THE CONCEPT OF VAJRA AND ITS SYMBOLIC TRANSFORMATION

Bhajagovinda Ghosh

An illuminating and inspiring discussion on various concepts of Vajra has been introduced by Sri N.C. Sinha, Director of SRIT in the Bulletin of Tibetology (Vol. VII, No. 2). There he has treated almost all the major points on evolutionary concept of Vajra. Again, in Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 3, the same author and a Tibetian lama research scholar also contributed notes throwing more light on Vajra.

Here we propose to discuss or rather illustrate or confirm those concepts mostly Sanskrit, Indian and Pali available sources.

The earliest reference of the word Vajra and Concept and formation of ontological meaning we find in Aiitareya Brahmana. Where it denotes according to Geldner, the 'Handle' while Kuti means 'Head' of the Hammer (vide. A.A. MacDonell and A.B. Keith, Vedic index Vol. II, p. 237).

We find in Asvaghosa's Vajrasivei this important text from the illustrious scholar referred to Vedas the Mahabharata and Manasvadhrasatra but no mention of Puranas. Either, the Puranas were not composed at all or were not old, or well-known enough to be quoted in the work of a distinguished author, therefore, we may suppose that the word Vajra obviously taken from the Vedic literature.

We may also state that the main objections against the authorship of Asvaghosa raised by eminent scholars like Wintermute are enumerated by A.K. Mukhopadhyayaya (Int. XII) we can only state that 'It is not enumerated either by I-T'ang or in the Tibetan Tanjut among the works of Asvaghosa (Ibid lat. XII). Any way we are not in this paper going to discuss the point of authorship of the text Vajrasuci also reveals an intimate knowledge of Brahmanical literature (Ibid. lat. XII).

In the famous Sanskrit lexicon such as Amarakosa (Svargavarga) the synonymous for we give as follow: तीर्थनी जयमतिः वज्रे नृतिः नमस्वा विदि। रात्रिकोटिः रक्ष: प्राः

In Amarakosa (Nagartha Sarga): —
The word वार्तर्दिनि is also used as a single unverbed concept वार्तर्दिनि विद्वृत्तयानि: (विद्वृत्ति विद्वृत्तिः भोगं)
In the above-stated manifold terms of vajra have varied significant derivative meanings. The first two synonymous dynamic velocity, the sense conceived from the derivative root all the rest terms besides the वार्तर्दिनि signifies the sense of Penetration. Here we are not concerned about the derivative meaning of each word. But two instances of derivative will clarify the above senses. Firstly, while the word वार्तर्दिनि derived from verb root which means वार्तर्दिनि which means velocity, (वार्तर्दिनि) whereas the term वार्तर्दिनि although have varied derivative meaning yet the two verb roots वार्तर्दिनि meaning penetration and वार्तर्दिनि means contract.
Therefore the both the वार्तर्दिनि suggest the sense of velocity and Penetrability.
If we get back to original meaning of vedic sense of vajra we find the meaning of 'Kuta' or head. We know that super rate of dynamic motion depends on the penetrability of an inanimate being. The ancient Indian zoologists were well conscious about the evolution of the concepts of Vajra. So we find lexigraphist are identifying to static and dynamic aspects of originating around “Vajra” in expression विद्वृत्ति विद्वृत्तिः भोगं: The scholars know the “Vajra” or Thunder and “Asani” lightning as indivisible aspect “Vajra”. The Adamantine. This identity has more clearly expressed in a lexicon वार्तर्दिनि वार्तर्दिनि. Ladhini or lighting is also indivisibly denote ‘vajra’ and ‘Tabita’. Thunder and lighting Bhattacharyakart’s son of Bhanujidikshiti in his commentary on Amarakosa refer medimkara also denoting vajra as hiraka an inanimate adamant object diamond. While it dissolves or cut through the other nothing can penetrate it. So diamond symbolizing the “Hardest” aspect in human imagination.

The adamant concept which underlay in vajra gradually taken to aesthetic expression of the poetic literature of Brahmanical as well as Buddhist. And also particularly became symbolic via media to define psycho-physical abstract aspects of Hindu and Buddhist antras.
Here we thing it will not be out of place to cite some instance. A Buddhist scholar Vidyakara prepared an anthology of Sanskrit court poetry shortly before the year 1100 who belonged to the Jagaddala monastery of Malda district. While eulogising the patron enlightened being of transcendental wisdom Manujoyshosa or Manjusi — invokes him with the epithet ‘Manuvajra’ in the following verse:-

मृत्थाकरोरीविकालासंहारूपिनम्
कान्तो कालिवलस्य पूज्याकरो

यो वन्यनिविविषाः धर्मराजस्य
अगन्तो वो हिदस्याय स मानुजकणां.

26
"May he who consecrates his worshipper into the kingdom of his law,
With anointing liquid, golden red as saffron,
Poured from golden ambrosia his foot,
Where in his lovely toes are ceremonial buds,
May Manjusri (Manjuvajra) watch over you,
For your happiness and good."

(An anthology of Sanskrit court poetry: translated by Daniel H.H. Ingalls

In Pali literature the reference of word Vajra is very scanty. In Sutta-Pitaka,
Dighanikaya Pali Pt. I.P. 284. (Nava Nalada Edn.) We find the following word:—

Vajra-pataya (क्षितिनिं), Vajra-samrat (संभवस्त्री). Vajra laksan (वज्र लक्षण)
are traced.

In Ambbatha-Sutta-4, कण्यनः-रोपणि an event is described, when Ambbatha
for the third time denied to give answer to lord Buddha’s reasonable answer, the
king of the yakshas ‘Vajra-Pani’ appeared in the sky on the head of Ambbatha
wielding bright and burning iron hammer (Ayokuta) to smash his head into seven
pieces, if denies still to answer and prayed shelter to the Buddha, the much terrified
Ambbatha.

Again, we find in धूलिलक्षणम्—पुष्य Sutta-piaka, Majjhimanikaya pt. I, p.
284. The thing happened to Nighantusutta who likewise desired from giving
answer. The name of Vajra—mahajati occurs in Bhavacaritam—ध्वजार्जितम्—पुष्य-5

The ontological sense of Vajra found its best expression in Mahayana
Sanskrit literatures. In र्वजस्वीयकार्यो सहायक:—वज्र्म, or laksan or the sublime
science of the great vehicle to salvation, a manual of Buddhist monism, the work
of Arya Maitreyan with a commentary by Arya Asanga (Eng. trans. by E. Obermiller
of the body of the Shasstra (भृष्ट:—सही) has been depicted by Arya-Maitreyan
and the book commences with the following verse:

अं गि भ्रविष्यस्थायी

वृत्तयः घर्षकम् गण्यस्य धातु

भ्रविष्यणा कर्षो भृष्यस्थितम्

सुभीतः विप्रवृत्तस्य राजसातीसि समा

11
The Buddha, Dharma, Sutra, Dharmadāna-gurus, Karma and the last Buddha; these are the body of the whole Shasta (The Shasta consist of these seven aspects). The concrete essence, in short these seven aspects are identical with the word vajra.

Here we are not going to discuss seven aspects of the Shasta, but propose to deal with the concept of vajra.

Asaṅga while expounding the verse gives an interesting analogical definition of the word vajra in the following manner:

“वज्रसमान् आत्मागार्थम् परं शास्त्रम्-काविता शास्त्रम”

This verse—विवेकम्-धार्म-पूर्वनिवृत्तिवाच-अस्तित्वस्तत्तत्त्वस्तत्तत्त्वत्त्वत्त्वत्त्वत्—उद्वितम्—सम्प्रदायिनि सम्प्रदायकाव्यसूचिः परिपूर्वनिवृत्तिवाच धार्मिकतत्त्वत्त्वत्त्वत्त्वत्त्वत्—अस्तित्वस्तत्त्वस्तत्त्वत्त्वत्त्वत्—वेदतीम्—अशुचित्तम् धार्मिकतत्त्वत्त्वत्त्वत्—अस्तित्वस्तत्त्वस्तत्त्वत्त्वत्। तत् पूर्वनिवृत्तिवाच धार्मिकतत्त्वत्त्वत्त्वत्—अस्तित्वस्तत्त्वस्तत्त्वत्त्वत्।

The “vajra Padam” means the similar sense, which as adamantine as Thunderbolt, is to be obtained. The object which is impenetrable through the knowledge of auditory perception and mental reflection, and hence which is naturally not determinable by speech; which can only be realised by intuitive knowledge. Therefore, the object should be known as hard as vajra. The non-extinguishable object, which, denote that adamantine object, because, that object leads to the path which is conducive to the realization of those are manifestation of that adamantine sense, as called as absolute object (Padam). Thus, the vajra object, denotes the impeneetrable sense and which reflects manifested meaning, which is then the object and which is the manifested meaning. The objects are seven, such as, the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha or the order, the Ekhatu or essence, the Bodhi, the enlightenmet, the guna or the glory and the karma or the action. Here it is said, by which words seven aspects are to be realised are indicated illustrated, that is why it is known as reflective meaning. This significance which is denoted by the word “Vajra” is to be realised from the relevant Sutra.

In the commentary Aryasanga quoted a passage from दुधार्माय अवस्थानित्व सुविदाः to confirm the above stated aspects defined by the word vajra, thus, अवस्थानित्व शास्त्रसम्बन्धता। शास्त्र सम्बन्धाः सुधार्माय अवस्थानित्व स्विदाः। शास्त्र सम्बन्धाः सुधार्माय अवस्थानित्व स्विदाः।

This passage is explained as आत्मागार्थम् परं शास्त्रम्—काविता शास्त्रम्। (सू. 2)

24
“Oh, Ananda, the Tathagata is indefinable. He can not be seen by eyes. The Dharma is inexpressible. That can not be heard by ear. The Sangha’s unconstituted that can not be propitiated either by body or by mind. The sense of the vajrapada should be realized as explained in the Sutra of Dharmadharmacaryam-sarvatva”.

Thus Assaga referred more five-Sutta for the true understanding of other aspects of denoted by the word Vajra. Having expounded the seven indefinable aspects of the Shatra. Aryayamira naries the adamantine aspects of Isana and Karuna of Tathagata in the following verse.

Thus Assaga commenting on this makes an analogy of these two aspects with vajra in the following passage:

The suffering, which originated from the precluded “vision i.e. belief in the existence of one’s own individuality can be eradicated by obtaining the power of knowing the suffering truth (विद्याविशीर्षण). This suffering can not be overcome by temporal knowledge. The strength of the compassion and absolute wisdom of the Tathagata is like vajra, which even penetrates (annihilates) the (Klesha), which is like the immovable hidden enclosure in the deep forest. This strength should be known through this analogy of vajra.”

Edward cone an internationally accepted authority on Prajnaparamita literatures, in his edition of most important and smallest text of above category, literature entitled Vajra Chedika-Prjna-paramita (pub. Rome 1957), states that the prefix “vajra” is used rather sparingly in the larger Prajnaparamitas and there indicates an “adamantine” Sadhaka as Dharma or citta or Isana. The combination vajra-Prajnaparamita is not found anywhere (vide p. 2, note).

Max Muller rendered the title of the text as “Diamond Sutra” cone opined that “there is no reason to discontinuity this” popular usage (bid p. “2) but he states”, “but strictly speaking, it is more than unlikely that the Buddhist here-understood vajra is the material substance which we call” “Diamond”. The term is familiar from many Buddhist texts, including the large Prjna-Paramita Sutra. Everywhere it refers to the mythical “Thunderbolt”, and denotes irresistible strength, both passively and actively the Title therefore means “The perfection of wisdom which cuts even the thunderbolt”, or less probably which could cut even a thunderbolt”. (2 bid 7-8).
Chandraciti while expounding the verse:

Pradhyayitaḥ śīśe Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad

मूलस-भाषकारिक p. 447, quoted the following verse from येव वेतादिका प्रद्यायार्तिता—

Those who by form did see me,
And those who followed me by voice,
Wrong the efforts they engaged in,
From the Dharma should one see the Buddhas,
For the Dharma-bodies are the guides,
Yet Dharma's true nature should not be discerned,
Nor can't it, either, be discerned.

We find almost same idea in गणाधिपतिवृद्धिः as in the ch. तथाकाल कालिकेरा परिको (Gilgit, MSS. VI. pt. II, p. 297). On the following passage, कोषिलसन्त महासाक्षी तत्स्वयंत्रकालगत: प्रायोगा, तत्स्वयंत्र हेतो। कोषिलसन्त महासाक्षी तत्स्वयंत्रकालगत: प्रायोगा न करकर प्रायोगिना।

The same idea has been illustrated in gatha:—

In the above-stated passages we find that the Dhammakaya can not be perceived through illusive sense of organ, "From the Dharma one should see Buddha," Eves that Dhamma, that is, "Dharma's true nature should not be discerned, nor can it, either, be discerned", one can realize Dharma through Samađhi, or 'through the Āpātātmanamam' by (pure, translucent thought; unreported thought, trans. conze) Prabhāṣa-cita (illustrate-in mind). In the ch. of समाधिसर्ववृद्धिः of गणाधिपतिवृद्धिः we find the same idea has been illustrated in the following line:—

उपमेयः नामस्वात्मिक विचार भोगि प्रायोगिकः।
The mind non-adhered to name-form is indistinct-clear mind.

The Prajnaparamitas in order to establish Sunyata have shown that there is nothing in the world of our knowledge which has any real existence. Everything that we are conscious of has only dreamy existence, and that all the 84,000 Dharmakandhas are only expedients (upaya-kannya) adopted by him the benefit of ignorant and deluded beings, and consequently a Bodhisattva while practising the Prajna paramita should treat them as mere apparitions devoid of reality...... the function of the Prajnaparamita is to make a bodhisattva bear in the mind that the Paramitas...... samadhi, samapathis, phala of bodhisap skakdharmas, which he has been practicing are only aids and expedients invented by Buddhhas to help beings to the realisation of the ideal. (N. Dutt 'Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism and its relation to Hinayana, p. 334).

Therefore from the above stated facts we know that, the realisation of the Upayakannya as mere devoid of reality is the highest perfection of wisdom which even makes the transcendental virtues baseless (Apratiputri), is the perfection of wisdom which cuts the Thunderbolt. These expedience are Thunderbolt the Adamantine aspects leading a bodhisattva to ultimate illumination. Siksaasamuccaya quotes a passage from chandrapradipa Sutra as follows:—

उपाय के वारिष्ठ में सारा धैर्यादृष्टि वाणी प्राप्त।
इन्हें लंबी घातार्थक दृष्टि।
शृद्धायाः प्रकरणार्थकतावादः कोशस्व वाणिं।

the gift imbied with the knowledge of Sunyata and Karma begets virtue, the same text quotes Vajraecenedika:—

गापीत समाप्त रविवारी
यि भविष्योत्पतनिरि आत्म ददाति।
स्य सुभद्रक्षणे तुऽकसे
प्राणार्थकथक्षणिति। (सिक्षासमुच्चय प. 275)

Before we set to discuss Vajrayana view on Vajra, we think it will not be out of place to say a few words about the various synonyms of the yana. Vajrayana also generally known as mantra-yana. Its full name is gubyu-mantra Phala-Vajra-Yana, is variously called Phalayana Upayayana, and Vajrayana. The vimalaprabha states as quoted by V. Guenther. "Vajra means sublime indivisibility and indestructibility, and since this is (the nature of) the course, one speech of vajrapa. This is to say that vajrayana is the indivisibility of cause or Paramita method and effect or mantra method. According to Bang-mدور-hutan,

"Awareness of nothingness is the cause
To feel unchanging bliss is the effect
The indivisibility of nothingness
And bliss is known as the enlightenment of mind.”

Here the indivisibility of awareness which directly insists nothingness, and the unchanging, supreme bliss is conceived as consisting of the two phenomena goal approach and goal-attainment. Such is interpretation of vajrayana, however, applied to Anuttarasamatattas, not to these lower Tantras. For this reason the explanation will have to be added, “The essence of mahayana is the six perceptions.” Their essence is fitness of action and intelligence of which the essence or one volume is the enlightenment-mind. Since this is the Vajrasattva-concentration it is Vajra, and being both vajra and a spiritual cause, one speaks Vajrayana. And this is the meaning of mahayoga. Thus Vajrayana is synonymous with vajrasattva-yoga which effects the indivisible union of fitness of action and intelligence. The indivisibility of cause and effect is one of the many meaning of Vajra.

The union of insight and action, of unlimited cognition and it is active framework of communication with others in a way we are referred to the symbol of Vajrasattva.

Vajra is the Dharma-kaya awareness in which three types of enlightenment enter indivisibility from ultimates, and Satvya is the apprehensible form pattern deriving from it (quoted from the collected works of Tsong-kha-pa, Tashilhunpo edition 1, 10, 2, a-b; quoted by V. Guenther, Tibetan Buddhism without mystification, Leiden 1955 2nd edition, p. 59. The attempt to effect this integration of thought and action is termed Vajrasattva-yoga, which is synonymous with vajrayana. Mahayana has been said to consist of the Paramatraya as the cause and vajrayana as the climax (ibid, p. 60, Tsong Khapa). For further discussion vide V. guenther, Tibetan Buddhism without mystification, (p. 54-60).

Many scholars have surveyed the mode of transformation of some philosophical ideas of Mahayana Buddhism. Here we are not concerned about all the aspects of Tantric Buddhism. “is the mode of transformation the most important point is the transformation of the idea of Sunyata (vacuity) into the idea of Vajra, or the Thunderbolt. The Sunyata-nature (svabhava) of the world is its ultimate immutable nature, as immovable as the thunderbolt, so it is called the Vajra. It has been said in the Adi-Buddhasamgraha, “Sunyata, which is firm, substantial, indivisible, impenetrable, incapable of being burnt and imperishable, is called the Vajra.”

तथा सत्यं अभिवृद्धिः विद्विष्णुविद्विष्णु
कृताम प्रभुग्नविद्विष्णुविद्विष्णुन

2(A). This transformation of Sunyata to Vajra will explain the term Vajrayana and in vajrayana all the gods, goddesses, articles for rituals have been marked with vajra to specialize them from their originally accepted nature. The supreme deity of Vajrayana is the Vajra - Sattva / Vajra-Sunyata, vacuity, Sattva - quintessence, who is of the nature of pure consciousness (Vijnapti-Matra) of Visvanavadin Buddhist as associated with Sunyata in the form of the absence of subjectivity and objectivity. (Ibid. p. 27).

The missionary author Rev. Graham Sandberg, who is so little favourable to Buddhism that he can discover (p. 260) in it, no scheme of metaphysics of morality which can be dignified with the title of an ethical system "when however, speaking of this most depraves form" in short chapter on the Tattras and Tantrik rites (Tibet and Neo Tibetans, p. 218), says this new vehicle (Ngag-kyi-Thegma) did not prefer to supersede the time honored Vajrayana (Droje-Thegma) but it claimed by its expanded mythological scheme and its fascinating and even sublime mystic conceptions to crystallize the old tantrik methods into a regular science as complicated as it was resourceful (V. Sir John Woodroffe, Saki and Sakti, p. 196).

Here we may state an interesting fact related to Vajra, John woodroffe states in above stated book, "Tantricism was reinforced on the arrival in 719 A.D. of two Indian Brahmanas, Vajrayodhi and Amogh. The demand of Tantra became so great that Amogh was officially deputed by the Imperial government to bring back from India and Ceylon as many as possible. Amogh who was the favourite of three Emperors holding the rank of minister and honoured with many titles lived till 774. He made the tantricism a fashionable sect. Amogh, however, demanded more of those who sought initiation. In the Indian fashion he tested (Pariksha) the would be disciple and initiated only those who were fit and had the quality of Vajra. (V. Sakti and Sakti pp. 200-201)."

In vajrayana tantrik texts the vajra represents various aspects. In the Panakarma of Nigajumapadi we find four gradation in the sunyata doctrine. The first is Sunya, the second Ati-Sunya, the third Mahasunya and the fourth or the final is the Savya-Sunya. The first stage Sunya has been explained as Aloka, it is knowledge (Prajna). The second stage viz., Ati-Sunya is said to be the manifestation of light (Alokahansa) and while the sunya is said to be Prajna, Ati-Sunya, is said to be the Upaya or the means. It is to be of the nature of constructive imagination (Parikalpita) and it belongs to the mind and its state (citta-rasa). It is also said to be right (Dakshina) the solar circle (Sunya-Mandala) and the Thunderbolt (Vajra). Third stage viz., Maha-Sunya proceeds from the union of Prajna and Upaya or Aloka and at first stage Sunya has been explained as Aloka in Lalita- Vinata, Ed. cf Dr. S. Ledtan pp. 41-18), Alokahansa, or Sunya or Ati-Sunya the fourth stage viz., Savya-Sunya (called or perfect void) is free from all threefold impurities and is self-illuminate. For details vide S.B. Dasgupta, An Introduc tion to Tantrik Buddhism p. 43-44.

33
According to Dr. Dasgupta, the Sri Samaja, which is credited by some to be the earliest authoritative text on vajra-yana, which he explained as the 'Adapantine-way' is really the way or means for the realisation of the Vajra-nature the immovable and imperceptible void-nature of the self as well as the dharmas. The above text explains vajra-yana as the means which has recourse in the five families (Kulis) of the Bodhisattvas viz., Maha (Presided over by Vairocana with his sakti Vajradhativasvari), Deva (Presided over by Akshobhya with his sakti Padma), etc., but these Kulis have always their foundation on the vajra or the Sunyata.

(quoted: Ibid., p. 70)

We quote here, Dr. Dasgupta, in his own words about the comprehensive idea of vajra which will help us to understand the ubiquity of perfect void in every aspect of Vajrayana. "It is, in fact, the heterogeneity of elements, the most striking feature of Vajrayana, which justifies the general name giver to it, as the use and function of the idea of vajra. Vajra, as we shall presently see, is the void (Sunyata), and in vajra-yana everything is vajra, i.e., perfect void. In worshipping a god, the god is thought of as of vajra-nature, his image is vajra the sculptor is vajra, the materials of worship are vajra, the mantras are vajra, the processes are vajra and everything is vajra. This vajra, as we have already said, often serves as the stamp of the Vajrayana." (Ibid., p. 72)

Vajrayanists declare that there cannot be anything evil for a vajrayanist, no work not to be done, no food not to be taken, no woman not to be enjoyed. (quoted: Dasgupta, p. 72). After undergoing practice of the prescribed Sadhana, a Siddhaka should think of the world of static and dynamic as all are void and place himself in the void with the mantras, "Oh ujjvala hridaya-bhoomi-vidyakalyanavanto" - "Oh I am of the nature of the immutable knowledge of void" then should realise that all the Dharmas are pure by nature and he too is pure (Ibid., p. 76).

As many phenomenal objects have been conceived to be the manifestations of impersonal and eternal beauty in monastic philosophy, like Vedanta, with the attributed glorious, substantial, beautiful, brilliant quality. Thus truth found expression in Lord Krishna's utterances to the apostle Arjuna.

Gita, ch. X, Verse 41;

Whatever being there is, endowed with glory and grace and vigour, know that to have sprung from a fragment of my splendours.

(trans. S. Radhakrishnan)
This divine aesthetic concept as it was, appealed to the visionary mind of the seers of all faiths. Thus we find the "tree of life" or "cosmic tree" (Avadhāna-figas reliquiae) in Gita, the blooming, fragrant and purple lotus is revealing the Supreme Bliss or enlightenment-symbolizing dedicatory heart, the brilliant jewels are symbolic of divine beauty and principles. The vajra is the embodiment of the undying and intransigent (Tib. mgur gyur) vacuity and impenetrable essence of nature (vajr-satrīva). Even the vajra representing the intense and potential aspect of the body of Sātra (Sastrā-Sastra).

So we find the adamantine aspect of vajra evolutes from the divine mutability of intelligence and them its flowering into the unnamable ultimate nature-Sunya.

We have already stated that transformation of total nature into the adamantine aspect of vajra.

We think it would not be irrelevant to state that, as the transformation of divine objective and subjective aspects has taken place into the vajra, so the like manner this took place for the place name and other phenomenal objects into the concept of vajra.

Which is accepted as identical with 'Subha-bhumi', was only a part of Ladha (Radha on vajra-bhumi) were, according to commentaries the two division of Ladha Limit of Bengal. (vide, Berayendra Sen: Some Historical Aspects, of the inscription of Bengal, University of Calcutta, 1942, p. 47, a part of Vajrabhumi lay beyond the present western, Limit of Bengal.

But earlier Brahmanical literatures knows Olly Subha, yet Jain literatures refer the word of esoteric significance-Vajra.

Here we may state that, both the Buddhism and Jainism deny the existence of an intelligent first cause, adores defined saints. Both the systems are indifferent to the authority of the vedas. There is no doubt about the truth, that, the things concern with appreciation of beauty and metaphorical objects have been transformed into metaphysical aspects and displayed in symbolic religions Art, and manifested in Buddhist Art abundantly than in Brahmanical. It is due to its ethical and creative evolutionism, and more, so in the mahayana and profoundly in Vajrayana Art. Thus we find, the mystical reference of vajra in pluralistic realist literature of Jaina and creative evolutionist literatures of the Buddhist.

The story of Mahavira's journey in Lodha country contained in the Acharanga-Sastra. Is specially interesting for one reason. There is a fair degree of possibility that at least a part of Vajra-bhumi lay beyond the present western limit of Bengal. There is a probable reference of Vajra-bhumi in classical Tamil work "Silpadhikeam" which supposed by some scholar preserved a genuine account.
of the career of Kārikāta, the Chok king, whose date can not be definitely fixed. The ruler of Vajra maintained neutrality. The commentators in explaining the passage, points out that the vajra country was situated "on the bank of river Sona. It was surrounded by "great waters on all sides" and its contiguity to Magadhā, whose ruler after some resistance-submitted to the invaders, is implied in the story which refers Magadhā, next to its mention of Vajra. If this tradition has any historical value, it is necessary to place Vajra somewhere in the neighbourhood of Magadhā along the western side of Radha.

The Mahabharata refers Uthmas exploits in eastern countries and the same tract of country, under the name "Prasuhma" (western Subhasa). It has been suggested that Vajra-bhumi or vajra as a geographic term is not entirely unknown to Indian epigraphy. An attempt has been made to connect it with the designation of a class of officials, who were specially entrusted with the task of assisting the Maurya Emperor Ashoka in the propagation of Dharma.

As regards the alleged mention of Vajra-bhumi (Vajra-bhumi) by Ashoka, it may be safely said that the theory has no foundation in fact. In his XII the Rock edict the Maurya Emperor informs us that the Dharma-Mahanantana, Mahananti in charge of women, the vachha-bhumi, and various engaged in such a way as to promote the growth of every separate religion as well as the awakening of Dharma among the subjects. (Rock Inscription XII, 9) of the Gimer edict, Kālījī-rātri Vaca-Bhumika, the reading in the Manusheka (XII, 8) and the Shabbahuja text is Vrach-Bhumika (1), 9. Vaca or Vrca may be equated with "Vajra". This word has been actually used in the Vihāra Rock edict of Ashoka, where it is impossible to suggest that it is the name of a country (cf. Gimer). It will be natural to suggest that "Vaca" is "Vachha-bhumika" should be taken in the same sense in which it has been used in the Vihāra Rock edict. Vajra means a cow-pen or cattle herd, pasture or a high road, is mentioned in the Vihāra Rock Edict. The Vajra-Bhumika (from Vajra and bhumi, i.e. office) in the employ of the Maurya were either superintendents of cattle establishments like the Godhākṣika or Kāsthyā Arhastava (11, 29), or they were officers in charge of high roads, the protection of which was a duty of the king in ancient time, (Ibid. pp. 50-52).

We think it necessary to say few words on "Vajra" before we retract to original topic, that is, Vajra-bhumi.

As we know that all the Buddhists unanimously held in high esteem the "Vajra-rasana": The immutable (Tib: Rdo-rje-gdan), where the Gautama Siddhārtha Buddha attained ultimate illumination. The Buddhist claim the place to be the Navel of the Jumbling or "the centre of earth". Likewise, we find in Brahmānic Vaishnavas also held the "Śiva" (Vraja) "The cow-pen" and popularly known as "The divine sphere of Vraja because this is the sort of divine play (रूपम् भविष्यति) by the lord Krishna along with beloved companions. In some Puranas, such as Matsya, Padma, Bhavishya etc., and the Vaishnavas text "Vraja-Bhakti, Vilasa, which ...
analysing the “Vraja”, gave an interesting description of “Vraja”. The area sur-
rounded by twelve auspicious manifestations the “Vraja-Mandala” circle of Vraja. One
who makes a Journey over here, his all ambitions will be fulfilled, attain the sphere
of Vishnu, be victorious over all by virtue of the:

Even the sense of impenetrability, which underlay “Vajra” also metaphorically
conjectured in the sense “As the cow-pen is besieged by cow-hero” in the follow-
ing verse of the poet Magha.

Even the Hathigumpha inscription. In the seventh line of the epigraph, there was
a similarity among the scholars so far as the reading of the first three letters in
concerned, Vajatra (Cunningham), Vajata (prince), Vajara (Jayawal-1918), and
late Vajara, can be taken as approximations of Vajra. It has been used at all as the
name of a country, the site represented by it is probably to be sought for else-
where, in Bengal or its immediate neighborhood.

Vajra-bhumī (Tami Vajra) which was a part of Rajha, lay close to Magadhā.
The Sanskrit word Vajra may mean “the hard or mighty one” (Monier Williams’s
Sanskrit Dictionary, New Edition, p 913) can Vajra-bhumī be taken as synonym
for Vira-bhumī (Bihar) which is the name of a modern district in Western Bengal
situated on the border of the Santal Parganas of Bihar.

According Jain Kalpa Sutra Mahāvīra spent sometime in a place named
Pāṇḍābhumī (Paniyā-bhumī in the Jains Bhágavati), which the commentators
explain as situated in Vaiśra-bhumī. The Vaiśra-bhumī comprising portion of the
modern district of Bārthum, Bankura and Midnapur in Bengal the Ramnagar hills
in the Santal Parganas and the eastern district of Chirānagar is the province of
Bihar (Ibid, 52-53).

While Bhendarkar in his book ‘Āshoka’ (Calcutta University 1955) expresses
somewhat difficulty to understand who vachabhūmikas were, and expresses pity
as the ignorance about the exact identity of the Vachabhūmikas and their func-
tions. Accepted the designation as has been according to him, twice mentioned in
the Arakassara as equivalent to “Vajra”.

Dr. Bami Mudhab Batri is certain that designation of the Asokan officials
as denoted by the word Vrachabhūmikas, had something to do with Vratea in
Rock Edict VI. That the word Vratea is the equivalent of Vraja is evident from

37
the Shāhbazgīri test of Rock Edict VI and R.E. XIII where the verbal forms Vṛcheya and Vṛchati occur. In support of "Vṛja" he shows instances from Dhāuli R.E.V. and visualizes, while in all the versions of R.E. VI the word is either Vṛcha or Vṛcha. The equation of Vṛcha or Vṛcha with Skt. Vṛcharas would be free from all objections. But unfortunately no sensible meaning can be made out of it. The choice lies at last between the two equations namely that with the Arthānāgādhī or Vṛchara and with the SK. Vṛja. in the Arthānāgādhī dīctum, Muni-vṛchara (Acāraga Sūtra, ed. by U. Schuhart-L, p. 13) the word vṛchara is Sanskritized in the commentary as Vṛya, a word which does not occur in any Sanskrit Lexicon. The word Vṛya which might not be proposed instead does not suit, the context, its usual meaning bring is men of the twice born (brahmin class who has not undergone the purificatory rites various interpretations of Vṛcha have so far been suggested on the strength of its equation with Vṛja. According to Amaranatha (Nārāyaṇa, 95) Vṛja may mean gudhita (cow-pen) addhva (food) nivāra (assemble) ved. Aṣṭaka and his inscriptions pp. 183-184. In view of after-stated facts we find that besides Benay Chandra Sen no later scholar on Asokā inscription, has conjectured the term to be vṛya for vṛcha. Dr. Barua, Banduvar, A.C. Sen and R. Mukhīpryo have accepted the equivalent "Vṛya" for "Vṛcha" or "Vṛcha". It is not probable that the reading "Vṛja" for vṛcha has not caught the sight of these scholars.

A.L. Basham, while discussing the reference of Pāṇiyabhumī in the text of Bhagavati Sūtra, states, Barua ignoring the clear statement of the bhagavati that Pāṇiyabhumī was near Kallaga, which was a settlement near Nalanda, located in Vajrabhumī, on the strength of Vinayavijaya's commentary to the relevant passage of the Kalpa Sūtra, (Journal of the Development of Letters, Calcutta University). The Acāraga Sūtra states that Mahāvīra did not in fact visit Vajrabhumī, which the commentators Śāṅkha described as a district of Lādha or western Bengal. In his ninth year of asceticism Mahāvīra decided to visit Non-Aryan countries in order to invite persecution and that to work off his Karma. Accompanied by Gosalā he Journalised to Lādha and Vajrabhumī (W. Bengali). The visit of Mahāvīra to this district is confirmed by the early Acāraga Sūtra. The Kalpa Sūtra confirmed that Mahāvīra passed rainy seasons in the places specified by Jīnādaśa, with the exception that spent in Lādha and Vajrabhumī. The discrepancy is explained by the commentator Vinayavijaya, who states that Pāṇiyabhumī, where Mahāvīra is said by the Kalpa Sūtra to have spent a rainy season, is in Vajrabhumī. Thus it is evident that Jīnādaśa did not invert the whole of his story (Basham, History and Doctrines of the Aṣṭasahas). pp. 41, 45-46).

The History of Bengal (Ed. Māyādas) says, "The Acāraga Sūtra, divides the land of Lādha into two parts named Vajrabhumī and Ṣubba (Subha) Bhumī, Vajrabhumī or Vajrabhumī had its capital, according to commentators, at Paṭabhumī. The name Yājñabhumī "Land of Diamond", reminds us of the Sākara of Madarānī in South-West Bengal mentioned in the Ain-i-Akhbar in which there was a diamond mine. The Sākara answer to parts of the modern Behbhum, Bādwa,
and Howa]gy district. The "Land of Diamond" may have extended west wards as far as Kokura on the Borders of Bihar which was famous for its diamond mines in the days of Emperor Asoka (p. 9).

Although he reading vajra for vaccha or vaja a conjectural proposition, yet, we have to shew obviously clear word for place name prepositive with vajra, namely 'Vajrayagni' name of a village of Vikramapura, Dacca, the residence of the celebrated Buddhist Savant Atina Dipankara Srjana. The Vajrayagni copper plate of Samala Varmadeva, it is also suggested that one Harihwarman succeeded Satavarmen. The name of Harihwarman was familiar to scholars long ago from the colophons of the Buddhist manuscripts, copied respectively in the 15th and 19th years of his reign (vide, S.K. Maity and R.R. Mukherjee, Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions, Calcutta, 1997), we found another name of a country Vajrayasti in Uttarapatha (somewhere about Western Punjab) was ruled by kind Vajrayanda (Bodhisattvadana Kāraśāstra, ch. 103rd. p. 4) V. Bimala Churas law, Geographical Samaya, vol. I, p. 25).

Both the word 'Vajra' and 'Vaja' have been derived from the root 'Vraj' meaning 'to go'. It seems from the derivative that the original word was most probably 'Vaja' then through linguistic alternative of modification process it underwent change into the form of 'Vajra' of course, it occurred so in remote prehistoric, Vedic times.

Vajra denotes in the first instance, in Rigveda, the place to which the cattle resort (from Vraj "go") the "feeding ground" and secondarily the "herd" itself. According to some such as Roth 'Vajra' as primarily the "enmioverse", for more detail vide, A.A. Macdonell, Vedic Index, vol. II, p. 340.

Even the concept of Vajra has transcended Himalayan regions well, as a result we find significant names adorning places tantrik importance: Do-De-ging (Darjeeling, Vajadavia) in eastern Himalaya. And also we find reflective transformation of whole image of 'Vajrasana' of Bodhgaya in Dojeden name of a locality in Central Tibet, as we find दोञ्जिङ्दन (Ningtsha also name of a small monastery in Phenyul in Tibet, Do-Ra (Do-De-Ra-Ba) and enclosure with pal-lars with capitals of the shape of the Vajra, which surrounds the Monastery of Samye, and so on. This shows the immutable cultural bonds that is as adamanate as that of Vajra, in between Bharata and Bod.

Finally, we may say, the Buddhist Tantricism may have borrowed lines of spiritual practices from the Hindus but it retained the Mahayana philosophy of भस्मात्मा स्वभावम् (Characteristics-lessness) भविष्यतंभाव (Future beingness) न विप्रतिदानं (Pure-consciousness apart from sense-consciousness). In Gukasyasrunga, an early Tactic text, Vajra is define as the Reality or the highest Truth. It is explained as the oneness of the diverse objects and beings of the universe i.e. Thatness of the Mahayamas. A Bodhisattva must attempt to
develop a mental state (Buddhicitta-Vajra) in which will vanish the distinction between the two opposite extremes. He should realize that acts of passion are not apart from the truth and so it is stated in the Tantric texts that hatred, delusion and attachment as well as the practitioner (Dharmas) for realizing the Truth and The Truth (Vajra) constitute the five means of escape from the world of desire.

To translate “Vajra” as powerbolt by David Snellgrove seems to be quite untenable in view of basic stands that has been taken by Buddhist philosophers fundamental ideas that underlay in Vajra have been discussed in the foregoing pages. Dr. Snellgrove in his most fascinating work on tawel and comparative study of Buddhism, entitled ‘Buddhist Himalaya, while divining ‘Vajra’ as the family of the Vajra (Thunderbolt), states for this signifies the power of powerful being. He himself has again explained Akshobhya-one of the five Buddhas, presiding over the east, with blue colour and of Vajra family and Vajra symbol as ‘imperceptible’, the rest four Buddhas have different sign and symbols. Again his statement ‘since magical power which is represented by Vajra in all important tantras’. These seems to be paradoxical and verify the reflection of preconceived idea of Hindu concept of Vajra. In his recent book, ‘Four Lamas of Dolgo, he rendered Vajra as ‘powerbolt’. This is the visualization of the idea of Vajra he here in mind, which is evident from his earlier interpretation of the word.

He also claimed the new coinage ‘Powerbolt’ as a satisfactory translation than the earlier rendering.

‘Thunderbolt’ and ‘Diamond’

That Thunderbolt is not a fully satisfactory translation, has been however admitted and as explanatory the word Adamant has been used. Several English knowing Lamas object to the construction ‘powerbolt’ since Thunder and not bolt, is essence of Thunderbolt. As Shri N.C. Sinha put it in suggestive English in his two notes (vide, Bulletin of Tibetology, vol. VII, No. 2 and vol. VII, No. 3, literal rendering of Sanskrit, Vajra, the Weapon of Indra should be Thunder or Thunderbolt. In his reference of Brhadaranyaka upanishad confirmed also the identity of idea of Vajra blended in two concepts. Also the identity of idea of Vajra blended in two concepts. The Lama scholar, Kunga Yonten’s examination of Vajra also determine the hard, void, imperishable, indestructable attributes of Vajra. As he states diamond has two names De-je Rin-Po-che and De-je-Phan-Lam. And if we study the inherent intant sense of three forms of Vajra, of three spokes, five spokes and nine spokes (vide, Bulletin of Tibetology, vol. VII, No. 3), it does not at all reflect the concept of power that has been conjectured by some scholars.

There is no doubt that Indra has become a mere background figure for the towering personality of the Buddha. The phenomenal development of the practice
of making image and worshipping them is interestingly indicated by the fact that even the attributes or weapons meant to be placed in the hands of the deities were personified and represented anthropomorphically. Such representations came to be designated generally. Such representations came to be designated generally as "Ayudhapurusha". The earliest representation of "Ayudhapurusha", however, seems to go back to the Indo-scythic period. Vajra appears on some Copper Coins of maars as a man behind whom is carved a double-pronged Thunderbolt, just in front of Zeus-Indra whose right hand is placed over his head. Various emblems, such as cakra, gada, tankha, padma in Vishnuite reliefs and Vajra, Saktri, Danda, Khadga, Pāśa, Ankusa, Trishula etc. are also personified in late Iconographic text (vide, J.N. Banejee, Development of Hindu Iconography. p. 557).

In Bhaddavata, we find Vajradāra as of the epithets of Indra and one of the many epithets of Indra as Vajrapani (V. Sri N.C. Sinha's note on Vajra. Bulletin vol. VII, No. 3). In Buddhist Iconography we find "Vajrapani" "Vajradhara" are the epithets of the Buddha, therefore we find through these terms that the Buddha the "Thunder bolt-holder" personified anthropomorphically. When these are representation of "Ayudhapurusha", we think the rendering "Thunderbolt" is more satisfactory than "Powerbolt" because thunder and not bolt is the essence of Thunderbolt as suggested by Sri N.C. Sinha.

Here we should not loose right of the similar weapon "Sakti" which is a long spear with very sharp edge on both sides and a banner with the design of a fowl. Unlike "Vajra" it is distinctly termed "Sakti" may be rendered "Power-bolt" without conjecture.

As we see personified Ayudhapurusha in Hindu and Buddhist Iconography so we find imagery of weapon of destruction "Vajra" was carried into stipulation about (impersonal being). Brahman or absolute, in Kētha Upanishad (2. 3-2) Brahman is linked to Vajra. In Buddhism, the attainment of Bodhi by Shākya prince, Gautama Suddhārtha, was described as attainment of Vajra (vide Sri N.C. Sinha's note on Vajra. Bulletin, vol. VII, No. 2). We know Vajrapani from the representation of Vajrapani carried to the transcendental concept of Vajradhara of Vajrasāra as first creative principle.

Before we say anything about the first creative principle to the aforesaid context of anthropomorphic representation of Vajrapani, we would like to write a few lines on the historical background of Vajrapani found in Buddhist literatures.

In the Vinaya of Mulasarsvatāvinā the Buddha takes himself first to the upper valley of the Indus and on that occasion he is accompanied by the Yaksha-Vajrapani. In the same Vinaya it is mentioned that the Buddha makes his grand journey to the North-West with the Yaksha Vajrapani, then the rejoices Ananda and goes with him to Mathura. Vajrapani has been frequently represented in the Graeco-Buddhist sculptures of Gandhara, as a contrast he never appears in the
According to Benoykumar Bhattacharya, Vajrakila, Vajradhara is either the Adi-Buddha or the Dhyani-Buddha, Akshobhya who has the Vajra as the recognition symbol (Sadanamala, Preface, p. VIII). In Lokanatha-Sarlas we find Vajrapani has been equalized with Maitriya, Kashatgarbha (Ibid, vol. I, p. 49). Again in Arya Halahala (Avatarkaras) Hridaya Mantra, Arya-Vajrapani has been equated with Maitreya and Samantabhadra and explicitly stated as Mahabodhisattva. The conception of Vajradhara presupposes Adinbuddha and therefore, is later than the first half of 10th century. Vajrasattva, being a regular development of the Bodhisattva Vajrapani emanating from the Dhyani Buddha Akshobhya, is little earlier, although the conception of Vajradhara and Vajrasattva are something inextricably mixed up, in Vajrayana. But Vajradhara was not universally accepted as the Adinbuddha or the first creative principle, when the theory of Adinbuddha was fully established the Buddhist seemd to have ranged themselves into so many sects as it were, holding different views regarding specific forms which the Adinbuddha should take. Some considered one among the five Dhyani Buddhas as the Adinbuddha, some acknowledges Vajrasattva as the Adinbuddha, many others were content to regard the Bodhisattva such as Samantabhadra or Vajrapani as the Adi-Buddha. Thus the cult Adi-Buddha was widely distributed among the different schools, which gave rise to many different sects amongst the Tantrik Buddhists (B. Bhattacharya: The Indian Buddhist Iconography, pp. 41-44).

In the previous note the Vajra has been described to be made of stone and alternately of Iron, Bronze or some sacred metal. Here we are not much concerned of the forms of Vajra. The shape of Thunderbolt the weapon of Indra also carried by several deities. It consists of two identical conical pieces each having three claws joined together in Middle (vide, D.R. Thapar, Icon in Bronze, figure of Vajra 8-41, and p. 44). As the threefold pattern, as typified by three basic evils persists behind the fivefold scheme. As the Buddha families were originally three, Tathagata, Lotus and Vajra also extend to five, and as we find three family protectors Mañjuśri, Avatarkaras and Vajrapani, gradually assumes concept of five Buddhas of Vajra-dhana, Mandalas vide, Stoddridge, Buddhaśaśīmaśāya, pp. 65-66). In similar way through the analogy we find the original concept of Vajra form of three spoked gradually assuming the shape of five and nine spokes. In the Vedic concept the Vajra which could prevail upon or destroy the mightiest adversary of Devas symbolizes might or power an exsterovent potential active property. Which gradually carried to the five spoke Vajra represent five wisdom and the nine spoke Vajra stands for Dhammabuddha (vide, Bulletin of Tibetology vol VII, No. 3). As we see here in Vajrayana concept the Vajra represents the intense introverted, hard, innate and adamantine aspects.
To the Buddhist, Sakti (कैकित) is Maya (माया) the very power that creates illusion, from which only Rajas can liberate us. The attitude of the Hindu Tantras is quite different, if no contrary ‘united with Sakti, be full of power’ says (Kalacudumani Tantra). From the union of Siva (सिव) and Sakti (कैकित) the world is created’. The Buddhist on the other hand, does not want the creation and enfoldment of the world, but the realization of the “un-created, un-formed” state of Sunyata (सून्यता) from which all creation proceeds, or which is prior to and beyond all creation, vide, Atanagika Gvinda, Principles of Buddhist Tantras; Bulletin of Tibetology, (Vol. II, No. 1). We may suggest the reader to read an interesting Article on ‘Consideration on Tantrik Spirituality’ by Thobten Tenzin (Alhus) Marco Falleni, Bulletin of Tibetology, (Vol. II, No. 2), for accurate understanding and as precluding all possible terminological confusion.

Finally we may sum up, that to realize “Vajra” one has to understand “Vajrayana”. They are so inextricably inter-linked that clear vision of one will dispel the misunderstanding of other. In spite giving our own interpretation we would prefer to quote one illuminating passage from a work of the one pioneer Indian exponent of Vajrayana. “The Mahayana in the opinion of the Vajrayanists is immanence with what they called Dharma which they considered as eternal and to which was given a more important place in later Buddhism that was assigned to Buddha himself. The Vajrayanists refer to Sunya in all their writings, but this is not the Sunya of the Mahayanaabhisheka which neither existence nor nonexistence nor a combination of the two nor a negation of the two can be predicated. To the Mahayanaabhisheka both the subject and the object are Sunya in essence; there is no reality either of the mind or of the external world. Obviously, this is a position which was not agreeable to the Vajrayanists because to them a positive aspect in the Sunya is absolutely necessary. The Vajrayana or the Vijnanavada goes a little further and the view of Vijnanavada as formulated by the school itself that when emancipation is obtained it does not become Sunya, but turn into eternal consciousness. Vajrayana, on the other hand, is characterized as the ‘path which leads to perfect enlightenment’ or what they call in Sanskrit ‘Amurta Sampur Naishadha’. Vajrayana literally means the adamantine path or vehicle, but its technical meaning is the ‘Sunya Vehicle’ where Sunya is used in a special sense to represent Vajra. It is said:

“Sunyata is designed as Vajra, because it firm and sound, and, cannot be changed, cannot be pierced, cannot be penetrated, cannot be burnt, and cannot be destroyed”.

Advayavajravamsastra, p. 23

(Benoytosh Bhattachatrya, The Indian Buddhist Iconography, pp. 10-11)