

## EMERGENCE OF KALACAKRATANTRA

-B. Ghosh

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 yantras with no marked individuality, such as, Tantrayana, Mantrayana, Bhadrayana etc. (B. Bhattacharyya, *Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism* (GOS) Varanasi, 1964, pp. 52-55). The advanced Buddhist Tantras are Kriyatantra, Caryatantra, Yogatantra and Anuttara-tantra.

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

गृध्रकुटे यथाशास्तः प्रज्ञापारमितानये ।  
तथा मन्त्रनये प्रोक्ता श्रीधन्ये धर्मद्वेशना ॥  
गृध्रकुटे महाशैले प्रज्ञापारमितानयम् ।  
सन्देश्य बोधिसत्त्वानां महायानं निरुत्तरम् ॥ (1)

At the outset it should be noted that "Kalacakra" is one of the epithets of Vajri :

मूलतन्त्रे । ए रहस्यारव्यधातो वा मगे धर्मोदयेम्बुजे ।  
 सिंहासने स्थितो वज्री उत्कस्तन्त्रान्तरे मया ॥  
 वं वज्री वज्रसत्त्वश्च वज्रभैरव ईश्वरः ।  
 हेरुकः कालचक्रश्च आदिबुद्धादिनामतः ॥  
 सर्वज्ञो वज्रघृक् शास्ता बुद्धः सिंहासने स्थितः ।  
 देशकः कालचक्रस्य सुचन्द्राद्येषितस्त्वया ॥ (२)

The *Sekoddesatika* 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 *Sekoddesa* in Shambala (bDe-hByung) on the north of river Sita.

सुचन्द्र आहति शीतानद्युत्तरे षण्णवतिकोटिग्रामशम्भल-  
 महाविषयाधिपतिः ....।  
 मूलतन्त्रे । वीपङ्गरेण वा पूर्वं मन्त्रयानस्य देशना  
 कृतास्माकं तु कर्तव्या गौतमेनाद्य साधुना ॥  
 अथातः शम्भलास्व्यातो वज्रपाषिणिनिमितः ।  
 सुचन्द्रन्तप आयातः स्वर्द्ध श्रीधर्मधातुकम् ॥ (३)

Being the Nirmanakaya 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 Griddhrikut, 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 Dharmadhatu (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 1958, 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-jneyam), that is Vajra-dhatu-Mahamandala (trans, Carelli).

वा तत्र महासुरवावसै धर्मधातावाकाशलिङ्गणे परमाङ्गरो  
अच्युतल्लणः काल इत्युच्यते तदेव वज्रज्ञानम्। तस्य  
कालस्य निरावरणस्कन्धधात्वाद्यतनं चक्रं त्रिभवस्यैकत्वं  
निरावरणज्ञेयम्। तदेव वज्रधातुमहामण्डलमित्युच्यते॥ (4)

Again while elaborating the form of AdiBuddha (the primeval/primordial one), Naropada quotes verses containing concepts of Kalacakra from Namasangiti: 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 unsubstantiality (Sunyata-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 (Sunyata). 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)

नामसङ्गीतौ । अनादिनिध्नो बुद्ध आदिबुद्धो निरन्वयः ।  
 करुणाशून्यतामूर्तिः कलः संवृतिरुपिणी ॥  
 शून्यताचक्रमित्युक्तं कालचक्रोद्भवोद्भारः ।  
 एकैकाक्षरसंज्ञया वा । काकारात्कारणे शान्ते लकारात्सर्वोद्भवे ।  
 चकाराच्चलचित्तस्य क्रकारात्क्रमबन्धनैः ॥ (5)

The editor of *Sekoddesatika*, M.E. Carelli, does not mention Tibetan version of the work. In Dege Tanjur, Rgyud (Tantra) section Vol. Na. FF 220 (b) -289 (a), however, the Sanskrit title of the book occurs as **परमार्थसंग्रहनाम सेकोद्देशटीका** (xylograph 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 (6) it is stated that Kashmiri Pandita Dharmadhara and Tibetan Lotsawa Grags-pa-Rgyal-mtshan collaborated in translation of the text into Tibetan in the metropolis of Nepal. If Dagpa Gyaltsen 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-chen-por).

In this work Sakya Dakpa Gyaltsan (1st vol. p. 245) claims Naropa as his pupil (vide Khentsun *Biographical dictionary of Tibetan Buddhism*, Pt. I, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives 1973, 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 (Abhiniskramana-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.B. Dasgupta in his book *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism* (p. 68) also narrates the above legendary account of propagation of Kalacakratantra from a manuscript (Sri Kalacakra-Tantra) preserved in the Cambridge University Library.

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

According to Buston diffusion of Kalacakra was first in India and therefrom to Tibet (Sung bum vol Nga,

f27). 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 Odisha (Orissa) 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 Kataka's patronage and transmitted these teachings to Pitopa of Bengal and to Kalapada of Varendra (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 Sumpa Mkhenpo in Dpag-bsam-ljon-bzan (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 (1526-1592) 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 Tsilu or Chilu and accepted by Narotapa who was then head of the university. From Nalanda it spread to Tibet. Manjusrikirti, king of Sambhala, is said to have been

an exponent of it and to have begun his reign 674 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 enigmatical. *Karandavyuha* relates how the original AdiBuddha produced



Avalokita by meditation. *Lalitavistara* 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). Asanga 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.Sar-  
kar, *Folklore Element in Hindu Culture*, which is however sparing of precise references. The Dharma as Niranjana of *Sunya Purana* seems to be equivalent of AdiBuddha (Eliot : Pt. I. p. 32). The *Guna-Karanda-vyuha* and *Karanda-vyuha* relate the primeval Buddha spirit, AdiBuddha or Svayambhu 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-vyuha: 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. G 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 is 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<sup>7</sup> (*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, Nispannayogavali of Mahapandita Abhayakaragupta (C. 1114 A.D.) (Ed. B. Bhattacharyya, GOS 1949, p. 22). The way Hindu deities are incorporated in the Mandala of Kalacakra as in Nispannayogavali 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 Kalacakratantra introduced the notion of Eternal Creator.

Central Asia, particularly the basins of rivers Oxus, Jaxartes 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 Shambhala, Kalacakra and Adibuddha.

The corresponding Tibetan Texts (translation) from  
Tanjur are as follows:-

ཨོ་པ་འཛུགས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་སྐྱེས་པ་ཡང་།  
སྒྲོན་པ་ལ་བྱ་རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལོ་རྒྱུ་ ། ཞེས་རབ་པ་རོལ་བྱིན་རྒྱུ་པ་བཞིན། །  
ཆེས་བསྐྱེད་པ་ལ་སྐྱེས་པ་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། དེ་བཞིན་གསལ་སྐྱེས་ལྟར་ལྟར་གསུངས། །  
བྱ་རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལོ་རྒྱུ་ཆེན་པོ་། ། ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐྱེས་པ་། །  
ཞེས་རབ་པ་རོལ་བྱིན་པ་འཛུགས། ། བྱང་རྒྱུ་པ་མེས་པ་རྣམས་ལ་བསྐྱེད། ། (1)

སྐྱེས་པ་ལྟར་ལྟར་།  
ཞེས་པ་གསལ་ཆེན་པོ་མེས་པ་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱ་གཞི་ལྟར་ལྟར་སྐྱེས་པ་། །  
མེད་གེ་ལྟར་ལྟར་གསལ་ཆེན་པོ་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་གསལ་ཆེན་པོ་། །  
རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། །  
རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། །  
རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། །  
རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། (2)

རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། །  
རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། །  
རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། །  
རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། །  
རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། རྒྱུ་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་ལྟར་། ། (3)

གྲ། ཡང་ན་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་གནས་དེ་རེ་མ་གྱི་དབྱིངས་ནས་མ་ཁའི་  
 མཚན་ཉིད་ལ་མཚན་གྱི་འགྲུར་བ་མི་འཕོ་བའི་སྐད་ཅིག་ནི་དུས་ཞེས་བརྗོད་དེ་  
 དེ་ཉིད་རྗེ་ཆེ་ཡོ་ཤེས་སོ། དུས་དེའི་སྒྲིབ་པ་མེད་པའི་ཡུང་བོ་དང་ཁམས་དང་  
 སྒྲིམ་ཆེད་ནི་འཁོར་ལོ་སྒྲིབ་པ་གསུམ་གཅིག་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་བྱིར་སྒྲིབ་པ་མེད་པའི་  
 ཤེས་བྱ་ལ། དེ་ཉིད་རྗེ་ཆེ་དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་ཆེན་པོ་ཞེས་བརྗོད་དེ། (4)

མཚན་ཡང་དག་པར་བརྗོད་པར་ཡང་། །  
 མངས་རྒྱས་ཐོག་མ་ཐ་མ་མེད། །དང་པོའི་སྤུས་རིགས་མེད་པ། །ཞེས་སོ།  
 སྒྲིབ་རྗེ་དང་ནི་སྒྲིབ་ཉིད་སྒྲིབ། །དུས་ནི་ཀློན་པོ་བཟུགས་ཆེན་མ། །  
 སྒྲིབ་ཉིད་འཁོར་ལོ་ཞེས་བརྗོད་དེ། །དུས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་གཉིས་མེད་འདོད། །  
 ཡང་ན།  
 མིང་གི་ཡི་གེ་རེ་རེ་སྒྲིབ། །ཀྱི་ཡིག་ལས་ནི་རྒྱ་ཞིབ། །  
 ལ་ཡིག་ལས་འདིར་ཐོམ་པ་ཉིན། །ཙ་ཡིག་ལས་ནི་གཡོ་བའི་སེམས། །  
 ག་ཡིག་རིམ་པ་བཅིངས་ལས་སོ། ། (5)

ཁ་ཆེའི་པ་རྒྱ་ཏ་རྒྱ་མ་རྒྱ་ར་དང་ལོ་རྒྱུ་བ་གྲགས་པ་རྒྱ་ལ་མཚན་གྱིས་  
 བལ་བོའི་ཐོམ་ལ་དུ་བསྒྲུབ་པ་ལས། སྒྲུར་ཡང་ལེགས་པར་སྒྲུར་བའི་  
 སྐད་ཀྱི་བད་སྒྲོད་པའི་རྩུ་ལ་རིག་པ་རིན་ཆེན་རྒྱ་ལ་མཚན་གྱིས་དཔལ་  
 ས་སྒྲིའི་ཆོས་སྒྲུ་ཆེན་པོར་ལེགས་པར་བསྒྲུར་ཅིང་ལུས་ཏེ་དག་པར་  
 བྱས་པ་ལོ། ། (6)