EMERGENCE OF KALACAKRATANTRA

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The characteristics of Tantra/Agama/Yamala as in important Hindu works are present in the Buddhist Tantras. The Buddhist Tantras are found in three great divisions into which esoteric Buddhism is divided namely, Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalacakrayana. Besides these, three other minor yanras with no marked individuality, such as, Tantrayana, Mantrayana, Bhadrayana etc. (B. Bhattacharyya, Introduction to Buddhist Esotericism (GOS) Varanasi, 1964, pp. 52-53). The advanced Buddhist Tantras are Kriyatantra, Caryatantra, Yogatantra and Anuttaran- tantra.

It appears from the following citation from the Mulatantra that Kalacakrayana is the earliest source of all later Buddhist Tantric systems. Naropa/Naropa/ Narotapa flourished about 990 A.D. (B.Bhattacharyya, Sadhanamala Pt. II). In Sekoddesatika (Ed. Merrio E. Carelli, GOS, 1941) while narrating the manifestation of Bhagavan Sri Vajrapani Naropa quotes verses from the Mulatantra:

अष्टुकृते अष्टाशुष्ट प्रज्ञापरिभाषने।
तथा मन्तननाद्रोहका श्रीवज्रश्च द्विदेशाना॥
सुशूक्ते श्रीधारे प्रज्ञापरिभाषनमु॥
संदेस्यं श्रीधिष्ठाष्ट्रान्यं महाश्च निम्नस्तमृ॥ (1)

At the outset it should be noted that "Kalacakra" is one of the epithets of Vajri.
The Sekoddasattika deals with the origin of Vajrayana giving a short account of the legend which was the source of the doctrine. In Tantric Literature there are several systems, each of which is attributed to a different revelation. Here it is said that the teachings of Mantrayana (Vajrayana) were given first by Dipankara, the Tathagata Buddha, preceding the historic one. But they had to be adopted to the later age and for the purpose the king Sucandra, whose realm is located by Sekoddas in Shambala (De-hbyung) on the north of river Sita.

Being the Nirmaraka of Vajrapani Sucandra went to heaven and begged Sambuddha to explain the theory of Seka (initiation/conversion). The Sambuddha (that is Buddha Gautama) summoned a council in Sridhanya. The Council of Sridhanya was held after that of Griddhakuta, in which the doctrine of Prajnaparamita was first expounded, and as it appears from the text was the
source of Vajrayana.

The "Kalacakra" is conceived in the following manner. In that joyful heaven, that the ultimate immutable and unchangeable one, remaining in the sky like Dharmadhatus (the element underlying all the dharmas, elements) is called "Kala". It itself is the immutable (adamantine) knowledge. "Cakra" implies the unity of three kinds of existence—the manifestation of Kala (trans, S.B.Dasgupta: An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism, Calcutta 1933, pp. 67-68). The "Kala" with the characteristic of five constitutive group, (skandha), noumenic perception (dhatu) and means of the sensorious sets (ayatana) is "Cakra". It (the cakra) is the body of Master-point like containing the potency of existence of three spheres of universe, can be visualised by undefiled illumination (niravarana-jevam), that is Vajra-dhatu—Mahamandala (trans, Carelli).

Again while elaborating the form of AdiBuddha (the primeval/primordial one), Naropa quotes verses containing concepts of Kalacakra from Narasamgiti: The Buddha who is without beginning and end the Adi-Buddha. He is without connections (Niranvaya—bereft of lineage). His aspects are universal charity (Karuna) and unsubsstantially (Sunnata—Murtih) which is connected with Karuna as Prajna and Upaya. He is 'time' (Kala) in so far as his Sakti is 'the involuted one' (Samvriti—
rupini). He is round as wheel (cakra) since he is without end (Sunya). So he is the Wheel of Time (Kalacakra), without an equal, imperishable.

Analysing each syllable, KA means the causality which is lost in him. LA means cosmic reabsorption, CA is the mobile mind, KRA is the process of both are to be checked (trans. Carelli)

The editor of Sekoddeatika, M.E. Carelli, does not mention Tibetan version of the work. In Dege Tanjur, Rgyud (Tantra) section Vol. Na. FF 220 (b) -299 (a), however, the Sanskrit title of the book occurs as a colophon in the collection of Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok. The date of compilation of the Sanskrit text appears to be obscure; we only know that the author flourished during 10th-11th centuries. In the colophon of Tibetan xylograph (a) it is stated that Karmapa Pandita Dharmadhara and Tibetan Longawa Grags-pa-Rgyal-mtshan collaborated in translation of the text into Tibetan in the metropolis of Nepal. If Dgags Gyaltshe be the third Sakya hierarch, his date of birth is 1147. Again Sanskrit Grammarian, Rinchen-Rgyal-mtshan, revised the translation at Sakya monastery (dpal-sa-skya'i-chos-grwa-men-por).
In this work Sakya Dakpa Gyaltsan (1st vol. p. 245) claims Naropa as his pupil (vide Khentsun Biographi-
cal dictionary of Tibetan Buddhism. Pt. I, Library of
Tibetan Works and Archives 1975, p. 834).

Sarat Chandra Das in his article on "the Kalacakra
system of Buddhism which originated in Orissa" (Journal
and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1907,
vol. 3) states: In the Sutra of great renunciation (Abbnis-
kramana-Sutra) Buddha delivered the Kalacakra-Mula-
Tantra at Sridhanyakataka in the beginning of the Twelfth
month after his attaining the perfect Buddhahood in
the new moon of the year (Water Sheep), at the request
of king Chandrabhadra.

S.R. Dasgupta in his book An Introduction to Tantric
Buddhism (p. 68) also narrates the above legendary ac-
count of propagation of Kalacakra-Tantra from a manu-
script (Sri Kalacakra-Tantra) preserved in the Cambridge
University Library.

In conclusion we may discuss briefly about the Intro-
duction of Kalacakra Tantra in India from Central Asia.
Scholars like Giuseppe Tucci and Helmut Hoffmann have
discussed many points from mostly Tibetan literary sour-
ces. Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra in their work Kal-
acakra Tantra and other Texts (Sata-pitaka series, vol.
69, 1966) made a review of the various opinions on the
Kalacakra.

According to Buxton diffusion of Kalacakra was
first in India and thence from to Tibet (Sung bum vojarga,
Lokesh Chandra holds the Kalacakra to be one of the last Sanskrit works written in Central Asia, whence it is said to have travelled into India (Lokesh Chandra ibid. p.6). The Kalacakra and its commentary were then brought into India by a Pandita from Odissa (Oriya) named Cilupa, who after long travels by land and by sea came to Sambhala, and having become an expert in this Tantra, this Pandita spread this esoteric doctrine in India under the king Kalaka's patronage and transmitted these teachings to Pitopa of Bengal and to Kalapa of Varendia (G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Pt. I, p 212). The Kalacakra had reputedly come to India from Sambhala sixty years before its advent into Tibet. As this Tantra entered Tibet about the year 1026 A.D., its penetration into India may be dated in the year 966 A.D., which is consonant with the fact that it was a dominant creed in India under King Mahipala of Bengal (c.974-1026). Its introduction into India must have been effected by Cilupa and not by Pitopa who is alternately suggested by Surapa Micherpo in *Dpag-bshams-ljon-bzang* (Lokesh Chandra p. 7).

Pitopa, whom we have already met, was a pupil of Atisa and who is also described by Taranatha as a disciple of Naropa. According to Lokesh Chandra, Naropa first had knowledge of Kalacakra through that original exponent in India whoever he would be. Lokesh Chandra has expressed doubt about Pitopa being the first Indian exponent of the Kalacakra, basing on many other sources (ibid p.7).
The fact that an Indian mystic received a new name after each initiation adds to the difficulties of identification, but it seems likely that Tsi-lu-pa and the great (i.e., the older) Kalacakrapada are identical (Hoffmann: Religions of Tibet, London 1961, pp. 126-127).

According to Tibetan historian Pad-ma-dkar-po (1326-1392) while Tsi-lu-pa is the great Kalacakrapada, Naropa is the lesser Kalacakrapada; when Tsi-lu-pa went to Nalanda from South India, Naropa, the presiding abbot, entered into disputation and was vanquished and thereafter Naropa studied Kalacakra under Tsi-lu-pa and was initiated in the Kalacakra (Hoffmann: ibid, p. 128). Naropa wrote the Commentary on Sekoddesa and initiated Atisa into its secrets. Atisa later systematized a new chronology in Tibet starting with 1027 A.D., the year of the introduction of the Kalacakra in Tibet (Lokesh Chandra, ibid p. 9). Pad-ma-dkar-po is also reputed to be author of a commentary on Kalacakra.

The new doctrine (Kalacakra) where the Adi Buddha concept found efflorescence, later branched into several schools (Lokesh Chandra, ibid p. 8).

The legend of propagation of Kalacakra from Indian sources may be supplemented from Tibetan sources thus: “Tibetan authorities state that it (Kalacakra) was introduced into Nalanda by a Pandit called Tsiu or Chulu and accepted by Narotapa who was then head of the university. From Nalanda it spread to Tibet. Manjusri Kirti, king of Sambhala, is said to have been
an exponent of it and to have begun his reign 673 years after the Nirvana of Buddha. But since he is the second precursor incarnation of the Panchen Lama and since the fourth precursor (Abhayakara) lived about 1075, he may really have been a historical character in the latter part of the tenth century. Its promulgation is also ascribed to a personage called Siddha Pito. It must be late for it too mentions Islam and Mohammed. It is perhaps connected with anti-Mohammedan movements which looked to Kalki, the future incarnation of Vishnu, as their Messiah, for Hindu tradition says that Kalki will be born in Sambhalagrama (as in Kalika Purana Vishnupurana, Bhagavata Purana). We have also a Siddha called Telopa or Tailopa, who was a vigorous opponent of Islam. The mythology of the school (Kalacakra) according to Eliot is Vishnuite, not Sivaite, and it is noticeable that Pancaratra having some connection with Kashmir lays stress on the wheel or discus (Cakra or Sudarsana) of Vishnu which is said to be the support of universe and the manifestation of creative will. The Kalacakra is mentioned as special form of this cosmic wheel having six spokes (Charles Eliot : Hinduism and Buddhism, Pt. III, p. 387).

As already stated the concept of AdiBuddha found acme of its development in the Kalacakra system; in support of this point we relate the doctrine from scriptures and modern literary sources. The concept and form of AdiBuddha, appears to be erigmatical. Karan-davyuha relates how the original AdiBuddha produced
Avalokita by meditation. Lallavistara describes Buddha as a Tathagata. The five Jinas and other supernatural personages are often regarded as manifestations of single Buddha-force and as the force personified as AdiBuddha (Charles Eliot: Hinduism and Buddhism, pt. II, p. 31). Assagga in his Sutralankara (IX 77) condemns the doctrine of AdiBuddha showing that the term was known then, even if it had not the precise dogmatic sense which it acquired later. His argument is that no one can become Buddha without an equipment (Sambhara) of merit and knowledge. Such an equipment can only be obtained from a previous Buddha and therefore the series of Buddha must extend infinitely backward (Charles Eliot, ibid pp. 31-32).

This (AdiBuddha) admittedly theistic form in Buddhism is late and is reported from Nepal, Tibet and Java, a distribution which implies that it was exported from Bengal (Eliot: pt. II, p. 32). For the prevalence of the doctrine in mediaeval Bengal one may see B.K. Sarkar, Folklore Element in Hindu Culture, which is however sparing of precise references. The Dharma as Niranjana of Sunya Parama seems to be equivalent of AdiBuddha (Eliot: Pt. I, p. 32). The Guna-Karanda-vyaha and Karanda-vyaha relate the primeval Buddha spirit, AdiBuddha or Swayambhu producing Avalokita by meditation. According to Eliot the first book was translated into Chinese in 270 A.D. (ibid, Pt. II, p. 57). The idea that Five (Dhyani) Buddhas are emanations or manifestations of a single primordial Buddha-spirit was a natural
development of Mahayana creed. But no definite statement about it earlier than Kalacakra literature is forthcoming though many earlier works throw hints (Eliot, Pt. II, p.118).

It may be stated here that there are two versions of the book Karanda-yuha, an earlier one in prose and a later one in verse. The book is based on a theistic view of the universe. It relates how, at the beginning of all things, AdiBuddha, also called "Svayambhu", the "self existent" and Adinatha "the first Lord" appeared and created the world through meditation. Now we know that in the fourth century A.D. there were already Buddhist saints who believed in AdiBuddha as "God" and "Creator". This is proved by Maitreyanatha saying in Mahayana Sutralankara IX. 77, "There is no AdiBuddha" (A History of Indian Literature by Maurice Winternitz Vol. II, University of Calcutta 1933, p. 306).

The well-known Visva Bharati scholar, Biswanath Bandopadhyaya, relates the real nature of Sri Kalacakra. "The nature of Sri Kalacakra becomes clear from the commentary of Vimalaprabha (Asiatic Society Mss. No. C 4727). He is saluted here as Sunyata, Karuna, bereft of origination and destruction, the unitary embodiment of knowledge and knowable embraced by Prajna (Transcendent Wisdom), who in both endowed with and bereft of forms (contents). He is sublime bliss and devoid of all lower pleasures. He is creator of all the Buddhas and knows the three periods of time. He is omniscient,
he is the great AdiBuddha and the only Lord. The commentary begins with ... salutation to the Lord Kalacakra (Journal of the Asiatic Society vol. XVIII, 1952 no. 2, A note on the Kalacakratantra and its commentary).

Reference may be made to a later work describing Mandala, namely, Nispamayagavali of Mahapandita Abhayakagarupta (C. 1114 A.D.) (Ed. B. Bhattacharyya, GOS 1949, p. 22). The way Hindu deities are incorporated in the Mandala of Kalacakra as in Nispamayagavali shows conclusively that there was considerable exchange between Buddhist and Hindu Tantras by 12th century A.D. This work was composed when the Kalacakra cult was firmly established in India.

Gautama the Buddha was silent on God and the Dharma in the beginning was not frankly interested in any theistic view of the universe and its creation. The Dharma even after Nagarjuna, that is in its Mahayana form, did not exhibit any firm notion of God or Creator. The concept of AdiBuddha as in the Kalacakra tantra introduced the notion of Eternal Creator.

Central Asia, particularly the basins of rivers Oxus, Jaxartees and Tarim, was the meeting ground of the theistic, rather mono-theistic, creeds like Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and later Islam. Mahayana monks must have encountered the exponents of these creeds in Central Asia. This is mentioned to refer to several theories about foreign (West Asian) inspiration behind the concepts of Shembhala, Kalacakra and AdiBuddha.
The corresponding Tibetan texts (translation) from Tanjur are as follows:

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