tha* (P om.) *tshig go// de nyid ces pa ni mi ‘gyur ba’i ste/ ‘dis mi gnas pa’i mya ngan las ‘das pa la mi bshu bar byed pa’i phyir ro// phyi ma la yang de bzhin du sbyar ro//* (*Sukusuma* D 109a.2; P 131a.3-4).

²⁵² *rngul*] sugg. em., *rdul D C P N S V* (D and P). This emendation is based on the line from the parallel verse in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* which reads *rngul chu thigs pas lus kun khyab//* (*Yogasapta*, D 71a.5; P 84b.7)

²⁵³ Vaidyapāda links the preceding five “signs” that come about through moving and stirring with the five wisdoms (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.3-4; P 131a.5-6).

²⁵⁴ Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that this actually refers to both partners looking at one another (personal communication, February 2016).

²⁵⁵ *bsgul*] sugg. em. based on V, *bskul D C P N S*. Buddhajñānapāda’s text here reads *bskul* but given the fact that earlier the text read *bsgul ba*, as well as the fact that this is glossed in Vaidyapāda’s commentary as *yang dang yang du bskyod pa* suggests that it is *bsgul* that is meant. This passage has been translated at least twice, in J. Dalton (2004, 13) and Roberts (2010, 486). I part ways from both of their interpretations of the passage in several places.

²⁵⁶ Vaidyapāda seems to suggest that this means something like “effortlessly.” He writes, “**Without concern** means **without** having to search for it. Since the causes have already come about, have no doubt that the fourth *tattva* will arise.” *sems khral med pa ru zhes pa ni btsal* (btsal] D, *brtsal P*) *dgos pa med de/ rgyu sngon du song ba’i phyir te de kho na nyid bzhi pa skye ba la the tshom mi bya’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.5; P 131a.7-8).

²⁵⁷ This is a reference to the wind element, the “*maṇḍala*” of which is represented in the traditional *sādhana* visualizations as a bow-shape. Vaidyapāda makes it clear that this refers to the wind *maṇḍala*. (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.5; P 131a.8).

²⁵⁸ Vaidyapāda explains that this is “the fire which has the nature of the triangle.” *sum mdo’i rang bzhin gyi me* (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.6; P 131b.1).

Which is like a jasmine flower,
Should be offered by unifying the winds.²⁵⁹ |122|

Naturally perfectly pacified
The suchness that is the pacification of all phenomena,
That bliss itself, dwells at the jewel [for] an instant.²⁶⁰
Free from recollection, [it] is made to move—²⁶¹
This itself is *mahāsādhana*.²⁶² |123|

²⁵⁹ Vaidyapāda elaborates “**The sixteenth part which is like a jasmine flower** means the *bindu* of *bodhicitta*. Through joining and uniting, this is made to enter the lotus *saṃputa* at the heart center.” *bcu drug char gyur pa me tog kunda* (kunda] D, kun da P) dang ‘*dra zhes te byang chub kyi sems kyi thig ler gyur pa sdus cing* (P adds *sdus pa’i*) *sbyor bas snying ga’i padma kha sbyar du gzhus pa’o*// (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.6-7; P 131b.2). Vaidyapāda explains that after causing the *bindu* to enter the heart, the downward clearing wind is then used to send it to the tip of the vajra, and at this point the disciple should come to know the seven yogas through the oral instructions of the master (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.7; P 131b.2-3). On these seven yogas see also note 121. Dakpo Tashi Namgyal cites this passage in the context of the experience of the third initiation performed with a visualized wisdom consort, but later references the possibility of a *karmamudrā* (Roberts 2010, 486).

²⁶⁰ Vaidyapāda comments that, “Regarding its being made to remain, it remains there for one or two ‘instants of a completed action.’” *gnas par byed pa ste/ der yang bya ba rdzogs pa’i skad cig ma gcig dang/ gnyis la sogs pa’i bar du gnas nas*// (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.2; P 131b.5-6). This is one of two types of “instant” found in Buddhist literature and refers to, as an “instant,” the time it takes to complete a given action.

²⁶¹ Vaidyapāda explains, “[One is] **free from recollection** because of having reached the natureless yoga. The text says **[it] is made to move** because one has completely abandoned all conceptuality.” *dran med ces te/ rang bzhin med pa’i sbyor bas zin pa’i phyir ro// g.yo bar byed pa* (byed pa] D, P om.) *zhes pa ni rnam par rtog pa thams cad spangs pa’i phyir ro*// (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.2-3; P; 131b.6-7). While in both earlier translations of this passage, J. Dalton (2004, 13) and Roberts (2010, 486) seem to take the subject of the movement to refer to consciousness, I am inclined to read this as referring to the *bindu*. Thus, following Vaidyapāda’s earlier explanations, the *bindu* has been brought to the tip of the vajra, remains there for an instant or two, and then the practitioner enters a state free from conceptuality and “it [i.e. the *bindu* of *bodhicitta*] is made to move.” This would then refer to the moment of emission. This reading also fits better with the statement two verses later where Buddhajñānapāda notes that “The intelligent one will take up the liquid nectar that is in the lotus with his mouth and drink it.” Without having emitted it there, there would be no nectar (i.e. semen), for the yogin to receive from his partner’s lotus and drink. Indeed, emission is a standard feature of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* and other manuals also instruct the yogin to drink the fluids that result from the sexual union as part of the ritual for this initiation (see e.g. Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* (ed. Sakurai 1996, 419)). This verse appears, then, to associate *mahāsādhana* both with the holding of the *bindu* at the tip of the vajra, as well as with its emission, or perhaps even with the precise moment in which the *bindu* begins to be emitted. Later commentators writing about the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* did get into detail about the precise location of the *bindu* of *bodhicitta* at the moment when suchness is experienced (see, for example, the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 104-5).

²⁶² Vaidyapāda elaborates, “**This itself is mahāsādhana** because it is the essence of the accomplishment of the *mahāmudrā*.” *de nyid la sgrub pa chen po zhes te phyag rgya chen po dngos grub kyi ngo bo nyid kyi phyir ro*// (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.3; P 131b.7). Here Vaidyapāda seems to be further supporting Buddhajñānapāda’s claim that these sexual yogic practices are in fact identical to these processes of *sevā* etc., which are generally used to describe the stages of generation stage practice. That is, he appears to be saying that the wisdom experienced through the bliss that occurs at the climactic moment of sexual yogic practice is called *mahāsādhana*, because it is indeed the essence of the result of deity yoga practice, of *mahāmudrā*. The term *mahāmudrā*, as I noted above, is in the 8th and 9th centuries used to refer to the form of the deity; Vaidyapāda clearly uses the term in this way at multiple places in the *Sukusuma*.

²⁶³ From the uniting of the realm of space and the vajra, great bliss that has genuine vision arises,²⁶⁴ which brings about genuine bliss.

²⁶³ It seems that the text of verses 124 and 125 may be corrupt in several places. My translation of these verses relies on Vaidyapāda's commentary, as well as the parallel verses that survive in Sanskrit from Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavedhi* (on which see below), and in Tibetan in Vaidyapāda's *Yogasapta*. These two verses are also metrically unusual in the Tibetan translation. Departing from the seven syllables per *pāda* in the preceding and subsequent verses, verse 124 has four *pādas* with nineteen syllables each, and verse 125 has two *pādas* with seventeen syllables each, two with thirteen syllables each, and a final *pāda* again with nineteen syllables. Verses 124a-125a are found in Vaidyapāda's *Yogasapta* where they appear with slight variation from the *Dvīṭyākrama*, which, on the basis of a comparison with the Sanskrit from the *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavedhi*, suggests that the *Yogasapta*'s verses are also somewhat corrupt (*Yogasapta*, D 71a.3-4; P 84b.4-6). As just noted, 124a-d and 125b-d are mostly parallel with Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* vv. 10-14 on the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*, which fortunately survive in Sanskrit. However, while the extant Sanskrit of these verses is very helpful in providing a more clear reading of the Tibetan translation of *some* parts of these verses from the *Dvīṭyākrama* (for example *mahādbhutaṃ/ sukham utpadyate yat tat paramānandadāyakaṃ// viramānandayor mmadhye* is extremely helpful in clarifying the confusing *bde chen 'byung byar 'gyur// gang gang yang dag dga' byed chags bral dga' gnyis bar du*, with which it appears to be precisely parallel, but which would otherwise not be naturally read that way just on the basis of the Tibetan), there are also several places where the wording as found in the *Dvīṭyākrama* and the *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* clearly differ, and where Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* supports the reading in the *Dvīṭyākrama*, rather than that in the *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* (such as *mchan can* versus *samspaśāt*). Thus the verses as found in Vāgīśvarakīrti's work appear to have undergone some transformation from the way they appeared earlier in the *Dvīṭyākrama*. Vāgīśvarakīrti's verses (following Sakurai's edition) read: *khadhātuvajrasamyogāt samsparśāc ca mahādbhutaṃ/ sukham utpadyate yat tat paramānandadāyakaṃ// 10// viramānandayor mmadhye lakṣyam vīkṣya dṛḍhikuru/ kamalākāṣe maṇivaratakayoḥ pīdanasthāne // 11// vajraparyāṅkataś cittam maṇyantargatam īkṣayan/ yat tad utpadyate jñānaṃ jñā[na]n tadrūpam ity alam// 12// na rāgo na virāgaś ca madhyamā nopalabhyate/ jñānadṛṣṭir yadā yogī sukhaṃ tiṣṭhet kṣaren na ca// 13 // praharam vātha vaikāhaṃ pakṣaṃ māsaṅ ca vatsaram/ kalpaṃ kalpasahasra[ṅ] ca tiṣṭhet jñānābhiyogataḥ // 14//* (Sakurai 1996, 418-19). Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for drawing my attention to this parallel. I have also emended Sakurai's edition very slightly based on Harunaga Isaacson's suggestions.

²⁶⁴ Vaidyapāda reads "that which has genuine vision" and "great bliss" separately, suggesting that the latter arises out of the former, but the grammar of the verse, at least as it has been rendered into Tibetan, does not allow for this reading, so I have not followed it here.

Between the cessation of bliss²⁶⁵ and bliss,²⁶⁶ an absence²⁶⁷ is seen and should be stabilized.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ *Chags 'bral*. The Sanskrit from Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* reads *viramānandayor*, and it seems that this is indeed probably what the Tibetan translators were reading here. They seem to have understood *virama* in the compound to mean *viramānanda* (thus they the two members of the compound would be *viram[ānanda]* and *ānanda*), and thus *chags 'bral* is here a translation of *viramānanda*. The more common Tibetan translation of *viramānanda*, however, would be *dga' bral* rather than *chags bral*.

²⁶⁶ This line seems to contain a reference to at least two of the three blisses that are mentioned in verse 241 and listed in verses 290 and 291 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, and which Vaidyapāda also refers to in his *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*. In both the *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 290-91 and in the *Muktilaka-vyākhyāna* the three blisses are listed as bliss (*dga' ba*), middling bliss (*dga' ba bar ma*), and bliss of cessation (*dga' bral*). Vaidyapāda correlates them with the seven yogas (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 58a.1). A similar set of categories also appears to be referenced in verse 125 of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as “passion, freedom from passion, and something in between” (*'dod chags, chags bral, bar ma*). Those lines from verse 125 are, however, excerpted from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, where the context does not seem to be the series of blisses arising from sexual yogic practice. On this line from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* and its relation to the three blisses see note 276. On the seven yogas see note 121.

²⁶⁷ *dben* (dben] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), bden D C P N S) *nyid* (nyid] sugg. em. based on parallel verse in Vaidyapāda's *Yogasapta* (see *Yogasapta*, D 71a.3; P84b.4), gnyis D C P N S). Here Vaidyapāda states, “The absence of the two blisses should be seen by means of the oral instructions, and [the text] is stating that one should stabilize that.” *dga' ba gnyis gyis dben pa de man ngag gis mthong ba de la blo brtan par gyis shig ces gdams pa 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.5; P 132a.2). I have emended the *Dvīṭīyakrama* here in accordance with Vaidyapāda's commentary to read “an absence” (*dben nyid*), rather than the implausible “the two truths” (*dben gnyis*), found in all recensions of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* itself. However, Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* (as well as the other citations of this line in later sources, on which see note 268 below) here reads “the goal” (*lakṣya*). I will note here that it was very tempting to make an even more serious emendation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* from *bden gnyis* not just to *dben nyid* following Vaidyapāda, but to *'ben nyid*, “the goal,” to match the Sanskrit (*lakṣya*) of all of the later sources of which I am aware that cite this passage. However, I have resisted doing so because, while this reading works quite well with the *Dvīṭīyakrama* itself, it is more difficult to coherently make this emendation in Vaidyapāda's commentary on the relevant passages. It is not absolutely impossible to make some sense of Vaidyapāda's commentary with the reading of *'ben nyid*—in the passage cited above in this note it is not so difficult, but a passage cited below in note 275 is significantly more difficult to comfortably emend in that way—but the *Sukusuma* reads much more smoothly and naturally without this emendation, and Vaidyapāda's commentary on the *Dvīṭīyakrama* is several centuries earlier than any of the Sanskrit sources that include this line, so my guess for the moment is that the *Dvīṭīyakrama* and the *Sukusuma* represent an earlier reading of the line that read “an absence” (*dben nyid*; I unfortunately cannot guess what the Sanskrit may have been), and which was later emended to read “the goal” (*lakṣya*). Moreover, the line as cited in Abhayākaragupta's *Āmnāyamañjarī*, which reflects the later reading translates *lakṣya* into Tibetan in a way that is more expected, not as *'ben* but as *mthshon bya* (*Āmnāyamañjarī*, D 67a.1). In the end, though, this point remains something of a question.

²⁶⁸ Apart from its inclusion, along with most of the rest of verses 124-125 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* in the *Samkṣiptābhiṣekavidhi* (see note 265 above), this particular line is cited—with some variant readings—in a number of later sources, including the *Caturmudrānvaya* (attributed, by some authors at least, to Nāgārjuna; p 32), the *Abhiṣekanirukti* (fol. 43 r) Kumāracandra's *Ratnāvalī* (p. 102), Rāmapāla's *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (see Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 275), and the *Kriyāsāṅgrahapañjikā* (chapter 6, *prajñāñānvhiṣekavidhi*, st. 13ab). (This list of citations is provided in Isaacson and Sferra (2014, 275 n 120) in the notes to their translation of the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, which cites the passage twice. The page numbers that I give here are those provided in their citation, and include sources I, myself, have not looked at. The interested reader is therefore directed to Isaacson and Sferra's bibliography for further details). Isaacson and Sferra note that the original source of this line is unknown (they do not reference its occurrence here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*), and suggest that it may derive from a lost tantra, since the sources that cite it tend to give it the reverence normally attributed to scripture (ibid., 98-99). They note, however, that Abhayākaragupta (who, it should be noted, holds a position on the sequence of blisses that seems to be contradicted by this statement) in his *Āmnāyamañjarī*, casts doubt on its scriptural authority (ibid.). Although Abhayākaragupta does, indeed, as Isaacson and Sferra have noted, cast doubt on the scriptural authority of the line, he does still provide (“in the case that it is scriptural....” *lung yin na de 'i cha/...*) a way of interpreting the line that does not undermine his position on the sequence of blisses (*Āmnāyamañjarī*, D 67a.1). While Isaacson and Sferra may be correct that this line is a from a lost tantra, it is also possible that the issue of its scriptural authority or lack thereof may be with reference to its presence here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, in a *mukhāgama*, a work that lies precisely on the borderline of scripture and authored commentary. It should be noted, however, that while Abhayākaragupta questions the scriptural authority of this line, he cites as scriptural—he attributes it to the *Paramādyā-tantra*—a

In the space of the lotus, the jewel of the vajra and the heart of the lotus join,²⁶⁹ in vajra posture²⁷⁰

The mind²⁷¹ is observed within the jewel.²⁷² The bliss that arises is ascertained—and that itself is wisdom.²⁷³ |124|

This is explained by all of the genuine supreme gurus to be the perfection stage.²⁷⁴

verse that is parallel to the very next two lines (124 cd) of the *Dvīṭyākrama* (*Āmṃyāyamañjarī*, D 68a.1-2). Lastly, the line as it is cited in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* does include a variant. While in the *Dvīṭyākrama* and *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* the line reads: **viramānandayor madhye...** /, the line in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (and apparently also the *Caturmudrānvaya*, from which it appears to cite the line) reads: **paramaviramayor madhye lakṣyaṃ vīkṣya dṛdhīkuru**. In both cases the first compound refers to two among the series of blisses that arise in the context of the *prajñāñānābhīṣeka*. In Buddhajñānapāda’s system, in which there are just three blisses, the compound seems to refer to *viramānanda* and *ānanda*, the third and first of the blisses, respectively. In the later systems under discussion in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, there are four blisses, among which the compound appears to reference *paramānanda* (the second) and *viramānanda* (the fourth, in the system upheld by Rāmapāla, who cites the passage). This, however, does not seem to be such a significant difference, given that the issue is in what lies between the two, and in Buddhajñānapāda’s system there is no division into the first two blisses (*ānanda* and *paramānanda*, respectively) of the later system. So, the middle place between the two corresponds in Buddhajñānapāda’s system to **madhyamānanda*, and in Rāmapāla’s system to *sahajānanda*, which may indeed be understood as parallel here—the absence (*dben nyid*) or goal (*lakṣyam*) which is to be marked by the practitioner during the initiation. I discuss the blisses according to Buddhajñānapāda’s system in Chapter Six. This line is also transmitted differently in Vaidyapāda’s *Yogasapta* (see note 265 above), which includes a parallel to *Dvīṭyākrama* 124a-125a. The remainder of the *pādas* in this segment of the *Yogasapta* are the same content-wise as those in the *Dvīṭyākrama*. There therefore seems to have been some error of transmission with respect to this particular line.²⁶⁹ In the later versions of this verse which survive in Sanskrit, what we find here in the Tibetan translation of the *Dvīṭyākrama* as *sbyor*, “unite,” is instead the slightly more forceful *pīḍana*, “pressing” or “squeezing.” My inclination is that the Sanskrit verse in the *Dvīṭyākrama* also likely read *pīḍana*, and that the choice of *sbyor* here was simply a choice made by the Tibetan translators. I have, however, translated it into English in accord with the text as it reads here in the *Dvīṭyākrama* as it survives in Tibetan translation, rather following the Sanskrit of the later parallel citations, since I cannot be absolutely certain about this point. The full Sanskrit line from Vāgīśvarakīrti’s *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* reads *kamalākāṣe mañivaratakayoḥ pīḍanasthāne* (Sakurai, 1996, 418). Note that the Tibetan translation of the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, where this same verse is cited as coming from the *Paramādyā-tantra* (though Isaacson and Sferra (2014, 297 n 239) have noted that it is not found in any surviving recension of that work), translates the whole verse somewhat differently (though giving the same sense), and translates *pīḍana*, specifically, with the more semantically accurate Tibetan term *mnan* (ibid., 229).

²⁷⁰ Vaidyapāda clarifies that vajra posture here means union (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.6, P 132a.3).

²⁷¹ *Sems* here refers to *byang chub kyi sems*, the *bindu* of *bodhicitta*.

²⁷² ~Cf. *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi*, verse 366c-d. *vajraparyāṅkataḥ cittaṃ manyantargatam īkṣyan*. Cf. also the *Vajrāvalī* (Mori 2009 Vol. 2, 444), which incorporates these two *pādas* immediately after the incorporation of *Dvīṭyākrama* 88a-c; and *Daśatattva* V.15, which follows the *Vajrāvalī* in incorporating these *pādas* after the incorporation of *Dvīṭyākrama* 88a-c.

²⁷³ Apart from their inclusion, along with most of the rest of verses 124-125 from the *Dvīṭyākrama*, in the *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* (see note 265 above), these two lines (124cd) are cited—with some variant readings—in several other later sources, at least two of which attribute the verse to the *Paramādyā-tantra*. The verse is cited in the *Abhayapaddhati* (MS A fol. 15v2), the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (ed. Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 173), the *Kriyāsaṅgrahapañjikā* (ed. Sakurai 1996, 514) and the *Yamāritantraṇḍalopāyikā* (fol. 24r.3), and the *Āmnāyamañjarī* (D 68b.1-2) (this list of sources is given by Isaacson and Sferra (2014, 297 n 239) in reference to the verse’s citation in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*; the page numbers I have given here are those provided in Isaacson and Sferra’s citation, and include sources that I, myself, have not looked at. The interested reader is therefore directed to Isaacson and Sferra’s bibliography for further details). Both the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* and the *Āmnāyamañjarī* attribute the verse to the *Paramādyā-tantra*, though Isaacson and Sferra note that it is not found in any of the surviving recensions of that tantra (ibid.).

²⁷⁴ Vaidyapāda explains that it is called the “perfection stage” (perhaps better translated here as “perfected stage”) “because it is naturally accomplished, and is not something posited by the mind” *rnam grangs gzhan du na rdzogs pa’i rim pa yin par bla ma mchog rnam kyis kyang bshad de/ rang bzhin gyis grub pa ste/ blos gzhag* [gzhag] D, [bzhag P] *pa ma yin pa’i phyr ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.7; P 132a.4-5).

Neither passion, dispassion, nor something in between²⁷⁵ is perceived;²⁷⁶ the wisdom deity is seen there in a single instant.

For eight hours, one day, one month,

One year, one aeon, up to a thousand aeons one should experience that wisdom.

The intelligent one will take up the liquid nectar that abides in the lotus with his mouth and drink it.²⁷⁷ |125|

[A Doxography of Philosophical Views]

Thus, the final identity of all things

Is profundity and luminosity.²⁷⁸

[But] since beginningless time, ordinary beings

Have fixated upon it as “me” and “mine;”

Thus, without examining, they grasp to the self.²⁷⁹ |126|

²⁷⁵ Vaidyapāda writes, “How is it that there is the absence of two blisses? **Neither passion, dispassion, nor something in between are observed** means that there is no conceptualization in terms of these three.” (*dga' ba gnyis kyis ji ltar dben zhe na/ 'dod chags chags bral bar mi dmigs zhes te 'di gsum gyi* (gyi) P, gyis d) *rtog pa med pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.7-110a.1; P 132a.5-6).

²⁷⁶ C.f. *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra* 1.3a-b. *na rāgo na virāgaś ca madhyamā nopalabhyate*]. Thanks to Péter Szántó for sharing with me his draft Sanskrit edition of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*. While the context of this line in the first chapter of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, from which it is drawn, is *not* one of sexual yoga, given the strong parallels between this verse and the names of the three blisses that are given in Buddhajñānapāda's system—they are listed in verses 290-91 of the *Dvītyākrama* as bliss (*dga' ba*), middling bliss (*dga' ba bar ma*), and bliss of cessation (*dga' ba dang bral ba*)—along with its incorporation into the *Dvītyākrama* precisely in the context of sexual yogic initiatory practice in which the three blisses are experienced—I wonder if the line from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* may have served as a scriptural source or inspiration for the classification of the blisses as three-fold, as well as for the names ascribed to them in Buddhajñānapāda's system. Certainly, Vaidyapāda does not take the line that way, however; as we will see below, he understands it to be a three-fold description of the goal itself. Nonetheless, my suspicion remains. Ronald Davidson (2002, 62) has suggested that the source of these three blisses may have been the oral tradition, and specifically the teachings of Buddhajñānapāda's guru Pālitapāda (Davidson erroneously refers to this guru as *Bālipāda; he did not, at the time of writing his article, have access to Sanskrit sources that we now have). My speculation here with regards to a scriptural inspiration for the three-fold system of blisses does not necessarily contradict Davidson's suggestion that this system may have been passed down to Buddhajñānapāda by means of an oral tradition. In any case, it seems that the *Dvītyākrama* represents a very early example of the classification of the blisses that arise in the context of tantric practice (Davidson 2002b, 60-1); later systems appear to be based on Buddhajñānapāda's, but with the addition of a fourth bliss, and a change in the name of one of the blisses. The reference to the “stages of bliss” the text cited in the *Sukusuma*'s commentary to verse 105, if it is indeed a *kāmasāstric* source rather than a Buddhist one, might suggest that perhaps the progression of the “blisses” in tantric texts was developed on the basis of their being such a progression already in the literature on *kāma*, which was then adapted to a soteriological context. See note 224.

²⁷⁷ Vaidyapāda follows up this section by adding the concluding elements of the initiation ritual, including the *vyākaraṇa*, *āsvāsa*, and *anujñā*. After the final initiation Vaidyapāda says that the oaths should be taken and a pacifying *homa* performed, the *maṇḍala* reabsorbed and so forth (*Sukusuma*, D 110a; P 132b).

²⁷⁸ Given that they follow immediately after the descriptions of the rituals for the *guhya*- and *prajñājñāna-abhiṣekas*, these two lines are actually quite similar to Vaidyapāda's interpretation of “the fourth” that would follow (or take place within the context of) these initiations: that is, a verbal description of suchness, or reality. However, Vaidyapāda explains “the fourth” as consisting of a much more elaborate presentation on the seven yogas. Could the presence of these two lines at this point in the text, though, perhaps serve as an allusion to the basic character of such an oral instruction on suchness immediately following the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*?

²⁷⁹ Vaidyapāda explains that the incorrect opinions expressed in this section of the text are those of ordinary beings who hold to certain philosophical systems but who have not investigated by means of genuine valid cognition, and thus perceive things mistakenly because they follow untrustworthy scriptures, inferences, and mistaken forms of *samādhi*. *thog ma dang tha ma* (dang tha ma) [D, P om.] *med pa'i dus na so so'i skye bo grub pa'i mtha' 'dzin pa rnam kyis nga dang nga yir 'dzin pas yang dag pa'i tshad mas ma brtags par ni bdag tu bzung zhes te yid mi ches*

Arisen from time, arbitrary,
Appointed by the heavens, inferior²⁸⁰
Emanated by the grasper,
Emerged from the all realms, |127|

Ísvāra, issued forth,
Created by time, and by *prakṛti*
Not the creator,²⁸¹
Yoga, valid cognition, |128|

Pure and impure,²⁸²
A self that is inexpressible and dwells within,
The individual, the pervasive self,
Life force, and individual,²⁸³ consciousness, |129|

The universal basis, and the knower,²⁸⁴
The seer, and subject and object,
Knowing and the known²⁸⁵
Man, and those born from him,²⁸⁶ |130|

Life force, sustenance,²⁸⁷ and so forth—
The nonbuddhists hold these ideas. |131|

[Asserting] space and the two types of cessation
[To be] completely uncompounded,
And perfectly stable; all compounded things
As momentary, and without an owner, |132|

Made up of subtle particles
And not of aspects of the mind—
The Kaśmīri Vaibhāṣikas understand [things in this way]. |133|

pa'i lung dang/ rjes su dpag par snang ba dang/ log par 'dzin pa'i ting nge 'dzin gyis so// (*Sukusuma*, D 110a.7-110b.1; P 132b.7-8)

²⁸⁰ Vaidyapāda notes that four terms beginning with “arisen from time” (*dus las byung ba*) are assertions of the Sāṃkhyas (*grang can pa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 110b.1; P 132b.8-133a.1).

²⁸¹ Vaidyapāda notes that the eight terms beginning with “emanated by the grasper” (*'dzin pa pos sprul pa*) are the assertions of the Vaiśeṣikas (*bye brag pa*), although I have found it difficult to find precisely eight terms in this list; the subsequent list begins with “yoga” (*rnal 'byor*). (*Sukusuma*, D 110b.1-2; P 133a.1a).

²⁸² The four terms starting with “yoga” (*rnal 'byor*) are presented by Vaidyapāda as assertions of the followers of Kapila (*ser skya pa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 110b.2).

²⁸³ The five terms starting with “a self that is inexpressible and dwells within” (*nang gnas brjod du med pa'i bdag*) are presented by Vaidyapāda as assertions of the Jains (*nam mkha' gos can pa*) (*Sukusuma* D 110b.2).

²⁸⁴ The three terms starting with “consciousness” (*rnam shes*) are presented by Vaidyapāda as secret assertions of the Vedantins (*rig byed kyi mtha' gsang bar smra wa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 110b.2).

²⁸⁵ The five terms starting with “the seer” (*mthong ba po*) are presented by Vaidyapāda as assertions of the Carakas (*tsa ra ka*) (*Sukusuma*, D 110b.2-3).

²⁸⁶ These two terms, ‘men’ (*shed bu*) and ‘born from men’ (*shed las skyes pa*) are presented by Vaidyapāda as assertions of “the kings and so forth” (*rgyal po la sogs pa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 110b.3).

²⁸⁷ This last point is presented by Vaidyapāda as an assertion of the “red-robed ones” (*gos dmar pa*).

Brought into being [by] one’s awareness,
The experienced object which is seen is an aspect [of the mind];
The three unconditioned [things]
Are nonexistent, like the son of a barren woman; |134|

All conditioned things are material
There is no transformation in the three times;²⁸⁸
[There exist] the smallest particles [and] unobstructed form—
This is what is understood by the Sautrāntikas. |135|

That which has parts is not the ultimate;
This is the case even for subtle particles.
One cannot observe them individually;
They do not appear, but are just like a dream. |136|

The wisdom²⁸⁹ that is free from subject and object
Is the ultimate, pure like a crystal—
This is what the Yogācārin understand. |137|

All of these different traditions
Are not the ultimate, because
[All things] are beyond the nature of being singular or multiple,
Just like a lotus in the sky. |138|

Peace [beyond] non-duality or non-non-duality
Completely stainless like space—
The intelligent Mādhyamikas understand [reality to be] thus.²⁹⁰ |139|

[Though] reality abides as suchness,
[Beings] conceptualize it distinctly
In these and countless other [ways].
Therefore, *all* of these [perspectives] |140|

Are not the genuine; they can be surpassed.
The perspective of the higher yogins
Is superior to that of the lower.²⁹¹

²⁸⁸ This line is strange given that it appears to be the exact opposite of the assertion of the Sautrāntikas, who precisely *do* assert the three times to be changing. Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel suggests reading this as something that should be negated, i.e. *dus gsum rgyu ba ma yin [pa med]*, “The three times are not unchanging, that is to say, they are impermanent” (personal communication, February 2016).

²⁸⁹ Vaidyapāda’s commentary preserves a different reading of this line. Instead of reading *ye shes te* “that wisdom,” it reads *rnam shes che*, “that great consciousness” (*Sukusuma*, D 111a.4; P 133b.5).

²⁹⁰ Buddhajñānapāda here clearly asserts the superiority of Madhyamaka to Yogācāra, and asserts Yogācāra to hold an idealist position, exactly like the critique of the system that is found in many later Tibetan sources. Vaidyapāda bears this out even more clearly in his analysis of the subsequent verses. However, as we will see, the Madhyamaka position is also here clearly asserted to be lesser than the tantric one.

²⁹¹ Vaidyapāda notes that compared to what is held by the non-Buddhists, the Vaibhāṣikas improve by asserting these things to be impermanent. Compared to that, the Sautrāntikas improve by asserting those impermanent things

The lower view is refuted |141|

By the wisdom of the higher one.
Therefore, by means of the higher stage
The *sahaja* master
Performs the genuine blessing.²⁹² |142|

Luminous and perfectly joyful like the sky
The self-arisen great **adhideva*
Is realized through spontaneously arisen wisdom
In reliance on the words of the guru.²⁹³ |143|

Thus, in the vessel²⁹⁴ possessed of *samayas* and vows,
Through water-like one-pointedness
The yogin should examine
The reflection-like wisdom. |144|

Once he has achieved this, the yogin
While abiding in cyclic existence
Will not be stained by those evils.
Just as someone possessed of mantras and medicines |145|

Enacts the slaying of snakes,
Likewise when the great lord of yogins,
Seals [them] with the medicine of wisdom
What can the afflictive emotions do? |146|

What can the rain do
To someone with an umbrella in his hand?
Likewise, when carrying the umbrella
Of nondual wisdom²⁹⁵ |147|

as imputations. Better yet, the Yogācāras assert that these imputations are merely mind, while the Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas improve this further by asserting the idea of things as merely the mind to be just the relative level of things. Even better, the Annuttara-ists(!) (*bla na med pa'i gzhung pa*) improve further by asserting that even the relative level of things is nothing but wisdom. (*Sukusuma*, D 111b.2-4; P 134a.4-5).

²⁹² Here Vaidyapāda identifies the higher stage as bestowing initiation, the *sahaja ācārya* as one's consort (Tib. *shes rab*; Skt. *prajñā*) and her blessing as uniting with her. (*Sukusuma* D 111b.3-4; P134a.6-7). See also note 10 with regard to the three types of *ācārya*, including the *sahaja ācārya*.

²⁹³ Here it seems Buddhajñānapāda is indicating that the wisdom that the disciple gains comes from the words of the master. Vaidyapāda makes this even more explicit. He writes, “**From the words of the guru** means, from what is transferred **from the words** of the great causal master, one directly experiences the bliss which is to be realized.” *bla ma'i kha las zhes te/ de [de] P, de'i D) rgyu'i (rgyu'i] P, rgyud D) slob dpon chen poi'i kha las rnam par 'pho ba las mngon sum du bde ba rang la (la] D, las P) 'byung ba rtogs par bya'o zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 111b.4-5; P 134a.8). The “causal master” is explained in a verse cited by Vaidyapāda earlier in the *Sukusuma*, as well as in the *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, to refer to the guru who bestows initiation upon the disciple. See also note 10 with regards to the “causal master.”

²⁹⁴ Here the common metaphor of the worthy student described as being a “proper vessel” for the teachings is being played upon.

²⁹⁵ Vaidyapāda identifies the umbrella of nondual wisdom as the second stage of tantric practice (*Sukusuma*, 112a.2).

Even if a rain of concepts should fall
How could they do any harm?
That kind of perfect supreme wisdom
How could it be known by an ordinary being? |148|

It is not known by the *śrāvakas*
Nor by the *pratyekabuddhas*
The Yogācāras, Mādhyamikas,
And bodhisattvas do not know it. |149|

Even all of the non-superior buddhas²⁹⁶
Do not know this at all.
[But] by pleasing the future vajra-holders,
Who know this reality, |150|

Due to the power of one's great merit
It will be transferred [even] without words.²⁹⁷
Thus the *maṇḍala*, *homa*,
Bali, recitation, the counting rosary, |151|

Sitting cross-legged, maintaining postures,²⁹⁸ and so forth²⁹⁹—
Are in contradiction³⁰⁰ to the unelaborate,
[Thus] they should not be [exclusively] taken up; but neither should they be [wholly] rejected
Since they are emanated by the **adhideva*. |152|

The yogin who holds actions
To be the great path
Is like a wild animal chasing a mirage—
[The goal] continually appears but can never be grasped. |153|

When infected by the great sickness of actions,
The one who heals [himself] with the great medicine
Of unwavering wisdom is a sublime being. |154|

Therefore, maintain the supreme three vows
Of body, speech, and mind³⁰¹

²⁹⁶ Tib. *bla bcas sangs rgyas*. Literally “those buddhas who are surpassed by something else.” Vaidyapāda identifies these as the buddhas of the Kriyā, Caryā, and Yoga tantras (*Sukusuma*, 112a.4-5).

²⁹⁷ This is one of a number of references in Buddhajñānapāda's writings to the transference of wisdom directly from the teacher to disciple.

²⁹⁸ Buddhajñānapāda, however, composed an entire treatise on postures, the **Gativyūya*.

²⁹⁹ In the *Muktilaka* Buddhajñānapāda mentions the very same list of activities but makes an even stronger statement about them: they are “meant to fool beginners” (*dang po pa rnams 'drid phyir ro*) (*Muktilaka*, D 47b.7).

³⁰⁰ Tib. *rnam par slu ba*, Skt. **visaṃvāda?*

³⁰¹ Vaidyapāda explains these vows. He says that the vow of body is not to have contempt for the many forms of male and female bodies since they are arisen from Vajrasattva; the vow of speech is to speak coarse words of desire and the like, and not to hold them back, since they have the nature of vajra speech; and the vow of mind is not to reject bad or good thoughts since these have the nature of Vajrasattva. (*Sukusuma*, D 112b.6-7). His commentary

And having generated the majesty of the thought “I am [this]!”³⁰²
Practice the second stage. |155|

[Instructions on the Second Stage, Beginning with the Framework of the *Utpattikrama*]

³⁰³ In an isolated place or on the edge of town

Having completed all the required tasks,

As appropriate

Sit down on a comfortable seat. |156|

Then bring to mind all sentient beings

By means of the four great *brahmacaryas*.³⁰⁴

[With] these and the rest

Purify the karmic obscurations in one’s mind-stream. |157|

Looking at [it] as mind alone

here is clearly taken from the *Muktītilaka* where Buddhajñānapāda makes almost identical statements about the three samayas (*Muktītilaka*, D 48a.4-5).

³⁰² This seems to be an acknowledgement of one’s own body, speech, and mind, as having a vajra-nature, or even, as in Vaidyapāda’s commentary, a Vajrasattva nature. It likely alludes both to the acknowledgement of the innate nature of the three gates, as well as the practice of generation stage deity yoga that is preliminary to and provides the framework for the perfection stage practice that is subsequently described. Vaidyapāda writes: “When [the text] says, **Generate the majesty of thinking, “I am [this]!”** [it means] to draw one’s own body, speech, and mind together as wisdom through uniting both means and wisdom, and to hold the pride of thinking that **[this] is me**. Mentally generate majesty in that way.” *nga’o snyam pas gzi bskyed la/ zhes pa ni thabs dang shes rab gnyis kyi sgo nas mnyam par sbyar bas bdag gi lus ngag yid gsum ye shes su rab tu bsod nas de lta bu’i rlom pa’i nga’o snyam pas sems kyi gzi bskyed pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 112b.7-113a.1; P 105b.7-8). Buddhajñānapāda’s *Muktītilaka* also has a parallel passage (*Muktītilaka*, D 48a.3-4), in which it is made clear that this process is to be engaged in while in union (“uniting the two organs”), which can likewise be understood from the reference to “uniting means and wisdom” in Vaidyapāda’s commentary to the *Dvīṭīyakrama* passage, translated above. Vaidyapāda’s commentary on the two parallel passages is also nearly identical (See *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 51a.1-2).

³⁰³ These verses are a very condensed version of the first two *samādhis* of generation stage *sādhana*. Vaidyapāda fills out the details significantly.

³⁰⁴ The term *tshangs spyod* normally translates the Sanskrit term *brahmacarya*. However, given the context—clearly the beginning of the generation stage, in which the four *brahmavihāras* are commonly practiced—and Vaidyapāda’s commentary which defines them as “the four—compassion and so forth,” it is clear that what is intended here are what are more commonly referred to as the *brahmavihāras*. Buddhajñānapāda also uses the term *mahābrahmacarya* to refer to the *brahmavihāras* in the *Muktītilaka* (D 49a.1). Vaidyapāda explains here in the *Sukusuma* that these are called *brahmacarya* because, “The four [practices] of compassion and so forth are the **conduct** (*carya*) of the Bhagavan Buddha Great **Brahmā**.” (*ston pa sangs rgyas bcom ldan ‘das tshangs pa chen po ste de’i spyod pa ni snying rje la sogs pa bzhi’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 113a.4-5; P 136a.5). He goes on to describe their contemplation in some detail, in a rather unusual matter that is connected with tantric *sādhana* practice: “Emanate from the seed syllable light rays that place the sentient beings who are illuminated by them on the path of seeing, and imagine that this liberates them from suffering and its causes. This is the contemplation of compassion. Having been freed from that [suffering] they achieve worldly and transcendent bliss. This is the contemplation of love. One might wonder how it is possible to have the capacity to benefit beings who are incorrigible and difficult to cure. Think with joy that it is possible to do this by appearing in the body of one’s own [*yidam*] deity by means of the seed-syllable that is like a wish-fulfilling tree. This is the contemplation of joy. Mentally engaging with unsurpassed awakening in these [three] ways and not thinking at all about praise and the like is the contemplation of equanimity.” *sa pon gyi ‘od zer gyis snang ba’i sems can rnams mthong ba’i lam du byas la/ de rnams sdug bsngal dang de’i rgyu las grol bar bya’o snyams pa ni/ snying rjes dmigs pa’o// de las grol nas ‘jig rte dang ‘jig rten las ‘das pa’i bde ba sgrub po snyams pa ni byams pas dmigs pa’o// dmu rgod ltar bcos dka’ ba’i sems can rnams la don de ji ltar nus snyams pa la/ dpag bsam gyi shing lta bu’i sa bon las rang gi lha’i (lha’i) D, om. P) skur snang na sgrub ltar nus so snyam pa la rangs pa ni dga’ bas dmigs pa’o// de rnams kyi bla na med pa’i byang chub yid la byed pas bstod pa la sogs pa la mi sems pa ni btang snyoms kyi dmigs pa’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 113a.5-7; P 136a.5-8).

The outer world is seen to be empty of nature³⁰⁵
Seeing³⁰⁶ mind alone, as well, to be empty
Remain in self-awareness alone. |158|

That awareness, as well, is imagined
As a moon, and so forth, upon a seat, which when struck
With the pen of the syllable³⁰⁷ becomes a characteristic implement.³⁰⁸
From that generate yourself as the deity. |159|

And while possessing divine pride
Seal with the four *mudrās*³⁰⁹
And emanate the *maṇḍala-cakra*,
[Then] please them. Accustom oneself to this through training. |160|

[First *Bindu* Yoga: The Indestructible Bindu]

Then, having cast away the outer body
One should train in the ultimate suchness³¹⁰
That is the buddhas' supreme sphere of experience.
At the heart center of³¹¹ the *samayamudrā*³¹² at one's own heart,³¹³ |161|

Abiding within the symbolic implement there

³⁰⁵ Tib. *stong bar bya*; literally “made empty.” I have rendered the term less literally here, as the meaning is that the yogin is to see or perceives the world as empty, which is indeed its fundamental nature. Vaidyapāda comments that this means not to mentally engage with the appearance of the world as appearing separately (*Sukusuma*, 113b.4). Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that the term “made empty” is used here to indicate that the practitioner is to “make” his perception of the world accord with the way the world actually is (personal communication, February 2016).

³⁰⁶ Again, the same wording of “making empty” is used here.

³⁰⁷ *ge yi*] sugg. em based on V (D and C) which read *yi ge'i*, *ge'o* D C P N S.

³⁰⁸ This is a tentative rendering of these two lines based on emending the text (see previous note) following Vaidyapāda's commentary. Vaidyapāda writes, “Strike with the pen of the syllable means upon that seat, having completed the first ritual, striking with the pen of one's own awareness, it is imagined as a syllable.” (*yi ge'i smyu gus bsnun byas zhes pa ni gdan de la cho ga dang po rdzogs pas rang rig pa'i smyu gus bsnun nas yi ger brtags pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 114a.1; P 138a.3-4).

³⁰⁹ Vaidyapāda writes “The second point is to uphold the pride of oneself as the deity. The eyes and so forth are consecrated and then Kāyavajra and the rest are sealed with the four *mudrās* and the initiation is bestowed.” (*bdag nyid rang gi lha'i nga rgyal 'chang ba ni gnyis pa'o// de'i mig la sogs pa byin gyis brlabs nas de la sku rdo rje la sogs pa phyag rgya bzhis rgyas btob ste dbang bskur blang ba'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 114a.4 ; P 137a.7-8).

³¹⁰ Vaidyapāda identifies the previous *pāda* as concluding the part of the text describing the practice of the generation stage, which forms the foundation for perfection stage practices. This line, he contends, begins the articulation of those perfection stage practices (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.2-3; P 137b.7-8). This section of the text corresponds with the very same perfection stage practices described—in a significantly abbreviated form—in the *Muktibindu* (D 49a.2-49b.7).

³¹¹ *yi*] sugg. em. following on V (D and P), *yi* D C P N S

³¹² Vaidyapāda glosses this *samayamudrā* as the *jñānasattva*, and indeed what is described here in Buddhajñānapāda's text is exactly what is usually referred to as the *jñānasattva* (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.4; P 138a.1-2). Buddhajñānapāda himself uses the term *jñānasattva* to refer to the same in a later passage in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (see *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 248, 252, 261, and 262).

³¹³ Vaidyapāda makes clear that this is all taking place within the framework of oneself visualized as the deity. “The *samayamudrā* at one's own heart means the *samayamudrā*, that is the *jñānasattva* together with his seat, at the heart center of one's own deity.” *rang snying dam tshig phyag rgya'i zhes te rang gi lha'i snying gar dam tshig gi phyag rgya ye shes sems dpa' gnas dang bcas pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.4; P 138a.1-2).

Is the supreme wisdom of all *tathāgatas*.
Which, for those practicing the first stage³¹⁴
Appears clearly in the form of a syllable, |162|

The seed syllable of one's deity, indestructible,
Blazing with five[-colored] light.
One should emanate the five-colored light of that [syllable]³¹⁵
Out of the right [side] |163|

Of the upper opening [i.e. the right nostril].³¹⁶
[Emerging] from the tips of these [light rays]³¹⁷
The *tathāgatas*, together with the *maṇḍala-cakra*,
Fill the world and its ten directions. |164|

Generate all sentient beings, who have emerged from the
Breath of conceptuality,³¹⁸
In³¹⁹ the forms of buddhas:
They are made to melt as the moon, dissolve, and are purified.³²⁰ |165|

Then, bring them, as the essence of wisdom,
Into the left nostril.³²¹
Bring them into the seed syllable
That abides within the center of the symbolic implement of [the *samayamudrā*].³²² |166|

³¹⁴ Vaidyapāda identifies the first stage here as the generation stage (*Sukusuma*, (D 114b.5; P 138a.3).

³¹⁵ yi] sugg. em. following V (D and P), yis, D C P N S.

³¹⁶ Vaidyapāda identifies the upper opening on the right side as the right nostril of the deity (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.6; P 138a.4).

³¹⁷ rtse las] sugg. em following V (D and P), rtse la D C P N S. Likewise, Vaidyapāda's commentary on the *Muktītilaka* also makes it clear that the Tathāgatas are emanated from the tips of the light rays (*Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* D 52b.5-6).

³¹⁸ Vaidyapāda clarifies this term, “**Sentient beings who emerge from the breath of conceptuality** means all sentient beings who have been produced by inauthentic conceptuality riding on the horse of the winds.” *des dbugs kyi kun rtog las byung ba'i sems can zhes pa ni yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun du rtog pa lung gi rta la zhon pas sems can thams cad bsgrub pa ste/* (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.7; P 138a.5-6).

³¹⁹ skur] sugg. em. following V (D and P), sku D C P N S.

³²⁰ Vaidyapāda elaborates on this process: “They are **generated in the form of buddhas**. How is this done? **They are made to melt as the moon, dissolve, and are purified**, which means that the emanated *maṇḍala*, which has melted like the moon, dissolves into sentient beings and they become as above. That itself, as well, **enters into oneself as the essence of wisdom** means that they are gathered as the **essence of wisdom** which is pure like water and **ushered into** one's left nostril.” *de rnams sangs gyas kyi skur bskyed pa'o// de gang gis she na/ zla bar zhu byas te/ thim pas rnam par dag byas nas/ zhes (zhes] D, shes P) pa ni 'phros pa'i dkyil 'khor zla ba lta bur zhu ba sems can thams cad la thim pas de rnams gong ma lta bur gyur pa'o// de nyid kyang ye shes ngo bo ru (bo ru] P, bor D) rang la zhes te chu ltar dang (dang] P, dangs D) ba'i ye shes kyi ngo bor 'dus zhing rang gi g.yon pa'i ha sar zhugs par bya zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 114b.7-115a.2; P 138a.6-8). A similar (but not identical) process involving the purification of sentient beings is found in the process of the generation of the causal deities in Buddhajñānapāda's generation stage *sādhana*, the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*.

³²¹ *ha sa*. It is clear from the earlier and later context in the commentary that this is meant to be a nostril. However, the Sanskrit word *hasa* normally means either laughter or is used to indicate the consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet. Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel suggests that here this term may be used to refer to the name of a particular channel in the subtle body, presumably one culminating in the nostrils (personal communication, March 2016).

³²² The procedure described in verses 161-166 is also described (in a less elaborated form) in the *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* in a single verse—verse 109—at the outset of the *karmarājāgrī-samādhi*.

This itself [becomes]³²³ the precious jewel
That produces the qualities of all buddhas
The self that pervades all things
The great indestructible *bindu*. |167|

Full of five-colored light,
It is about the size of a chickpea.
Within this [*bindu*], within one's own mind,
All phenomena are gathered³²⁴—contemplate thus. |168|

Its light, bit by bit,
Fills its own area.
Then spills outward
Illuminating the interior of the *samayamudrā* |169|

This light then illuminates the outer body [of the *samayamudrā*]
Which illuminates the *maṇḍala* and its area.
Spilling outward [it illuminates] the sixteen forms of *bodhicitta*
In one's own interior: |170|

At the base of the big toe[s], the syllable *a*;
On the two calves, likewise, [the syllable] *ā*;
On the two thighs, the form of *I*;
On the secret place the form of *ī*; |171|

The form of *u* is at the navel;
Likewise on the abdomen, the form of *ū*;
On the two breasts rests the form of *r*;
Likewise on the hand[s] the form of *ṛ*; |172|

On the throat the form of *l*;
Likewise on the lower lip the letter *l̄*;
On the two cheeks the form of *e*;
On the two eyes, as well, *ai*; |173|

At the base of the ears the form of *o*;

³²³ Vaidyapāda clarifies that the seed syllable *becomes* the indestructible *bindu*. This also simply makes sense, since first there is a syllable there and then the practice is done with a *bindu*, rather than a syllable, so some sort of transformation from syllable to *bindu* must take place at some point. Vaidyapāda reads: “Once it has been made to enter inside in that way, it is brought into the seed syllable that abides in the center of the symbolic implement mentioned above; this sets forth the source and locus of the practice. By means of that [process], what does it become? This is expressed in the verse beginning, **This itself...**” *nang gi la yang de bzhin du zhugs nas gong gi mtshan ma'i dbus na gnas pa'i sa bon la zhugs par bya ste 'grub pa'i rgyu (rgyu] D, rgyud P) dang gnas bstan (bstan] P, brtan D) pa'o// des cir 'gyur zhes na/ (des cir 'gyur zhes na/] D, P om.) de nyid ces pa la sogs pa'o// (Sukusuma, D 115a.2; P 138a.8-b.1).*

³²⁴ Vaidyapāda writes that both the mind and all things are gathered into the *bindu*. *de (de] P, da D) nyid 'od zer lnga dang ldan pa'i sran tsa na ka tsam du rang gi sems bsdus te der chos thams cad kyang bsdus nas rnam par bsam pa ni de'i tshad bstan pa'o// (Sukusuma, D 115a.3-4; P 138b.2).*

On the crown there is the form of *au*;
 The forms of *aṃ* and *aḥ* on all the joints—
 These are completed at the time of the sixteenth.^{325 326} |174|

³²⁵ Verses 171-174 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama* are attested in Sanskrit in a citation (?) given in the single surviving manuscript of Kalyāṇavarman's *Catuspīṭhapañjikā*. The verses appear as part of a larger passage, in which they are preceded by part of verse 111 from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, and followed by some other verses that are not found in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*. The verses are attributed in the *Catuspīṭhapañjikā* to the *Aṣṭāṣṭaka*, which presumably is the title of a work, though this is not entirely clear. Thanks to Péter Szántó for pointing the parallel of verses 171-174 out to me and for sharing me with his diplomatic transcript of the verses from the *Catuspīṭhapañjikā*. *ākārāṅguṣṭhamūle ca ākārāṅ caiva jaṅghayoḥ | ikāram ūruyugale | ikāraṃ guhyam āśṛtaṃ | ukāraṃ nābhimūle tu ūkāram udare tathā | ṛkāraṃ stanamūle tu ṛkāraṃ tu kare sthitaṃ | lkāraṃ tu gale caiva lkāra mūrdhayas tathā | ekāraṃ gaṇḍadeśe tu aikāraṅ caiva cakṣuṣī | okāraṃ karṇnamūle tu aukāra mūrdhni saṃsthitam | aṃ aḥ sarvāṅgike kāya | vidhānāni prayojayet |.*

³²⁶ Vaidyapāda explains, “Also, one should know that this is with regard to the stages of the first day [of the month] and so forth. **They are completed at the time of the sixteenth**, means that at the time when the outer moon comes to **fullness**, these are also perfected. One must understand that this is then reversed. Regarding being **perfected at the time of the sixteenth**, the sixteen places that are stirred up through practice also become “the sixteen.” These then [become] the *bindu* and this becomes like the moon, which produces the consciousness of joy. **The previous light rays hook**, means that they **hook** the sixteen syllables and draw them into the *bindu*. By slightly holding one's mind, like the first wisdom, there for a moment, what happens? [The text then says] **Meditate with determination/ On the great [maṇḍala]-cakra of deities together with its support.**” *de yang tshes gcig la sogs pa'i rim par shes par bya'o// bcu drug dus su rdzogs gyur pa zhes pa ni phyi'i zla ba rdzogs par'i dus su de yang rdzogs pa'o// de ne bzlog ste shes par bya'o// bcu drug dus su rdzogs par 'gyur ba ni sgrub (sgrub] P, bsgrub D) pas dkrugs pa bcu drug/ de (de) D, ste P) yang bcu drug par 'gyur/ de yang thig le/ de yang zla ba lta bur song nas/ dga'i ba'i shes pa 'byung ba'o// gong gi 'od kyis rnam pa bkug ste zhes pa ni yi ge bcu drug po rnam par bkug nas thig le'i nang du bcug la der rang gi sems dang po'i ye shes ltar bag zhad bzung bas cir 'gyur zhe na/ lha'i 'khor lo che/ rten dang bcas pa mos pas bsgom/ (Sukusuma, 115a.6-115b.1; P 138b.6-139a.2). This is very similar to Vaidyapāda's comments earlier in the *Sukusuma*: “Moreover, through practicing, by means of the agitation of the locations, the sixteen syllables appear, and these, then, become the sun and moon. Having transformed into a *bindu* like that, they go to the tip of the vajra. This itself, in a form which blazes with thousands of light rays, is meditated upon by the yogin in accordance with the ritual that will come below. When this happens, the suchness that has been spoken of will be realized, [and that is the] purpose [of this practice.]” *de yang bsgrub pas gnas rnam dkrugs pa las yi ge rnam bcu drug par gyur/ de yang nyi zlar gyur/ de lta bu'i thig ler gyur nas rdo rje rtse mor 'gro ba ste/ de nyid 'od zer stong du 'bar ba'i gzugs su rnal 'byor pa rnam kyis 'og nas 'byung ba'i cho gas bsgoms nas/ ji skad du gsung pa'i de kho na nyid rtogs par 'gyur pa'i phyir ro// (Sukusuma, D 88a.4-5; P 105b.6-8). Tāranātha, who reports having received initiation into and teachings on the Jñānapāda lineage from his master Buddhaguptanātha, in his much later instruction manual on the perfection stage rituals of the Jñānapāda School, gives an ever-so-slightly more clear presentation of this practice that does not seem substantially different from what is already here in Buddhajñānapāda's text, with Vaidyapāda's clarifications. He writes, “For the second part, the light from the *bindu* illuminates the *jñānasattva*, and from that light radiates forth and illuminates the interior of the foundational body. Like holding up a lamp in darkness, one sees clearly the sixteen *bindus*, which are the white substance.... [He lists here the syllables at all of the locations on the body, exactly as they are described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*]...All of these are white and radiate white light. Think of them as being of the nature of bliss. The light from the heart center, either in stages or all at once, as one prefers, dissolves those syllables into the indestructible *bindu* at the heart center, and [it] then blazes with light and causes a strong increase in the essence of bliss. Contemplate thus.” (*gnyis pa ni thig le'i 'od kyis ye shes sems dpa'i sku gang / de las 'od 'phros gzhi lus kyi nang gsal zhing gang bar byas/ mun khung du sgron me bteg pa ltar dkar cha thig le bcu drug po rnam gsal bar mthong ba ni/ thams cad kyang kha dog dkar po 'od zer dkar po 'phro ba/ bde ba'i rang bzhin can du bsam/ snying ga'i 'od kyi yi ge de rnam rim pas sam cig car gang mos kyis snying ga'i mi shigs pa'i thig ler bstims pas/ 'od zer 'bar zhing/ bde ba'i ngo bo lhag par rgyas par bsam mo// (Dpal grol ba'i thig la'i khrid yig, 243-4). In both Vaidyapāda's and Tāranātha's descriptions, what is located at the sixteen places is sometimes described as syllables and other times as *bindus*. Likewise, in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* itself the *bindu* is first described as a syllable and then as a *bindu* without anything explicit describing its transformation from one state into the other. Tāranātha does not include any reference to the line “They become complete at the time of the sixteenth,” which is unfortunate because Vaidyapāda's commentary here is still rather cryptic. Vaidyapāda's comments about the phase of the moon in relation to these syllables in different parts of the body can, I believe, be understood more clearly with reference to the later *kāmasāstric* doctrine of *candrakalā* in***

The previous light rays hook them [i.e. the syllables]
And draw them into the *bindu*.
By holding the mind briefly there,
Meditate with determination |175|

Upon the great [*maṇḍala*]-*cakra* of the deities together with its support.
At the heart center of the lord in the center of that [*bindu*]³²⁷
By means of the stages given above
Meditate upon the great indestructible *bindu* |176|

which Kāmadeva was understood to dwell in different parts of the body at different points in the moon’s phases (See Ali 2011, 47). As described in Kokkoka’s *Ratirahasya* and in Padmaśrī’s *Nāgarasarvasva*, this involves Kāma moving gradually through the left side of the body in the moon’s waxing phase, pervading the entire body for two days during the moon’s fullness, and traveling down the right side of the body during the waning phase (ibid.) A man is meant to stimulate these specific location on his lover’s body at particular days in the lunar calendar in order to please her, and the texts even prescribe the visualization of the vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet (i.e. precisely the syllables listed in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*), along with a *candrabindu*, at these various places on the body, on the appropriate dates (ibid., 47-48). While the doctrine of *candrakalā* described in these works is several centuries later than the *Dvīṭīyakrama*—the *Ratirahasya* is likely not earlier than the 10th century, and perhaps even later, and the *Nāgarasarvasva* dates to the 12th century—and pertains to the genre of erotics rather than tantric practice, Ali has shown clearly that *kāmaśāstra* authors from this period, including Padmaśrī (who perhaps not incidentally was a Buddhist), were drawing on tantric Buddhist ideas in their writings (Ali 2011, esp. pp. 53-54). A similar practice is described also in *Surūpa’s *Kāmaśāstra*, which may be earlier than the *Ratirahasya* and the *Nāgarasarvasva*, but as I noted above, that work is difficult to date (See Vogel 1965, 24). In any case, we saw earlier that Buddhajñānapāda and Vaidyapāda both seem to show some familiarity with *kāmaśāstra*. The specific association with Kāmadeva is unlikely to be relevant here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*— While the practices described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* with regard to these syllables are also presumably to be done in union with a partner, the syllables and *bindus* that are visualized, agitated, and drawn in with light rays are specified in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* as being present within the yogin’s own body, whereas the practice of *candrakalā* in a *kāmaśāstric* context seems always to pertain specifically to a woman’s body (see Desmond 2011, 26). However, the idea of syllables or *bindus* in the practitioner’s body becoming fully “perfected” at the time of the full moon (and perhaps otherwise individually “perfected” on the waxing or waning days of the moon) may be related to a more widely shared conception of specific areas of the body being associated with the progression of the lunar calendar. Indeed, such a conception appears to be a more broadly Indic idea, as it is also found in Indian medical traditions, where both the life force and the pulse are also said to travel through the body on specific days of the lunar calendar, and are likewise associated with vowels located at the same places on the body described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (Somānanda Dharmanātha, personal communication). Moreover, a passage on the syllables at the sixteen places found in Kalyāṇavarman’s *Catuspīṭhapañjikā* that is parallel with *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 171-174 (see previous note for details) makes reference to the waxing and waning phases of the moon, and its context is clearly one of sexual yogic practice. While this work is also several centuries later than the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, it further confirms the connection between the syllables and locations described in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* with the practice of *candrakalā* in a sexual (and in this case also a yogic) context.

³²⁷ Vaidyapāda makes explicit that this is taking place within the lord at the center of the *bindu*, suggesting that one is to meditate upon the *maṇḍala* within the *bindu* and focus on the “great” indestructible *bindu* at the heart center of the lord of this *maṇḍala*. This is thus a further “nesting” of deities inside of deities—the *bindu* at the heart center of the *samayamudrā* (= *jñānasattva*) now holds its own *maṇḍala*, with yet another indestructible *bindu* within the symbolic implement within the *samayamudrā* at his heart. Here we may also note that the first *bindu* was described as the size of a chickpea while the second one is the size of a mustard seed. Vaidyapāda writes, “**At the heart center of the lord in the center of that [*bindu*]** means that in the **center** of the *bindu* is the *samayasattva*. Meditate with special determination on the *cakra* of the *jñānasattva* at his heart center following the stages given. Meditate on the great indestructible *bindu* in the symbolic implement at his heart center. How big is it? **The size of a mustard seed.**” *de dbud bdag po thugs ka ru/ zhes pa ni thig le’i dbus su dam tshig sems dpa’i thugs kar ye shes sems dpa’i ‘khor lo gong ma’i rim pas lhag par mos pas bsgoms la/ de’i thugs kar mtshan ma la yang mi shigs pa’i thig le chen po bsgom par byas nas zhes’o// ci tsam zhes na/ yungs kar tsham/* (Sukusuma, D 115b.2-3; P 139a.2-3).

About the size of a mustard seed from which [light rays] emanate
Illuminating its own area and the interior of the [*samaya*]*mudrā*
[And its] *maṇḍala*.³²⁸
[Then those rays], illuminate its area and the interior of the lord.³²⁹ |177|

This illuminates the outer body
And the *maṇḍala* together with its basis.³³⁰
The light that resides in the sixteen places
Spills outward |178|

Illuminating the outer body.³³¹
This [light] illuminates the *maṇḍala-cakra*
Together with its basis.³³²
It then goes before all of the *tathāgatas* |179|

Who reside in the ten-directional world.
It melts into nectar and enters their mouths
And takes up nectar from the *bindu* [at their heart centers],
Which then emerges from the vajra path. |180|

This comes like a stream of nectar [toward oneself]
And the wisdom of method enters into [one's] right [nostril].
Likewise, the other enters into the left [nostril].³³³
Then it dissolves into the wisdom *bindu*

³²⁸ Vaidyapāda identifies “its area” as “the subtle symbolic implement;” the *mudrā* as the “*samayamudrā* in which that [symbolic implement] abides;” and the interior which is illuminated as “the interior of its [the *samayamudrā*’s] body.” He explains that the *maṇḍala* is the “*maṇḍala* of that [*samayamudrā*],” i.e. a small *maṇḍala* within the larger of the two *bindus*, in which the *samayamudrā* is the central deity (*Sukusuma*, D 115b.3; P 139a.3-4).

³²⁹ Vaidyapāda identifies “its area” as the symbolic implement. This presumably is the larger symbolic implement which houses the larger of the two *bindus*. He explains that ‘the interior of the lord’ means “the other *mudrā* of the *samayasattva*.” Presumably this is the larger *samayasattva/mudrā* at the center of oneself as deity (*Sukusuma*, D 115b.3-4; P 139a.4-5).

³³⁰ Vaidyapāda identifies the ‘outer body’ as the body “of the lord;” the ‘*maṇḍala*’ as “the eighteen,” presumably referring to the other 18 deities of the 19-deity *maṇḍala*; and ‘its basis’ as “the celestial palace and the *dharmodaya*” (*Sukusuma*, D 115b.4; P 139a.5-6). These two lines must be a brief description of what is described again in more detail in the subsequent lines, that is, the light spilling out of the body of oneself as the deity and onto the other eighteen deities of the *maṇḍala-cakra* as well as the “support *maṇḍala*” of the celestial palace, *dharmodaya*, etc. They have to be describing the same process as the subsequent lines, because otherwise we end up with more *maṇḍalas* than have been visualized—three instead of just two.

³³¹ Vaidyapāda explains that this is the body of the “outer *samayasattva*,” i.e. oneself-as-deity (*Sukusuma*, D 115b.5; P 139a.6-7).

³³² Vaidyapāda explains that this is the *maṇḍala*, meaning the other eighteen deities, of oneself-as-deity, and the basis is the support *maṇḍala* which consists of the palace, *dharmodaya*, and protection circle (*Sukusuma*, D 115b.5; P 139a.5-6). Since he did not mention the protection circle above in the description of the basis of the smaller *maṇḍala* inside the *bindu*, it seems that there is no second smaller protection circle visualized there.

³³³ Vaidyapāda explains that that which enters into the right nostril is the nectar emerging from Akṣobhya, and so forth, the male deities, while “the other” is that which originates from the Locanā and so forth, the female deities (*Sukusuma*, D 115b.7-116a.1; P 139b.1-2). Tāranātha likewise describes this process in the same way, but is more explicit, explaining that the substance emerges from the vajra of the male deities and the lotus of the female deities. (*Dpal grol ba’i thig la’i khrid yig*, 244).

Via the apparent *bindu*.³³⁴ |181|

That [*bindu*] has the nature of dripping.
Blazing with five[-colored] light,
It is brilliant white, with a reddish tinge,
Hold the mind stably within this.³³⁵ |182|

From here,³³⁶ in accordance with the above stages,
Correctly perform the emanation,
Absorption, and holding.³³⁷
Through this eventually one will come to encounter³³⁸ |183|

The mind as the vajra of cessation.³³⁹

³³⁴ Vaidyapāda explains: “The **wisdom *bindu*** is the first *bindu*. The **apparent *bindu*** is the one that appeared from that, which is suchness.” *ye shes kyi thig le zhes pa ni dang po'i thig le'o// snang ba'i thigs pa* (thigs pa] P, thig le D) *zhes pa ni de las snang ba'i thig le ste chos nyid do//* (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.1; P 139b.2-3). The wording of these two lines are a bit strange, suggesting that the transmission may be corrupted. I am tempted to emend as follows: *de nas ye shes thig le las// snang ba'i' thigs par* (or *thig ler*) *thim par 'gyur//*. It seems that this emendation could be made following Vaidyapāda's commentary, but it's not clear if Vaidyapāda is actually glossing the root text there or merely explaining. The translation, following both emendations, would be: “Then, it dissolves into the *bindu* that has appeared from the wisdom *bindu*.” For now, I will simply leave this here as an alternative way to read the line. Tāranātha, for what it's worth, does not mention anything about two *bindus* here, but he also left out the nesting sequence above in which the second *bindu* was visualized. He simply states that the two flows of nectar dissolve into the “root *bindu*” (*rtsa ba'i thigs las*) (*Dpal grol ba'i thig la'i khrid yig*, 244).

³³⁵ Vaidyapāda clarifies that this is to be done “one-pointedly, and without [thought] proliferation, via the practice of the entering of the winds.” *rtse gcig pa ma 'phros pa dug's 'jug pa'i spyod pas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.3; P 139b.5).

³³⁶ las] sugg. em. following V (D and P), la D C P N S

³³⁷ Vaidyapāda explains that “From here, in accordance with the above stages” means starting from the final point (of the previous practice), without setting the practice aside for a moment, but continuing directly into the emanation (along with exhalation), which then draws up the nectar (from the hearts of the buddhas) as before. The yogin should then engage in drawing the nectar in (along with inhalation), and then holding the mind in the *bindu* as before (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.3-4; P 139b.5-7).

³³⁸ Tib. *reg*, literally “touch.”

³³⁹ These lines are part of a verse adapted from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, VI, 41 (see note 341 below) and are also included in the *Muktilakā* (D 49a.4-5). Vaidyapāda explains: “The mind will become the vajra of the cessation of all entities, and the signs of stability [in that] arise. That is to say, **Eventually, one will come to encounter** means **at some time** [one] will encounter the unchanging *bindu* by means of the path of [practicing with?] the goddess (i.e. the consort?), and at that time.... [the signs will authentically arise] **of having become the glorious wish-fulfilling gem/ That contains all the great buddhas...**” *sems dgnos po kun las 'gog pa'i rdo rjer gyur nas brtan pa'i rtags skyes pa ste/ nam zhig de la reg gyur pa/ zhes pa ni dus nam zhig na mi 'gyur ba'i thig le la lha mo* (mo] P, mo'i D) *lam gyis reg par gyur pa de'i tshel/ sangs rgyas kun gyi mchog 'dzin pa // yid bzhin* (bzhin] sugg. em based on *Dvitiyakrama* D C, and *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, VI, 41), sbyin V (D and C)) *dpal dang 'dra bar 'gyur ba' 'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 116a. 4; P 139b.6-7). Vaidyapāda's commentary on the parallel lines from the *Muktilakā* reads: “**The mind as the vajra of cessation** indicates that [this takes place] by means of the **mind** [which engages in] the action of inhalation into(?) that *bindu*. **Whoever comes to eventually encounter that**, means one should not have any doubts that by means of **encountering** [it?] with that mind the signs will arise.” *'gog pa'i rdo rje sems nyid du// zhes pa ni thig le de la(?)* (la?) sugg. em., las D P) *dbugs 'jug pa'i spyod pa'i sems kyis so// nam zhig de la sus reg pa/ zhes pa ni sems des reg pas rtags rnam's skye bar 'gyur ba la som nyi mi bya'o//* (*Muktilakavyākhyāna*, 53a.4-5). In any case, this seems to be the result of the first *bindu* yoga, the yoga of the indestructible *bindu* which is meditated upon at the heart. A different result—the arresting of the breath—is described below with *bindu* yoga performed with the “secret *bindu*” located at the tip of the vajra.

Thus signs will authentically arise³⁴⁰
Of the glorious wish-fulfilling gem,
The great receptacle of all the buddhas.³⁴¹ |184|

Because through this ritual
The deities of the aggregates, elements, and sense sources
Are at the outset gathered into the heart by means of wisdom fire
This is explained as the first.³⁴² |185|

[Second *Bindu* Yoga: The Secret *Bindu*]

³⁴³ There, through the power³⁴⁴ of practice,³⁴⁵
[The *bindu*] travels to the tip of the nose [i.e. the vajra].³⁴⁶
It is explained that one should meditate upon the secret *bindu*
Immediately following the [meditation on] the indestructible *bindu*. |186|

From the above-mentioned wisdom *bindu*³⁴⁷
Light rays in the form of hooks
Emanate to the ten directions
Hooking all the *sugatas* together with their *maṇḍala-cakras*. |187|

In the form of the essence of wisdom
They are drawn into one's own heart center.
Those³⁴⁸ melt and enter into the *bindu*.

³⁴⁰ The signs mentioned by Vaidyapāda are the same signs mentioned by Buddhajñānapāda himself later in the text as indications of the effectiveness of perfection stage practices: laughter, yawning, and trembling. (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.5-6; P 139b.1-2).

³⁴¹ C.f. *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, VI, 41. *nirodhavajragataṃcittaṃ yadā tasya prajāyate/ sa bhavec cintāmaṇiḥ śrīmān sarvabuddhāgradhārakah/* (I have emended Matsunaga's edition of the line from the tantra to follow the variant -*dhārakah* found in two of his manuscripts, since that is the reading found here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* (it is also, incidentally, the reading found in the Tibetan translation of the tantra). It is fortunate that these two lines are based upon a verse from the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* for which we have Sanskrit—which was very helpful in making sense of this verse from the *Dvīṭīyakrama*—as there appears to be some problem in the transmission of the lines in the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda's works. The verse is found also in the *Muktītilaka*, but it is transmitted differently in each of the four places we find it—the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma*, the *Muktītilaka*, and Vaidyapāda's *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna*!

³⁴² Vaidyapāda indicates that this refers to the ritual of the indestructible *bindu* that has just been explained. Because it has the function of drawing the deities of the aggregates and so forth into the heart, it is explained first (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.6-7; P 139b.3).

³⁴³ Vaidyapāda explains that this is the ritual for the training on the “secret *bindu* which has the nature of the wisdom of the intermediate joy” (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.7-116b.1; P 140a.3-4).

³⁴⁴ Tib. *byin rlabs*, Skt. *adhiṣṭhāna*.

³⁴⁵ Vaidyapāda specifies that this is performed by the “moving wind that has the form of *hūṃ phaṭ*.” *hūṃ phaṭ rnam pa dang ldan par gyo ba'i rlung gis so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.1; P 140a.4-5).

³⁴⁶ Vaidyapāda makes this clear: “**It goes to the tip of the nose** means the tip of one's vajra, and it is held there.” *sna yi rtse mor 'gro bas na/ zhes pa ni rang gi rdo rje kha ste der 'dzin pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 116a.1-2; P 140a.5).

³⁴⁷ Vaidyapāda specifies that “**The wisdom *bindu*** is the *bindu* at the center of the symbolic implement of the *jñānasattva*.” *ye shes thig le zhes pa ni ye shes sems dpa'i mtshan ma'i dbus kyi thig le...* (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.2; P 140a.6).

³⁴⁸ Vaidyapāda specifies that “**Those melt** means the locuses and so forth **melt**.” *de rnam zhu nas zhes* (zhes] P, zhen D) *pa ni gnas la sogs pa zhu nas/* (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.3; P 140a.7-8).

Due to this, in the form of *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva*³⁴⁹ |188|

The *bindu* also
Descends from³⁵⁰ the lotus at the heart center
And then abides at the center of the
Jewel at one’s own vajra. |189|

The supreme form of the five elements,
The identity of the five wisdoms,
Blazing with five[-colored] light—
Visualize the form of the subtle symbolic implement of one’s own deity [thus].³⁵¹ |190|

In its center³⁵²
In the middle of a support³⁵³ the size of a mustard seed
Meditate intently upon the great [*maṇḍala*-]*cakra*, together with a *bindu*.³⁵⁴
If while [regarding] that |191|

One’s mind becomes dull or weary
And it emerges from the vajra
Make it remain at the tip of the nose³⁵⁵—
And examine by means of the bliss of cessation.³⁵⁶ |192|

³⁴⁹ Vaidyapāda notes that the aspect of the *bindus* that “travels down the right [channel] is *rajas*, that which travels down the left [channel] is *tamas*, and that which travels down the central [channel] is *sattva*.” *g.yas nas ‘gro ba rdul dang g.yon nas ‘gro ba mun pa dang/ dus nas ‘gro ba snying stobs kyi tshul du babs...* (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.3-4; P 140a.8). This use of the three *gunas* from the Sāṃkhya system to describe the constituent aspects of the *bindu* is unusual, and is another example of Buddhajñānapāda’s use of non-Buddhist terminology, suggesting that he was indeed operating in an eclectic milieu.

³⁵⁰ [as] sugg. em., la D C P N S. The reading of *las* also seems to have been transmitted in Tsongkhapa’s commentary on the five stages (see its translation in Kilty 2013, 174-75). The passage makes much more sense this way.

³⁵¹ It seems that the descriptions in this verse pertain to the visualized subtle symbolic implement that is to be visualized; it is unclear in both the root text and the commentary, however, precisely what the relationship is between this implement and the *bindu* described in the previous verse.

³⁵² Tib. *‘bum pa*

³⁵³ Vaidyapāda identifies this as the “support *maṇḍala*” (*rten gyi dkyil ‘khor*) (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.6; P 140b.3)

³⁵⁴ [thig le] sugg. em. following V (D and P), thig ler D C P N S

³⁵⁵ While looking only at the root verse, one might presume that the “nose” referred to here is (as is often the case) the tip of the yogin’s penis. Vaidyapāda, however, specifies that one is to “**make it remain at the tip of the nose** of the goddess’ lotus.” *lha mo ‘i padma ‘i sna rtser rnam par gnas par byas nas/* (*Sukusuma*, D 116b.6-7; P 140b.4). A similar passage in the *Samantabhadra/Caturaṅga-sādhana* is described in Vaidyapāda’s and Samantabhadra’s commentaries as indicating a process by means of which the yogin appears to be instructed to draw the *bindu* which was previously emitted into the lotus of the consort out onto the “nose tip” of her lotus by means of transforming the “prong” of his vajra into hook-like light rays that hook the *bindu* and draw it out to this location. (See *Samantabhadra/Caturaṅga-sādhana* verse 130 (D 34b.3), Vaidyapāda’s *Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā* (D168a.2-5), and Samantabhadra’s *Sāramañjarī* (D 38a.1-3; Szántó unpublished 125).

³⁵⁶ These lines describing the procedure for when the drop emerges from the vajra appear to be something of an aside, as they occur right in the middle of the description of the yoga itself, which continues below with the instructions on emanating, absorbing, and holding, which is performed in the same way with the *bindu* at the tip of the vajra as it was performed with the *bindu* at the heart. The less detailed instructions in the *Muktilaka* lack the instruction on what to do if the mind becomes tired and the *bindu* emerges from the vajra. This verse in the *Dvītyākrama* is one of several points in Buddhajñānapāda’s system where we see an association of the “bliss of cessation” with emission. I address this point briefly in Chapter Six.

In this *bindu* yoga
 Following the stages described above, the five[-colored] light
 Emerges from the upper door
 And again draws in the nectar and |193|

Likewise brings it into the foundation³⁵⁷
 Stopping the breath—[this is] the branch of emptying.³⁵⁸
 Then [within] the very subtle
 Great secret *bindu*, just like before |194|

³⁵⁷ Vaidyapāda clarifies that this foundation is the *bindu* (*Sukusuma*, D 117a.2).

³⁵⁸ There appears to be some confusion regarding the name of this branch in Buddhajñānapāda's system. Vaidyapāda's *Sukusuma* reads "the branch of casting out" (*gtong pa'i yan lag*) (as does Vaidyapāda's *Samantabhadri-ṭikā*, which also mentions the practice), but Tāranātha's later text follows Buddhajñānapāda's root text in reading *stong pa'i yan lag* for this practice—actually he calls it the "branch of emptying which stops the breath" (*dbugs dgag stong pa'i yan lag*), which clearly follows the line in the *Dvitiyakrama* itself that mentions this branch (*Dpal grol ba'i thig le'i khrid yig*, 247). Vaidyapāda here writes, "The *bindu* is **the foundation**. Abiding there is called **stopping the breath, the branch of casting away** (or "emptying" if one uses the term from the root text). This is because movement, abiding, emanating, and absorbing are **stopped** and **cast aside**, and thus [the winds?] are united." *thig le ni gzhi ste der bzhugs pa ni dbugs dgag gtong gi yan lag go zhes te/ rgyu dang gnas dang spro bsdu dgag pa dang gtong bas bsdu pa'i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 117a.2-3; P140b.8-141a.1). This is the first of three branches (*yan lag*, *aṅga*) that are mentioned in this section of the *Dvitiyakrama*, the other two of which are clearly two among the classical tantric Buddhist version of the *śadaṅga* (*praytāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *prāṇayāma*, *dhāraṇā*, *anusmṛti*, and *samādhi*), the Buddhist locus classicus of which seems to be the *Samājottara*, verse 141. The fact that Buddhajñānapāda refers to some of these six *aṅgas* but not all of them and also includes a branch that is at least not referred to by the name that is used for that branch in the classical sixfold list—is further suggestive of the fact that he did not know the *Samājottara*. Even in the later presentation by Tāranātha of these practices only these same three branches—named just as they are in the *Dvitiyakrama*—are mentioned, as Tāranātha appears to be presenting Buddhajñānapāda's system quite faithfully. However, while he keeps to the name used in Buddhajñānapāda's text, Tāranātha does correlate this branch of emptiness with the branch of *prāṇayāma*, which is one of the classical six branches (*Dpal grol ba'i thig le'i khrid yig*, 247). Indeed, the connection of this *gtong pa'i yan lag* or *dgag pa'i yan lag* with *prāṇayāma*, one among the classical six branches, is also suggested by Vaidyapāda's *Samantabhadri-ṭikā*, his commentary on Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturāṅga-sādhana*, where he mentions that the practice of the *sūkṣma* yoga according to that *sādhana* constitutes "the branch of emptying, or cessation, the third" (*dgag pa dang gtong ba'i yan lag gsum pa'o*) (*Samantabhadri-ṭikā*, D 168a.6). *Prāṇayāma* is the third of the six yogas in the traditional list as given in the *Samājottara*.

In any case, Tāranātha's later description of the practice here is clarifying, "Just like before, meditate upon the *bindu* at the jewel. The light from the *bindu*, beginning with the handle of the sword, illuminates the inner and outer *maṇḍala* of the *bindu* in two stages and the foundational body together with its outer *maṇḍala*. Together with the drawing back in of the light the outer and inner *maṇḍalas* gradually disappear, and in the end one holds the mind only on the *bindu*. One should bring this to a halt with the forceful vase breath. This is a sublime method for bringing about the cessation of impure perceptions and gathering the ordinary mind and winds into the central channel. Regarding [the practice] in the aspect of nonconceptuality,* by practicing in union with a *karmamudrā*, through holding the *bindu* unmoving at the jewel, the earth, wind, and so forth are forcefully brought to a halt. Up until here is the branch of *prāṇayāma*." *snga ma bzhin du nor bur thig le bsgoms/ thig le'i 'od kyis ral gri'i yu ba nas brtsams te/ nor bu'i thig le'i phyi nang gi dkyil 'khor rim pa gnyis dang/ gzhi lus phyi'i dkyil 'khor dang bcas pa gsal bar byas/ 'od zer tshur bsdu ba dang lhan cig phyi nang gi dkyil 'khor rnam rim gyis mtha' nas yal te/ mthar thig le gcig pu la sems gzung/ rlung bum pa can drag tu dgag par byas ste/ 'di ma dag pa'i snang ba 'gag cing tha mal gyi rlung sems rnam dbu mar sdud pa'i thabs dam pa'o// rtog med kyi phyogs la ni las rgya dang mnyam par sbyor bas nor bur thig le g.yo med du bcings pas sa rlung sogs ches 'gags pa'o// de yan chad srog rtsol gyi yan lag go//* (*Dpal grol ba'i thig le'i khrid yig*, 247). *Tāranātha specifies each of the three branches in terms of a conceptual and a nonconceptual practice. Presumably for the "conceptual" aspect of the practice of the branch of emptiness one would not be practicing with an actual partner, since the practice done in union with a *karmamudrā* is specified as the nonconceptual aspect. This seems to be the case for the other branches in which such a distinction is made, as well.

Hold your mind very gently
The state of entitylessness ensues.³⁵⁹ |195|

Through training in retention,³⁶⁰ as well,
The mistaken earth is withdrawn.³⁶¹
This experience of [things] being like a mirage—
Know that this is the first sign.³⁶² |196|

Likewise, when water is withdrawn
There is the experience of something which appears like smoke—
Know that this is the second sign.
Due to the withdrawing of fire |197|

One experiences something like a bright sky—the third [sign].³⁶³
When the wind likewise is withdrawn
There is an appearance like a lamp—
Know this to be the fourth sign. |198|

Likewise, when the mistaken consciousness
Is withdrawn, something similar³⁶⁴ to the profound, luminous
Nondual state [appears], clear like the cloudless sky—
This is the fifth sign.³⁶⁵ |199|

³⁵⁹ Vaidyapāda explains that this does not mean that entities are empty because they are destroyed or overcome. Rather, by means of the yoga of lacking nature (one of the seven yogas mentioned by Vaidyapāda in his *Yogasapta* treatise on the fourth initiation) one turns away from other mental states, and since one therefore remains only in suchness, the state of entitylessness ensues. (*Sukusuma*, D 117a. 4). On the seven yogas see note 121.

³⁶⁰ *gzung ba*. Vaidyapāda specifies that this refers to the “branch of retention” (*gzung ba’i yan lag*), which is one of the six-branch yogas, *dhāraṇā* (although this branch is normally rendered into Tibetan as *’dzin pa*). Two of these six yogas are mentioned in this section of the *Dvitiyākrama*, along with a third “branch”—the branch of “emptying,” which appears to be an alternate name for what is usually termed *prāṇayāma*, the third among the classical set of six (on this branch see note 358), whose Buddhist *locus classicus* is the *Samājottara*. See also verse 210.

³⁶¹ Here Vaidyapāda explains that earth and the rest of the elements have two aspects—they can either appear in a mistaken way or appear to wisdom. He seems to understand the ‘withdrawal’ of these elements here as referring to the reversal of their mistaken perception (*Sukusuma*, D 117a.5).

³⁶² Here Vaidyapāda explains that this refers to “the light rays of that *bindu* [appearing] clearly and [then] unclearly, like the example of a mirage. In this context one should understand it like this. One should then think, ‘This **mistaken** experience of **earth** in my mindstream which ought to be **withdrawn**—I know [this to be] the sign [of that withdrawal taking place],’ and in this way feel a sense of encouragement and conviction. Apply this [attitude] to all of the other [signs] also.” *thig le de’i ’od zer gsal ba dang/ mi gsal ba’i dpe smig rgyu dang ’dra ba ’byung ste/ de’i skabs su ’di ltar shes bar bya’o// bdag gi rgyud la gnas* (gnas) D, gñang P) *pa’i phyin ci log tu snang ba’i sa ’di ni rnam par ldog tu rung ba ste/ bdag gis* (gis) D, gi P) *ni rtags shes so snyam du gzengs bstod la yang de la zhen par bya’o// gghan rnams la yang de bzhin tdu sbyar bar by’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 117a.7-118a.1; P 141a.7-141b.1).

³⁶³ Here Vaidyapāda’s commentary describes this “bright sky” as referring to the more commonly mentioned third sign—fireflies (*Sukusuma*, D 117b.1-2).

³⁶⁴ ‘dra] sugg. em. based on V (D and C), dran D C P N S

³⁶⁵ Vaidyapāda notes that these signs are visible not only to oneself, but to others. “The previously mentioned light rays themselves appear in the form of the deity or of signs, and so forth, and are perceptible by my sense faculties and within the sphere of experience of others, as well. They are not [exclusively experienced] from one’s own perspective.” *gong gi ’od zer nyid lha ’am mshan ma la sogs pa’i gzugs su snang zhing bdag gi dbang po dang gghan gyi yang spyod yul du snang bar ’gyur ba’o// rang dngos ni ma yin no//* (*Sukusuma*, D 117b.3-4; P 141b.4-5).

Since by means of these five signs
One will attain non-abiding *nirvāṇa*,³⁶⁶
A yogin should strive in this—
This is the branch of retention.³⁶⁷ |200|

In this way having made the five signs appear
To make this reality³⁶⁸ pervasive,
Emanate [it] from the vajra path
Into the realm of space. |201|

From those emanations, those appearances
Which were previously³⁶⁹ seen should be generated.
The recollection of the buddha
And the authentic recollection of the dharma |202|

The recollection of vajra,
The genuine recollection of family,
The recollection of the wrathful ones,
Vairocana, Amitabha, |203|

Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, and the rest,
Yamāntaka and the others—the *maṇḍala* forms³⁷⁰
Of the wrathful ones, as many as there are—

³⁶⁶ Vaidyapāda here correlates several of the signs with the stages of practice—the second through the fourth of the signs mentioned in the text are, he says, signs of attainment for the yogin practicing *sevā*, and the “first” and “second” levels of *sādhana*—presumably *sādhana* and *mahāsādhana* (*Sukusuma*, D 117b.5).

³⁶⁷ Retention is one among the *śaḍaṅga* yoga, *dhāraṇā* (normally rendered in Tibetan as ‘*dzin pa*, though this does not present so much of a problem given that *gzung ba* and ‘*dzin pa* are simply different tenses—future and present, respectively—of the same verb). But below in verse 210 Buddhajñānapāda specifically mentions only *three* branches: emptying (*stong pa*), retention (*gzung ba*), and recollection (‘*dran pa*). With respect to this particular branch of retention Vaidyapāda says “The text says **This is the branch of retention**, because this is the branch where one attains the signs that arise due to **holding** (“retaining”) one’s life force like a precious gem.” *gzung ba yi* (ba yi] D, ba’i P) *ni yan lag go// zhes pa ni rang gi srog rin po che lta bu gzung bas rtags rnyed pa’i yan lag tu ‘gyur ba’i phyir ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 117b.6; P 141b.8). Tāranātha retains the spelling of *gzung ba’i yan lag*—he calls this branch “the branch of retention where the signs appear” (*rtags snang gzung ba’i yan lag*)—when listing the branches from the Jñānapāda School practices, but later refers to the same practice using the more common Tibetan translation ‘*dzin pa’i yan lag*. (*Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*, 247-48). Tāranātha further clarifies that it is through the practice of the previous branch that the five signs begin to appear and slowly stabilize, but when they have become stable and one focuses one-pointedly on their appearance, this is the branch of retention (*Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*, 247-48).

³⁶⁸ Vaidyapāda identifies “this reality” (*don de*) as the deity, symbolic implements, and the rest (*lha dang phyag mtshan la sogs pa*) (*Sukusuma*, D 117b.7; P 142a.1). Likewise, earlier he wrote of “light rays appearing in the form of the deity, signs, and so forth,” (‘*od zer nyid lha am mtshan ma la sogs pa’i gzugs su snang*) (*Sukusuma*, D 117b.3-4; P 141b.4).

³⁶⁹ sngon] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), mngon D C P N S.

³⁷⁰ Tib. *sku*

Visualize the activity³⁷¹ of their emanation and absorption.³⁷² |204|

Likewise, regarding the recollection of the *samayas*,³⁷³
They are passion and the four-fold ritual—
First visualize the activity of emanation and absorption.
Regarding the recollection of the *maṇḍala* |205|

Clearly perform the activity of emanating and absorbing
The *maṇḍala* of the second ritual and the rest
As for the recollection of body,
Speech, and mind, |206|

And the recollection of sentient beings,
Having emanated and absorbed the three vajras,
Which have been cultivated as awakened body, speech, and mind
Aspire to³⁷⁴ and recall these. |207|

Likewise, regarding the recollection of the
General form of all *mantras*:
By means of the five wisdoms
Generate Vajrasattva, |208|

And encounter the clarity³⁷⁵
Of your own deity endowed with the four enjoyments, [through] the activity of emanation and
absorption.
Regarding the recollection of *samaya*:
Perform the tasting of nectar, and so on, |209|

[And] the activity of emanation and absorption clearly.
As for the recollection of the *prajñāpāramitā*

³⁷¹ I am not completely sure of the way the term *las* is being used in this section. I am translating it now as “activity,” understood as an appositive of “emanating and absorbing.” Vaidyapāda does seem to read it this way, as well, but this is not completely clear. It does seem clear that he does not take *las* as a third member of the list, however. The Tibetan translators or redactors of the Tibetan canon also seem to have had some issue with the term, as a number of places in several of the various recensions of the canon read *la* rather than *las* in some but not all instances. The majority of instances across the root text and the commentary, however, read *las*, so I have kept it in all instances.

³⁷² Vaidyapāda identifies recollection of the buddha as the emanation, absorption, and activity of Vairocana; the recollection of the dharma as the emanation, absorption, and activity of Amitabha; the recollection of vajra as that of Akṣobhya; the recollection of family as that of Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, Locanā and the rest; and the recollection of the wrathful ones as that of Yamāntaka and the other three (*Sukusuma*, D 118a.2-3; P 142a.4-6).

³⁷³ For this and each of the subsequent recollections, Vaidyapāda introduces the section by writing, “Regarding the recollection of *samaya*, what should one recall with respect to the reality that was previously seen?” *dam tshig rjes su dran pa ni smgon mthong ba’i don la gang dran zhe na/* (*Sukusuma*, D 118a.4; P 142a.7). And later Vaidyapāda clarifies that “it is called the **branch of recollection** because of **recalling** [something] with respect to the reality that one has previously seen.” *de rnams ni smgon mthong ba’i don la rjes su dran pas na rjes su dran pa’i yan lag go//* (*Sukusuma*, D 118b.6; P 143a.3-4). This suggests that what is meant in this section on recollection is to bring to mind different aspects of the reality that one has previously experienced, which suggests that the various deities of the *maṇḍala* and their qualities are understood here as constituting different expressions of suchness itself.

³⁷⁴ smon] P N V (D and P), smin D C S

³⁷⁵ Tib. *rjes su gsal ba*; Skt. **anuspaṣṭa*(?) = noticed, clearly perceived.

And non-arising:
Those emanated *maṇḍalas*, as well, [210]

Do not exist in any way—
Recalling their nondual essence
Perform the activity of emanation and absorption.
Regarding the yoga of recollecting [211]

The *pūjā* of the family of anger and so forth,
The supreme girl of one's own [buddha-] family
Purified by the intermediate four enjoyments³⁷⁶
Should be pleased by means of passion— [212]

This activity of emanation and absorption should be performed;
This is the branch of recollection.³⁷⁷
In this way, by means of these three branches,
Meditate upon the secret *bindu*. [213]

[Third *Bindu* Yoga: The Emanated Bindu (=Vajrajapa)]

³⁷⁸Even when it emerges from the jewel³⁷⁹
It is made to pervade the three realms—
This is called meditation upon the emanated *bindu*.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ The “four enjoyments” here are the four stages of *sevā* etc. that constitute the ritual procedures for the generation stage practice. The “intermediate ones” are those four stages in Buddhajñānapāda’s generation stage *sādhana* that relate to the consort. The “lesser ones” are the four stages as performed in relation to oneself as the deity, and the “greater” ones are the same four stages performed for the *maṇḍala* deities. Tāranātha here notes that this practice could be performed either with an actual or a wisdom (i.e. visualized) partner (*Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*, 249).

³⁷⁷ This is one among the *ṣaḍāṅga* yoga, *anusmṛti*. As noted above, Vaidyapāda clarifies that “it is called the **branch of recollection** because of **recalling** [something] with respect to the reality that one has previously seen.” *de rnam ni sngon mthong ba’i don la rjes su dran pas na rjes su dran pa’i yan lag go//* (*Sukusuma*, D 118b.6; P143a.3-4). Tāranātha calls this “the branch of recollection in which the deity appears” (*lha snang rjes dran gyi yan lag*) and gives a rather detailed description of the practice that elaborates somewhat significantly on Buddhajñānapāda’s text (*Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*, 247-51). In particular, in the practice of recollection, Tāranātha often gives instruction to follow the procedures described in “the *sādhana*,” which clearly refers to passages in Buddhajñānapāda’s *Caturaṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*, which is generally understood to constitute generation stage practice. This is perhaps yet another indication of the fact of the generation and perfection stage practices not being completely separate in Buddhajñānapāda’s system. These practices of recollection, Tāranātha notes, constitute “the perfection stage being sealed with the generation stage,” which is an unusual reversal of the more common phrase “the generation stages sealed with the perfection stage” at least within the later Tibetan tradition of *sādhana* practice within the Nyingma School. Tāranātha further clarifies that when these appearances of the deity *actually* appear, they exclusively constitute the appearance of the perfection stage deity (*Dpal grol ba’i thig le’i khrid yig*, 249).

³⁷⁸ Vaidyapāda specifies that the emanated *bindu* has the nature of the wisdom of the “bliss of cessation.” *da ni dga’ bral gyi ye shes kyi rang bzhin sprul pa’i thig le gsungs pa/* (*Sukusuma*, D 118b.6-7; P 143a.4)

³⁷⁹ i.e. the head of the penis

³⁸⁰ Vaidyapāda clarifies that it is what follows in the *Dvīṭyākrama* that is the procedure for meditating on the “emanated *bindu*” (*Sukusuma*, D 119a.2; P 143a.7-8). He also seems to link this practice both to the context of initiation and to post-initiatory practice. He writes: “Then, having performed the meditation on the secret *bindu*, now, in order to indicate the purpose of the meditation on the emanated *bindu* [the text] states, **Even when it emerges from the jewel/ It is made to pervade the three realms**. Thus, after the conclusion of the initiation, due to abiding in the branch of increase, [there is] the emanated [*maṇḍala*]-*cakra*, the meditation upon the *nirmāṇakāya*;

At the center of the crown of your head |214|

At the heart center of Kāyavajra³⁸¹

Resting in a symbolic implement is a wind *maṇḍala*.

[The color] of smoke. Here, upon a moon disc,

Imagine a white syllable *om* that symbolizes coming. |215|

Likewise at the center of one's throat

At the heart center of Vacvajra³⁸²

At the center of the symbolic implement

Is a white water *maṇḍala*. At the moon disc at its center |216|

Meditate upon a red syllable *āḥ* with the nature of abiding.

At one's heart center, in the heart center of Cittavajra,

Resting in the center of the symbolic implement

Is a red fire *maṇḍala*. On this is a moon disc |217|

At its center meditate upon the black syllable *hūṃ*

Which has the nature of going.

Also between the two breasts

At the heart center of the *samayamudrā* |218|

On the symbolic implement rests the

Yellow *maṇḍala* of Iśvāra.³⁸³ On a moon disc there

Is the great seed of your own deity.

Think that this is the seed of liberation

From arising, engaging, and abiding.³⁸⁴ |219|

³⁸⁵ In this way, having joined the four great *mudrās*

Together with the [four] identities,³⁸⁶

By means of the [following] procedure

or, alternatively, because of emanating the four *bindus* and the rest [it is called the practice of] the **emanated** [*bindu*]. This meditation is [now] explained.” *De gsang ba'i thig le bsgom par byas nas/ sprul pa'i thig le bsgom pa'i dgos pa gsungs pa/ nor bu las ni byung nas kyang/ khyams kun khyab par byed pas ni// zhes te dbang gi mthar thugs rjes rgyas pa'i yan lag tu gnas pas sprul pa'i 'khor lo ste* ('khor lo ste] D, P om.) *sprul pa'i sku sgom par byed pa'am yang na thig le bzhi la sogs par spros pa'i phyir na sprul pa ste de bsgom pa* (bsgom pa] P, bsgoms D) *bshad do zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 118b.7-119a.2; P 143a.8-143b.2).

³⁸¹ According to Vaidyapāda, Kāyavajra (another name for Vairocana) has been generated from the seed syllable placed in this part of the body during the generation stage practice, which was first transformed into a symbolic implement before being transformed into the form of Kāyavajra. (*sku yi rdo rje thugs ka ru/ zhes pa ni bskyed pa'i rim pa'i skabs su gnas bskyed nas/ sa bon mtshan ma phra mo las gyur pa'i sku'i rdo rje bsams te de'i thugs ka ru'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 119a.2-3; P 143a.8-143b.1).

³⁸² i.e. Amitabha

³⁸³ i.e. the earth *maṇḍala*

³⁸⁴ After this section Vaidyapāda notes that “The four *maṇḍalas* which arise in this way are [the practice of?] the perfection [stage?] yogin.” *de ltar 'byung ba'i dkyil 'khor bzhi ni rdzogs pa'i rnal 'byor pa'o* (*Sukusuma*, D 119a.4-5; P 143b.3).

³⁸⁵ The next few verses are translated into French in Tomabechei (2006, 66-7).

³⁸⁶ Vaidyapāda omits the mention of *mudrās* and simply writes, “Having thus joined together with the four identities...” *de bas na bdag nyid bzhi dang 'brel par byas nas...* (*Sukusuma*, D 119a.b 5; P 143b.4).

Perform the essence of the indestructible vajra recitation: |220|

From the right [nostril]³⁸⁷ emerges the great *maṇḍala*
Of the element of wind,
Smoky-colored and with the activity of moving.
By means of the essence of *hūṃ*, emergence,³⁸⁸ |221|

It is made to pervade all the phenomena of appearance and existence.
It purifies all phenomena and transforms them into nectar.
By means of the essence of *oṃ* it is made to return
And cleanses the habitual patterns in one's own mindstream, |222|

Purifying them, and then enters into that [*oṃ*].³⁸⁹
By means of the essence of *āḥ* it is made to remain.
Then, the suchness of the deity,
Is gently, gently held. |223|

This brings about the state of entitylessness.
[Then] from the left [nostril] emerges the great *maṇḍala*
Of the element of water
White in color and perfectly remaining |224|

From that the *hūṃ* of emergence,
The *oṃ* whose nature is gathering,
The *āḥ* whose nature is remaining.
And one holds suchness, just as before. |225|

[Then] from both [nostrils] emerges forcefully
The *maṇḍala* of fire itself
It is red in color. From its essence
Hūṃ emanates and *oṃ* draws in |226|

Āḥ causes [it] to remain, and suchness is held—
Understand that it is just as before.
Likewise, from both [nostrils] slowly emerges
The causal *maṇḍala* of Maheśvara,³⁹⁰ |227|

³⁸⁷ Vaidyapāda clarifies that this is the right nostril. *rang gi steng sgo'i bug pa gnyis kyi g.yas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 109a.6; P 143b.6).

³⁸⁸ The last two lines of this verse are a bit problematic. Reading them in a natural way following Tibetan grammar, the *las* in the penultimate line of the verse seems to be an ablative. However, Vaidyapāda—though his comments are also slightly unclear—seems to read this as a noun, *karma*, rather than a particle, providing a reading of the passage that makes more sense, though it is at odds with a more natural grammatical reading of the Tibetan translation (*Sukusuma*, D 110a.7; P 143b.7). The final line also appears to be preserved in a different version in the Derge recension of Vaidyapāda's commentary, where it reads *'byung ba rlung gi ngo bo yis//* rather than *'byung ba hūṃ gi ngo bo yis//* (*Sukusuma*, D.110a.7). The Peking recension of Vaidyapāda's commentary accords with the root text (*Sukusuma*, P 143b.7).

³⁸⁹ Vaidyapāda makes this clear: *oṃ de la zhugs pa* (*Sukusuma*, D 109b.3; P 144a.2). Tāranātha says it enters back into the wind *maṇḍala* (*Dpal grol ba'i thig le'i khrid yig*, 253).

³⁹⁰ i.e. the earth *maṇḍala*

Gold colored and perfectly apparent.
Then, by means of *hūm* it emerges
Om draws it back in, and *āh* makes it abide,
Then suchness is held there. |228|

Have no doubts or hesitations
That you will encounter a wisdom
That is free from drawing in, abiding, and letting go. |229|

This recitation combined with the four *mudrās*³⁹¹
[Is done] two hundred and twenty-five times
That, when multiplied [by four], is nine-hundred [recitations]
In one day, because of the twenty-four— |230|

The great lord of yogins
Always [performs]
21,600 recitations³⁹²
Day and night. |231|

By means of this, he will know all appearing phenomena
To be [like] an illusion, a mirage,
An echo, a spinning firebrand,
A delusion, a city of *gandharvas*, |232|

Bubbles in the water, an optical illusion,
A reflection, the moon in the water, and so on,
And will share the fortune
Of the lords of the tenth *bhūmi*.³⁹³ |233|

Therefore, the yogin³⁹⁴ should put effort
Towards this natural recitation.
Although this has been the genuine nature,
Since beginningless time, [even] if one constantly recites³⁹⁵ |234|

³⁹¹ Vaidyapāda explains, “Regarding the **four *mudrās***, the [recitation] together with the wind support is the *karmamudrā*; with the water support it is the *dharmamudrā*; with the fire support it is the *mahāmudrā*; with the earth support it is the *samayamudrā*.” *phyag rgya bzhi ni rlung rten dang bas pa ni las kyi phyag rgya ’o// chu rten dang bcas pa nichos kyi phyag rgya ’o// me rten dang bcas pa ni phyag rgya chen po ’o// sa rten dang bcas pa ni dam tshig gi phyag rgya ’o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 110a.2; P 144b.3-4).

³⁹² This passage on the number of recitations connected with the four *mudrās* is parallel to *Muktilaka*, D 49b.

³⁹³ Here we see an instance of Buddhajñānapāda homologizing the results of the tantric path with those of the *sūtric* one, in a move that seems directed towards legitimizing these tantric practices.

³⁹⁴ Interestingly, given that this seems to be part of the perfection stage *sādhana* practice, Vaidyapāda specifies that this is something that “beginners, and so forth” should train in (*Sukusuma*, 120b.5).

³⁹⁵ Here I follow Vaidyapāda’s commentary with respect to the phrase *rtag zlo*. He says, “Because **since beginningless time** all sentient beings have arisen together with wind, they remain in the vajra **recitation**. But without being accepted by a teacher one will not realize this.” *thog ma med pa ’i dus nas sems can thams cad kyang rlung dang lhan cig tu byung bas na rdo rje bzlas pa la gnas kyang bla mas ma zin pas rtogs par mi ’gyur ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 120b.5-6; P 145b.2-3).

Without relying upon a genuine teacher
One will not realize this truth.³⁹⁶
Knowing this correctly
Abandon the obstacle to meditation,
External recitation. |235|

The great supreme essence of recitation
Is the inexpressible awakened body of Vajradhara
Which completely transcends thought and expression—
How could this be recited by speech? |236|

Thus, having found an elephant
What need does one have of his footprints? |237|

[Yet] for a great yogin who abides in that reality
It is not a contradiction for him to rely upon outer [recitation].
This is like the [effortless] acquisition of firewood (i.e. elephant dung)
Due to the [mere] power of the elephant[’s presence].³⁹⁷ |238|

Therefore, due to striving in the supreme vajra recitation,
When the sleep³⁹⁸ that is
Blessed by the *tathāgatas* occurs
The signs of accomplishing the *mahāmudrā*
Will appear again and again.³⁹⁹ |239|

Since it is doubtless and certain that
Remaining in the [practice of] the ritual that brings that about
For [just] a single moment will transfer
Great omniscience into⁴⁰⁰ one’s mindstream,
Strive in the practice of this ritual. |240|

³⁹⁶ *don*

³⁹⁷ The sense behind these lines on their own is rather unclear, but it seems, based on Vaidyapāda’s commentary together with Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel’s explanation of it, that the meaning is that the excrement of the excellent elephant is able to turn ordinary gold into the superior Jambu-river-gold, when that ordinary gold is placed in the elephant’s excrement and the excrement is then burned in a fire, i.e. used for firewood. And once one has found the elephant, the firewood one seeks—i.e. his excrement—is also naturally found. Like that, even when one knows the essence of the vajra recitation, doing external recitation still perfects the accumulation of merit, and therefore remains powerful (*Sukusuma*, D 120b.7-121a.1; P 145b.5-6.; Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communication, February 2016).

³⁹⁸ *gnyid*] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), *nyid* D C P N S. While all recensions of the Tibetan translations of Buddhajñānapāda’s text here read *nyid*, Vaidyapāda’s commentary makes it very clear that the Sanskrit text read a word which would, in Tibetan, be rendered as *gnyid*, sleep. “Of course, the yogin who strives in the vajra recitation abides within spontaneity in which there is no lying down, resting, repose, or sleep. However, when, a little bit of **sleep** that is **blessed** by the *sugatas* takes place, at that time [**the signs of accomplishing**] **the mahāmudrā**...” *rdo rje bzlas pa la ‘bad pa’i rnal ‘byor pa lhun gyis grub pa nyid du gnas pa nyal ba dang snyes pa dang ‘phres pa dang gnyid la sogs pa med mos kyi/ bde bar gshegs pas byin gyis brlabs pa’i gnyid cung zad ‘ong (‘ong] , ‘od D) pas na de’i dus su phyag rgya chen po zhes te/ (Sukusuma, D 121a.2-3; P 145b.7-8).*

³⁹⁹ Vaidyapāda specifies that these signs refer to auspicious dreams of the deity, and so forth (*bkra shis pa’i lha’i rmi (rmi] P, smon D) lam la sogs pa) (Sukusuma, D 121a.3; P 146a.1).*

⁴⁰⁰ *la]* sugg. em. based on V (D and P), *las* D C P N S

This was the authentic teaching of the ritual
Of meditating on the three *bindus*
That correspond with the three joys. |241|

⁴⁰¹ Although nondual wisdom itself
Takes on a relative form⁴⁰²
Even when the inanimate, and so forth, along with the animate,
Brahmā and the others, the gods, *asuras*, and the rest |242|

Completely disappear,
That *bindu* will not cease;⁴⁰³
Everything animate and inanimate⁴⁰⁴
Will again be made to emerge from it. |243|

However, because they do not realize
What is genuine,
Beings are confused, [believing everything] to be arisen from Brahmā's egg.
But that [*bindu*], which cannot be moved by any phenomena, |244|

Which cannot be destroyed by anything at all,
As long as it remains embodied
Brings about [engagement in virtuous] activity and non[-virtuous] acts.⁴⁰⁵
Therefore⁴⁰⁶ the meditation on the indestructible *bindu*,
Stable and beyond destruction, is explained. |245|

[Perfection Stage Practices with Detail on Dissolution Process]

The four *brahmacaryas*,⁴⁰⁷
Seeing⁴⁰⁸ the outer [world] as empty, and so forth,⁴⁰⁹
And having generated oneself as the deity,
One should also seal with the four *mudrās*— |246|

Understand these procedures, just as [explained] before,
And [then] by means of⁴¹⁰ the [subsequent] procedures,
Hold one's mind within the *bindu*.

⁴⁰¹ This passage is quoted at length in Vaidyapāda's commentary on the *Muktilaka* (*Muktilaka-vyākhyāna*, D 47a).

⁴⁰² Vaidyapāda specifies that it remains in the conventional form of the five-colored *bindu* the size of a chickpea (*Sukusuma*, D 121b.2; P 146a.7-8). He explains that the phenomena described below in fact emerge from that conventional form of nondual wisdom (*Sukusuma*, D 121b.2-3; P 146a.8-b.2).

⁴⁰³ This seems to indicate that the indestructible *bindu* remains at the end of the aeon, which Vaidyapāda states even more clearly in his commentary (*Sukusuma*, D 121b.4; P 146b.3).

⁴⁰⁴ rgyu] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), rgyur D C P N S

⁴⁰⁵ Here I rely upon Vaidyapāda's commentary, which notes that abandoning killing is an example of "acts" and killing is an example of "non-acts" (*Sukusuma*, D 122a.2-3; P 147a.2-3).

⁴⁰⁶ pas] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), pa D C P N S

⁴⁰⁷ Here *brahmacarya* clearly refers to what are usually called the *brahmavihāras*. See also verse 157 and note 304.

⁴⁰⁸ Literally "making," but it what is meant is making oneself see it as such.

⁴⁰⁹ This is a concise description of the beginning steps of the generation stage practice, and Vaidyapāda says as much (*Sukusuma*, D 122a. 4-5; P 147a.5-6).

⁴¹⁰ yis] P N S V (D and P), yi] D C

From the seed that rests in the center of the symbolic implement |247|

Of one's *jñānasattva*⁴¹¹

Five [-colored] light rays radiate outward.
At their tips countless *maṇḍala-cakras* are emanated;
These fill all realms. |248|

[Thus] the concepts that ride on the horse of the breath
Are perfectly cleared away. These, as well
Become the *maṇḍala-cakra*.
Second,⁴¹² the *maṇḍala* is gathered in |249|

[As] the essence of wisdom, which enters into the left nostril.
And is made to abide in the center of the symbolic implement.
This then dissolves into the seed,
Which then illuminates |250|

The indestructible *bindu*, blazing with five [-colored] light,
Thus authentically producing
All the qualities ascribed to the buddhas
Who abide in the [ten] directions and [three] times. |251|

From that, as well, light radiates forth
Illuminating its own space and the interior of the *jñānasattva*.
That illuminates its exterior, and the *maṇḍala* and its area.
The [light] which emerges from this draws in⁴¹³ the |252|

Bindus in the forms of the syllables *āḥ* and so forth that abide in
The channels of the big toes, the calves,
The two thighs, the secret place,
The navel, the belly, |253|

The two breasts, the tips of the fingers,
The throat, the two lips,
The two cheeks, the two eyes,
The channels of the ears, the crown of the head, |254|

And all the joints,
And dissolves them into the indestructible *bindu*.

⁴¹¹ Interestingly here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* the term *jñānasattva* is used for what was termed the *samayamudrā* in the previous section of the very same text. (Vaidyapāda's commentary clarified in the earlier usage that by *samayamudrā* what was meant was the *jñānasattva*.) This raises the question of whether this summary section of the *Dvīṭīyakrama* was added later by a different author using the more updated vocabulary that is present in the commentarial literature or whether Mañjuśrī/Buddhajñānapāda himself just used two different terms to refer to the same thing in these different sections of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

⁴¹² gnyis pa] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), gnyis pa'i D C P N S

⁴¹³ bkug] sugg em. based on V (D and P), bsgrub D C, sgrub P N S. This is also what happens in the more elaborate description of this practice earlier in the *Dvīṭīyakrama*.

Gently⁴¹⁴ holding your mind there,
Visualize⁴¹⁵ the support and supported *maṇḍala*,⁴¹⁶ |255|

And, in its center, meditate
Upon the indestructible *bindu*, wisdom,
Which has an essence of cognizance.⁴¹⁷
The light rays from this illuminate its area and onwards. |256|

The light rays of the wisdom *bindu*
That have been placed to illuminate the interior⁴¹⁸
Go before those [*tathāgatas*] who reside in the world of the ten directions
Melting into nectar |257|

They enter their mouths
And travel to the indestructible *bindu* at their hearts
Nectar,⁴¹⁹ in the form of *kṣum* is taken up
It emerges from the vajra path |258|

Like a stream of milk
And, coming from the ten directions,
Draws all sentient beings and buddhas along with the inanimate
Together⁴²⁰ and brings them into the [*vajra-*] *pañjara*. |259|

Likewise they are drawn into the *dharmadhātu mudrā*⁴²¹
And the support *maṇḍala*.
These themselves are drawn in
And brought into the [supported] *maṇḍala* |260|

This is then drawn into oneself
Then oneself, as well, becomes no longer apparent.
Focus on the abode of the *jñānasattva*.
This also [is drawn into] the [*maṇḍala-*] *cakra* |261|

And the [*maṇḍala-*] *cakra* is made to enter the *jñānasattva*.
The *jñānasattva* becomes no longer apparent
And one focuses only on the symbolic implement.
The symbolic implement itself is drawn inwards, |262|

⁴¹⁴ *cung zad*

⁴¹⁵ *mos*

⁴¹⁶ i.e. the *maṇḍala* and the deities of the *maṇḍala*

⁴¹⁷ *snang ba*. Vaidyapāda notes that “the essence of cognizance” refers to the *bindu* which is endowed with a subjective aspect (*snang ba'i ngo bo zhes pa de ni de'i yul can dang ldan pa'i thig le*) (*Sukusuma*, D 123a.4; P 148a.7-8).

⁴¹⁸ Here I follow Vaidyapāda's commentary to interpret the otherwise unclear term “placed” (*bzhag*). He explains that the “light rays which have been placed” refers to those which have been placed at the sixteen locations in the interior of the body (*Sukusuma*, D 123a. 5-6; p 148b.2).

⁴¹⁹ bdud rtsi] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), bdud rtsir D C P N S

⁴²⁰ Vaidyapāda specifies that they are drawn together as the essence of *bodhicitta* (*Sukusuma*, D 123b.1; P 148b.6).

⁴²¹ Vaidyapāda explains that this is the *dharmodaya* (*Sukusuma*, D 123b.2; P 148b.6).

Then, hold the mind within the indestructible *bindu*.
From that as well, the inner gathering is all drawn in.
Genuinely hold the mind within
Just that great self-appearing *bindu*. [263]

Meditating [on this] as long as one is able
Bring the mind again and again into this.
And then, when it emerges from there⁴²²
Focusing on its own area and one's own body, [264]

The *maṇḍala-cakra*
And its support and the three realms—all are illuminated.
And then again, just as before,
Gradually they dissolve into one another. [265]

And the mind should be placed upon the *bindu*.
When one's faculty⁴²³ is held there,
The earth *maṇḍala* enters into water,
That water likewise enters into fire, [266]

The fire then enters into wind,
And the wind enters into mind.⁴²⁴
As an indication that the mind has to some degree
Entered nondual wisdom [267]

There are five signs that will appear:
Appearances like a mirage, like smoke,
Like a lamp, like a bright sky,
And like a cloudless sky, [268]

Because one has entered into Vajrasattva.
Holding the mind within the *bindu*
When the yogin experiences
Yawning, laughing,⁴²⁵ trembling, and so on [269]

The *bindu* should be genuinely emanated
By means of the higher stage, making it pervade everything.
When one has genuinely trained in this
One attains great non-abiding *nirvāṇa*, [270]

The supreme attainment of every method,

⁴²² Vaidyapāda says that its emergence means, “casting [it] out immediately after [its/the?] genuine perfection.”
(*yang dag par rdzogs pa'i de ma thag du gtong ba*) (*Sukusuma*, D 123b.7; P 149a.5).

⁴²³ Vaidyapāda explains that this is the life force (*Sukusuma*, D 124a.1; P 149a.7124a.5).

⁴²⁴ Vaidyapāda clarifies that these five signs as explained in the tantra unfold only appear when one practices with the “secret *bindu*” located at the tip of the vajra (*Sukusuma*, D 124a.2; P 149a.8-149b.1).

⁴²⁵ dgod] D C V (D), rgod P N S V (P)

[The state of] great Vajradhara.
Innate wisdom alone
Brings control over this.
The method for training in the second stage
Is the meditation upon the indestructible *bindu*. |271|

[The Names of Suchness]

In this way, having explained the ritual for training
In that which is genuinely brought about
By focusing on the suchness of all phenomena,
The excellent immeasurable sublime— |272|

Its various names will be set forth:
Suchness, authentic limit,
The inconceivable *dhātu*,
Dharmatā, stainless dharma, |273|

Emptiness, signlessness,
Wishlessness, as well,
That which throws off the great load of the negative emotions,
The unborn, the luminous, |274|

Manifest awakening,
That which brings about knowledge of others' minds,
Bestower of the ear of the gods,
Bestower of the eye of the gods, |275|

The great emanator of countless miracles,
The perfection of entities,⁴²⁶
The ultimate truth,
The perfection stage,⁴²⁷ |276|

The completely pure body,
The reliance of all,
Completely pure like space,
Unsoiled by adventitious stains, |277|

Primordially luminous,
Indestructible by any means,
Entitylessness itself,
That which brings about cause, and so forth—the twelve,⁴²⁸ |278|

Perfectly pure wisdom of the great glorious ones

⁴²⁶ *dingos po*

⁴²⁷ Vaidyapāda explains “It is called **the perfection stage** because it is not posited by the intellectual mind.” *blos gzhaḡ pa ma yin pas na rdzogs pa'i rim pa'o*. (*Sukusuma*, D 124b.7; P 150a.8-150b.1).

⁴²⁸ This seems to be the twelve links of dependent origination. Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel suggests that it refers to their pure aspect, that is, the twelve links in reverse order (personal communication, February 2016).

The perfectly pure great⁴²⁹ *bindu*,
The great secret of all buddhas,
Space, [and]⁴³⁰ the object of experience [like] space, |279|

Non-meditation itself,
The great pith instructions of the revered master,
Transferred from ear⁴³¹ to ear,
Not known by the *śrāvakas*, |280|

Not known by the *pratyekabuddhas* and others,
The letterless itself,
Wordless, inexpressible, and so on.
In the *sūtras* and *tantras* |281|

It has been expressed, and will be again,
With these countless names and others.
There is nothing at all taught there
Besides this suchness. |282|

Therefore, with a mind that has already [generated] faith,
Genuinely maintain⁴³² the nature of all phenomena,
The profound, luminous, nondual great reality,
The suchness of the second stage, |283|

Which has been taught by the guru.
Maintaining this, by means of the previously-described procedures,
[Results/Benefits of the Training]
The individual who constantly habituates himself to it
Based on this [practice] will give rise to the signs |284|

As if leaping from *bhūmi* to *bhūmi*!
The capacity of his intellect⁴³³ will increase
By means of emanating as a *vidyādhara*, and so forth
He will connect others with this truth.⁴³⁴ |285|

The yogin who has become stable by means of [practicing] this
Will possess the identity of accomplishment
The one who possesses that identity should engage
In the supreme practice just as it is taught. |286|

A devī, nāginī, yakṣinī

⁴²⁹ Vaidyapāda’s commentary suggests that he was reading “stable *bindu*” (*thig le brtan po*) here (*Sukusuma*, 125a.3).

⁴³⁰ Vaidyapāda’s commentary appears to read simply “the object of experience [like] space” (*Sukusuma*, 125a.5).

⁴³¹ rna] P N S V (D and P), sna D C

⁴³² *gzung*

⁴³³ blo] P N S V(D and P), de D C

⁴³⁴ In the *Muktīlaka*, as well, Buddhajñānapāda writes of the yogin taking different forms to benefit beings.

A human female, a *kiṃnārī*,
Dākīṇīs, and others

One should [summon them] with one’s power and practice [with them]. |287|

Put forth effort for six months, and so on

In the observance of a madman (*unmatta-vrata*) and others.⁴³⁵

By means of that [one will attain]⁴³⁶ the revered, the letterless,⁴³⁷

The essence of all the glorious buddhas, |288|

The state of all *vajradharas*,

The profound suchness of all phenomena,

The supreme attainment of all buddhas.

Just as the yogin of the higher stage,⁴³⁸ |289|

Having put forth tireless effort,

Remained there,⁴³⁹ for a moment,

In the manner of the example,⁴⁴⁰

In bliss, middling bliss, |290|

And the bliss of cessation,

[Likewise,] in time, he will attain just as has been taught,

The three blisses just as they are. |291|

Then until *samsāra*’s end

He will remain, free from torment,

⁴³⁵ The observance of a madman (*unmatta-vrata*) is a ritual observance in which the practitioner takes a vow to act like a madman in order to test the stability of and further his practice. Vaidyapāda’s commentary here instructs that the yogin should engage in the observance of a madman for six months, and then he will experience the signs of the main part of practice, and through the goddesses’ initiation the realm will be purified. Then he should practice with a consort for six months and the results should become manifest. But if that does not bring success, he must to do it for another six months. If that does not bring success, he must to do a peaceful summoning (*bskul ba*) ritual for seven days. If that still does not bring success, he should practice for another seven days following each of the various divisions (*dbye ba’i sgo nas*), which perhaps means using another one of the divisions of the four activities, increasing and then magnetizing. If that does not bring success, he should do a wrathful ritual for summoning the buddhas for seven days. He should use a *kīlaya* and so forth. Then he will obtain the result (*Sukusuma*, D 126b.4-7).

⁴³⁶ There is no clear verb here, but Vaidyapāda’s commentary indicates that these phrases describe the result that is attained by the previously described practices (*Sukusuma*, D 126b.7).

⁴³⁷ *yig*] P N S, *yid* D C. This is also strongly supported by Vaidyapāda’s commentary, which provides a gloss of *yi ge med pa* (*Sukusuma*, D 126b.7; P 150b.8).

⁴³⁸ Vaidyapāda identifies these here as “the six-month period and so forth,” suggesting that he is referring to the practice of the *unmatta-vrata* and so forth, which was just mentioned (*Sukusuma*, D 127a.1-2).

⁴³⁹ Vaidyapāda specifies that this means in the lotus of the consort (*Sukusuma*, D 127a.2).

⁴⁴⁰ In his comments on this passage, Vaidyapāda links the three blisses not only to the three *kāyas*, but also to the seven yogas, and notes that the yogin remains in these “in the manner of an example” during the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and that they will “in their own time” be fully attained as explained in the tantras (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.1-4; P 153a.1-6). He specifically links bliss with two of the seven yogas, middling bliss with two, and the cessation of bliss with one. He does not specify which yogas are linked to the different blisses. Vaidyapāda makes this same link of the yogas to the blisses in his *Muktītilaka-vyākhyāna* (D 58a.1), but there additionally notes that the remaining two of the seven yogas pertain to all three blisses. In that statement he also does not identify which of the yogas pertain to which of the blisses. I imagine that this point is clarified in the *Yogasapta*, but did not yet have the opportunity to check this.

Cool, singular,
Blissful, stainlessness, [292]

Joyful, and mentally joyful—
These are the eight [signs] of having tasted great bliss.
The lord,⁴⁴¹ supreme Vajradhara,
The yogin of the perfection stage [293]

He who has performed the actions, completed the activities,
The great lord who has cast off the great load,
Unagitated by thorns, omniscient,
The hero of beings, knower of all, [294]

The great bull-among-men,⁴⁴² the tamed one,
The one who has gone to the far shore of *samsāra*,
The great yogin for whom
The ultimate and relative truths are nondual, [295]

He who has abandoned misdeeds,⁴⁴³ completed all paths,
Source of all qualities, Samantabhadra,
The suchness that encompasses everything,
Filling all the realms with *kāyas* and so forth, [296]

The authentic state, above which nothing is higher—
It is known in this way, and by many other names.
The names that indicate nondual wisdom⁴⁴⁴
In all the *sūtras* and tantras
Are limitless—
The intelligent ones must realize this. [297]

[Stages of Sexual Practice Homologized with Ten *Bhūmis*]

⁴⁴⁵ A vajra holder,
Who abides in the thirteen virtues⁴⁴⁶
Genuinely realizes the stainless
In a single moment through [relying upon]
The previously-mentioned goddess,⁴⁴⁷
While endowed with the ten *bhūmis*. [298]

⁴⁴¹ Tib. *bdag po*

⁴⁴² Tib. *glang po chen po*; Skt. **gopati*.

⁴⁴³ tha ba] P N S V (D and P), thab D C.

⁴⁴⁴ The names given here include some that seem to refer to a state, and others that seem to refer to an individual who abides within that state, as if these are somehow indistinguishable.

⁴⁴⁵ Vaidyapāda explains that these verses are meant to teach about the substantial cause of such realization who is the goddess, together with the ten *bhūmis* (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.1).

⁴⁴⁶ Vaidyapāda indicates that this refers to the thirteen *bhūmis* (*sa bcu gsum*). The term “the thirteenth *bhūmi*” is used below in verse 314 to refer to the final result of practice, and this verse does explain that the vajra-holder reaches attainment in a single instant by means of practicing with a consort.

⁴⁴⁷ Vaidyapāda indicates that this refers to the consort types, like *kamalī* and the others who were mentioned before (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.1).

⁴⁴⁸[Adorned] with garlands, necklaces, anklets,⁴⁴⁹ and more,
[Beholding] her complexion, breasts,⁴⁵⁰ and the rest,
Knowing the bliss of examining the lotus—
This should be known as the first. |299|

Praising [with] melodious tones
Like the *ṣaḍja*, *ṛṣabha*, *niṣāda*⁴⁵¹ and others,
And delighting with the sweet sound *śīt* —⁴⁵²
This should be known as the second. |300|

At the time of anointing the body
With sandalwood and other scents,
The genuine bliss which is so produced—
This should be known as the third. |301|

Having sucked the honey from [her] lower lip
The *bodhicitta* that abides in the head melts,
Tasting it brings pleasure,⁴⁵³ thus delighting oneself—
This should be known as the fourth. |302|

Through anointing the body and a variety of acts
At the time of playing
Genuine bliss is brought about through touch—
This is known to be the fifth. |303|

⁴⁴⁸ What follows is a revisioning of the classical ten bodhisattva *bhūmis* in terms of tantric sexual practice. The ten verses correspond with first the six sensory experiences— visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental—and then with the four elements—earth, water, fire, and wind—respectively. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for pointing out these correspondences, which were obviously intended in the text.

⁴⁴⁹ Tib. *ha ra nu pur*. This seems to be a Tibetan transliteration of *hāranūpura*, necklaces and anklets. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for his assistance with this point.

⁴⁵⁰ *ku tsa*. This may be a Sanskrit transliteration of *kuca*, breasts. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for this suggestion.

⁴⁵¹ *ṣa dzdza rī ṣa ni ṣā*] sugg. em. following V (D), *ṣa dzdze rī ni ṣā na D*, *ṣa dzdza rī ni ṣā na C*, *sha rdzas gri tra gri na P N S*), *sha rdza gri ta ghri na V (P)*. These terms seem to have caused some confusion for the translators and scribes of the Tibetan canon, as they are rendered in four different ways in the five extant recensions of the root text and two further ways in the two recensions of Vaidyapāda’s commentary that I consulted. Vaidyapāda indicates that they refer to the singing of erotic songs from the **devīśāstras* (*lha mo’i bstan bcos*) (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.3).

Following Harunaga Isaacson’s suggestion, for which I am grateful, I believe that these garbled Tibetan translations of Sanskrit terms (although the transliteration from Vaidyapāda’s *Sukusuma* in the Derge Tengyur—the one I have chosen to use in my edition of the *Dvītyākrama*—is pretty close) are meant to read *ṣaḍja*, *ṛṣabha*, and *niṣāda*, which are the Sanskrit names of the first two and the seventh, respectively, among the seven tones of the classical Indian musical scale: *ṣaḍja*, *ṛṣabha*, *gāndhāra*, *madhyama*, *pañcama*, *daivata*, and *niṣāda*. It seems, then, that the intent of the passage is simply to indicate that the praises are to be rendered musically. Thanks also to Grant Damron for his clarifications on the nature of the Indian scale.

⁴⁵² *sid sgra*] P V (D), *sing sgra D C S N V (P)*.

⁴⁵³ I am not entirely sure about this line, but this seems to be the meaning. Vaidyapāda writes, “**The bodhicitta that abides in the head melts** means that regarding the path of the *bodhicitta* that resides in the head, it is by means of that path, that one drinks this elixir.” *mgor gnas byang chub sems ‘ju bas/ zhes pa ni mgor gnas pa’i byang chub kyi sems kyi lam ni des te des ro ‘thung ba’o*// (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.3-4; P 154a.7-8).

By means of this the three wisdoms⁴⁵⁴
Are known, and one's mind
Is made to experience great bliss—
This should be known as the sixth. |304|

By means of the hardness that results
From one's relying on her body⁴⁵⁵
Genuine bliss is produced—
This should be known as the seventh. |305|

The dew from her lotus and
The wetness of *bodhicitta*
Bring about great bliss in the mind—
This is known as the eighth. |306|

Due to heat—the warmth and so forth of the secret place—
One's mind is brought to the supreme,
Genuine bliss—
This should be known as the ninth. |307|

Then, through stirring, the wisdom fire
Burns the aggregates, elements, and the rest
Through this the mind becomes genuinely blissful—
This should be known as the tenth. |308|

By means of these ten
The first and the later supreme result
Are attained, just as explained above.
But for those disciples |309|

Who are unable to authentically engage in this great reality
The *tathāgatas* have taught it in terms of characteristics
Like “Perfect Joy” and the rest.⁴⁵⁶
Through engaging in this truth, and by means of [its practice] |310|

They gain realization—though there is still something higher.⁴⁵⁷
That itself⁴⁵⁸ has been taught,⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁴ Vaidyapāda explains that the three wisdoms are the wisdoms of “*sevā* and the rest.” (*Sukusuma*, D 128a.4).

⁴⁵⁵ *de yi lus ni bdag gi ni// rten du gnas pa sras pa yis//* I am unsure about the translation of these two lines.

⁴⁵⁶ *Rab tu dga' ba*, “Perfect Joy,” is the name of the first bodhisattva *bhūmi*.

⁴⁵⁷ It is not completely clear here whether Buddhajñānapāda is asserting the *path* or the *result* of tantra to be higher. It seems, however, like he is talking about the result. Vaidyapāda reads it this way: he says that via the bodhisattva *bhūmis* they attain the final result that is not the highest, whereas the unsurpassable result is attained by means of the unique path (*Sukusuma*, D 128b.1-2). This is not the only instance in which Buddhajñānapāda seems to say that the result of tantra is superior to that of *sūtric* practice. In his *Ātmasādhanāvatāra* he also states that only by means of deity yoga can one attain the result of perfect awakening. I discuss Buddhajñānapāda's position on the superiority of tantra in Chapter Three

⁴⁵⁸ Vaidyapāda explains that this refers to the ten *bhūmis* (*Sukusuma*, D 128b.2)

⁴⁵⁹ bstan] P N S V (P), brtan D C V (D)

To the yogins of the first [stage]⁴⁶⁰
[As] the support and supported *maṇḍala-cakra*. |311|

Engaging in and relying up on that one may gain realization,
But those who do not know this truth
Are not genuine buddhas. |312|

This is the self-arisen *bhagavan*
The sole supreme deity (*adhidaivata*),⁴⁶¹
Called the **adhideva*
[And] explained as the “thirteenth *bhūmi*.” |313|

In this way, as for the suchness
Of the second stage,⁴⁶²
Whichever yogin drinks this supreme nectar⁴⁶³
Together with the method |314|

[The Greatness of This Kind of Practitioner]
Certainly becomes a son of the buddhas,
A companion of the bodhisattvas,
A leader of the *vidyādhara*s,
The husband of the *dākiṇīs*. |315|

The main guide,
Leader of the *śrāvaka*s and *pratyekabuddha*s,⁴⁶⁴
The revered master of ordinary beings.
To him [i.e. the yogin] the buddhas, |316|

Bodhisattvas, wisdom deities, wrathful [deities], and others
Who abide in the realms of the ten directions,
Together with offerings of flowers,
Worship him and sing his praises |317|

From the sky
First in the morning at dawn, then in the warmth of mid-day,
And as evening comes on,⁴⁶⁵
And [then] depart to their own realms. |318|

⁴⁶⁰ Vaidyapāda clarifies that this refers to yogins who are at the generation stage level of practice (*Sukusuma*, D 128b.2-3).

⁴⁶¹ These two lines correspond to the first two *pādas* of *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*, I.2. *asau svayambhūr bhagavān eka evādhidaivataḥ*. Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for bringing this parallel to my attention and to Péter Szántó for sharing with me his draft Sanskrit edition of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-tantra*.

⁴⁶² Here Vaidyapāda describes this as “the perfection stage of the perfection stage,” following Buddhajñānapāda’s four-fold classification of the generation and perfection stages in the *Muktītilaka* (*Sukusuma*, D 128b.6-7).

⁴⁶³ Vaidyapāda seems to understand the nectar spoken of here to be wisdom, as he writes that it is to be received again and again from the guru’s mouth (*Sukusuma*, D 129a.1). I am inclined to read the line more literally.

⁴⁶⁴ *rang* ‘dren

⁴⁶⁵ *chal chil mtshams su*. Vaidyapāda also clarifies that worship at the three times of the day is being referred to here (*Sukusuma*, D 129a.4).

Thus if the pure deities
Worship him thus,
Why would the impure deities
Not do so, as well? |319|

Other ordinary sentient beings, as well,
Filling their cupped hands with flowers
With their necks [bent] low, bow at his feet
And constantly respect him—this is absolutely appropriate. |320|

He is the lord among the two-legged,
The one set forth by the omniscient,⁴⁶⁶
The one who throws off the mistaken great load,
The future vajra holder. |321|

[Faults of Deprecating Such a Practitioner]

Anyone who deprecates him,
That practitioner who is like a bull[-among-men],
Because they [also] deprecate me
I will always abandon them.⁴⁶⁷ |322|

On the other hand, since I⁴⁶⁸ abide in [his] body,
By praising and worshipping [him]
[Their] physical obscurations will be cleared away. |323|

Here in the second stage, the practitioner
Practices one-pointed retention.
Maintaining that,
By means of the *vratavidhi*,⁴⁶⁹ |324|

[And] with the goddess acting as the condition—

⁴⁶⁶ Vaidyapāda explains that this means he is sealed by omniscient wisdom, and therefore is set forth by the omniscient ones, like bodhisattvas held back from awakening by only one life time who reside in Tuṣita (*Sukusuma*, D 129a.6-7).

⁴⁶⁷ This verse is rather perplexing. Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel suggests emending the final line to *nga ni des kun dus kun spong*. “They also constantly abandon me [i.e. Mañjuśrī].” It does seem strange for Mañjuśrī, a well-known bodhisattva, to promise to forever abandon someone who deprecates him, but I have not taken the liberty of making such a significant emendation in the text. Jamgön Kongtrül, who cites this passage in his *Torch of Certainty*, does seem to take the passage to intend exactly what it says with regard to abandoning. He uses the citation to argue that one should view the guru as the Buddha and takes it to mean that Mañjuśrī dwells in the body of the guru receiving offerings, and so forth (Kongtrül 1994, 126).

⁴⁶⁸ Vaidyapāda is very clear that I means, I, Mañjuśrī (*Sukusuma*, D 129b.1).

⁴⁶⁹ Given that the “goddess acting as the condition” is mentioned in the subsequent line, it is presumably the *vidyāvrata* and its associated sexual yogas that is intended here. However, the *unmattavrata* was also specifically mentioned earlier in the text (in verse 288), so perhaps this *vrata* and its associated practices are also being referenced.

Have no doubt that the *mahāmudrā*⁴⁷⁰
Will be transferred to his mindstream in this very life. |325|

[The Yoga of *Utkrānti*]

⁴⁷¹ Now for the stage of *svādhiṣṭhāna*⁴⁷²
This will be explained
To a few yogins
Who are fortunate due to their actions. |326|

Someone who has pleased the guru
And received the vase [initiation] and the others
Together with the *samayas* and vows given by him
And has thus obtained the suchness⁴⁷³ |327|

That is found through the guru's words,⁴⁷⁴
And has realized the secret and supreme secret
[But] is not able to genuinely train by means of the activities
In the way explained [above]— |328|

He should train in this stage

⁴⁷⁰ Here Vaidyapāda glosses *mahāmudrā*: “It is [called *mahāmudrā*] because it is a **great** (*mahā*) accomplishment that is generated through the *mudrā*.” (*phyag rgya las skyes pa 'i dngos grub chen po bas na de skad de/* (*Sukusuma*, D 129b.5-6; P 156a.5).

⁴⁷¹ Vaidyapāda states, “Having in this way taught the stages [of practice] for attaining *nirvāṇa* in this life, now he teaches the stages [of practice] for attaining *nirvāṇa* in the intermediate state with the verse beginning ‘Now...’.” *de ltar mthong ba 'i chos la mya ngan las 'da' ba 'i rim pa bstan nas/ da ni bar ma dor mya ngan las 'da' ba 'i rim pa gsungs pa/ da ni zhes pa la sogs pa 'o* (*Sukusuma*, D 129b.6-7; P 156a.7-8).

⁴⁷² The term *svādhiṣṭhāna* is used in several works of the *Guhyasamāja* system, as well as in the corpi of later tantras, to refer to a number of different practices, but its use here to refer to the yoga of *utkrānti* appears unique. *Svādhiṣṭhāna* is mentioned in the *Samājottara* (verse 77), in reference to what appears to be a practice within the context of the generation stage, and the term is also used within the literature of the Ārya School to describe the third of the five stages of that tradition's perfection stage practices, called the *svādhiṣṭhānakrama*, and also termed the practice of the the illusory *samādhi* (*māyopama-samādhi*), or of the illusory body (*māyādeha*) (see Wedemeyer 2007, 68 and Tomabechi 2006, 79-81). The *Hevajra-tantra* uses the term *svādhiṣṭhāna* in what has been interpreted by commentators as just a reference to *utpannakrama* practice more generally (see Isaacson and Sferra 2014, 267 n 74). None of these usages of the term relates to *utkrānti*. However, the practice of *svādhiṣṭhāna* according to the Ārya School is the method by which the yogin produces the body or form of an awakened *buddha* (ibid.), and indeed, as we shall see below, the *utkrānti* instructions given here in the *Dvīṭīyakrama* seem to serve precisely this same function of generating a *saṃbhogakāya* form, which is done here by means of first bringing the mind into the *dharmakāya* at the time of ejecting the consciousness in the moment of death. Once the *saṃbhogakāya* form is achieved, the *Dvīṭīyakrama* contends, one will naturally take birth in the next life in a *nirmāṇakāya* form (see *Dvīṭīyakrama* verses 351-353).

⁴⁷³ Vaidyapāda specifies that this refers to having received the instructions on suchness together with the *sādhana* for accomplishing suchness via the seven yogas (*Sukusuma*, D 130a.3; P 156b.3-4). On the seven yogas see note 121, and Chapter Seven.

⁴⁷⁴ This is one of a number of instances in which Buddhajñānapāda writes about the practice of the guru directly showing the state of suchness to students, here by means of words. Such a “showing” of suchness by means of words seems, in his system to have been a practice that was connected to or immediately followed the third initiation, and indeed such a verbal communication of suchness is the dominant one among the various positions recorded in the literature about what is meant by the so-called “fourth initiation,” that later became part of the standard sequence of initiations (see e.g. Isaacson 2010b, 270-1). I discuss this topic briefly in Chapter Three and in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Of suchness, just as it is.⁴⁷⁵
At some time in the future
One will see the signs of death. |329|

When the time of death has arrived
And one is not completely overcome by illness
Engage in the yoga of *utkrānti*. |330|

The forehead and the navel,
The crown and the eyes,
The ears and nose,
The urethra, the anus, |331|

And the mouth—
Know the signs of wisdom traveling through these places.
Know that [wisdom departing from] the forehead is a sign
Of being born in the form realm, |332|

[From] the navel, as a god in the desire realm—
If the sign appears, birth there is certain.
[Emergence from] the crown of the head is a sign
That one will be reborn in the formless realm. |333|

If the wisdom is transferred out from the two nostrils⁴⁷⁶
One will be reborn in the abode of *yakṣas*.
If from the two ears,⁴⁷⁷ one will certainly go
To the abode of the *vidyādhara*s. |334|

If from the two eyes, this is a sign
That one will certainly be born as a king among men.
If the wisdom leaves from the mouth
This should be known as a sign of [birth among] the *pretas*. |335|

[If from] the urethra this should be known
As a sign of [birth among] the animals.
If the wisdom exits from the anus

⁴⁷⁵Precisely what practice background is necessary for taking up the yoga of *utkrānti* is not made entirely clear. The *Dvīṭīyakrama* appears simply to suggest that this practice is for someone who received initiation and “obtained suchness” from the guru, “and has realized the secret and the supreme secret” but was unable to train (fully?) in the practices “described above.” Vaidyapāda, explains that this refers to a disciple who has received suchness from the guru by means of the seven yogas, but who has been unable to genuinely train in it, meaning that he has begun with the generation stage, but been unable to train in accordance with both stages (*Sukusuma*, D 130a.3-4; P 156b.4-6). Vaidyapāda’s subsequent explanation gives many options for the type and frequency of practice that a yogin who wishes to perform *utkrānti* may have engaged in before undertaking this final practice, but the very fact that he includes such a list seems to indicate that he understood some type of training in suchness by means of the generation and perfection stages as a necessary prerequisite for performing the yoga of *utkrānti* at the moment of death (*Sukusuma*, D 130a.4-7; P 156b.6-157a.1).

⁴⁷⁶ sna] P N S V (D and P), rna, D C

⁴⁷⁷ rna] P N S V (D and P), sna D C

This should be known as a sign of [birth] as a hell being. |336|

Knowing in this way the aspects
Of wisdom being transferred
One should block the seven higher doors
With the syllable proclaimed by [all] five [buddhas].⁴⁷⁸ |337|

Block the urethra with *sum*
Block the anus with *kṣum*.
Having thus blocked the nine doors
By means of this procedure, |338|

Search for the abode of your mind
By doing this, it will certainly enter into space itself.
By meditating on the aggregates,
Elements, and sense sources |339|

As they are explained in the Yoga tantras,⁴⁷⁹
Through wisdom⁴⁸⁰ you will realize the unsurpassed state.
Just as explained,
One transforms oneself into the body of the deity,⁴⁸¹ |340|

And⁴⁸² the *dharmadhātu* and [one's] consciousness
Remain as the identity of the body of the buddha.⁴⁸³
Imagine a supreme nine-pronged vajra
Perfectly adorned with the five colors |341|

Of a variety of gems
Above the crown of one's head.
There, imagine one's own mind
As a five-pronged white vajra one-tenth of the size [of the previously visualized vajra]⁴⁸⁴ |342|

And examine it.
The five upper prongs represent the five methods

⁴⁷⁸ Vaidyapāda specifies that this refers to *hūṃ*, since it is proclaimed by the five buddhas (*Sukusuma*, D131a.1; P 157b.4).

⁴⁷⁹ Vaidyapāda provides an unattributed quotation here to illustrate how to visualize these—the aggregates as the buddhas, the sense sources as the *maṇḍala* bodhisattvas, and the elements as the buddha consorts (*Sukusuma*, D 131a. 5-6; P 158a.2-4).

⁴⁸⁰ gwis] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), so D C P N S.

⁴⁸¹ Vaidyapāda explains that this means to generate oneself in the form of the deity following the four-branch ritual of the generation stage (*Sukusuma*, D 131a.7-131b.1; P 158a.4-5).

⁴⁸² la] P N S, pa D C. Vaidyapāda supports this reading: *lha'i lus su gyur par byas la/* (*Sukusuma*, D 131a.7; P 158a.5).

⁴⁸³ Here I am reading the verse following Vaidyapāda's commentary which indicates that it is these two things—the *dharmadhātu* and one's consciousness—that have the identity of the body of a buddha. The third genitive particle in the Tibetan of the root verse might suggest reading the "identity" as a third member of the list, but Vaidyapāda's reading is grammatically possible even with the Tibetan translation of the verse as it is, and also seems to me a more plausible reading, so I have followed it here (*Sukusuma*, D 131b.1; P 158a.6).

⁴⁸⁴ *bcu tshal tsam*. I am unsure of the meaning of this term.

Likewise the ones facing downwards are the five wisdoms
Imagining that at⁴⁸⁵ its center is the rabbit-holder⁴⁸⁶ |343|

There, meditate upon great wisdom
Yellow, and like *bodhicitta*,
With the nature of dripping.⁴⁸⁷
This *bindu* is the size |344|

Of five chickpeas joined together.
Then imagine that all phenomena
Dissappear,⁴⁸⁸ and focus [only] on oneself.
Then oneself dissolves into oneself, |345|

And there is only mind.
This, [shoots up] like an arrow, entering into the opening
At the lower end of the vajra above one's crown and dissolves into the *bindu*.
Know that [*bindu*] |346|

To be the natural abode
Of the *tathāgatas* [and] the goddesses.
That is the primordially accomplished form.
Having placed one's consciousness there |347|

Again and again hold the mind there.
When the mind becomes dissipated from that
It emerges from the opening at the top
Of the nine-pronged vajra and, |348|

On a moondisc on top of a multi-colored lotus,
It transforms into the body of Vajrasattva.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁵ bar] sugg. em. based on Vaidyapāda's commentary, ba D C P N S. Vaidyapāda reads *dbus kyi bum pa ni de'i dbus kyi bum par ro//* (*Sukusuma*, D 131b.4; P 158b.2-3)

⁴⁸⁶ i.e. the moon. Here, according to Vaidyapāda, in the form of the reflection of the moon (*Sukusuma*, D 131b.5; P 158b.3).

⁴⁸⁷ Vaidyapāda explains the reason for each of the characteristics described. He says it has the nature of dripping because when one places one's attention upon it a definitive mental state does not arise. *de yid la byed pa la nges pa'i shes pa mi skye ba'i phyir 'dzag pa'i ngang tshul dang ldan pa'o//* (*Sukusuma*, D 131b.6; P 158b.4-5).

⁴⁸⁸ Vaidyapāda explains that this means "do not direct your attention to the appearances" of these things (*Sukusuma*, D 131b.7).

⁴⁸⁹ In Buddhajñānapāda's generation stage writings, like many other *sādhana*s and *sādhana* commentaries from this period, *vajrasattva* (*rdo rje sems dpa'*) does not mean the specific deity/buddha Vajrasattva, but is an epithet for the causal deity from which the main deity of the *sādhana* is generated, and is, in that context, interchangeable with *vajradhara* (or at least some of the commentaries on his *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana* also use the term *vajradhara* to refer to this causal deity). As such, the form of this *vajrasattva* in the generation stage is indeterminate; he can have different colors or attributes, as determined by the particular *sādhana*, and does not have the specific form of Vajrasattva as the primordial buddha (who is usually white in color and holding a bell and vajra). I am unsure how to read the term *vajrasattva* here in the *Dvīṭyākrama*, but my inclination is to read it as referring to the primordial buddha Vajrasattva, in part since no details of his appearance are given and they therefore appear to be assumed, which would only be possible if they were standard rather than indeterminate. (Though of course it is possible that this Vajrasattva should be visualized in the form of the progenitor deity *vajrasattva* described in Buddhajñānapāda's *Caturāṅga/Samantabhadra-sādhana*) Presumably there is anyway a relationship

He is adorned with all the major and minor marks
Fully ornamented, but without clothing, [349]

Visualize him very clearly.
Then imagine the emanation
And absorption of the great [*maṇḍala-*]*cakra*
Arisen from the blessings of nondual union. [350]

In this way engage in this supreme meditation
Again and again, for as long as one is able.
When one’s mind enters into the [*dharmā*]*dhatu*
Due to this contemplation [351]

One realizes that which is luminous and perfectly joyful,⁴⁹⁰ like the sky.⁴⁹¹
Then, possessed of miraculous power,⁴⁹²
One accomplishes the form of a five-year-old child
At that time, one realizes unparalleled perfect bliss. [352]

When one is transferred⁴⁹³ from that
To another rebirth
One will genuinely realize the *nirmāṇakāya*. [353]

Therefore, it is by means of the various
Attitudes of sentient beings
That the human mind is purified.
Such [cause] and such [result] [is explained] in the *sūtras*
Like [the resulting appearance of] different types of gems.⁴⁹⁴ [354]

The *dharmakāya*, perfect joy equal to the sky,

between the use of the term *vajrasattva* as an epithet of the causal deity in *sādhana* practice and the primordial buddha Vajrasattva, as the causal deity is the deity from which the *iṣṭadeva* for a given *sādhana* is produced, and, as such, it makes sense for the primordial buddha to function as the source/progenitor of any and all other deities.

⁴⁹⁰ dga’] P N S V (D and P), dag D C

⁴⁹¹ Vaidyapāda explains that this describes the attainment of the *dharmakāya*, but that this moment is referred to as the “death state” (*shi ba’i srid pa*) by “followers of karma who do not know the nature of mind” (*sem kyi rang bzhin ma shes pa’i las su smra ba*) (*Sukusuma*, D 132b.2; P 159a.1). According to Vaidyapāda’s commentary, this and the subsequent two verses are about attaining the three *kāyas*. At the time when ordinary beings experience the moment of death (*shi ba’i srid pa*) the practitioner realizes *dharmakāya*; at the time when ordinary beings would be in the intermediate state (for seven days etc) the practitioner realizes the *sambhogakāya* (here this is the practitioner taking on the form of a five-year-old child as described in the next verse); and at the time when they would be born into another body the practitioner realizes the *nirmāṇakāya*. This amounts to a description of the death process for the practitioner who has realization of suchness, in which the death processes of an ordinary being instead become the stages for the practitioner’s realization of the three *kāyas*.

⁴⁹² ldan pa] D C V (D and P), ldan pa’i P N S

⁴⁹³ ‘phen par] P N S V (D and P), ‘phel bar D C

⁴⁹⁴ Vaidyapāda explains that this is an example given to show that the statement above, about appearing in the form of the emanated body, is not contradictory. Following his explanation, the text generally seems to be saying that in the same way, due to giving rise to different thoughts (Vaidyapāda gives the example of pleasure, pain, and the seed of liberation) the human mind is variously trained, likewise, as explained in the *sūtras*, because of these differences, different forms—like those of different jewels—appear (*Sukusuma*, D 132b.4-5). This passage, which is cited in Tsongkhapa’s *Lamp to Illuminate the Five Stages* is translated rather differently in Kilty (2016, 433-4).

Is experienced for just an instant
At death, when fainting, falling asleep,
When yawning, and during intercourse.
Therefore, by training in this, embodied beings purify their minds.⁴⁹⁵ [355]

With this ritual even someone
Who has committed one of the acts of immediate retribution,⁴⁹⁶
A deluded being, or a brahmin-slayer—
None of these are precluded from accomplishment. [356]

Therefore receive the instructions and transmission
And maintain the vows and *samayas*—
Then there is no doubt that one will attain the three *kāyas*!
If one does not attain the three *kāyas*⁴⁹⁷ [357]

He will become the leader of the *vidyādhara*s
And gradually will transform into the *mahāmudrā*.⁴⁹⁸
In that way, it is explained that meditating
By means of these three [procedures⁴⁹⁹ brings about] accomplishment. [358]

Anyone who, without having realized this,
Speaks about these secrets,
I and the *tathāgatas*
Will never join with him
And give him blessing. [359]

I abide in the bodies
Of a few [individuals] who possess this understanding,⁵⁰⁰
Receiving offerings from⁵⁰¹ other practitioners.⁵⁰²
Through pleasing [those individuals], the karmic obscurations

⁴⁹⁵ Vaidyapāda explains that because these experiences are so short, without the instructions of a guru one will be unable to gain realization. However, when one does have those instructions and trains in the suchness that is experienced, then the mind becomes purified, as explained in the example above (*Sukusuma*, D 132b.6-7; P 159b.8-160a.1).

⁴⁹⁶ *Mtsham med pa*. A set of five particularly heinous evil deeds: killing one's father, one's mother, or an *arhat*, creating a rift in the *saṅgha*, and maliciously drawing blood from a *tathāgata*.

⁴⁹⁷ Vaidyapāda specifies that this means attaining the three *kāyas* in the manner that was just described above in the text (*Sukusuma*, D 133a.1-2).

⁴⁹⁸ This passage is cited by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal as indicating the situation of the lesser individual who attains *siddhi* in another lifetime (Roberts 2010, 614).

⁴⁹⁹ Vaidyapāda clarifies that this refers to the three meditations on the *bindu* (*Sukusuma*, D 133a.2).

⁵⁰⁰ *'di ni don ldan*. Vaidyapāda is very clear that this is still Mañjuśrī speaking in the first person: "The lines **I abide in the bodies...** is the opposite [of the situation previously described]. The text says **in a few** because there are not many suitable individuals. **I** Mañjuśrī **abide in their bodies.**" *'di ni don ldan zhes pa ni bzlog pa'o// 'ga' zhig la zhes pa ni snod du rung ba'i gang zag mang ba ma yin pas so// 'jam dyangs nga* (nga] P, D om.) *ni de'i lus la gnas so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 133a.5-6; P 160a8-160b.1).

⁵⁰¹ [as] sugg. em., la D C P N S V (D and P). I suggest this emendation to gramatically align with the verb *len*.

⁵⁰² I have interpreted this line following Vaidyapāda's commentary: "If someone asked, 'Why do you abide there?' It is [in order] to **receive offerings from other practitioners.**" *khyod ci'i phyir gnas she* (she] D, zhe P) *na/ sgrub pa* (P om.) *po gzhan la mchod pa len zhes so//* (*Sukusuma*, D 133a.5; P 160b.1). The grammar of this passage remains problematic, however. See previous and next note.

In the mindstreams of [those practitioners] are purified.⁵⁰³ |360|

[Essential Nature of These Instructions]

For as long as those who pass along this teaching
Into the ears [of disciples] remain,
For that long it is said
That the Buddha’s precious teaching will remain. |361|

When this lineage is broken
This should be known to everyone
As the [time of the] disappearance of the Buddha’s teaching. |362|

Therefore you should one-pointedly
Compile [these instructions]
And bring some fortunate future individuals
Who have previously generated the accumulations
Into connection with this lineage transmission. |363|

Those who connect with this [lineage]
Should be known as authentic yogins. |364|

[Mañjuśrī’s Prediction and Command for Buddhajñānapāda]

However, because of [your] conduct regarding food,
And holding a slight delusion with respect to me
You will not, in this very life,
Bring about a complete transformation of the state of
Your body—the aggregates including form. |365|

However, you will accomplish consciousness,
Which is indestructible, as the *mahāmudrā*.⁵⁰⁴ |366|

⁵⁰³ Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that this verse refers to the practice of generating oneself as the deity in generation stage practice, and making offerings to oneself (in the form of offering goddesses) as a way of purifying obscurations (personal communication, February 2016). The grammar of the verse is problematic, however, given that the verb *len* does not go with the particle “to” (*la*), and we find this problematic reading in all versions of the text. I have suggested emending *la* to *las*, in order to make the grammar work better, but with this reading it is difficult to understand the verse as Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel has suggested.

⁵⁰⁴ This verse seems, in Vaidyapāda’s commentary—and definitely is in its interpretation by later commentators and historians—to be understood to refer to the fact that Buddhajñānapāda gave rise to doubt with respect to the monk, himself an emanation of Mañjuśrī, who emanated the *maṇḍala* of Mañjuśrī from which Buddhajñānapāda received these instructions. Vaidyapāda reports that the “conduct regarding food” refers to Buddhajñānapāda’s refusal of “the cooked rice and yogurt vomited by the female dog and the cooked fish.” Later Tibetan historians elaborate that these were foods served to Buddhajñānapāda by the female companion of the “emanated monk” who eventually emanated Mañjuśrī’s *maṇḍala* for Buddhajñānapāda, prior to that visionary experience. The “slight delusion with respect to me,” according to Vaidyapāda, refers to Buddhajñānapāda’s lack of faith toward the “vajra holder” (Vaidyapāda’s term for the emanated monk) based on his confusion (*Sukusuma*, D 133b.1-2). Vaidyapāda’s comments on the subsequent lines of the verse are difficult to understand, but the later historians interpret the whole episode to mean that these mistakes made it impossible for Buddhajñānapāda to attain the final fruition in this body (i.e. not bringing about a complete transformation of his body as referred to in the verse itself), so he had to wait for full awakening in the intermediate state at the time of death. Various versions of these accounts are found in Chogyal Phagpa’s *Gsang ‘dus ye shes zhabs kyi rnam thar dang rgyud pa’i rim pa*, Gö Lotsāwa’s *Deb ther sngon po*, Tāranātha’s *Rgya gar chos ‘byung* and his *Bka’ babs bdun*, Amnye Zhab’s *Gsang ‘dus chos ‘byung*, and Dudjom Rinpoche’s *History of*

Therefore you should compose with a genuine intention
A *sādhana*, *homa*,
Bali, *gaṇacakra*,⁵⁰⁵
Summary, commentary,
Maṇḍala-vidhi, and so forth⁵⁰⁶ |367|

For the first stage
Of the tantra that is the gathering all the buddhas,
Which is greatly secret,⁵⁰⁷ secret and, supremely secret—⁵⁰⁸
This great scripture, surpassed by none— |368|

[To be] like a scalpel⁵⁰⁹ for sentient beings who are
Obscured by the darkness of ignorance. |369|

the Nyingma School. Certainly this is not an exhaustive list of Tibetan accounts of Buddhajñānapāda’s life. I am grateful also to Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel for his explanations clarifying the details of Buddhajñānapāda’s life story and the intent of this verse (Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communications, January and February 2016). I discuss several accounts of Buddhajñānapāda’s life in Chapter One.

⁵⁰⁵ *sna tshogs ‘khor lo*.

⁵⁰⁶ Vaidyapāda explains that each of these refer to texts that Mañjuśrī is commanding Buddhajñānapāda to compose, and he identifies many of these texts, making this section of his commentary the earliest list we have of texts purportedly composed by Buddhajñānapāda. The *sādhana*, Vaidyapāda says, is the “three *Samantabhadrīs*” (*kun tu bzang mo gsum*); the *homa* is [for?] the generation stage, and he notes that there are two such *homa* rituals; the *bali* ritual is that for the unfaltering Tārā (*mi nub pa’i sgrol ma*); the *gaṇacakra* text is *Mahāgaṇacakra* (though it is unclear if this is meant to be the name of a text or simply stating that it is a ritual for the practice of the *mahāgaṇacakra*; the summary is the *Blazing Gem* (*rin po che ‘bar ba*), the commentary “he did not compose.” As for the *maṇḍalavidhi*, Vaidyapāda notes, “Regarding the *maṇḍalavidhi*, the one in two hundred and fifty verses is said to have been taken off to Kaśmir and I, myself, have not seen it.” (*dkyil ‘khor cho ga ni shlo* (shlo] D, shlō P) *ka nyis brgya lnga bcu pa de kha che’i yul du khyer zhes grags te/ bdag cag gis ma mthong ngo//*. (*Sukusuma* D 134a.1-2; P 161a.7) Vaidyapāda then goes on to explain that the “and so forth” includes the *Great Root Wisdom* (*rtsa ba’i ye shes chen po*) and the *Treasure of Verses* (*tshigs su bcad pa’i mdzod*), the *Muktilaka* (*grol ba’i thig le*), and the *Āmasāadhanāvātāra* (*bdag nyid grub par ‘byung ba*; usually rendered as *bdag nyid grub pa la ‘jug pa*, but presumably it refers to the same text here), the **Bodhicittabindu* (*byang chub sems kyi thig le*), the *Great Commentary on Glorious Auspiciousness* (*dpal bkra shis kyi rnam par bshad pa chen po*), *The Method for Engaging in the Fourth* (*bzhi pa la ‘jug pa’i thabs*), and three Jambhala *sādhana*s. Vaidyapāda then notes that these fourteen teachings were composed in accordance with Mañjuśrī’s prediction (*Sukusuma*, D 133b.7-134a.3). Some of these texts we know and others we do not. The only way I have been able to make this list total fourteen is by counting each of the texts listed in the root text as one (7; ignoring the fact that Vaidyapāda says that the *sādhana* actually refers to three texts, and the *homa* to two), subtracting the commentary that Vaidyapāda says was not composed (-1), and adding the texts Vaidyapāda lists in as part of the etc (+8; again ignoring the fact that the “three Jambhala *sādhana*s” counts only as one of the eight). (I discovered only later that Gö Lotsāwa had previously engaged in a similar mathematical endeavor regarding this list of fourteen! (*Deb ther sngon po*, Vol I, 550).) The texts in this list that are identifiable among Buddhajñānapāda’s surviving works are: the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* (It is interesting that Vaidyapāda mentions “three *Samantabhadrīs*,” as there are two translations of the *sādhana* into Tibetan under two different names, the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* and the *Caturaṅga-sāghanopāyikā-samantabhadrī-nāma*, as well as a third “Samantabhadra” text, the *Kun tu bzang po bsod don*, which is listed in the Peking Tengyur catalogue, but the text itself is strangely absent from the place where it should be in that Tengyur, and is not mentioned even in the catalogues of the other Tengyurs); the *Muktilaka*, the *Āmasāadhanāvātāra*, and the three Jambhala *sādhana*s (*Bhaṭṭārakāryajambhalajalendra-sādhana*, *Guhyajambhalasādhana*, and *Vistarajambhalasādhana*). I discuss Buddhajñānapāda’s extant compositions in Chapter One.

⁵⁰⁷ *gsang chen*

⁵⁰⁸ *ches gsang ba*

⁵⁰⁹ *thur ma, śalākā*. According to Vaidyapāda’s commentary such an instrument is used “to clear away cataracts” (*ling tog rnam bsal*) (*Sukusuma*, D 134a.4; P 161b.2).

Therefore the great yogins of the future,
Should please a guru who knows this,
And, having received it with genuine desire,
Should train their mind in this. |370|

The mind, when it has fully abandoned conceptuality,
Joins with that and awareness arises there.
When awareness has arisen, one accomplishes
The [state of] a vajra holder. |371|

Due to that they will then⁵¹⁰ genuinely accomplish
Buddhahood,⁵¹¹ the *pāramitās*, *dhārāṇī*,
All the *bhūmis*, and great bliss.
Since everything arises from great bliss, |372|

If one trains in this, why would this [result] not occur?
Therefore, with great effort,
At least make aspirations⁵¹²
Towards this supreme suchness, the perfectly secret secret,
[Or⁵¹³] endeavor feverently towards its accomplishment! |373|

A la la ho!”

[Conclusion of the Visionary Encounter]

In this way with the vajra song like an echo, together with the playful dance
And the [*maṇḍala-*] *cakra*, right then⁵¹⁴ he sang and praised me⁵¹⁵
Then, right there, he disappeared like a cloud into the sky⁵¹⁶
And the monk and two gurus also likewise disappeared. |374|

[Autobiography: Part II]

In a place fifty *krośas* behind Vajrāsana
I lived in the Parvata cave. In order to benefit beings
I compiled this [text, the *Dvīṭyākrama*], composed and taught all of the treatises,⁵¹⁷ and so forth.

⁵¹⁰ Vaidyapāda clarifies that this does not mean subsequently, but rather that these other attainments arise from the power of the accomplishment of the state of being a vajra holder (*Sukusuma*, D 134b.2).

⁵¹¹ It is worth noting here that Buddhajñānapāda states that after having become a vajra holder then subsequently the practitioner will accomplish buddhahood, the *pāramitās*, *dhārāṇī*, etc, as if buddhahood itself were somehow of a lower status than being a vajra holder. Vaidyapāda specifies that this is the “buddhahood of the lesser stages” (*sa ‘og ma’i sangs rgyas*) (*Sukusuma*, D 134b.1; P 161b.8).

⁵¹² smon lam] P N V (D and P), smon las D C, smon la S

⁵¹³ Presumably what is meant here is, “Or, better yet...”

⁵¹⁴ *de nyid*. I am following Vaidyapāda in interpreting that as referring to the immediate moment (*Sukusuma*, D134b.6).

⁵¹⁵ Vaidyapāda seems to suggest that the song of praise is from, or perhaps located in, the previously mentioned **Gathākośa* (*Sukusuma*, D 134b.6).

⁵¹⁶ Unusually, this short section of Vaidyapāda’s commentary appears to be commenting on a line or lines of the root text that are not extant in our version of the *Dvīṭyākrama* (*Sukusuma*, D 134b.7-135a.2).

⁵¹⁷ Vaidyapāda explains that this refers to the treatises mentioned above, that Mañjuśrī commanded Buddhajñānapāda to compose (*Sukusuma*, D 135a.3-4).

Since excellent beings made extensive supplications, I was delighted [to do so]. [375]

Living there together, my retinue⁵¹⁸ and I [received] necessities,
Clothing, food, a treasury of jewels, and various vast offering substances for *gaṇacakra*.
[From] the tenth-ground bodhisattva the treasure guard,⁵¹⁹ great Jambhala
Each day we regularly received seven hundred *kārṣāpaṇa*. [376]

Then I traveled to meet the great guru Pālitapāda⁵²⁰
In order to please that guru, I compiled⁵²¹ some short *sādhanas*⁵²²
And the guru and all the others there were pleased.
I returned to the place I had come from and⁵²³ joyfully performed the benefit of some⁵²⁴ fortunate
[individuals]. [377]

[Buddhajñānapāda's Advice and Injunction to Practice]

Thus in this way everyone, having come to know the detailed accounts [of my life],⁵²⁵
Should, using all methods, please the sublime and sincere learned one,⁵²⁶
And listen to and contemplate his teachings, compositions, and so forth. [378]

Through relying upon that, remaining in isolated places and the rest,
Training one's mind in suchness, and genuinely realizing the way things are,

⁵¹⁸ Vaidyapāda notes that this includes eighteen disciples who functioned as his regents, among whom there were four disciples who attained nirvāṇa in this lifetime: Dīpaṃkarabhadra (*mar me mdzad bzang po*) *Praśāntamitra (*rab tu zhi ba'i bshes gnyan*), *Rahulabhadra (*sgra gcan 'dzin bzang po*) and *Vajramahāsukha (*rdo rje bde ba chen po*) (*Sukusuma*, D 135a.5-6; P 162b.8-163a.1).

⁵¹⁹ srung] D C V (D), gsung P N S V (P).

⁵²⁰ bā li pā da'i] D C, bha li pa trī P N S. Vaidyapāda's commentary, however, reads *bsrung ba'i zhabs*. For this and a number of other reasons cited in his article, I follow Szántó in identifying this guru as Pālitapāda (Szántó 2015, 542). In the edition, however, I have left the rendering from the Derge and Cone Tengyurs because to "correctly" phoneticize the teacher's name would render the line unmetrical.

⁵²¹ It is worth noting that Buddhajñānapāda here uses the word "compile" (*bsdus*) rather than "compose." He uses the term compile to describe the compilation of the *Dvīṭīyakrama*, but that is presumably because it is in fact Mañjuśrī's teaching, which he is only compiling within the framework of his own narrative. "Compiling" rather than "composing" these *sādhanas* may hint to a process more revelatory than compositional, or it may simply be an acknowledgement that sections of the *sādhana* were compiled from other sources, most prominently the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* itself.

⁵²² Vaidyapāda seems to take this to refer to more than one *sādhana*, as he notes that it refers to "those" that were mentioned above (*Sukusuma*, D 135b.1).

⁵²³ nas] P N S, gnas D C.

⁵²⁴ 'ga'] D C V (D and P), dga' P N S

⁵²⁵ Vaidyapāda here refers to several accounts of Buddhajñānapāda's life as if they are already well-known stories that will be understood by anyone reading his text. "Having come to know all of the detailed accounts means having engendered even more faith in the fortunate by means of the detailed accounts of the great master: the taming of Nālandā, the offerings made at Vajrāsana, the consecration, and so forth." (*gtam rgyud rgyas par shes byas nas/ zhes pa ni bla ma chen po'i gtam rgyud* (P om.) *rgyas pa ni na landa* (landa] P, lendra D) 'dul ba dang/ rdo rje gdan gyi mchod pa byas pa dang/ rab tu gnas pa byas pa la sogs pa'i lo rgyus kyis skal pa dang lcdan pa cher dad par byas nas/ (*Sukusuma*, D 135b. 3-4; P 163a.7-8). These same accounts are described in a number of later Tibetan histories in much more detail, though unfortunately not to my knowledge in any earlier Indian sources, so it seems they survived only in the oral tradition until their recording centuries later by Tibetan historians. See note 504 for a list of Tibetan accounts of Buddhajñānapāda's life. I also discuss some of these accounts in Chapter One.

⁵²⁶ Vaidyapāda says the "learned one" refers to the *bla ma* himself, which is the term Vaidyapāda uses throughout the commentary to refer to Buddhajñānapāda (*Sukusuma*, D 135b.4).

[One can] attain awakening in this very life, or [even] in [just] six months, and so forth—who could refute this!? |379|

The one who drinks this supreme nectar is the object of respect of all sentient beings
That great⁵²⁷ being is praised by Vajradhara and all the *sugatas*
Since the seeds of all of mistaken obscurations are exhausted,
And although he may remain in *samsāra* he remains always unstained by faults, like a lotus.
|380|

If he does not attain [awakening] now, then in the future⁵²⁸
The result of genuine experience will be brought to ripening.
In the *mantrin*'s mind, the genuinely arisen vast accomplishment will be obtained
And he will travel to all worlds, with a retinue as numerous as sand grains from the [River]
Ganga. |381|

Therefore like [someone who has] fallen down into a whirlpool,
One should bring forth exertion in body, speech, and mind,
And, stage-by-stage, as [explained] before, accomplish this [result]. |382|

This body [endowed with] freedoms and riches so easily wavers
Just like a flame blown out by a gust of wind
It lasts barely a moment—time passes by.
Therefore don't let this go to waste—
Train in the great supreme suchness of all things! |383|

Having become certain about this practice [of] suchness,
One will become just as explained above.
Therefore, make the mind stable!
I supplicate [thus] to sentient beings. |384|

Because this [teaching] is secret
Those who desire [to realize] suchness should
Please a genuine guru who understands this and ask of him
Whatever [points] I have not explained clearly. |385|

Engage genuinely with yogic conduct in this and
Train⁵²⁹ well in that which bestows the result of the essential essence.
This should be authentically received from the words
Of a great guru who has gone beyond, who is a treasure⁵³⁰ of limitless qualities. |386|

Thus the meaning of the Mahāyoga tantras

⁵²⁷ chen] P N S, can D C

⁵²⁸ Vaidyapāda explains that *de ru* means “this year” and *lan drang gzhan* means some time after this; after two, three, or an indeterminate number of years (*Sukusuma*, D 136a.4).

⁵²⁹ sbyong] P N S V (D and P), spyod D C

⁵³⁰ gter] D C rten P N S

Though it may appear unpalatable,⁵³¹ like the example of the sun,⁵³²
Is capable of benefiting oneself and others
Therefore, certain yogins must genuinely endeavor towards it. |387|

With faith, free from doubts and hesitations,
Having accomplished this purpose, and taken up what is genuine,
Train oneself again and again with wisdom.
In this way the great nondual wisdom, like the circle of the moon in clear water,
Will arise within oneself—of this have no doubts! |388|

With the naturally accomplished pith instructions,
Through relying upon a genuine lineage teacher,
And one's own previously gathered accumulation of merit—
One will come to realize this. |389|

Apart from⁵³³ these [circumstances], those with little merit
Even in countless aeons will not realize this
If one has not realized this reality⁵³⁴ he is not called a great yogin. |390|

Having come to fully understand this,
[One knows] the universal form of the wisdom of the great perfection,⁵³⁵
The perfectly pure body, Great Vajradhara,
The essence of all the great glorious ones, this second stage.⁵³⁶ |391|

Even following the path with suffering for three aeons
The concordant awakening that one attains can be surpassed.
Why would a yogin who is so attached⁵³⁷ to the very limited bliss of that [result]
Not train in this [path instead]?⁵³⁸ |392|

Residing in a delightful place
With a mind [full of] faith, diligence, concentration, wisdom, and attention,

⁵³¹ *mi 'tsham par*

⁵³² I am still unclear on this example and its explanation in Vaidyapāda's commentary (*Sukusuma*, D 137a.4).

⁵³³ *gtogs*] sugg. em., *rtogs D C P N S*

⁵³⁴ Vaidyapāda notes that this remains the case even if one has attained the highest realization of a bodhisattva, and so forth (*Sukusuma*, D 137b.3-4).

⁵³⁵ *rdzogs pa chen po*. This line is often cited by Tibetan Nyingma scholars as evidence of the practice of the “great perfection” in Indian Buddhism. Vaidyapāda glosses the term as “the second part of the second stage” (*rim pa gnyis pa'i rim pa gnyis pa*), thus associating it with the four-fold schema of generation and perfection stages found in Buddhajñānapāda's *Muktītilaka* (*Sukusuma*, D 137b.6). I discuss this and another use of the term *rdzogs pa chen po* in the translations of Buddhajñānapāda's writings in Chapter Four.

⁵³⁶ *rim gnyis 'di* ('di] sugg. em. based on V (D and P), 'dis D C P N S). Vaidyapāda clearly indicates that *rim gnyis 'di* is to be understood as the “second stage,” the perfection stage (or, according to P, the “perfection stage of the perfection stage”) only, rather than to the “two stages.” (*Sukusuma*, D 137b.7-138a.1; P 166a.5). I have translated in accordance with his comments, somewhat (but not completely unfeasibly; *rim gnyis* could very easily be an abbreviation of *rim pa gnyis pa* made for metrical reasons) against the grain of the Tibetan translation of the root text, which would be more easily translated as the “two stages.” Moreover, given that the topic of the verse is wisdom, “the second stage” really seems to be the better reading.

⁵³⁷ *chags*] P N S V(D and P), *tshogs D C*.

⁵³⁸ Dudjom Rinpoche cites this passage of Buddhajñānapāda, as well as Vaidyapāda's commentary, in his *Nyingma School* (Dorje and Kapstein, 313).

One should train only in this ever-excellent supreme path
In accordance with its previously-described stages! |393|

[Dedication and Aspiration]

By the stainless virtue, perfectly white like the light of the snow[-white] moon,
That has arisen from compiling these oral instructions
May some⁵³⁹ fortunate beings of the future meet with this truth
And with sincere faith may they take it up and train in this supreme [truth]! |394|

When one has been cleansed and sprinkled and made pure, and thus become a great *ācārya*⁵⁴⁰
Who holds all of the tantras, and brings others to connect with all tantras,⁵⁴¹
And having perfectly realized the first stage and purified all stains,
May the yogin become a suitable vessel for illusory wisdom!⁵⁴² |395|

Through respectfully [serving at] the feet of a compassionate guru
And by means of that which has the rabbit-holder's form,⁵⁴³ may one's mindstream be perfectly
ripened
So that the field is purified,⁵⁴⁴ and one perfectly realizes the reality of phenomena to be illusory
and the like:
In this way may all beings, like Maitreya and others, arrive [in that state].⁵⁴⁵ |396|

⁵⁴⁶ Through the blessings of the *sahaja* [guru]⁵⁴⁷ [and] the great compassionate revered master,⁵⁴⁸
[One] encounters bliss, through which one [realizes] the undeciving truth, just as it is,
The supreme, great pure essence of all things, the drop which is the sixteenth part,⁵⁴⁹

⁵³⁹ 'ga'] P N S, dga' D C

⁵⁴⁰ Vaidyapāda explains that this is by means of receiving the *ācārya* initiation (*Sukusuma*, 128b.2). This line and Vaidyapāda's commentary on it are cited in Jamgön Kongtrül's *Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (Kongtrül, 205).

⁵⁴¹ Vaidyapāda here specifies that all the tantras refers to "the Kriyā, Cārya, Yoga and Yoganiruttara mantras and tantras" (*bya ba dang / spyod pa dang/ rnal 'byor dang/ rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i sngags dang rgyud*) (*Sukusuma*, D 138b.3; P 167a.2-3)

⁵⁴² Here Vaidyapāda associates the vessel mentioned here with the vase (*kalaśa*) initiation, and identifies this passage as referring to the receiving of the *kalaśābhiṣeka* (*Sukusuma*, D 138b.4). The next two verses refer to the *guhya*- and *prajñājñānābhiṣekas*, respectively.

⁵⁴³ This is a reference to the moon, and therefore a metaphor for the *bindu* of *bodhicitta*.

⁵⁴⁴ I believe this is yet another instance in which Buddhajñānapāda takes a Mahāyāna concept—here the concept of *zhing sbyang ba*, the "cultivation/purification of the [buddha]field," and reenvisioning it according to a tantric paradigm. Vaidyapāda explains the *zhing* here as referring to the aggregates of the yogin himself (*Sukusuma*, D 138b.6-7). Thus the field that is purified here is indeed the body of the yogin himself. This is an internalization of the concept of the purification of the field, directing it towards the locus of the yogin's body—the macrocosm having become microcosm. This supports Jacob Dalton's (2004) analysis of the interiorization of ritual during precisely this period.

⁵⁴⁵ This line is a bit grammatically unclear. Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel explains that the basic sense is the aspiration for all beings to follow in Maitreya's footsteps (Khenchen Chodrak Tenphel, personal communication, March 2016).

⁵⁴⁶ The grammar of this verse is somewhat unclear, but the general sense seems clear enough. This verse is a reference to the *guhya* initiation. Much of the language used in this verse reflects the language in the verses above on that initiation.

⁵⁴⁷ Vaidyapāda identifies the *sahaja* as the "*sahaja guru*," which in this system refers to the consort, and indicates that her "blessing" refers to union with her (*Sukusuma*, D 139a.1). While the previous two verses refer to the *kalaśābhiṣeka* and *guhya* initiation, respectively, this one refers to the *prajñājñānābhiṣeka*.

⁵⁴⁸ Vaidyapāda explains that this refers to the causal guru, which in this system is the guru from whom one receives initiation and instruction (*Sukusuma*, D 139a.1-2).

⁵⁴⁹ Vaidyapāda explains that this is *bodhicitta* (*Sukusuma*, D 139a.3).

Achieved through resting,⁵⁵⁰ the great instruction⁵⁵¹ —may you come to encounter this! |397|

Having encountered this, with a mind filled with deep respect,
With neck held low,⁵⁵² and through investigating,⁵⁵³ the self-aware *dharmakāya* is attained.
[Thus] may the three realms be filled with awakened body, speech, and mind
And uncountable emanations, liberating all beings from existence! |398|

[Colophon]

This completes [the treatise] called *Training in the Suchness of the Second Stage*, the oral instructions of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, a lineage passed from mouth to mouth, which were compiled by the great *maṇḍalācārya*,⁵⁵⁴ Buddhaśrījñānapāda.

It was translated, edited, and finalized by the great Indian scholar⁵⁵⁵ Kamalaguhya and the great Tibetan *lotsāwa* Ngadak⁵⁵⁶ Lha Yeshe Gyaltzen.

⁵⁵⁰ Vaidyapāda clarifies that it is “attained through resting” since it is encountered through the winds resting in the central channel (*Sukusuma*, D 139a.3-4).

⁵⁵¹ Vaidyapāda notes that this is called a “great instruction” because it is encountered by means of method (*Sukusuma*, D 139a.4).

⁵⁵² Vaidyapāda explains this refers to keeping undistracted focus on the generation stage practice (*Sukusuma*, 139a.5).

⁵⁵³ Vaidyapāda explains that this means examining the innate nature via the second stage of practice (*Sukusuma*, 139a.5).

⁵⁵⁴ om.] sugg. em., *lha* D C P N S. I suggest omitting *lha* here, though it is present in all recensions of the *Dvitiyākrama*. To call Buddhajñānapāda a *deva* would indeed be a very unusual epithet, and I believe it is more likely that the *lha* from the translator Lha Yeshe Gyaltzen’s name was somehow added in front of Buddhajñānapāda’s name, as well, in a scribal error.

⁵⁵⁵ *mkhan po*

⁵⁵⁶ P N S om.

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- *So sor 'brang ma chen mo'i bsrung ba*. Tōh. 3124. *Sde dge bka' 'gyur, rgyud, pu*, ff. 220a.6-224b.3.
- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, tu*, ff. 248b.5-254b.5.

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- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, dbu ma, ha*, ff. 402a.1-413b.8.

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- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, ngi*, ff. 9b.2-174b.6.

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- *Grol ba'i thig le*. Tōh. 1859. *Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, di*, ff. 47a.1-52a.7.
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- *Mdor bsdus pa'i sgrub thabs kyi 'grel pa rin chen phreng ba zhes bya ba*. Tōh. 1826. *Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, ci*, ff. 1b.1-95a.6.
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- *Dbu ma'i man ngag rin po che'i za ma tog kha phye ba zhes bya ba*. Tōh 3930. *Sde dge bstan 'gyur, dbu ma, ki*, 96b.1-116b.7.

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- *Mi shigs pa'i rin po che zhe bya ba'i sgrub thabs*. *Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, pi*, ff. 81a.2-84b.2.

Ratnāvalī of **Ranākaraśānti**. *Piṇḍīkṛtasādhanopāyikāvṛtti-ratnāvalī-nāma*.

- *Mdor bsdus pa'i sgrub thabs kyi 'grel pa rin chen phreng ba zhes bya ba*. Tōh. 1826. *Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, ci*, ff. 1b.1-95a.6.

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Samantabhadrārthasaṃgraha of **Buddhajñānapāda(?)**.

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Samantabhadra-sādhana of **Buddhajñānapāda** = *Caturaṅga-sādhana* of Buddhajñānapāda⁴

- *Samantabhadra-nāma-sādhana. Kun tu bzang po zhes bya ba'i sgrub pa'i thabs. Tōh 1855. Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, di, ff. 28b.6-36a.5.*
- *Kun tu bzang po zhes bya ba'i sgrub pa'i thabs. Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, ti, ff. 33b.3-42b.5.*
- *Caturaṅgasāadhanopāyikā-samantabhadrī-nāma. Yan lag bzhi pa'i sgrub thabs kun tu bzang mo zhes bya ba. Tōh. 1856. Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, di, ff. 36a.5-42b.5.*
- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, ti, ff. 42b.5-51a.4.*

Samantabhadrasādhana-vṛtti of **Śrīphalavajra**.

- *Kun tu bzang po 'i sgrub pa 'i thabs kyi 'grel pa. Tōh. 1867. Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, di, ff. 139b.3-187b.3.*

Samantabhadrī-ṭīkā of **Vaidyapāda**. *Caturaṅgasāadhanopāyikāsamantabhadrī-nāma-ṭīkā*.

- *Yan lag bzhi pa'i sgrub thabs kun tu bzang mo zhes bya ba'i rnam par bshad pa. Tōh. 1872. Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, ni, ff. 130b.1-178b.7.*
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- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, ji, 208a.7-202a.7.*

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- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, ti, ff. 274b.4-330a.6.*
- See Tanaka, 2010, pp. 505-550.
- See Kano 2014.

Saptaṅga of **Vāgīśvarakīrti**.

- *Yan lag bdun pa. Tōh. 1888. Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, pi, ff. 190a.3-203a.3.*

⁴ What might otherwise appear to be two different compositions, preserved with different titles in the Tibetan canon, are, in fact, the same text.

- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, thi*, ff. 224b.5-238b.8.

Sarvasamayasaṃgraha of **Atīśa**.

- *Dam tshig thams cad bsdus pa zhes bya ba*. Tōh. 3735. *Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, tshu*, ff. 44a.1-49b.1.
- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, nu*, 253b.6-259b.8.

Sarvayānālokaravaibhāṣya of **Subhūtihoṣa**

- *Theg pa thams cad snang bar byed pa'i bye brag tu bshad pa zhes bya ba*. Tōh. 3907. *Sde dge bstan 'gyur, dbu ma, a*, ff. 306a4-313a.7.

Siddhisambhavanidhi of **Vaidyapāda**. *Śrīguhyasamājasādhana-siddhisambhavanidhi*.

- *Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sgrub pa'i thabs dngos grub 'byung ba'i gter*. Tōh. 1874. *Sde dge bstan 'gyur, rgyud, pi*, ff. 1a.1-69b.6.
- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, thi*, 1a.1-83a.4.

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- *Pe king bstan 'gyur, rgyud 'grel, ti*, ff. 224a.2-274b.4.

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