The author of this thesis has granted the University of Calgary a non-exclusive license to reproduce and distribute copies of this thesis to users of the University of Calgary Archives.

Copyright remains with the author.

Theses and dissertations available in the University of Calgary Institutional Repository are solely for the purpose of private study and research. They may not be copied or reproduced, except as permitted by copyright laws, without written authority of the copyright owner. Any commercial use or re-publication is strictly prohibited.

The original Partial Copyright License attesting to these terms and signed by the author of this thesis may be found in the original print version of the thesis, held by the University of Calgary Archives.

Please contact the University of Calgary Archives for further information:
E-mail: uarc@ucalgary.ca
Telephone: (403) 220-7271
Website: http://archives.ucalgary.ca
Abstract

The *cakra* system is a very elaborate internal *manḍala* that is transposed onto the physical body of a practitioner. The components of the *cakra* system form an elaborate paradigm within the body that correspond to and reflect different realities of the external environment. In the esoteric tradition one of the means by which a practitioner comes to identify oneself with a higher level of reality and achieve a non-dual state of consciousness is by visualizing and experiencing the internal *cakra* system. In this thesis the role of the *cakra* system as found in the *Hevajratantra* will be examined because without an internal experience of the *cakra* system it becomes difficult to understand the significance of the external ritual practice. In short this thesis will demonstrate how the *cakra* system is foundational for an inner spiritual experience and the development of a practitioner's spiritual growth.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Leslie Kawamura, for his patience and support while writing this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Charles Willemen for sharing with me his knowledge of the esoteric practice associated with the Hevajratantra. I would especially like to thank Dr. Hillary Rodrigues for serving as my External Committee member. I would also like to express my gratitude to my teacher Seva Simran for his insight and encouragement throughout this process. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to my family and friends, for their support and encouragement in my endeavours.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to all my friends and family, who provided great support and encouragement throughout my academic endeavor.
# Table of Contents

Approval Page.............................................................................. ... .................................................................................................9
Abstract......................................................................................... iii
Acknowledgements............................................................................... iv
Dedication.......................................................................................... v
Table of Contents................................................................................ vi
List of Tables........................................................................................ vii
INTRODUCTION .............................................................................. 1
I. Overview.......................................................................................... 1
II. Purpose............................................................................................ 3
III. Review of Existing Literature:............................................................ 5
IV. Summary of Thesis........................................................................... 6
CHAPTER ONE .............................................................................. 9
I. Background of the Tantras.................................................................. 9
II. The Hevajra Tantra........................................................................... 13
   A. Overview..................................................................................... 13
   B. Historical Background of the Hevajra Tantra.................................. 17
      1. Root Text ............................................................................... 17
      2. Commentaries........................................................................... 18
      3. Date of Composition................................................................... 19
      4. Popularity.................................................................................. 20
      5. Intent of the Hevajra Tantra Terminology..................................... 20
C. Contents of the First Chapter of the Hevajra Tantra.......................... 23
D. Abhiseka............................................................................................ 27
CHAPTER TWO .............................................................................. 33
   Inter-linear translation of kye'i rdo-rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po (Hevajra Tantra) and kye'i rdo-rje rgyud kyi dka' 'grel padma can zhes bya ba (Hevajra tantrapāṇijākāpadaṃśa)........................................................................... 33
CHAPTER THREE ........................................................................... 54
I. Exposition of the Main Components of the Cakra system................... 54
II. Synopsis of the Major Concepts forming the Cakra System.................. 59
II. Function of the Cakra System in Religious Experience: External Practice and Internal Meditation................................................................. 65
CONCLUSION...................................................................................... 77
I. Overview.......................................................................................... 77
II. Speculations and Future Considerations............................................. 80
BIBLIOGRAPHY .............................................................................. 82
APPENDIX ONE ............................................................................ 89
   Interlinear Edition of ཉིན་ལེགས་ཐོབ་བསྡུན་གྲོགས་པ and ཉིན་ལེགས་ཐོབ་བསྡུན་གྲོགས་པ་དེར་བརྟེན་པ།........................................ 89
List of Tables

Table 1. The Four-fold Cakra System.................................................................25
INTRODUCTION

I. Overview

Generally speaking, the *cakra* system is an elaborate system of energy, vital forces, channels and centres that comprise the internal structure of the subtle body. The subtle body exists within the practitioner's physical body¹ and is cultivated by the practitioner during ritual practice. A very dynamic tool used by the practitioner as a basis for meditation, the *cakra* system is not a concrete entity, but rather is a means of visualization used by a practitioner. The contents of the visualization are then transposed onto the physical body to form a subtle internal structure that can be manipulated by the practitioner. Therefore, the *cakra* system is very subjective and any attempt to concretise it will lead to inconsistencies in its formation and function. Thus, scholars such as R. Beer state that the *cakra* system is purely experiential.² The process of visualizing the *cakra* system and the movement of the energy through the system comprise the internal practice of a practitioner.

Although different texts and schools vary slightly from each other in their discussion of the *cakra* system, they all have the same purpose, which is to provide a foundation for the internal meditation of a practitioner. For the purpose of this thesis, a practitioner is defined as a person who undergoes the process of the four consecrations.

This thesis examines the role of the *cakra* system as found in the first chapter of the *Hevajra Tantra*. It discusses how the inner experience of the practitioner is foundational for the external ritual practice to become meaningful. Specifically, this thesis examines how the *cakra* system functions in the development of the religious experience of a practitioner. The religious experience of a practitioner is characterized

---


²
by the movement of energy through the cakra system. This movement of the energy is fundamental for the practitioner to attain a state of non-dual consciousness.

The importance of the internal practice and the function of the cakra system is demonstrated first by translating the root text, the Hevajratantra, and then by discussing the importance of specific aspects of the translated material. Specifically, it is the cakra system as explained in the root text, the Hevajratantra that is the focus of this study. The Hevajratantra was chosen because it provides a very detailed outline of the cakra system that is visualized by the practitioner. It is the first chapter of the Hevajratantra that provides the information on the cakra system. David L. Snellgrove states that most tantric texts are composed in an incoherent manner, making them difficult to read and therefore to comprehend.\(^3\) In an attempt to elucidate the meaning of the root text, the Hevajratantrapaññikāpadmanāma, a commentary on the Hevajratantra has been consulted. Unfortunately, it is not as clear or coherent as the root text on which it purports to comment.

There already exist three translations of the Hevajratantra in English. Two of the three translations of the Hevajratantra are translations from Sanskrit manuscripts, and the third is translated from the Chinese. It was necessary to provide a translation of the text from Tibetan into English because to date there has been no translation of the root text based solely on a Tibetan translation. In addition, there is no English translation of the commentary, the Hevajratantrapaññikāpadmanāma, and for that reason this commentary was chosen for the purpose of this thesis.

---


II. Purpose

Many studies concerning the interpretation of Buddhist texts have relied on the methodology proposed by R. Thurman, a methodology referred to as 'vajra hermeneutics'. This methodology stresses the 'esoteric' nature of tantric texts in so far as they are intentionally secretive and elusive. Tantric texts are designed to take the practitioner beyond the limitations imposed by the mind and thus an intellectual understanding is not the intention of the text. Rather, an intuitive understanding is intended which engages the practitioner on an experiential level. In the interpretation of tantric texts, it is pertinent that one accounts for the intuitive nature of the text as well as the experiential implications found therein. This means that one must consider the secrecy and elusiveness as well as the explicit intention of a tantric text, which is to mystify and bring the practitioner into a state of discursive (vikalpa) obscurity balanced by intuitive wisdom (prajñā).

Janet Martin Soskice accounts for the role of the intuitive mind in the understanding of metaphors by means of what she calls the 'Intuitionist Theory' of metaphor. According to this theory, there occurs a “destruction of the standard senses of the term,” and the intuitive mind moves beyond the destruction towards a new meaning intended by the writer. By employing this metaphor theory the inherent esoteric nature of a text and the need to move beyond the discursive mind when reading and discussing the text can be understood.

Keeping the above mentioned methodologies in mind, the pertinent sections of the Hevajratantra, supposedly expounded by the historical Buddha, have been translated and discussed. Specifically, it is the first chapter of the Hevajratantra and the

---

5 Ibid., 144.
corresponding passages of the commentary that are used as the foundation for this thesis and thus they provide a basis for understanding how the cakra system as found in the Hevajratantra can function (or not) as a foundation for a practitioner’s inner experience and spiritual development.

In order to keep close contact with the material, an inter-linear methodology has been employed. This means that for each line (or content) of the root text, the Hevajratantra, the corresponding passage(s) of the commentary, the Hevajratantrapāṇījikāpadmanāma, by Saroruha (Tib. mtshon skyes) has been noted and translated. This was done so that the reader could see, at a glance, the similarities and differences of interpretation.

Metaphor theory became an important interpretive tool, and thus much of the translated material has been discussed in a metaphorical way. Although, metaphor theory has not been applied explicitly to the translated material, it did provide a point of reference for translating the root text and the commentary. Therefore, throughout the translations this elusiveness or the esoteric nature of the text has been kept in mind in order to demonstrate the inherent secret and elusive nature that is intended for an initiated audience.

A translation of both the root text and the commentary is essential for an understanding of the cakra system used in the Hevajratantra in view of D.L. Snellgrove's statement that while the root text or tantra explains the outward ritual practice, it is the commentarial literature that reveals the subtle internal processes involved in the outward ritual practice. The commentarial literature helps to supplement the reading of the root text.

---

It is also important to briefly note the choice of terms throughout the main body of the thesis. Although the translated material worked with has depended solely on Tibetan texts, the decision has been made to use the Sanskrit terms instead of the Tibetan equivalent. The first instance of a term in the thesis provides both the Sanskrit and Tibetan equivalents but from then on only the Sanskrit term is given. The reason for this is the familiarity of Sanskrit terms among most academics as opposed to the Tibetan. Moreover, the cakra system has been well documented in the Hindu Tradition using Sanskrit terminology. Thus, for the sake of consistency and owing to the familiarity of Sanskrit terminology, the Sanskrit terms have been used as the major terminology.

III. Review of Existing Literature:

There are three different English translations of the root text.\(^8\) The first, provided by D.L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*, is based on various Sanskrit manuscripts. D.L. Snellgrove also provides an edited transliteration of the Sanskrit root text and a transliteration of the root text from the Tibetan. The second translation, by G.W. Farrow and I. Menon, is *The Concealed Essence of the Hevajratantra, with the Commentary Yogaratnamālā*. They offer a translation of the Hevajratantra and the Yogaratnamālā concurrently to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the primary text.\(^9\) Their translation is also based on a Sanskrit manuscript of both the root text and the commentary. The third translation, by C. Willemen, is *The Chinese Hevajratantra: The Scriptural Text of the Teaching the Adamantine One with Great Compassion and Knowledge of the Void*. Unlike the

\(^8\) In Tibetan the root text is referred to as *kye'i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgal po*. The Sanskrit is *Hevajra Tantra*. Any reference to 'root text' heretofore implies this text.
previous two translations, C. Willemen's is based on the Chinese composed by Dharmapāla around 1054/5 ACE.

Regarding the external ritual practice in a tantric context, P. Kvaerne in his article, “On the Concept of Sahaja in Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature”, has provided a most enlightening presentation on the means for making the correlation between the internal development and the external ritual practice. Furthermore, S. Tsuda's two articles, "A Critical Tantrism" and "The Cult of the Śmaśana, realities of Tantrism" helped to provide a context for the development of the external practice found in the Hevajratantra.

IV. Summary of Thesis

Chapter One provides the reader with a brief context for reading the translated material and for understanding the discussion on the translated material. This chapter starts with a basic discussion of the background on the tantras and then provides an overview of the two dominant traditions, what R. Davidson terms institutional esoterism and non-institutional esoterism, that were current during the development of the esoteric tradition. Then, a history of the literature surrounding the Hevajratantra as well as the basic contents of the first chapter of the Hevajratrantran are discussed. Finally, the four-fold consecration system (abhiṣeka) has been detailed to provide a basis for the discussion found in chapter three.

Chapter Two consists of an inter-linear edition of the translated material. The chapter consists of a translation of the first chapter of the root text the Hevajratantra (Tib. kye'i rdo-rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po) and a translation of the

---

corresponding passages of the commentary, the *Hevajratantrapāṇijikāpadma* (Tib. *kye'i rdo-rje rgyud kyi dka' 'grel padma can zhes bya ba*). As stated previously, the translated material is presented in an inter-linear fashion to facilitate an easy reading of the material. This methodology will also provide a reference for the reader when looking at selected passages.

Chapter Three provides a discussion on the translated material. The translated material found in Chapter Two provides a foundation for the discussion on how the *cakras* function in religious experience. The discussion on the material is not a line by line analysis and interpretation. Rather, it is a discussion on what was understood to be the important aspects of the text, essentially the *cakra* system and what it represents. This discussion provides the framework for discussing the external practice and the internal meditation as they function for the practitioner. The internal and external practices provide a means by which the practitioner can gain an elevated state of consciousness.

Chapter Three begins with a short exposition of the basic components of the *cakra* system to help reorient the reader to the contents of the Tibetan texts as translated for this thesis. A discussion follows which highlights the importance of the different components of the *cakra* system and what they mean for the practitioner. Each component becomes an aspect of reality that the practitioner embodies, step by step, during the ritual practice. The last part of the chapter is an examination of the External Practice and the Internal Meditation wherein the function of the *cakra* system becomes apparent. Here the external ritual practice is related to the movement of the energy

---

through the cakra system. It is at this time that a practitioner is able to invoke the cakra system and uses it as a means to enlightenment.

How the cakra system functions to develop the internal ritual experiences of a tantric practitioner is summarized in the Conclusion. This topic has raised several questions that are acknowledged in a sub-section called "Speculations", and finally on the basis of what has been gained in writing this thesis, in a section entitled "Future Consideration," how this thesis may contribute to further studies has been addressed.
CHAPTER ONE

I. Background of the Tantras

Esoteric Buddhism, specifically Indo-Tibetan esoterism\(^\text{11}\), is a very rich and complex tradition that developed from the wider framework of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Hindu culture. The sūtra (Tib. mdo) literature, which characterizes the Mahāyāna tradition, is that upon which the tantric (Tib. rgyud) literary tradition of Esoteric Buddhism builds. However, sūtra literature is largely concerned with philosophical matters,\(^\text{12}\) while tantric literature is largely concerned with the practical and experiential aspect of the Buddhist tradition. Sūtra, literally translated, means ‘thread’; while tantra literally means ‘weave’.\(^\text{13}\) Taken together, the tantras are the woven application of the thread, which is the sūtra. The tantras put into practice the doctrine expressed in the sūtras.

Traditionally, tantric literature has been classified into four classes based on whether external or internal practice is emphasized, and this classification was first formulated by the Tibetan historian Bu-ston, c. 14\(^\text{th}\) century CE.\(^\text{14}\) The first class, Kriyātantra (action-tantra; Tib. bya ba'i rgyud)), is largely concerned with external

---

\(^{11}\) There are many terms that can be used to signify the esoteric tradition found within Buddhism. The term Vajrayāna is often used to describe the whole class of tantric literature and practice today, but D. Snellgrove asserts that this term applies only to the last class of tantric literature, namely the anuttarayoga class (Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, 240). Likewise, the term Sahajayāna can also be used to signify this last class of tantric literature and practice (Hajime Nakamura, 340). The term Mantrayāna is used mostly to signify those practices that designate the use of mantra, specifically those practices found within the first three classes of tantric literature, kriyā, caryā, and yoga. Lastly, Tantrayāna is a more general term used to signify the vehicle which is based on the practices found within the tantric literature. Although I am focusing on the anuttarayoga class of literature, I have chosen to use the term esoteric to signify the class of practice that I will be describing to avoid confusion surrounding the many terms. By esoterism I mean simply practice that is intended for initiated individuals only and not for the general public.


\(^{13}\) John Blofeld, The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet (Boulder Colorado: prajna Press, 1982) 45.

ritual practices, while the second class, *Caryātantra* (practice-tantra; Tib. *spyod pa'i rgyud*), equally emphasizes both the internal and external practices.\(^{15}\) The third class, *Yogatantra* (Tib. *rnal 'byor rgyud*), is characterized predominantly by internal yoga practice, as is the fourth class, the *Anuttarayogatantra* (unsurpassed yoga-tantra; Tib. *rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud*)\(^{16}\) which is further divided according to the occurrence of female and male elements within the text. Male elements, specifically male deities, are prevalent in the father *tantra* class, also called *upāya-tantras*, while female elements (deities) are prevalent in the mother *tantra* class, also referred to as *prajñā* or *yoginī-tantras*.\(^{17}\) There is also a non-dual class of *tantra* within the *Anuttarayoga* class. The *Kālacakratantra* falls within this class of literature.\(^{18}\) The *Hevajratantra* and the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* are symbolic of the mother *tantras* while the *Guhyasamājatantra* is symbolic of the father *tantras*. The *Saṃvarodayatantra* is a transitional *tantra*, providing a link between the *yogatantra* class and the *anuttarayogatantra* class.

The classification of *tantric* texts can also be distinguished according to the disposition of each individual practitioner. According to *mkhas grub rje*,\(^{19}\) the practices contained in the first class of *tantra* (*kriyā-tantra*) are prescribed for those practitioners who find satisfaction in the practice of external ritual. Those of the second (*caryā-tantra*) class are given to those individuals who find satisfaction in both internal and external ritual practice.\(^{20}\) This homeopathic approach for developing a practitioner is applicable to the *Yoga* and *Anuttarayoga* classes as well. Those actions with which a

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) Ibid. 10.


\(^{19}\) *mkhas grub rje*’s book, *The Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, is the basis for Wayman’s discussion of the classification of *tantric* literature in his introduction to *Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra*. 
practitioner identifies one's self with are used to stimulate the spiritual growth and the experiential basis of a practitioner. Due to this homeopathic reasoning, D.L. Snellgrove claims that the practices asserted by the esoteric tradition represent "...a genuine stratum of human experience." The entire psychophysical structure of the individual is addressed during ritual practice. Even those aspects of the personality that are seen as hindrances or obstacles to a practitioner are used as means to enlightenment. Moreover, a practitioner is seen as an individual with individual needs that may differ from those of another practitioner. The individuality of each practitioner instigates the need for a guru (bla ma), who has the knowledge and ability to determine the predominant disposition of a practitioner and prescribe a corresponding mode of operation for a practitioner. The role of a guru is also necessary for the transmission of knowledge within the lineage in which a practitioner will practice. During initiation, the experiential knowledge of the guru is transmitted to the student:

...truth always transcends intellectual apprehension or discursive speculation – it is to be intuited within through the help of the preceptor, who has already realized it. Truth is transmitted from the preceptor to the pupil just as light from one lamp to another. The only way of knowing the truth is, therefore, to ask the grace of the Guru, who, and who alone, can make a man realize the Supreme Reality. It is believed that the true preceptor in his non-dual state identifies himself with the disciple and performs from within the disciple all that is necessary for the latter's spiritual uplift.

A sharing of consciousness occurs between the master and student whereby the student is consecrated into the specific lineage and practice of the chosen deity. Thus, the esoteric tradition is a very ritualistic and practice-oriented tradition.

20 Alex Wayman, Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977) 60.
During ritual practice, a practitioner becomes identified with and embodies both wisdom (prajñā) and means (upāya) in various ways. In the mundane world (samsāra) wisdom and means are seen as two necessary components or ideals that must be developed on the path towards enlightenment (nirvāṇa). However, within the esoteric tradition, ultimately both are experienced by a practitioner as the one true nature of reality, and it is in the union of the two that non-dual consciousness occurs. The duality characterized by samsāric existence is overcome with the union of wisdom and means.

Specifically, it is the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra systems which provide the philosophical foundation for the tantric tradition and the basis for ritual experience.23 The central principle of the Madhyamaka school is emptiness (śunyatā), i.e., non-duality. Samsāra and nirvāṇa are held to be one and the same reality.24 For the esoteric practitioner, the means for achieving this realization of non-duality is through direct experience. The experience of non-duality occurs within consciousness wherein reality is perceived through the senses by a practitioner. There is no tangible difference between the practitioner and the external environment of a practitioner or the phenomenal world. The perception of non-duality is a transformation of consciousness. Ultimately, what is perceived as mystical or transcendent is identified by the practitioner as being none other than the material and the sensual.25 Moreover, the material world becomes the sacred space of the enlightened practitioner who now has the ability to exercise skilful actions in mundane reality.

The means by which an esoteric practitioner gains and experiences a state of non-dual consciousness is through ritual practice. The external ritual practice stimulates the internal development of a practitioner. It also becomes the physical manifestation of

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
the internal experience. Therefore, the internal and external experiences of a practitioner directly influence each other. The basic components that contribute to the manifestation of ritual practice are particular visualizations and contemplative practices (samādhi), precise hand gestures and movements (mudrā), the repetition of formulated syllables (mantra), and the creation of sacred space (maṇḍala), either mentally or physically.26 Through these various means a practitioner comes to identify with the chosen deity, and transforms oneself into the chosen deity (yid-dam). The body, speech, and mind of the deity are embraced and cultivated into the body, speech, and mind of a practitioner so that a practitioner assumes all levels of reality represented by the deity.27 The visualizations of a practitioner are internalised and integrated into the psyche so that foundationally the nature of a practitioner actually becomes divine. A particular guideline to be followed by a practitioner is found in a particular text among the diverse literature of the many tantric texts.

II. The Hevajratantra

A. Overview

In Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement, R. Davidson acknowledges that there are two different spheres of activity in medieval India that contributed to the development of esoteric Buddhism. The first is the monastic communities, or in his words ‘institutional esoterism’28. The monastic communities continue the lineage of traditional theory and praxis and help to codify new practices that are developing within the external environment. Essentially,

26 Snellgrove, Buddhist Himalaya: Travels and Studies in Quest of the Origins and Nature of Tibetan Religion 68.
27 Ibid.
institutional esoterism springs forth as a reaction to and an adaptation of the greater social and political environment in which it exists. In contrast, R. Davidson refers to ‘non-institutional esoterism’, which is largely characterized by the *siddha* tradition.\(^{29}\) Although the non-institutional form of esoterism also absorbed many of the distinguishing features of the greater medieval environment, it existed largely outside of the normative social context of medieval India. It is the *siddha* figure, or the sorcerer (*vidyādhara*) that largely characterizes ‘non-institutional’ esoterism.\(^{30}\)

David L. Snellgrove places the origins of the *Hevajra Tantra* within this ‘non-institutional’ esoterism, and among those groups who are situated on the peripheries of society, whether voluntary or otherwise.\(^{31}\) The actions of the *siddhas* and their fellow practitioners are not dictated by societal norms; consequently, they are able to exercise various sorts of practices at their own discretion. In *A Critical Tantrism*, S. Tsuda states that the *tantric* practitioner or *yogin* (*rnal ’byor pa*) is beyond even the virtues put forth by Mahāyāna Buddhism and that the *yogin* is not operating on the same level of existence as ordinary practitioners.\(^{32}\) This idea is affirmed by R. Davidson who also asserts that the *siddha* culture existed within the fluid environment of the *tantric* Hindu cults represented by the *Kāpālikas* and the *Pāśupatas*.\(^{33}\) Ultimately, the liminal nature of the *siddha* position became a source of empowerment. It allowed these practitioners to exercise a wide variety of means to attain their spiritual goals. The *Hevajra Tantra*, itself, testifies to this liminal and very powerful position held by the *tantric* practitioner:

\(^{29}\) Ibid. 167.
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
Free from learning and ceremony and any cause of shame, the yogin wanders, filled with great compassion in his possession of a nature that is common to all beings. He has passed beyond oblations, renunciation, and austerities, and is freed from mantra and meditation. Released from all the conventions of meditation, the yogin performs the practice. 34

Once initiated into the tradition of esoteric practice and having experienced the truth upheld by the tradition, the practitioner or siddha becomes free of all conventions. Moreover, this freedom allows the siddhas to explore practices that are far from the conventional. It is the use of sexuality in general, and the sexual act specifically, which is brought into the forefront by the wandering yogins and siddhas. 35 Ultimately, the act of sexual union is used as a means for achieving an enlightened state. The sexual act eventually becomes ritualised in the last set of initiation practices, thus validating the use of sexuality on the path to enlightenment. 36

According to S. Tsuda, the origins of the practices found within the yogini-tantras, specifically the ritual of sexual union, are found within the ‘cult of the śmaśāna’ (cemetery cult) where mostly lower class women interacted with wandering yogins from Hindu Śaivite cults, specifically, Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas, and practiced unconventional rituals such as eating meat, drinking alcohol and engaging in sexual practices. 37 These ritual practices performed by men and women were held in secret and performed to the deity Bhairava 38 in a cemetery in the hopes of attaining magical powers or siddhi. 39 Because the siddha social environment has been a fluid one, the

35 Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement 196.
36 Ibid. 197.
38 Bhairava is a wrathful form of the deity Siva. For more information see Tsuda.
39 Tsuda, “The Cult of ŚMaśāña, the Realities of Tantrism,” 96.
Hindu *maṇḍala* and ritual practices were easily transposed into the Buddhist sphere of esoteric practice.

First the Buddhist practitioners created a new deity with whom to identify during ritual practice. Hevajra was introduced as a wrathful manifestation of Heruka and as the deity who overcomes the wrathful Śaivism deity Bhairava. Hevajra, transposed into the centre of the existing *maṇḍala*, is surrounded by a ring of eight *yoginis*, the lower caste women who visualize themselves during ritual practice as powerful goddesses or *dākinīs*. The Buddhist *maṇḍala* differs from the Hindu one in that there is an additional ring of five female practitioners between Hevajra in the centre and the original eight female practitioners on the outer ring of the *maṇḍala*. Ultimately, the ritual practice, within the *maṇḍala*, entails the male *yogin* identifying himself with the central deity Hevajra and performing the act of sexual union with the inner circle of the five *dākinīs*. By identifying one’s self with the deity Hevajra and by identifying the female practitioner as the embodiment of the divine feminine, it became easy for the sexual act to become ritualised and understood according to the Buddhist worldview. Moreover, the ritual of sexual union is added to the set of consecrations (*abhiṣeka*) and thus an entirely new form of practice that becomes manifested in the *yogini-tantras* is created. It is through this ritual practice that the immediacy of Buddhahood can be attained, and thus setting it apart from other methods that proclaim Enlightenment to be only attainable over many eons.

---

40 Ibid., 97.
41 Ibid., 99.
43 Ibid.: 170.
B. Historical Background of the Hevajratantra

The historical background of the Hevajratantra can be discussed from several perspectives — viz., 1) the root text, 2) its commentaries, 3) its dates of composition, 4) its popularity, and 5) the intent of the terms used.

1. Root Text

The Hevajratantra was translated into Tibetan by 'brog-mi (992-1072 CE), an influential scholar and a teacher of the famous yogin Mar-pa. According to C. Willemen, this translation of the text occurred prior to the Chinese translation which was done by Dharmapāla in 1054/5.

According to D. L. Snellgrove, Vajragarbha in his Hevajrapīndārthaṭikā mentions that there is a version of the root text (Hevajratantra) that was significantly larger than the one that was in circulation at the time of his writing. This information is significant because it identifies an alternate text that existed prior to the version that was consolidated around the end of the eighth century CE. On the basis of a single source it is difficult to speculate the existence of such a version; however, D. Snellgrove states that references are also made to an alternate version in the Sādhanamālā as well.

This may have been possible owing to various communities of practitioners formulating various recensions. Ronald Davidson asserts that esoteric literature was not composed in an isolated environment by individual authors but within a fluid and interactive social setting. Furthermore, the performative nature of the texts may have inspired variation within the practice.

---

47 Ibid. 16.
48 Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement 144.
49 Ibid. 238.
there became a need to adapt the written text to reflect the changes in the rituals. Although the ritual practice was structured, there was also room to adapt to the realities of the social environment. This strengthens the argument for the possibility of multiple recensions.

2. Commentaries

The numerous commentaries and texts used in rituals surrounding the deity Hevajra seem to indicate that rituals concerning this deity and his consort Nairātmyā were fairly popular in medieval India and Tibet. The Yogaratnamālā is probably the most well known commentary on the Hevajratantra. This commentary was written by Kṛṣṇa or Kāṇha. David L. Snellgrove provides us with the lineage of Kṛṣṇa, through Jālandhari, who, in turn, was instructed by King Indrabhūti II. King Indrabhūti II was instructed both by Saroruha and Kampala. Bhadrapada, Nāropa, Ṭaṅkadāsa, Ratnākaraśānti, Dharmakīrti and Vajragarbha also wrote commentaries on the Hevajratantra, which highlights the popularity of the text from the 9th to the 11th centuries CE. Of the many commentaries, it is Vajragarbha’s commentary, the Hevajrapindārthaṭikā, that D.L. Snellgrove claims is helpful, although it presents some problematic information. Snellgrove is also credited with a number of practice texts and a commentary on the Hevajratantra, the Hevajratantrapañjikāpadmanāma (kye’i rdo rje rgyud kyi dka’ ‘grel padma can zhes bya ba’), an extensive commentary on the root text. According to

51 We know that Nāropa was the teacher of Marpa and Willemen gives Marpa’s dates as 1012-1097. For more information, see C. Willemen, The Chinese Hevajratantra: The Scriptural Text of the Teaching the Adamantine One with Great Compassion and Knowledge of the Void, p. 21.
55 Ibid. 14.
the colophon, this text was translated from the Sanskrit into Tibetan by two skilled translators, Kṣitigarbha, a highly placed teacher from India, and khu ston dngos grub, a well known translator at the time.57

3. Date of Composition

Two personalities from the mahāsiddha lineage, Saroruha (mtshon skyes) and Kampala, are credited with making the Hevajratantra known.58 Saroruha is alternately called Saroruhavajra or Padmavajra.59 Tāranātha states that a certain Saroruhavajra (mtshon skyes rdo rje) was the eldest offspring of King Indrabhūti.60 Both C. Willemen and D.L. Snellgrove state that Saroruha and Kampala were actually instructors to King Indrabhūti II.61 The information that Saroruha was either the son of Indrabhūti II or his instructor cannot be certified; however, this information on the historical link between these figures provides us with a basis for approximating the time for the written text.

The Sanskrit version of the Hevajratantra can be placed in the latter half of the eighth century CE.62 However, there is evidence that suggests that there was interest in practices surrounding the figure Hevajra earlier. Both D.L. Snellgrove and C. Willemen

---

56 Ibid. 12.
57 mtshon skyes, Kye'i Rdo-Rje Rgyud Kyi Dka' 'Grel Pa' tan Can Zhes Bya Ba', trans. Kṣitigarbha and Khu ston dngos grub, Taipei Edition ed., vol. 21, #1181; rgyud 'bum, vol. ka, The Tibetan Tripitaka (Taipei: SMC Publishing, 1991). Dates for khu ston dngos grub are obscure, however, The Blue Annals informs us that Kṣitigarbha was a disciple of the master Ātīśa (Roerich, Vol.2, 262) who arrived in Tibet in 1042 CE (Tucci (1988) 250). A certain khu ston is linked to Kṣitigarbha in The Blue Annals (Roerich, Vol.2, 262); however, it is difficult to determine whether or not this is the translator khu ston dngos grub that is mentioned in the colophon. From this information, it can be stated that the commentary attributed to Saroruha, the Hevajratantraspaṇḍitaṇḍadāmanama, was translated into Tibetan sometime during the 11th century CE, placing it later than the translation of the root text into Tibetan by 'Brog-mi.
60 Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, ed., TāRanaTha's History of Buddhism in India. (Calcutta: KP Bagchi & Company, 1980) 241, nt. 70.
mention Đomī-heruka (c. 750) who was involved in Hevajra practice prior to Saroruha and Kampala. Đomī-heruka is said to have composed the Śrīsahajasiddhi.

4. Popularity

In his A Cultural History of Tibet, D.L. Snellgrove states that it was the Śa-skya scholar Kun-dga'-snying-po (1092-1158) who organized the teachings and instructions related to Hevajra practice. Bu-ston in his History of Buddhism in India and Tibet, composed during the 14th century, mentions both the Hevajratantra and its many commentaries. By the time of Tāranātha’s History of Buddhism in 1608, the cult of Hevajra has been firmly embedded in the Tibetan tradition.

5. Intent of the Hevajratantra Terminology

Placing the Hevajratantra within the mahāsiddha tradition may shed light on the obscure nature and terminology found throughout the text. The ritual practice found in the Hevajratantra is intended for an initiated audience. Initiation is transmitted directly from teacher to student; therefore, the intended meaning of the text often remains unclear to the uninitiated.

The intended meaning is often obscured to the uninitiated practitioner owing to the use of samādhyā-bhāṣā which is defined by A. Bharati as ‘intentional language’.

---

65 In his Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes, Nakamura argues that the Śrīsahajasiddhi provides the groundwork for the uppannakrama (rdzogs-rim), or the Process of Completion, that is later found in the Hevajratantra.
67 Ibid. 169.
while R. Davidson defines it as 'coded language'. The intention of this coded language is to obscure the intended meaning of the text from those who are uninitiated. Ronald Davidson states that this coded language assumed a figurative reading of the text as opposed to a literal reading. Of course, only those initiated into the tradition of the text would know that a figurative reading was the proper way to interpret the text and thus those outside of the tradition would be lead astray by holding on to the literal meaning of the text. It should be pointed out that the figurative meaning of the text was handed down only from master to student and thus creating a lineage of the direct transmission of the text. Ronald Davidson questions the extent to which one can accept this mode of interpretation, because according to him there really is no uniform way to read an esoteric text, especially a yogini tantra. He states that one section of a tantric text may be read either literally or figuratively by different commentators on the text. Therefore there is no uniformity in the reading of a text and this is proven by the disparity that occurs between different commentaries on the same root text.

In using saṃdhya-bhāṣā or coded language what were the authors trying to accomplish? Agehananda Bharati gives two reasons why the authors were using coded language. The first reason was that practitioners within a tradition were intentionally being exclusive because they did not want just anyone participating in the implied practices or rituals without a proper understanding of the material and ritual practice. The ritual practices were of such a profound nature that unless one were initiated one would not have the proper understanding and training for partaking in the practice. Essentially, esoteric texts do not promote common Buddhist practices with which other

---

71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
Buddhists are familiar. Further, the texts even proclaimed the use of sexual union as a means by which one could attain an enlightened state. This was not considered mainstream practice by any means. Therefore, the initiated practitioners needed to keep their practices secret from outsiders. The second reason offered by A. Bharati is that intentional language was used as a mnemonic device so that passages of the text could be easily remembered and called to mind.75 This is most probable, because many esoteric texts circulated first by means of an oral tradition and only later were put into written form. By remembering a set of coded language the practitioner could easily recall the practices to be performed.

The performative nature of the language is highlighted by R. Davidson, when he states that the employment of coded language was created for the purpose of ritual practice.76 When the practitioners came together to perform the ritual practices, they could easily identify with each other by means of the coded language. George W. Farrow and I. Menon agree with this claim stating that coded language was a direct means of communication between the master and the initiates at the esoteric gatherings (gañacakra).77 By means of a secretive system of language, the initiated practitioners were able to identify with each other and thereby exclude those persons who were not initiated into the tradition of practices. The Hevajratantra provides a list of samdhya-bhāśā terms that are explained in view of their true meaning in the context of ritual practice.78 This list of terms clearly shows that the initiated must be well versed in the secret code language in order to participate in the ritual practice. This served to enforce the secretive and elusive nature of the practice and the texts themselves.

75 Ibid. 170.
76 Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* 263.
78 Ibid. 201.
C. Contents of the First Chapter of the Hevajra Tantra

The Hevajrarājātantra (k ye’i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po) is classified as a yoginī-tantra with the central deity Hevajra (k ye’i rdo rje) accompanied by his female consort Nairatmyā (b dag med ma).\(^79\) As a tantra, the Hevajratantra is concerned with the ritual practice of identifying with and, ultimately, becoming one with the central deity. Association with the deity Hevajra, through various processes is the means by which the practitioner achieves a state of non-dual consciousness or enlightenment. The ritual practice to be followed by the practitioner is presented in the text by means of a discourse between the Bhagavan and the Bodhisattva Vajragarbha (rdo rje snying po).\(^80\)

In the opening verses of the first chapter the reader is introduced to the formidable deity, Hevajra. Hevajra is a wrathful manifestation of the Buddha Akṣobya, who represents the Vajra-family (kūla).\(^81\) The wrathful manifestation, Hevajra, also known as Heruka, characterizes the mental and emotional affliction of hatred or wrath (dveṣa). In the first chapter, the Bhagavan states that the letters that compose the name Hevajra (HE and VAJRA) are symbolic of the ultimate reality that is Hevajra. Essentially, Hevajra is the union of wisdom (prajñā) symbolized by the letters HE, and compassion (karunā, representing upāya) symbolized by the letters VAJRA.\(^82\) This union, manifested in the name of the deity, represents the ultimate goal of a practitioner, which is non-dual consciousness.

It is also in the first chapter of the Hevajratantra that the reader is introduced to the internal maṇḍala or cakra system of the practitioner. The cakra system can be


\(^{80}\) G.W. Farrow, *The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra: With the Commentary YogaratnamāLā* viii.


\(^{82}\) Ibid. 23.
understood as a subtle body that is transposed upon the physical body of a practitioner. It is an internal *mandala* constructed out of four main energy centres (Tib. 'khor lo; Skt. *cakras*), three main channels that convey the energy (Tib. *rtsa*; Skt. *nādis*), and the different energies or substances that travel throughout the system (such as *bodhicitta*; Tib. *byang chub sens*). The four *cakras* provide the foundation for an elaborate paradigm identified within the physical body that corresponds to and reflects different realities of the external environment. The many concepts and sequences reflected in the paradigm show a progression from the lowest *cakra*, or navel centre, towards the uppermost *cakra* located at the crown of the head. The more mundane concepts found in the external environment are associated with the lowest *cakras* while concepts that are dealing with a transcendent or an elevated nature are associated with the highest *cakra*. The four-fold scheme of existence represented by the *cakra* system becomes a valuable tool for a *tantric* practitioner.

Table 1. describes the four-fold *cakra* system based on the information in the *Hevajratantra*. Table 1. is adapted from the chart found in *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*, vol.1, by D.L. Snellgrove.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups of Four</th>
<th>Navel</th>
<th>Heart</th>
<th>Throat</th>
<th>Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of</td>
<td>Sixty-four</td>
<td>eight</td>
<td>Sixteen</td>
<td>Thirty-two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lotus petals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>VAM</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>YÅ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four</td>
<td>Locanā</td>
<td>Māmakī</td>
<td>Pāḍurā</td>
<td>Tārā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goddesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four</td>
<td>Nirmanācakra (Tib. 'khor lo)</td>
<td>Dharma</td>
<td>Sanbhogacakra (Tib. longs spyod rdzog pa'i 'khor lo)</td>
<td>Mahāsukhacakra (Tib. bde ba chen po'i 'khor lo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nerve centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tib. 'khor lo)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dharm</td>
<td>Sanbh</td>
<td>Mahāsuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four</td>
<td>Variety (rnam pa sna thogs)</td>
<td>Maturation (Tib. rnam par smin pa)</td>
<td>Consummation (Tib. rnam par rnyed pa)</td>
<td>Blank (Tib. mtshan nyid dang 'bral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tib. rnam pa)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four</td>
<td>Suffering (Tib. 'phags pa'i bden pa)</td>
<td>The origin of Suffering (Tib. kun 'byung ba)</td>
<td>The cessation of Suffering (Tib. 'gog pa)</td>
<td>The path leading to the cessation of Suffering (tib. lam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tib. sdug bsgal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four</td>
<td>Self as actuality (Tib. bdag gi de kho na nyid)</td>
<td>Mantra as actuality (Tib. snags kyi de kho na nyid)</td>
<td>Mental Energy as actuality (Tib. lha'i de kho na nyid)</td>
<td>Knowledge as actuality (Tib. ye shes kyi de kho na nyid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tib. de kho na nyid)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four</td>
<td>Joy (Tib. dga' ba)</td>
<td>Highest Joy (Tib. mchog tu dga' ba)</td>
<td>Joy of cessation (Tib. dga' bral gyi dga' ba)</td>
<td>Spontaneous Joy (Tib. lhon cig skyes pa'i dga' ba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tib. dga' ba; Skt. ānanda)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four</td>
<td>Sthāvira (Tib. gnas brtan pa)</td>
<td>Sarvāstivāda (Tib. thams cad yor par smra ba)</td>
<td>Śāmśānitya (Tib. kun gyis bkur ba)</td>
<td>Mahāsanghika (Tib. dge' dun phal chen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tib. sde pa)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the Buddhist esoteric tradition, one means by which a practitioner comes to identify oneself with a higher level of reality and achieve a non-dual state of consciousness is by visualizing and experiencing the internal mañḍala, or cakra system. The symbolism of the cakra system provides the foundation by which the practitioner can identify with a higher level of reality and eventually identify oneself as the deity being envisioned. Associating the external world internally helps to create a sense of unity and structure within a practitioner.

Although the four-fold cakra system that is found in the Hevajratantra is consistent with other tantras of this class (anuttarayoga-tantra), it is not a universal system.\(^{84}\) The tantras deal with the experiential or practical aspect of Buddhist teachings and this experiential aspect contributes to many inconsistencies. Therefore, there is no uniform system. David L. Snellgrove acknowledges that schematic inconsistencies and discrepancies are inherent to tantric literature. However, D.L. Snellgrove concludes that the function of the internally organized scheme of existence is similar within any text and is highly symbolic. He states, "...they always represent the same intention, namely to emphasize the identity of microcosm with macrocosm by locating the various orders of existence within the body at the level of the various cakras".\(^{85}\) This identification of the macrocosm within the microcosm provides structure for the practitioner. This relationship also emphasizes the sacred nature of one’s body. Ultimately, by perfecting and mastering the internal microcosm the practitioner can gain mastery of the external world or macrocosm.

\(^{84}\) Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors* 251.

D. Abhiṣeka

It is the initiation process that sets the esoteric tradition apart from the sūtra tradition characterised by Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mahāyāna Buddhism claims the ideal of the Bodhisattva as the path towards enlightenment and opens this path to all that may enter. The esoteric tradition, however, stipulates that the esoteric path is for only the initiated thereby excluding the general population from its practice, and from taking a tantric vow or initiation. David L. Snellgrove states that the term ‘initiation’ (Tib. dbang bskor; Skt. abhiṣeka) implies exclusion and secrecy as well as ‘privileges’ and ‘responsibility’.86 The Sanskrit term used for initiation is samaya, which is usually translated ‘pledge’ or ‘union’, but which according to D.L. Snellgrove is the act of the ‘coming together’ of two things, namely the person to be initiated and the sacred or transcendent.87 By taking the tantric vow and receiving the initiation, a practitioner is taking responsibility for the immediacy of the divine that will be appropriated by the practitioner. It is a fully conscious action by both the practitioner as the adept and the preceptor as a manifestation of divinity.

In the first three classes of tantras – Kriyātantra, Caryātantra and Yogatantra – there occurs a five-fold consecration (Skt. abhiṣeka; Tib. dbang bskor) process usually referred to as the Consecration of the Jar (Tib. bum pa dbang bskor; Skt. kalaśābhiṣeka) because sacred jars were used during the ritual practices.88 The reason that the consecration is five-fold is that the five Buddha families are represented in the consecration. The five divisions of the kalaśābhiṣeka are: 1. water; 2. crown; 3. vajra; 4. royal; and, 5. name.89 In the first three classes of tantras, the contents of the five jars (water) are sprinkled over the head of the practitioner by the preceptor during this five-

86 Snellgrove, Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors 213.
87 Ibid. 220.
fold consecration process. In this way the adept is initiated into the ritual practice of the chosen deity and thus becomes consecrated. Only the adept and the preceptor are involved in the ritual practice during this five-fold consecration.

In the *Anuttarayogatantra* class, for the adept to become initiated into the practice of the chosen deity as well as to achieve higher states of consciousness, the five-fold *kalaśābhiṣeka* is expanded. Now the adept proceeds through a series of four consecrations or initiations, with the former five-fold consecration becoming the preliminary consecration and providing the foundation for the new four-fold consecration scheme. The four-fold consecration scheme now consists of (1) Master (Skt. ācārya; Tib. slob dpon); (2) Secret (Skt. guhya; Tib. gsang ba); (3) Knowledge of Wisdom (Skt; prajñājñānā; Tib. shes rab ye shes) and (4) 'The Fourth' (Skt. caturtha; Tib. bzhi ba). By means of the fourfold consecration the adept progresses towards the ultimate goal of enlightened consciousness and non-duality.

Here, the "Master" consecration consists of the above mentioned five-fold *kalaśābhiṣeka* with the additional sixth, called the ācārya, or "Master" consecration, which then names the set of consecrations of the first stage. The "Master" consecration becomes the preliminary practice for the following three higher stages of consecration and are performed to purify the adept and to prepare him mentally and physically for the consecrations to come. During the initial stages of the preliminary "Master" consecrations only the practitioner and the preceptor are involved. At this time, sacred space is invoked and sustained for the forthcoming consecrations. Once the ritual space

---

88 Ibid. 223.
89 Ibid. 229.
91 Ibid.
has been established, a transition occurs in that an additional person is introduced.\textsuperscript{92}

During this last stage of the preliminary rite of the first "Master" consecration, a young girl (\textit{mudrā}) is introduced into the ritual practice as a representation of the embodiment of wisdom (\textit{prajñā}).\textsuperscript{93} The male figure (either the master or the adept) who interacts with the \textit{mudrā} (i.e., the female) signifies means (\textit{upāyā}). The adept is blindfolded at this time of the consecration and is lead by his preceptor into the sacred space of the \textit{mandala} where he is given permission by the preceptor to touch the breast of the \textit{mudrā}. There is no other contact at this time, and this is the final act that makes up the \textit{ācārya} consecration and thus the whole series of consecrations designated as \textit{ācārya}, or Master consecration, is conferred. It is after the Master consecration that the adept is initiated into the lineage of the chosen deity and can appropriate the chosen deity on his own simply by means of self-consecration in which the adept consecrates himself without the need for the preceptor.\textsuperscript{94}

With sacred space established and the three figures present (adept, preceptor and \textit{mudrā}), the adept progresses to the second consecration, the \textit{Guhya} or Secret Consecration. In this stage, the preceptor unites with the \textit{mudrā} and produces the 'thought of enlightenment' or \textit{bodhicitta}.\textsuperscript{95} A drop of the 'thought of enlightenment' is then placed on the tongue of the adept, thereby allowing him to taste the 'Nectar of Immortality'.\textsuperscript{96} There is no contact between the adept and the \textit{mudrā} at this stage; however, when the adept receives the \textit{bodhicitta} the blindfold is removed and he is able to see the \textit{mudrā} for the first time. The ritualised sexual union that occurs between the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[92] Willemen, \textit{The Chinese Hevajratantra: The Scriptural Text of the Teaching the Adamantine One with Great Compassion and Knowledge of the Void} 30.
\item[93] Ibid.
\item[94] Snellgrove, \textit{Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors} 240.
\item[95] Kvaerne, "On the Concept of Sahaja in Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature," 97.
\item[96] Ibid.: 97-98.
\end{footnotes}
preceptor and the mudrā is the event which characterises the second consecration known as the Guhya consecration.

The Consecration that follows is the Prajñājñāna or Knowledge of Wisdom consecration. In this stage the preceptor no longer functions as a mediator in the ritual act. Rather, with the preceptor's permission, it is the adept who unites with the mudrā.\textsuperscript{97} During sexual union the practitioner generates his own bodhicitta or 'thought of enlightenment'. There is no emission of the seminal fluid with the consummation of this union with the mudrā.\textsuperscript{98} Therefore, the heightened experience of the practitioner at this time cannot be equated with the climax that is generally associated with sexual union. The adept is engaging in the act of sexual union as a means for achieving the supreme state of non-dual consciousness. In the sacred space created by the maṇḍala, the sexual act becomes a legitimate path to realization. This third consecration is designated as the consecration of the Knowledge of Wisdom because at this time the practitioner gains the experiential knowledge of wisdom, which is represented by the mudrā, or the female practitioner, uniting with him. Furthermore, it is the mudrā who is able to guarantee the authenticity of the experience of wisdom because she is the embodiment of wisdom. The union of the practitioner and the mudrā, is the union of wisdom and means.

The last consecration, designated as "The Fourth", (caturtha), occurs in conjunction with the third consecration mentioned above.\textsuperscript{99} A higher state of consciousness is achieved with the union of Wisdom and Means represented by the sexual union of the male practitioner and the mudrā. This last consecration is designated simply 'The Fourth' because although it occurs at the same time as the third

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.: 99. 
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.: 113. 
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.: 100.
consecration, it differs from the third in that it has no distinguishing mark by which it can be described. David L. Snellgrove states that this last stage which we call “The Fourth” is ‘induced by one’s master’, thus reaffirming the need for an experienced teacher in the whole process.¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, the fourth consecration transcends all concepts and descriptions.

It is clear from the Hevajratantra and other texts within the anuttarayoga class of tantra that the rituals were actually practiced by real yogīns and yogīṇīs. The ritual act of sexual union was held to be a legitimate means of gaining enlightenment among the groups of wandering siddhas. As the practices were passed down by means of initiation from master to student, they became acceptable to even a wider populace. David L. Snellgrove states that the original texts describing the ritual practices were probably composed by actual masters of the rites involved, thus lending to the legitimacy of the practice and promoting the codification of the ritual practice.¹⁰¹ However, the commentaries clearly indicate that the practices eventually became a form of visualized meditative practice. This does not detract from the importance that the actual ritual practice must have held, but the visualized meditative practice eventually allowed for a wider base of participants, most notably the monastic community, who took the vows of chastity (brahmācārya). Ultimately, the practices were codified and a lineage was maintained providing a direct transmission from master to student. Today it is mostly the Sakya pa school which is involved in the initiation and ritual practice of the Hevajra lineage.

¹⁰⁰ Snellgrove, Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors 245.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid. 147.
CHAPTER TWO

Inter-linear translation of kye'i rdo-rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po (Hevajratantra) and kye'i rdo-rje rgyud kyi dka’ ‘grel padma can zhes bya ba (Hevajratantrapañjikāpadmanāma).

[Root Text]

rgya gar skad du / he vajra tan tra rāja nāma /

bod skad du / kye’i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po /

In Sanskrit [this text] is named the Hevajratantrarāja.

In Tibetan [this text is] kye’i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po.

In English [this text is] The King [of all the Tantra] named Hevajratantra.

/ kye’i rdo rje la phyag ‘tshal lo /

Reverence to Hevajra!

/ ‘di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na / bcom ldan ‘das de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi sku dang gsung dang thugs kyi snying po rdo rje btsun mo’i bha ga mams la bzhugs so /

Thus, at one time it was heard by me, the Bhagavan dwelt in the bliss of all the Vajra-yoginīs who are the quintessence of existentiality (sku), communication (gsung) and spirituality (thugs) of all the Tathāgatas.
Is it not the case that the greatest of secrets from among all secrets is that Vajrayogini is the quintessence of all Buddhas' existentiality, communication and spirituality?

Then the Bhagavan said,

Well [said], well [said], Oh Vajragarbha! [you] Great Bodhisattva, Great Being! Listen!

This so called Hevajra is the quintessence of Vajrasattva (rdo rje sems dpa'), Mahasattva (sems dpa' chen po) and Mahasamayasattva (dam tshig sems dpa' chen po).
[Then] Vajragarbha asked,

Why is [this Hevajra the quintessence of] Vajrasattva?

In what manner is [Hevajra the quintessence of] Mahāsattva?

By what is [Hevajra the quintessence of] Mahāsamayasattva?

I beseech the Bhagavan to explain [these] to me. //1//

/bcom ldan ‘das kyis bka’ stsal pa /
/rdo rje mi phyed ces byar brjod /
/sems dpa’ srid pa gsum\textsuperscript{103} gcig pa /
/‘dis\textsuperscript{104} ni shes rab rigs pa yis /
/rdo rje sms dpa’ zhes byar brjod //2//

By the Bhagavan it was said,

Vajra is said [to mean] ‘not divisible’.

Sattva [refers to] the three existences as one and the same.

The logic behind this equivalence is wisdom\textsuperscript{105}.

Therefore, it is said [that Hevajra is the quintessence of] ‘Vajra-sattva’. //2//

\textsuperscript{102} Should dang / read dag or even dag gi, in accordance with the Sanskrit?
\textsuperscript{103} "Three existences" (srid pa gsum) can either be read as the three existences of sentient beings (kamadhātu, rūpadhātu, arūpadhātu) or as Body, Speech and Mind. I am using the former in this translation while D.L. Snellgrove uses the latter in his edition of the text, The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study, Vol. I, p. 47, nt. 2.
\textsuperscript{104} The text reads ‘dis (by this). Perhaps it should be corrected to read ‘di (this) which would then indicate that the previous two lines are the subject of wisdom. The Sanskrit text clearly reads anayā prajñāyā yuktyā and thus the third pada can be translated as “owing to the logic of this wisdom” upon which Hevajra is said to be [the quintessence of] Vajrasattva.
\textsuperscript{105} Here we are following D.L.Snellgrove who understands prajñā in the sense of logic. See p.47, nt. 3.
One who has the full taste of great wisdom
is called the Mahāsattva (Great Being).

Because Samaya (the vows are) practiced at all times
[Hevajra] is called [the quintessence of Mahā-] Samayasattva. //3//

Vajragarbha asks,
How is the name composed?
What is Hevajra?
What is explained by the aspect of ‘HE’?
Moreover, how is ‘VAJRA’ like that? //4//
The Bhagavan replies,

‘HE’ is indeed Great Compassion.

‘VAJRA’ is said to be wisdom.

Means and Wisdom alone are Tantra;

because I explain thus, listen! //5//

Gazes, Conjuring, Mahamudra,

The enumeration of manifold proficiencies,

The cause to paralyze, to drive away,
To cause to paralyze an army, bewitching, // 6 //

Awareness of what is with regard to

The production, dwelling and cause of the Yoginīs, and,

Primordial awareness and discursive understanding of proficiency—

[All] arise in the manner of the Gods. // 7 //

/he ru ka ni bskyed pa'i rgyu /
/dang por gcig ni bsgom par bya /
/rdo rje snying po snying rje che /
/dngos po nyid kyis nam grol zhing // 8//

The cause for the production of Heruka is

[that ] firstly, one must habituate one's self (bsgom par bya).

Oh, Vajragarbha, increasing compassion,

become freed from existence itself (dngos po nyid). //8//

/dngos po'i 'ching bas 'ching bar 'gyur /
/de yongs shes pas grol ba yin /
/dngos po med par yongs shes pas /
/dngos po bsgom 'gyur shes rab can /
/dngos po med pa yongs shes pas /
/de ltar he ru ka bsgom bya // 9//
To know that one is tied ('ching) by the chain of existence, that is liberation.

One who habituates one's self (bsgom) in existence by knowing that there is no substantive basis for existence (dngos po med pa) is a wise one.

By knowing that there is no substantive basis for existence [One] should practice Heruka in that manner (bsgom bya).

\[\text{lus la ye shes chen po gnas}\]
\[\text{rtog pa thams cad yang dag spangs}\]
\[\text{dngos po kun la khyab pa po}\]
\[\text{lus gnas [f.2b] lus ma skyes pa’o}\]

In the body, Great Wisdom dwells.

All (every) discursive discrimination has been properly removed (yang dag spangs).

That [wisdom] which pervades (khyab pa) all existences, dwells in the body [but] does not come forth from the body.

\[\text{rdo rje snying pos gsol pa}\]
\[\text{kye bcom ldan ‘das rdo rje’i lus la rtsa du lags}\]

Vajragarbha asks, Oh Bhagavan, how many veins are there in the vajra body?

\[\text{bcom ldan ‘das kyis bka’ stsal pa}\]
The Bhagavan replies,

The veins [number] thirty-two. The flow of the bodhi-mind (byang chub kyi sems) transmitted by the thirty-two veins flows to the place of great bliss. From among these [veins], three are most central – i.e., lalanā, rasanā and avadhūtī.

Lalanā dwells as prajñā.

Rasanā dwells as means.

Avadhūtī, in view of dwelling in the middle

is freed from (rnam par spangs) object-subject [dichotomy]. //11//

Lalanā transmits (‘bab pa; blood) Akṣobhya (mi bskyod; semen).

---

Likewise, rasanā, blood (khrag).

What is explained as the flow (‘bab) of wisdom and moon (zla ba)

That is renown as avadhūtī. //12//

/ mi phyed ma dang / phra gzugs ma dang / rtse ba ma dang / gYon pa ma dang / thung ngu ma dang / rus spal skyes ma dang / sgom pa ma dang / dbang ma dang / skyon ma dang / ‘jug ma dang / ma mo dang / mtshan mo dang / bsil sbyin ma dang / tsha ba ma dang / brkyang ma dang / kun ‘dar ma dang / ro ma dang / gzhol ma dang / rangs ma dang /shin tu gzugs can ma dang / spyi ma dang / rgyu sbyin ma dang / sbyor bral ma dang / sdug gu ma dang / grub ma dang / ‘tshe ma dang / de bzhin du yid bzangs ma dang / sum skor ma dang / ‘dod ma dang / khyim ma dang / gtum mo dang / bdud dral ma’o /

[The names of the thirty-two nādis are:]

Indivisible; Subtle-form; Divine; Left-handed; Female Dwarf; Tortoise-born; Female Practitioner; Consecration; Misfortune; Pervader; Mother; Female Savage; Provider of Coolness; Female Heat; Lalanā; Avadhūtī; Rasanā; Intent; Black Colour; Beautiful; Common; Cause-giver; Freed from Attachments; Affectionate; Accomplished; Purified; Good-minded; Three Turnings; Lustful; House Wife; Inner Heat; Tearing away from Māyā.

rdo rje snying pos gsol pa/
Vajragarbha asked,

Oh Bhagavan, in what manner are these thirty-two [veins]?

The Bhagavan said,

All of the three transient worlds

are free of object-subject [dichotomy].

Still, by everyone, means is conceptualized

as the defining characteristic (mtshan nyid) of reality.  //13//

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

/srid pa gsum/ zhes pa ni sku gsum gyi rang bzhin te / rtsa gsum gyi gzugs kyis so //
yongs su gyur pas zhes pa ni sum cu rtsa gnyis po ‘di dag go// don dam pa las ni
avadhuti’i rang bzhin te / de bas na gzung pa dang ‘dzin pa spangs p’o // yang na thams
cad kyi thabs kyi dngos po’i mtshan nyid kyis brjod pa’o zhes pa ni’/ mna’i byor ma bco
Ina’i gzugs kyis ni ‘di dag thams cad bsgom pa’i thabs kyi mtshan nyid kyis gsungs pa’o /

107 Highlighted text refers to passages that are directly quoted from the root text.
The statement "three levels of existence"\(^{109}\) [in the root text] means the facticity (rang bzhin) of the three patternings\(^{110}\) (sku) because they constitute the substance of the three veins (rtsa; Skt. nadis). The statement “by permutations” (yongs su gyur) is meant [by] the thirty-two [veins]. From the view of higher reality (don dam pa; Skt. paramārtha), [permutations] is the facticity (rang bzhin) of avadhūtī. Therefore, it is free from subject-object [dichotomy]. The statement “still, by everyone, means is spoken about”\(^{111}\) as the defining characteristic of reality”, is explained through the manifestation of the fifteen yoginis\(^{112}\), as “all of these are the defining characteristics of the means of contemplation.

[Root Text]

sdom pa'i dbyes ba'ng bshad par bya ste / ā li dang ka li ni zla ba dang / nyi ma dang / shes rab dang / thabs so // chos dang / longs spyod rdzogs pa dang / sprul pa ni sku dang / gsung dang / thugs so /

The details of the contents must be explained; Āli and Kāli refer to the moon and the sun, respectively, and also to wisdom (shes rab; Skt prajñā) and means (thabs; Skt. upāya). Dharma and complete enjoyment and transformation refer respectively to existentiality, communication, and spirituality.

\(^{109}\) The three levels of existence are kāmadhūtā, rūpadhatu and arūpadhātā.

\(^{110}\) The three patternings are Body, Speech and Mind. D.L. Snellgrove states that the various commentaries are in agreement with this, although Dharmakirti states that ‘the three’ refers to the three levels of existence stated in the previous footnote. See D.L. Snellgrove, The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study, Vol. I, p. 47, nt. 2.

\(^{111}\) Although the root text reads brtag, to examine or to believe, the commentary here reads brjod, meaning to say or to speak.
Because all of the various teachings of the Vajra of Great Bliss are contextualized as one [the root statement], “contents” or by selecting out the highest Great Bliss as what is to be explained, the defining characteristic of distinction [is explained].

The very ṛḷī [and] kāḷī refer to the two, namely, means (thabs; Skt. upāya) and wisdom (shes rab; Skt. prajñā) and they correspond respectively to lalanā and rasanā.

Moreover, candāli is non-duality. The status (gnas rnam) of dharma (chos) etc.\(^{115}\), and of existentiality (sku)\(^{116}\) etc., is in respect to that [essence] and facticity of that [reality].

[Root Text]

/e vam ma ya ni /

/e Yi rnam pas lha mo spyan /

---


\(^{113}\) The root text reads sdom pa’i, which means to bind or fasten, while the commentary reads bsdoms pas, which is the future tense.

\(^{114}\) Although, the Tibetan grammar reads ṛḷī = means and kāḷī = wisdom, it is actually that ṛḷī = wisdom and kāḷī = means.

\(^{115}\) Dharmakāya, nirmāṇakāya, sambhogakāya, and mahāsukha.
With regards to EVAM MAYĀ [there is the verse:]

By means of ‘E’ we speak of the goddess Locana.

By means of VAM we speak of Māmakī.

MA is the goddess Pāṇḍurā.

By means of YĀ we speak of Tārā. //14//

The sixty-four petaled lotus is in regard to the cakra of transformation (sprul pa’i ‘khor lo; Skt. nirmāṇacakra); and, the eight petals are in regard to the cakra of authentic being (chos kyi ‘khor lo; Skt. dharmacakra); and, the sixteen petals are in regard to the cakra of complete enjoyment (longs spyod rdzogs pa’i ‘khor lo; Skt. sambhogacakra); and, the thirty-two petals are in regard to the cakra of great bliss (bde ba chen po’i ‘khor lo; Skt. mahāsukhacakra).

116 Sku, gsung, and thugs.
[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

sngar gsungs pa bshad pa ni / E VAM zhes bya la sogs pa ste / go rims ji lta bar sprul pa la sogs pa ‘o /

At first the exposition of the [Hevajra] tantra begins with E VAM, and in an orderly fashion refers to transformation (nirmanākāya), and so on.\(^\text{117}\)

/ de nyid gsungs pa’i ‘khor lo zhes pa ni ‘og ma dang yang sbyor te / bya rog gi mig bzhin no /

The turning of the wheel of this very text (gsungs pa’i ‘khor lo) [the Hevajra tantra] is contextually related to what went on before and is like the eye of a black crow (bya rig gi mig).\(^\text{118}\)

[Root Text]

skad cig ma bzhi ni rnam pa sna tshogs dang / rnam par smin pa dang rnam par nyed pa dang / mtshan nyid dang bral ba’o /

The four moments refer to [1. the moment of] variety (rnam pa sna tshogs), [2. the moment of] maturation (rnam par smin pa), [3. the moment of] consummation (rnam par nyed pa), and [4. the moment] free of distinguishing characteristics (mtshan nyid dang bral).

\(^{117}\) VAM means dharmakāya; MA means saṃbhogakāya; YĀ means mahāsukha.
[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

/nam pa sna thogs zhes bya ba la sogs pa la de’i bshad par ‘gyur ba ni nram pa sna
tshogs pa zhes bya ba la sogs pa’o /

What the explanation of the statement “nram pa sna tshogs” and so on, is [the words] “variety” and so on.119

[Root Text]

/‘phags pa’i bden pa bzhi ni sdug bsngal ba dang / kun ‘byung ba dang / ‘gog pa dang /
lam mo /

The four realities of the sublime one120 are [1. the reality of] suffering, [2. the reality of] the cause [of suffering] and [3. the reality of] the cessation [of suffering] and [4. the reality of] the path [leading to the cessation of suffering].

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

/thugs rdo rje de nyid sdug bsngal la sogs pa’i tshul gyis shes par bya’o /

That very vajra-spirituality (thugs rdo rje de nyid) should be known as the dynamics (tshul gyis) of [the reality of] suffering and so on.

118 This passage is not understood; perhaps the crow refers to a previous existence, death, or perhaps referring to the enjoyment of something in the past.
119 Here, variety is referring to the first of the four moments, with the three others following as maturation, consummation and free of distinguishing characteristics, as stated previously in the root text.
120 These are usually referred to as the Four Noble Truths: duḥkha, samudaya, nirodha, mārga.
The four actualities (de kho na nyid)\textsuperscript{121} are, the actuality of self, the actuality of mantra, the actuality of mental energy\textsuperscript{122}, and the actuality of knowledge.

That very [vajra-spirituality] is the dynamics of the four [kinds of] actualities and the [four] actualities constitute its facticity.

The content of enjoying a celestial form of that very [vajra-spirituality] is an actuality in so far as its facticity is [like] an illusion (sgyu ma’i; Skt. māyā). Knowledge is an actuality in so far as [it is] its facticity which causes [one] to know and causes [one] to protect that very [vajra-spirituality].

\textsuperscript{121} This word has been translated by D.L. Snellgrove as the four realities, not actualities. See D.L. Snellgrove, The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study, Vol I, p.49.

\textsuperscript{122} The Tibetan word is lha, while the Sanskrit is devas. Our translation of this word is based on H.V. Guenther’s interpretation of lha as ‘deiform energy’. For more information see H.V. Guenther, The Creative Vision, pp.11-13.
[Root Text]

/ dga’ ba bzhi ni / dga’ ba dang / mchog tu dga’ ba dang / dga’ bral gyi dga’ ba dang /

lhan cig skyes pa’i dga’ ba’o /

The four joys are joy, highest joy, joy of cessation, and spontaneous joy.

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

/ de nyid shin tu gnyis su med pa’i bde ba chen po rang rig pa’i tshul gis de kho na nyid do // de nyid chung du dang / ‘bring dang / chen po dang chen po’i yang chen po’i dbye bas dga’ ba la sogs pa’i rang bzhin no /

Through the sovereignty of Great Bliss, non-duality is reality. The very small, middle, great, and the greater than great, are the actuality (rang bzhin) of [the four] joys.

[Root Text]

/ sde pa bzhi ni gnas brtan pa dang / thams cad yod par smra ba dang / kun gyis bkur ba dang / dge ‘dun phal chen no /

The four [Buddhist] schools are Sthāvira, Sarvāstivāda, Sāṃśītya, and Mahāsāṃghika.

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

/ de nyid gnas brtan la sogs pa nye bar mtshon pa’i gnas ‘og nas ‘chad par ‘gyur ro /

That very [dynamics] will be understood after [having understood the four schools] on the basis of the characteristics of the Sthāvira and so on.
Izla ha dang
I nyi ma dang / ali dang/ kali dang / 'pho ba becu drug dang / dbyug gu
drug cu rtsa bzhi dang / chu tshod sum cu rtsa gnyis dang / thun tshod bzhi ste / de
ltar thams cad bzhi bzhi'o /

Moon and sun, ali and kali, the sixteen phases, sixty-four quarter-hours (sixteen hours),
thirty-two hours and four watches of the night- such kinds are all in fours.

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]
/zla ba dang nyim dag sna'i bug pa gyas pa dang gYon pa dag gi rlung ngo // de nyid ali
dang kali dag ste gnyis ka nas thun phyed byed kyis nyin mtshan du spyod pas 'bo ba becu
drug go /

The two, moon and sun are the winds (rlung ngo) of the nostrils, right and left. Those
[correspond to] ali and kali, and are the sixteen [phases]¹²³ that arise as the activities of
night and day with the night watch divided into two parts.

/de nyid 'lo ba'i dus dag tu/
/bzhi cha yis ni me dang rlung/
/de bzhin dbang chen chu dag gi/
/dkyil 'khor las ni kun tu spyod/ //i)//

/de nyid steng 'og dbus 'og rgyu/
/dbyu gu drug cu rtsa bzhi yin/
/bzang ngan las ni de yi phyed/
/chu tshod sum cu rtsa gnyis thun/ //ii)//
Thus,

The sixteen phases of time of that very [vajra-spirituality]
When analysed into their four divisions [refer to] fire and wind [etc.]
In the same manner, the activity of the transference to higher numbers of time\(^{124}\)
[refers to] the practice. (i)

The impetus for going from the base through the middle to that very [vajra-spirituality]
comprises the sixty-four periods [and] half of that - i.e., positive and negative actions
comprise the thirty-two hours. (ii)

Regarding the four watches, [there is] night and day
Consequently, by purifying [activities] of the [four] night watches,
[there is] the movement [through] dharmakaya’s destruction
[through the sixteen petal] sambhoga [kāya] and the sixty-four [petal] nirmāṇa [kāya].
The [passing off] time [produces] the great purity. (iii)

[Root Text]

/ lte bar gtum mo ‘bar ba yis /
/ de bzhin gsegs pa Inga bsregs shing /
/ spyan la sogs pa yang bsregs te /

\(^{123}\) I assume that the commentary is referring to the sixteen phases that are mentioned in the root text.
\(^{124}\) Is chu here an abbreviation for chu tshogs?
Igniting the heat in the navel,
The five Tathāgatas being consumed,
Locana and the rest also are consumed.
HAM, being consumed, the moon trickles down.
The first chapter: The Vajra lineage

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

Thus, there is the nullifying, from the very roots of the emotions of existence (srid pa) by the heat (gtum po). The so-called burning increases, and, it is [active] during what is known as the process of manifestation (stong bar byed ba). The so-called āli is a pattern (ri mo). Navel refers to the navel [cakra], which is the lotus of great happiness. To burn up means to eliminate self-nature (ngo bo nyid). The five Buddha families (bzhin gshegs pa) refer to the five psychophysical constituents (phung po; Skt. skandhas). Locāna, and
so on, refer to the elements of earth, and so on\textsuperscript{125}. If you should ask when these are consumed (bsregs), it is at the time of happiness when the self, being consumed, when the attachment to self is consumed. Vajra means Vajrasattva (rdo rje sems dpa'); it means [one] dwells in the family (rigs) of Vajrasattva [the Adamantine Being].

[This] first [chapter] is the chapter [for] making [one] experientially understand that [Vajra-spirituality].

\textsuperscript{125} The four goddesses that are associated with each cakra correspond to the four elements earth, fire, water and wind.
CHAPTER THREE

I. Exposition of the Main Components of the Cakra system

In the passages translated for the purpose of this thesis, an explanation of the key elements of the cakra system that the practitioner visualizes and manipulates\textsuperscript{126} have been expressed. Specifically, the cakra system is comprised of the cakras or subtle energy centres of concentrated energy, the veins or channels (Tib. rtsa; Skt. nādi), and the vital forces (such as bodhicitta) that flow through the system. A more comprehensive analysis will reveal that all the components of reality and the nature of reality are located within the practitioner's body. Graphically, this results in a very elaborate internal maṇḍala. David L. Snellgrove explains that in this internal structure the macrocosm (the world or reality in all its aspects) is identified within the microcosm (the body)\textsuperscript{127}. According to R. Beer, this internal maṇḍala can also be understood as a 'vajra-body' and is the "...vital 'life energy' of consciousness within the physical body...."\textsuperscript{128} It is this 'vajra-body' or internal maṇḍala with which the practitioner identifies and uses as a means to enlightenment.

The main components of the internal maṇḍala or 'vajra-body' are the cakras, or areas where there is a concentration of energy. David L. Snellgrove translates cakra literally as 'wheel' or 'circle' and defines the term first in the context of maṇḍalas and the corresponding deities and secondly in regard to the 'psychic centres' that exist within the

\textsuperscript{126} The word 'manipulate' is not used in a negative sense here, but rather is used to describe the method by which a practitioner works with the subtle body or cakra system.
body. For the purpose of this thesis, these psychic centres refer to areas where subtle energy concentrates within the body. Each cakra has a physical location within the body, is associated with one of the four elements, is associated with a Goddess, and is visualized as a lotus with a specific number of petals.

Although the above mentioned information can be found in the Hevajratantra, it fails to tell us specifically where each cakra is actually located within the body. It is the Yogaratnamālā, a commentary on the Hevajratantra, that provides the location of the cakras within the body.

The root text follows a four-fold cakra system. In an ascending order, the first cakra is the sixty-four petaled lotus which is known as the cakra of 'transformation' (Tib. sprul pa'i 'khor lo; Skt. nirmāṇacakra). The Yogaratnamālā states that this cakra of 'creation' is located at the generative organ or the sexual organs; however, D.L. Snellgrove places the first cakra at the navel centre, and other scholars tend to be in agreement. Elizabeth English relies on the Yogaratnamālā for the location of the first cakra, although for the location of the other three cakras she is in agreement with D.L. Snellgrove. The second cakra, located at the heart centre, is the cakra of 'authentic being' (Tib. chos kyi 'khor lo; Skt. dharmacakra), which is visualized as a lotus with eight petals. The third cakra is the cakra of 'complete enjoyment' (Tib. longs spyod rdzogs pa'i 'khor lo; Skt. saṁbhogacakra) that is visualized as a lotus with sixteen petals

---

130 Other than the places where references have been given, most of the information in this section is either a summary or a paraphrase of the contents of my translations found in Chapter Two of this thesis.
and is located at the throat area of the physical body. Finally, the fourth cakra is known as the cakra of 'Great Bliss' (Tib. bde ba chen po'i 'khor lo; Skt. mahāsukhacakra). The mahāsukhacakra is visualized as a thirty-two petalled lotus located at the crown of the head.

The root text analyzes the words EVĀṀ MAYĀ into their individual syllables - E, VĀṀ, MA, YĀ – so that each syllable corresponds to a respective cakra. Therefore, the syllable 'E' corresponds to the first cakra located at the navel centre, 'VĀṀ' corresponds to the heart cakra, 'MA' corresponds to the throat cakra, and, finally, 'YĀ' corresponds to the fourth cakra located at the crown of the head. David L. Snellgrove states that the words EVĀṀ MAYĀ, along with ŠRŪṬAM are the opening words of sūtras and tantras and the words represent the totality of the quintessence of the tantras and the whole doctrine of Buddhism in general. Therefore, by locating the syllables within the subtle body of a practitioner, the practitioner comes to embody the truth or quintessence expressed in the text. In the same manner, from the base of the body to the crown of the head are the four Goddesses – Locanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍurā, and Tārā respectively. Accordingly, the four elements - earth, water, fire, and air respectively—are associated with each cakra.

The root text goes on to mention other groups of four. The first are the four moments - i.e., variety, maturation, consummation and the moment that is free of distinguishing characteristics. Although the Hevajratantrapāñjikāpadmanāma does not

134 G.W. Farrow, The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra: With the Commentary YogaratnamāLa 15.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
elaborate on these, the *Yogaratnamālā*, states that "Since they are the choicest of essences, these must be actualised in the four Centres *[cakra]*."\(^{138}\) This statement seems to imply that each of the four moments are experienced at each of the four *cakras* which would mesh nicely with the four-fold scheme laid out by the four *cakras*.

The next group of fours are the Four Realities, commonly referred to as the Four Noble Truths; the reality of suffering, the reality of the cause of suffering, the reality of the cessation of suffering and, lastly, the reality of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. Again, the *Yogaratnamālā* states that each of these must be 'actualized' at each of the four *cakras*.\(^{139}\) It further states that "...the perfection of the emanation of the Four Noble Truths is essential in order to perfect the emanation of the Centres."\(^{140}\) Therefore, the practitioner must have a thorough understanding of the Four Realities in order to perfect the embodiment of the four *cakras*. The Four Noble Truths provide the foundation for the Buddhist practitioner and must be understood as a reality in the moments of enlightenment.

Continuing on with the groups of four, the root text states that the four actualities are the actuality of self, the actuality of mantra, the actuality of mental energy and the actuality of knowledge. The meaning behind this group of four is a little more problematic. The *Hevajratrampaññikāpadmanāma* states that the dynamics of the four actualities constitutes the facticity of the *vajra*-spirituality.\(^{141}\) *Vajra*-spirituality (Tib. *thugs rdo rje*) could also be translated as the embodiment of the adamantine being; that is, one who has realized a state of non-duality and who embodies the non-duality of

---

\(^{138}\) G.W. Farrow, *The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra: With the Commentary Yogaratnamālā* 16.

\(^{139}\) Ibid.

\(^{140}\) Ibid.
reality. Therefore, the four actualities are the reality or dynamics of the adamantine-being.

The next group of four outlined in the Hevajratantra are the four joys – i.e., joy, highest joy, joy beyond cessation and spontaneous joy. This group of four will be discussed in detail in the section on External Practice and Internal Meditation.

Finally, the last group of four discussed in the root text are the four Buddhist schools. The first is Sthāvira, the second Sarvāstivāda, the third Sāminītiya, and the fourth, Mahāsaṃghika. The Yogaratnamālā states that "The Four Doctrinal Schools must also be actualized in the Centres, for all doctrines are comprehended by means of the emanation of the four Centres." The doctrine of the four different schools are learned prior to the esoteric training so that a practitioner will be well versed in the philosophy and practice associated with these schools. According to the Yogaratnamālā the doctrines of the four schools are comprehended by means of the emanation or embodiment of the four cakras.

The four cakras of the internal maṇḍala are connected together by veins (Tib. rtsa; Skt. nādis) or subtle energy channels. David L. Snellgrove speaks of the nādis as the psychic channels which sustain the practitioner's body. It is through the nādis that different forces and subtle energy travel throughout the body and move throughout the various energy centres. The three main nādis, are lalanā (brkang ma), rasanā (ro ma) and avadhūti (kun 'dar ma). Lalanā and rasanā are the two subsidiary channels on either side of the central channel, avadhūti, that begin at the left and right nostrils and reconnect

---

141 de nyid de kho na nyid bzhi'i tshul gyis te / de la bdag nyid kyi de'i rang bshin ni de kho na nyid do/
142 G.W. Farrow, The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra: With the Commentary Yogaratnamālā 17.
at the sexual organs. It is at the base of the genitals that the three main channels come together to form a closed circuit within the body.\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Lalanā} corresponds to the left side of the body while \textit{rasanā} corresponds to the right. It is from these two channels that the vital forces enter the body and are dispersed throughout the entire body. Finally, \textit{avadhūtī} is the central \textit{nādi} that runs the length of the spinal column, from the genitals up to the crown \textit{cakra} situated at the top of the head. Robert Beer suggests that the \textit{avadhūtī} passes through the crown \textit{cakra} and terminates at the third-eye point, situated between the two eyebrows.\textsuperscript{145} The \textit{Hevajratantra} states that this vein or channel is "free from object-subject [dichotomy]"; therefore, its nature is that of non-duality. Of the thirty-two main \textit{nādis} that run throughout the body \textit{lalanā}, \textit{rasanā} and \textit{avadhūtī} are three. These thirty-two veins are channels through which the \textit{bodhicitta} (Tib. \textit{byang chub kyi sems}) as well as the vital forces (Tib. \textit{rlung}; Skt. prāṇa) may flow through the body.

II. Synopsis of the Major Concepts forming the Cakra System

It becomes clear from the \textit{Hevajratantra} that the natural grouping into fours and the relation of each to the four \textit{cakras} create a very elaborate scheme of existence within the body. The ascending order of each group of four shows that a progression occurs within the body of the practitioner. As will be shown, the energy that moves up the central channel, ignites each of the four \textit{cakras}, facilitating the embodiment of the reality that each \textit{cakra} represents.

The \textit{cakras} are associated with the body, speech and mind of the Buddha. According to H.V. Guenther, the Sanskrit triad \textit{kāya}, \textit{vāc} and \textit{citta}, (body, speech and

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid. 36.
mind) has two sets of equivalents in Tibetan as either lus, ngag, and yid, or sku, gsungs, and thugs.

What these Tibetan triads imply are quite different. The first triad, lus, ngag, and yid, represent the un-purified individual. However, an entirely different level is achieved when the triad sku, gsungs and thugs are used to talk about the various cakras. Thus, sku refers to the existentiality of the individual, gsungs refers to the communication of the individual, and thugs refers to the 'spirituality' of the individual.

Sku, gsungs, and thugs represent the individual on a purified level -- purified in body, speech and mind. This purification happens through the series of consecrations by which the practitioner progresses. Furthermore, sku refers to the first cakra, the nirmāṇacakra; thugs refers to the second cakra, the dharmacakra; and gsungs refers to the third cakra, the saṃbhogacakra. The fourth cakra, the mahāsukhacakra, symbolises the ultimate unity of the three notions of body, speech and mind. H.V. Guenther states:

...the open dimensional facticity becomes man's existentiality (sku) which is not a rigid entity of an eternal substance, but an openness that sends its message through communication (gsungs) in the sense that its radiation communicates itself to and is being responded to by an aliveness which is man's 'spirituality' (thugs).
Herbert V. Guenther provides an explanation of a person as a manifestation of one's true potential. On the mundane level (lus, ngag,yid) the practitioner engages in the world in a very physical way. With a true understanding of the nature of reality, the practitioner engages in a world connected to the world beyond the dichotomy of subject and object (sku, gsung, thugs). A practitioner can now manifest one's authentic being in the mundane world as well as enjoy the fruits of one's practice. The practitioner functions on a higher plane of existence where the external world becomes manifested internally. Essentially, a practitioner embodies one's own reality. Moreover, the practitioner who attains this understanding is able to be skilful in action and solicits a response due to one's very presence. Furthermore, the practitioner is able to embody both wisdom and means when one exercises one's potential as a human being. Finally, it is caṇḍālī, visualized as an ethereal fire, that consumes the notion of the ego, or self (ātman) that obstructs the way to the realization of reality as-it-is. This will be discussed further in the section concerning the internal meditation of a practitioner.

The nādis are explained as metaphors for the two main concepts found in Mahāyāna doctrine – wisdom (Tib. shes rab; Skt. prajñā) and means (Tib. thabs; Skt. upāya) and the unity of the two, i.e. non-duality (Tib. zung 'jug; Skt. yuganaddha). Wisdom and means are two of the three main philosophical components that are developed on the path to enlightenment (bodhi), the third being compassion (Tib. snying rje; Skt. karunā). These concepts developed in the esoteric tradition are taken directly from the Mahāyāna tradition; therefore, it is important to note that the esoteric tradition
does not introduce new philosophical concept into its mode of practice.\textsuperscript{153} Because in the esoteric tradition, it is wisdom and means in particular that are cultivated on the path to enlightenment, they are said to be \textit{samsāric} in nature.\textsuperscript{154} In unity, though, they symbolize \textit{nirvāna}. 

The root text states that \textit{lalanā} "dwell as \textit{prajñā}" while \textit{rasanā} "dwell as means". "Dwelling as means" refers to the \textit{activity} of existing in reality which denotes the mode of action that a practitioner takes. Similarly, "dwellling as \textit{prajñā}" refers to an awareness that informs one's ability for action. Ultimately, \textit{lalanā} and \textit{rasanā} represent a dichotomy or duality. On the mundane level, \textit{lalanā} and \textit{rasanā} represent the feminine and masculine components of reality, respectively. \textit{Lalanā}, as a symbolic representation of \textit{prajñā}, refers to the female energy and fluid (blood, Tib. \textit{khrag}; Skt. \textit{rakta}), the female sexual organ symbolised by the lotus, as well as the life-giving solar energy.\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Rasanā}, as a symbolic representation of \textit{upāya}, refers to the male energy and fluid (semen, Tib. \textit{khu ba}; Skt. \textit{ṣukra}), the male sexual organ symbolised by the \textit{vajra}, as well as the soothing energy of the moon.\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Lalanā} and \textit{rasanā} also correspond to \textit{āli} and \textit{kāli}, respectively, which represent the vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit language system.\textsuperscript{157} However, on a higher plane of existence \textit{lalanā} and \textit{rasanā} represent the means towards enlightenment and constitute the two principles that must be embodied by a practitioner in order to achieve a state of non-dual consciousness. Furthermore, on a mundane level, the two \textit{nādis}, (in fact, all thirty-two \textit{nādis}), represent the dual nature of

\textsuperscript{153} Snellgrove, \textit{The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study} 20.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid. 36.
\textsuperscript{155} Beer, \textit{The Encyclopaedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs} 144.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Snellgrove, \textit{The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study} 26.
reality. They embody both, subject and object – i.e., the means of grasping and what is grasped – by the senses. Transcending duality they come together as an unity and become manifest as the non-dual nature of nirvāṇa. The avadhūtī represents the coming together of the two concepts, wisdom and means, or the effort to overcome sāṃsāric existence. For this reason, avadhūtī is symbolic of nirvāṇa. ¹⁵⁸

The thirty-two nādis are what transmit the drop (Tib. thig-le; Skt. bindu), specifically, bodhicitta (byang chub kyi sems), as well as the vital forces (Tib. rlung; Skt. prāṇa) through the body. The drop and vital forces are directed by means of the system. ¹⁵⁹ Although neither the first chapter of the Hevajratantra nor the corresponding passages in the commentary explicitly mention the drop and winds that flow throughout the body; the other parts of these texts imply that they are important for an understanding of the system as a unified whole. It is also important to note that while the winds or vital forces flow freely through the two side channels, lalanā and rasanā, the mind is restless and cannot focus in a non-discriminating way. ¹⁶⁰ When the winds are brought under control so too is consciousness. Ultimately, it is the winds or vital forces which carry the drop as well as consciousness throughout the many nādis within the body.

Since neither the drop nor the forces are discussed in the root text and commentary, only the two aspects of bodhicitta (byang chub kyi sems) will be discussed here. However, one must keep in mind the dynamic play between forces within the body throughout the discussion. ¹⁶¹ The two aspects of bodhicitta or the 'thought of

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 36.
¹⁵⁹ Beer, The Encyclopaedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs 136.
¹⁶¹ For a detailed explanation of the different drops and winds that exist within the cakra system, see D.L. Snellgrove, The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study. Vol. I, pp. 25-31; R. Beer, The Encyclopaedia of Tibetan
enlightenment' are the relative (Tib. kun-rdzob; Skt. saṁvṛtī) and the absolute (Tib. don dam pa; Skt. vivṛtī) aspects or conditions.¹⁶² Both G.W. Farrow and I. Menon argue that both the relative and absolute aspects of bodhicitta are the result of the coming together of female (rakta) and male (sukra) energies during sexual union.¹⁶³ The result is that both the relative and absolute aspects of bodhicitta exist within the body from conception. The relative bodhicitta lies dormant at the base of the genitals where the three main channels, lalanā, rasanā and avadhūtī come together.¹⁶⁴ D.L. Snellgrove explains that the relative aspect of bodhicitta is "...the life force, the essence of saṁsāra, and therefore manifest under the two-fold aspect of the masculine and the feminine."¹⁶⁵ Essentially, this relative aspect is symbolic of the dual nature of saṁsāra, and becomes manifest from this dual nature. Therefore, it represents the finite manifestation of bodhicitta in its absolute aspect.

The absolute aspect of bodhicitta lies dormant at the crown of the head. According to G.W. Farrow and I. Menon,

The absolute, unlimited Enlightened Consciousness [bodhicitta], the Innate, is perceived as the divine, underlying factor of existence. The nature of this underlying Enlightened Consciousness is the vibrant, radiant voidness, the concealed essence of existence. This essential nature encompasses all things, at all times and also beyond all time.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ G.W. Farrow, The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra: With the Commentary Yogaratnamālā xxv.
¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 25.
¹⁶⁶ G.W. Farrow, The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra: With the Commentary Yogaratnamālā xxv.
It is this absolute aspect of *bodhicitta* that lays dormant and unknown within each individual. When awareness of this aspect of *bodhicitta* arises, an enlightened state of consciousness occurs. For this reason, D.L. Snellgrove describes it as the 'supreme mystical experience'. The moving and awakening of these two aspects of the same reality is a practitioner's experience of enlightenment and is a state of non-dual consciousness. This non-dual consciousness is symbolic of the unity felt within the body of a practitioner.

**II. Function of the Cakra System in Religious Experience: External Practice and Internal Meditation**

It is through the physical act of the four consecrations that a practitioner gains the ability to achieve an elevated state of consciousness and to experience *bodhicitta* in both its relative and absolute aspects. Per Kvaerne specifies that although it is the internal practice which transforms consciousness, the external ritual is equally important. Thus, both the internal and external ritual practices must be seen as an unity and as guiding the development of the practitioner. But, it is the four consecrations that fit appropriately into the four-fold cosmic scheme laid out in the four-fold cakra system which help to purify the practitioner on the different planes of existence (body, speech and mind), so that one may become a 'vajra' or adamantine being.

---

169 Ibid.: 92.
Per Kvaerne relates the progression of the practitioner during the four consecrations to the four moments (kṣaṇa) and the four joys (ānanda)\(^{170}\) which is also explained in the root text.\(^{171}\) The Yogaratnamālā also explains it in this way stating that the occurrence of each joy and moment during each consecutive consecration indicates the accomplishment of that specific consecration.\(^{172}\)

During the first consecration (ācārya), when the practitioner himself becomes a master (ācārya),\(^{173}\) he is introduced to the mudrā for the first time. The practitioner experiences the first of the four ānandas and kṣaṇas at this time.\(^{174}\) The first joy is simply ānanda or 'joy' because there arises a feeling of anticipation or joy within the mind of the practitioner. This anticipation arises within the practitioner from the desire to be in contact with the mudrā. The moment associated with this stage is termed vicitra or 'variety'. It is difficult to speculate what the term 'variety' may encompass. The root text states that variety refers to the different actions undertaken by the practitioner in conjunction with the mudrā.\(^{175}\) However, it could also refer to the various feelings that the practitioner experiences at this time, in the anticipation of the joy to come.

With sacred space established during the first consecration there is a progression to the second consecration, the Secret Consecration (guhya). During this stage the bodhicitta, generated from the union of the preceptor with the mudrā, is transferred to the

\(^{170}\) Ibid.: 109.
\(^{172}\) G.W. Farrow, The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra: With the Commentary Yogaratnamālā 183.
practitioner. The joy associated with this action is paramānanda or 'highest joy'. This 'highest joy' is associated with the awareness or bodhicitta that is generated by the preceptor during sexual union. It is first experienced by the preceptor and then transferred to the practitioner. The third kṣaṇa known as vipāka or 'maturation', is also experienced at this time. 'Maturation' explains the progression that the practitioner is experiencing during one's spiritual development. The root text states that it is at this time that the practitioner experiences the "enjoyment of the blissful knowledge" which would be associated with the generation of the bodhicitta. The practitioner is slowly progressing to a more elevated state of consciousness with each consecration, culminating in the third and fourth consecrations, which happen simultaneously.

The consecration that follows is the Consecration of the Knowledge of Wisdom (prajñājñāna) and it is at this time that the practitioner comes into union with the mudrā. During this union the practitioner generates one's own bodhicitta or thought of enlightenment and at this time the third joy, the 'joy of cessation', viramānanda, is experienced. That is, the practitioner experiences a state of non-dual consciousness for himself. Per Kvaerne states that this 'joy of cessation' is a passionless state that exemplifies the experience of nirvāṇa. There is neither joy nor the lack of joy being experienced by the practitioner; it is a completely neutral or non-dual state of consciousness. The third moment, vimarda or 'consummation' typifies this occurrence,
and this moment refers to the consummation of the union between the practitioner and the mudrā. The practitioner, representing means (upāya), and the mudrā as the embodiment of prajñā, signify the unity of wisdom and means and the resulting non-duality that is symbolic of reality as-it-is. The root text states that it is at the moment of consummation that the practitioner reflects back on the experience of bliss that one has had. Therefore, at this moment during the consecrations the practitioner is able to integrate the experience into one's psyche.

The last consecration, the 'Fourth' (caturtha), occurs in conjunction with the third consecration. The fourth joy arises at this time and is call sahaja, meaning 'simultaneously-arisen' or 'innate joy' because it arises in conjunction with the third joy. What the practitioner experiences in sahaja is a state of bliss or joy that is like no other; it transcends the normal conceptions of joy that usually characterize mundane existence. Furthermore, it is a state of unbounded bliss, wherein the practitioner can sit in a state of complete awareness and enjoy the fruits of one's actions. Per Kvaerne states that this fourth joy exists apart from the previous three joys which are still bound to the world of existence. Sahaja, or 'simultaneously-arisen' joy is beyond the constraints of expression and temporal reality. The fourth moment is also experienced at this time and is referred to as vilakṣaṇa, which P. Kvaerne translates as 'Blank', but literally the term means 'free of defining characteristics' or 'devoid of defining characteristics'. This moment refers to the third and fourth consecrations occurring simultaneously in the same moment and therefore there exists no characteristics by which the two moments can be

---

distinguished from each other. Per Kvaerne describes the fourth moment as one that is transcendent.\textsuperscript{185}

Although this four-fold progression of the practitioner fits appropriately into the four-fold consecration, P. Kvaerne also suggest that the four joys and moments could occur concurrently, one after the other, during the act of sexual union.\textsuperscript{186} Shinichi Tsuda agrees with this view, suggesting that the master first experiences all four joys during the secret consecration and then the practitioner experiences all four joys during the act of ritual union that occurs during the consecration of the knowledge of wisdom.\textsuperscript{187} Both P. Kvaerne and S. Tsuda relate the experience of the four joys to the movement of the bodhicitta either upwards or downwards through the avadhūti. Shinichi Tsuda claims that it occurs during the upward movement of the bodhicitta, because as it moves through each successive cakra, each of the four joys are experienced.\textsuperscript{188} This explanation would fit nicely into the four-fold cakra system. However, P. Kvaerne claims that the four joys are experienced while the bodhicitta moves from the crown cakra, or the top of the head, down towards the first cakra.\textsuperscript{189} This would also fit nicely into the four-fold cakra system. But, inconsistencies between the ordering of the third and fourth joys have been pointed out by D.L. Snellgrove.\textsuperscript{190} The problems highlighted by S. Tsuda, P. Kvaerne and D.L. Snellgrove leads to the discussion of internal meditation performed by the practitioner.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.: 110.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.: 111.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.: 214.
\textsuperscript{189} Kvaerne, "On the Concept of Sahaja in Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature," 112.
\textsuperscript{190} Snellgrove, The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study 35.
During the performance of the set of four consecrations there occurs an internal meditation based on the cakra system or subtle body. The cakra system provides the foundation for the internal meditation and the progress that the practitioner experiences during the consecrations. With the initial set of consecrations (ācārya), the preceptor and the practitioner outwardly prepare the practitioner for the ritual to follow. With the creation of sacred space the practitioner also internally prepares and purifies the subtle body and consciousness. With the first set of consecrations, the practitioner is said to become a divine being,\textsuperscript{191} endowed with the qualities of the deity that one is trying to embody. In the context of this thesis, the practitioner is identifying one's self on all levels with the deity Hevajra. Internally, as well as externally, the practitioner identifies with the chosen deity.

In order to develop a more concentrated awareness, the practitioner consciously focuses on the winds or life force (Tib. rlung; Skt. prāṇa) moving in and out of the body. The practitioner visualizes the life force as travelling through the many nādis that function as connectors in the cakra system. So long as the winds flow freely through the subtle body the mind remains restless and without focus. By means of concentration, the practitioner focuses internally and then consciously forces the flow of the life force out of the two subsidiary channels, lalana and rasanā, into the avadhūti.\textsuperscript{192} With the control of the life force, comes the calming of the mind. This process also instigates the awakening of the dormant bodhicitta that is located where the three main nādis – lalana, rasanā and avadhūti -- intersect.\textsuperscript{193} The journey to enlightenment begins for the practitioner with the

\textsuperscript{191} Kvaerne, "On the Concept of Sahaja in Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature," 102.
\textsuperscript{192} Snellgrove, The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study 36.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
awakening of the *bodhicitta* in its relative aspect. This aspect of the internal meditation process is discussed within the root text itself:

Igniting the heat at the navel,
The Five Tathāgatas being consumed,
Locanā and the rest also are consumed,
HAM being consumed, the moon trickles down.

With the awakening of *bodhicitta*, there arises heat at the navel centre, which is visualized as a blazing fire designated as *caṇḍāli*.

It is this blazing fire that moves up the *avadhūti*, carrying the *bodhicitta* in its relative aspect from the base of the spine to the crown of the head. It is also this fire, *caṇḍāli* that purifies the different *cakras* and the many defilements of the mind and body on its journey towards the crown *cakra*. The *Yogaratnamālā*, elaborating on the verse mentioned above, states that the burning of the "Five Tathāgatas' and 'Locanā and the rest" refers to the burning of the five *skandhas* (Tib. *phung po*), as well as the five elements which come together to create the individual; the five Tathāgatas represent the five *skandhas* and the four Goddesses represent the four elements.

The *Hevajratantrapāñjikāpadmanāma*, the commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*, also concurs with this explanation. According to this commentary the use of the term 'burns' indicates the purification that is occurring at this time. The *Hevajratantrapāñjikāpadmanāma* also states that it is the heat that nullifies the emotions

---

194 Ibid.
196 For more information on the five *skandhas* or the five psycho-physical constituents of the personality see *Pañca-skandha-prakaraṇa*.
from their very roots.198 The defilements of the body are purified in such a way that the practitioner is able to fully identify with the state of consciousness to come.

The initial awakening of the relative bodhicitta corresponds to the third initiation of the Knowledge of Wisdom (prajñāpāramitā) when the practitioner first comes together in sexual union.199 During sexual union, the relative bodhicitta burns upwards through the avadhūti200 towards the crown cakra invoking each cakra along the way. When the bodhicitta in its relative aspect reaches the crown and comes together with the absolute aspect of bodhicitta, the practitioner experiences 'Great Bliss'.201 This experience of 'Great Bliss' pervades the whole body and consciousness of the practitioner. Furthermore, candāli is visualized as a blazing letter 'A' that meets the bodhicitta in its absolute aspect and in its absolute aspect, it is symbolized by the syllable 'HAM'.202 When the fire makes contact with bodhicitta there occurs a melting of the absolute bodhicitta which is also known as the moon.203 This explains the root text statement, "HAM being consumed, the moon trickles down". The syllable HAM, as a representative of the absolute bodhicitta, is consumed by the fire of candāli, and the result is the melting of the bodhicitta and the subsequent downward flow. With the melting action, the absolute aspect of bodhicitta as well as the relative aspect descend by means of the central channel, avadhūti, piercing each cakra along the way.204 When the syllables 'A' and 'HAM' come together at the base of the spine to form AHAM, this becomes 'I' or the

---

198 gtum mo'i srid par'i nyon mongs pa rtsad nas med pa byed pa nyid do //
199 Alternately, this process could be done through meditation and visualization.
203 Ibid. 37.
204 Ibid.
complete incorporated self. The Hevajratantrapaññikāpadmanāma states that 'burning up'' refers to the elimination of self nature. Therefore, it is the integrated self, or the ego, that is overcome.206 David L. Snellgrove explains that it is at this point when the absolute bodhicitta reaches the base of the spine that the last joy, which he calls the 'Joy Innate', is experienced by the practitioner.207 The Hevajratantrapaññikāpadmanāma is in agreement with this, stating that it is when the self is overcome that happiness occurs.208 The ascension and dissension of the bodhicitta within the body allow for an integration of the experience by the practitioner. With the destruction of the integrated self, there no longer exists the dichotomy of subject and object. Duality is overcome and the practitioner can sit in a state of perfect awareness.

It may seem unlikely from the above discussion that each of the four moments and four joys correspond to each of the four consecrations in an orderly fashion. Rather, all four moments and four joys are experienced concurrently only during the act of sexual union209 (i.e., in the second consecration for the master and the third consecration for the practitioner) when the bodhicitta is forced to move up and down the central channel. However, it is difficult to determine exactly when each joy occurs in the upward and downward movement. The 'melting' of the bodhicitta at the crown of the head and the destruction of AHAM at the base of the spine are two of the salient points within the process. The third joy, the 'joy of cessation' occurs when the 'moon' melts and the practitioner experiences 'Great Bliss' and the fourth joy, the 'Joy Innate' or sahaja occurs

205 Ibid.  
208 bdag bregs te bdag tu 'dzin pa bregs bde'i tshe na'o //  
209 Kvaerne, "On the Concept of Sahaja in Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature," 111.
when the destruction of the ego occurs. However, D.L. Snellgrove states that it would make sense to place the 'joy of cessation' after the 'Joy Innate, thus representing the "return to normal experience" by the practitioner,\textsuperscript{210} because ultimately, the practitioner must integrate the experience into everyday existence. Either way, the two last joys, the 'joy of cessation' and the 'Joy Innate' occur simultaneously. Both the experience of non-dual consciousness and 'Great Bliss' are experienced at the same time. This makes clear the use of the name \textit{sahaja} to signify the last joy experienced by the practitioner. The above indicates that the information in the root text can be understood in various ways and D.L. Snellgrove acknowledges the inconsistencies that occur within the system; still, he claims that, ultimately, the intention is to identify the macrocosm with the microcosm; that is the external environment within the body of the practitioner.

Furthermore, sexual union is held to be a legitimate mode of practice for experiencing non-dual consciousness. The external ritual practice and the internal meditation emphasize the importance of one's physical body. The physical form is embraced in esoteric practice and used as a means to enlightenment. George W. Farrow and I. Menon state that the act of sexual union is used by the practitioner as a ritual, recreating the 'procreative drama' to allow for an awareness of the \textit{bodhicitta} to arise.\textsuperscript{211} In this sacred act the practitioner experiences a state of non-duality. Moreover, the external ritual is necessary for the internal meditation and development. According to D.L. Snellgrove, the significance of the physical form is stressed as a means to enlightenment:

\textsuperscript{210} Snellgrove, \textit{The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study} 35.
\textsuperscript{211} G.W. Farrow, \textit{The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra: With the Commentary YogaratnamâLa} xxxii.
The object of all tantric practice...is the total reintegration of scattered personality in the pristine state of self-realizing wisdom. Thus the whole process, whatever appears to occur outwardly, takes place within the practitioner's personality as expressed by his actual human body. While the body may be no more real than any other external phenomena, it provides the yogin with the only available means in order to attain his goal.212

The body is used as a vehicle, externally as well as internally, in the attainment of an enlightened state of consciousness. Moreover, the body provides a foundation for the cakra system and helps the practitioner integrate the spiritual experience. It is the cakra system that allows the practitioner to perform the internal meditation practice. The method of visualizing the internal maṇḍala or cakra system is the means by which the practitioner comes to identify with a higher level of reality. All the concepts and ideas that make up the external reality are placed within the body at the different levels of the cakras. As the practitioner gains mastery over the internal environment proficiency in the external environment is attained as well. The duality that is normally experienced by the practitioner in mundane existence is overcome during sexual union, which is practiced during the third consecration. There no longer remains a distinction between nirvāṇa and samsāra with the awakening of the bodhicitta and the overcoming of the integrated self. According to D.L. Snellgrove, the identifying of samsāra with nirvāṇa is the ultimate goal of the practitioner.213 This awareness becomes a reality through the experience of the practitioner's own body.

By means of the cakra system, the practitioner gains the ability to make the identification of samsāra with nirvāṇa and, ultimately, achieve as state of non-dual

consciousness. The cakras and nādis allow for the movement to occur within the subtle body and provide a means by which the bodhicitta may travel. Through yogic techniques the practitioner is able to gain control over the body thereby influencing the movement of bodhicitta. The practitioner gradually develops the control over consciousness. Although the practitioner has a choice to identify with either samsāra or nirvāṇa in the moments during the ritual act of sexual union, ultimately, the practitioner chooses to identify with nirvāṇa (non-duality) instead of samsāra (duality). By consciously forcing the flow of the vital forces into the central channel and awakening each cakra with the flow of the bodhicitta a practitioner is in the process of choosing to identify with non-duality. The duality of samsāric existence is overcome in the moment of enlightenment.

It is after this whole process that a practitioner can identify with a higher state of consciousness while functioning in mundane reality. The practitioner, having realized one's potential, can now exercise oneself in a manner that reflects the consciousness that one has achieved. By embodying the cakra system and all that it represents, a practitioner is in the process of embodying the macrocosmic reality. Furthermore, a practitioner is exercising mastery over the macrocosm by identifying it internally as the microcosm.
CONCLUSION

I. Overview

The concern of this thesis has been the cakra system that is outlined in the first chapter of the Hevajratantra. It has discussed how the external ritual practice became meaningful through the knowledge of the internal meditation practice. Thus we have seen that the cakra system is foundational for the internal meditative practice of a practitioner. Moreover, we have seen that the cakra system provides the foundation for the external ritual practice and the religious experience of the practitioner.

This thesis involved the translation of the first chapter of the root text, the Hevajratantra, and the corresponding passages of the Hevajratantrapañjikāpadmanāma. In translating the Tibetan texts, Robert Thurman's 'vajra- hermeneutics' and what Janet Martin Soskice calls the 'Intuitionist Theory' of metaphor were taken into consideration. The hermeneutical methods proposed by these writers were most helpful in translating the Tibetan texts into English, because they helped to contextualize the translated material within the esoteric doctrines found in tantric texts. Thus, by taking into account the elusive nature of the text itself their methodologies served to clarify the very secretive nature of the Hevajratantra that falls within the anuttarayoga class of tantric literature.

An inter-linear methodology was applied to the translated material to facilitate a straightforward reading of the selected passages. This methodology allowed for a close reading of selected passages from the root text and the corresponding passages found within the commentary. It also provided for a straightforward reference and contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the root text. The inter-linear methodology
highlighted what information was accessible in the root text and what information was accessible in the commentary and that information was applied to this thesis to provide a strong foundation for an understanding of the cakra system.

Although, it was anticipated that more information could be gained by supplementing the thesis with information from the Hevajratantrapañjikāpadmanāma, a commentary on the Hevajratantra, it provided very little additional information. However, the exercise of translating a commentary written in Tibetan was in itself a helpful exercise.

From the materials presented in this thesis, we have found that the cakra system represented a very complex system of energy transference within a meditative practice that enabled the practitioner to gain the highest state of enlightenment. It is this internal structure or cakra system that is manipulated and transformed during ritual practice. The main focus of the Hevajra practitioner is to merge with the chosen deity and experience a state of non-dual consciousness. This state of consciousness is achieved by the external means of the four consecrations and by the internal means of the movement of the bodhicitta through the cakra system. The external ritual is the outward manifestation of the internal development. As the adept progresses through the various stages of consecrations the cakra system is invoked and the bodhicitta is manipulated throughout the internal system to bring the practitioner to a higher state of consciousness. It was shown that as the bodhicitta or 'thought of enlightenment' flows upwards through each cakra the many defilements and disturbances of the mind and personality are cleansed. It was also shown that when the bodhicitta moves from the base of the spine to the crown of the head the practitioner experiences a state of "Great Bliss". However, it is when the
*bodhicitta* descends to the base of the spine by means of the central channel that the 'I' or ego is eradicated, allowing for a state of non-dual consciousness to arise.

It was shown that when the energy moved through points known as *cakras* – i.e., from the *nirmāṇacakra* through to the *dharmacakra* and on to *sambhogacakra* to finally reach *mahāsukhacakra* – the practitioner encountered various experiences which were discussed in terms of the four-fold *cakra* system (refer to pp 55-7 of the thesis). Thus by the discussions related to the four-fold *cakra* system and the system of consecration (refer to pp 64-75 of the thesis), we observed how in the movement of the *bodhicitta* a practitioner was able to gain a state of non-dual consciousness through the guidance of one's teacher (*ācārya*). Ultimately, the *cakra* system functions as a support for a practitioner and provides a path for the *bodhicitta* to travel. When the *cakra* system is invoked during the different stages of the consecrations, the generation and awakening of the *bodhicitta* takes places within a practitioner. Finally, a practitioner is able to attain a state of non-duality, or perfect enlightenment.

In chapter one, a general background of the *tantras* was provided to help orient the reader to the esoteric tradition within which the *Hevajratantra* is found. The contents of the first chapter of the *Hevajratantra* were also provided as well as the four-fold consecration system to help orient the reader for the two chapters to come.

In chapter two, an inter-linear edition of the first chapter of the *Hevajratantra* and the corresponding passages of the *Hevajratantrapaññijāpadmanāma* was provided. This was presented in such a fashion as to allow for straightforward reference to the translated material. The inter-linear translation was provided in chapter two to allow the reader to
gain first had knowledge of the contents of the first chapter of the *Hevajratantra* and the corresponding commentary.

In chapter three, a discussion of the translated material was given as well as an analysis of the function of the *cakra* system in the religious experience of a practitioner. A short exposition of the *cakra* system was provided to help reorient the reader to the contents of the translated passages. What followed was a discussion of the different components of the *cakra* system and how they are understood by the practitioner. The third part of the chapter consisted of a discussion on the relationship between the external ritual practice and the internal meditation. The external ritual practice was related to the internal movement of the *bodhicitta* through the *cakra* system and the attainment of non-dual consciousness.

II. Speculations and Future Considerations

In developing this thesis several areas that would be useful for further considerations came to mind. For example, it would be helpful to look at the process of the internal *cakra* system and relate it to deity-yoga, specifically, the process of generation (Tib. *bskyed rim*; Skt. *utpattikrama*) and the process of completion (Tib. *rdzogs rim*; Skt. *utpannakrama*). In view of that, there arose questions such as "how does the *cakra* system relate to the process of generating the deity and eventually identifying one's self with the chosen deity?" or "is the *cakra* system employed during the visualization and meditation process of generating the deity?"

Also of interest is the relationship between the Hindu *cakra* system and the Buddhist *cakra* system. Both the Hindu and Buddhist systems use the polarities of the male and female dynamics, however, they are used in very different ways. In the Hindu
system, the female is accorded the principle of activity while the male is accorded the role of passivity. In the Buddhist system, the roles are reversed with the female dynamic being designated to the passive role while the male is designated to the active role. How does this reflect the roles of both the female and male participants during the external ritual practices? Furthermore, it is usually a male practitioner who is undergoing the ritual consecration; how would the ritual practices differ if a female were to take the place of a male practitioner? Could a female undergo the four-fold consecration?

Given that this basic difference of gender occurs, is it possible to investigate the similarities and differences between the two systems? Further, although S. Tsuda has highlighted that Hindu practices were appropriated by Buddhist practitioners, was it the case that the cakra system was something that was appropriated by the Buddhist? Or is it possible that the two cakra systems evolved side by side?

In responding to these questions it would be useful to direct future investigations toward indigenous Tibetan texts – that is those Tibetan texts that are not based on Sanskrit originals. Overall, looking at indigenous Tibetan texts would not only strengthen an understanding of the contents of the cakra system but it would introduce heretofore un-investigated indigenous Tibetan commentaries to the academic world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Sharf, Robert H. "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience."


APPENDIX ONE

Interlinear Edition of

[Root Text]
ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་ལྷག་བཅས་ཀྱིས

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ་ལྷག

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ

ལོ་ཐོར་ལྷག་ཐོང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་གནང་ཐུབ
[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

[Root Text]
[Root Text]

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

[Root Text]

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

[Root Text]
[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

[Root Text]

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

[Root Text]

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

[Root Text]
[Commentary by mtshon skyes]

[Root Text]

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]
[Root Text]

[Commentary by mtshon skyes]