



#### ICONOGRAPHIC NOTE

Amitāyus differs from the figure of Amitābha inasmuch as he wears all the ornaments of a bodhisattva: diadem, earrings, necklace, breast chain, armlets, bracelets. In addition to these, he wears green scarves and a red lower garment (*dhoti*), while Amitābha is represented simply as a buddha without any ornaments. Both are red, the color of the setting sun, indicating their connection with the Western Paradise. Amitābha usually holds on the palms of his hands a blue alms-bowl, while Amitāyus has a golden vase of long life with an Aśoka tree. The nimbus of Amitāyus is very elaborate, and golden beams of light on a deep blue background shoot forth from his body. They are framed by a beautifully patterned, wide circle which in turn is surrounded by a narrow, rainbow-like halo. The head is framed with a bright green nimbus bordered in gold, from behind which usually two red lotuses emerge. In the foreground are represented two goddesses who with Amitāyus are implored often for the bestowing of long life. To his left is Ushnishavijayā, and to his right is the White Tārā (See *Yhk*, I, p. 77, figure 8). This group is called in Tibetan *Tshe lha rnam gsum* "The three divinities of long life." Between them there is an elaborate bowl of fruit and flowers(?).

WU-LIANG-SHOU (無量壽)  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TIBETAN AND  
CHINESE LONGEVITY RITES

F. D. LESSING

University of California, Berkeley

PREFATORY NOTE

In April, 1932, my daughter (Mrs. B. Körner, now of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin) and I, who at that time were associated with the Scientific Expedition under the leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, stayed as guests of the Sunit Wang (Te Wang 德王), Demcygdongrob (T. Bde mchog don grub), in his palace in Inner Mongolia. There I was received in audience by His Serene Holiness the Pan chen lama, who then sojourned in that same place. For some time this high dignitary of the Yellow Church of Tibet had lived as a "political refugee" and guest of the Chinese Nationalist Government in various parts of China where he felt himself protected from the intrigues of his confrère, the Dalai lama, and the latter's hostile entourage.

The Pan chen rin po che, to give him his more complete title ("Great and Precious Doctor", *paṇ* standing for S. *paṇḍita* "scholar"), knew of my studies in Tibetan Buddhism and was quite inclined to further them by assigning a learned lama to teach me. Unfortunately, because our enjoyable stay at the court was cut short, I was unable to make use of his instruction. However, thus through his favor, I had the unique opportunity of assisting at a High Service, celebrated by the Grand Lama when he performed the "Rite of Obtaining Long Life through Amitāyus (Immeasurable Life), the Buddha of Longevity. The service received a particularly solemn note since the Pan chen lama is believed to be an incarnation of Amitābha "Immeasurable Light," of whom Amitāyus is a special aspect.

This celebration was occasioned by the arrival of a number of Tangutian men, women, and children who had made that formidable trek from the distant Kukunor area, driving their sheep over perilous roads and bleak wastelands and carrying their silver to the blessed spot where the august ruler of their church happened to reside. They did all this for the single purpose of receiving his blessings, the most coveted of which was, of course,

the prolongation of their life span.

I had neither the facilities nor was there time to make preliminary studies in order to prepare myself for the important performance I was privileged to witness. The following essay is merely a synthesis of my notes, jotted down after the celebration, and a subsequent study of pertinent Tibetan rituals. To these are added an introduction and some necessary notes.

Honoring the eminent scholar, my inspiring teacher and warm friend, to whom this study is dedicated—may it be an auspicious omen to him, even as my presence at the ceremony has been interpreted as a lucky event in my own life—I have added the analysis of an analogous rite contained in the Chinese Buddhist “canon” and drawn a few comparisons between the two rituals.

It goes without saying that the investigation here presented cannot be anything other than a preliminary essay. A thorough study would include an annotated, faithful translation of the basic texts, critical source research, and a technical vocabulary. It would also comprise all the different subsidiary rites connected with this ritual, that is to say, apart from the “creation” (S. *sādhana*, 成就), a “consecration” (S. *abhisheka*, 灌頂), “cosmogram” (S. *maṇḍala*, 曼陀羅), and burnt offering (S. *homa*, 護摩) rite. But such an undertaking would fill a book, and the fact that at present almost every hour of my working day is taken up with other urgent tasks makes it quite impossible to offer something more complete.

## INTRODUCTION

Rites and ceremonies may be described as the mirror of a religion. They reflect, in part at least, the recognized dogma as well as popular beliefs, mythological and legendary traditions, and even, in a limited and fragmentary way, the history of a creed. The latter is particularly true of Lamaist rituals, with their long listings of spiritual lineages of lamas whose individual personalities are invoked as protectors of the various schools of thought and bestowers of “gifts of grace” (S. *siddhi*, 悉地).

Major Lamaist rites are called *sādhana*, that is to say, “perfection” or, more specifically, “evocation,” namely of a deity. *Sādhanas* are often compared to dramas, acceptably so if we allow some latitude in the interpretation of that term. A *sādhana* shares the qualities of a drama as far as it presents a clearly organized structure leading to a climax and ending in a solemn con-

summation. But the stage on which the drama unfolds is almost entirely limited to the internal experience of the officiant which has been purified and sublimated by long yogic training accompanied by appropriate consecrations or initiations. His aim is to realize his body, speech, and mind, in a word, his whole personality, as identical with the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha himself. This act is described as intuition (S. *abhi-samaya*, 現觀), namely of the Absolute in its hypostasis, the deity.

The ideal objective of Christian rites, as contrasted to the Lamaist rituals, has been characterized thus: the Catholic wishes to realize the actual presence of God in the sacrament, the Protestant tries to explore the will of God, while the Lamaist wishes to become God Himself, or, to put it the Buddhist way, to realize his virtual identity with the god and to make him subservient to his own wishes. The vehicle by which he is able to reach this goal is the *sādhana*, to be discussed later on.

Lamaist ceremonies are often described as mysteries, but that statement cannot pass without restrictions. What sets them apart from Greek mysteries is a certain lack of visible dramatic action in most of the ceremonies. Only the religious dances (T. *hcham*) are an exception, but they, too, want the esoteric element necessary to make them real mysteries.

It cannot be denied that the ritual texts contain passages the full meaning of which is not revealed to the uninitiated. I also have been assured that there do exist secret rites in the true sense of the word, but I have been unable so far to obtain definite information.

The chief means by which the phantasmagoric play of the ritual is kept moving are: (1) Meditation on the creation of the deity invoked. In the tripartition of the personality into body, speech, and mind, this corresponds to the mind of the Buddha. (2) Recitation of the ritualistic texts with their "sacred spells" (*mantras* or *dhāraṇīs*). This corresponds to the voice of the Buddha. (3) "Hand seals" (*mudrā*, 手印) and other physical movements necessary for the performing of sacred acts. They symbolize the body of the Buddha. Correctly performed, these three items constitute the identity of the priest with the Buddha.

The construction of a *sādhana* or evocation ("creation") of a deity follows a traditional form.

The formularies used in Tibetan Buddhism contain instructions as to how the liturgic material is to be arranged. The most widely used pattern is in seven members or branches. It may suffice here to mention only one of



these patterns: Salutation to the buddhas, oblations, confession of sins, sharing the joy over the merits acquired by others, request addressed to the buddhas to continue turning the "Wheel of the Law" (that is, to preach), prayer addressed to the buddhas to stay in this world until all beings are saved, dedication of one's own merits to others for their salvation.

Among the various precepts concerning the preparation of the priest for a solemn service, aside from purification, (ablutions, clean garment), meditation is the most important. The priest concentrates on the god he wants to invoke until he forgets his own ego and realizes himself identical with the deity.

Then there follows the meditation on the four "boundless things" (四無量): boundless love for all living beings, boundless compassion, boundless joy over merits acquired by others, boundless equanimity.

Other meditations, partly optional, concern the VOID, according to which all *dharma*s ("elements," "essences") are empty (S. *śūnya*, "non-substantial"). They exist not through their own intrinsic nature (S. *svabhāva*) but merely through interdependent relationship ("relationalism"). Neither the iconography nor the cult of Buddhism can be fully appreciated without reference to this basis, which we translate by the term VOID.<sup>(1)</sup>

- (1) The Doctrine of the Middle Path (中道論) which is accepted by the Vajra-yāna teaches that the *dharma*s ("elements of consciousness" 法) cannot be intrinsically real by themselves (*svabhāvena* 自性), they are relatively real (*svabhāvena śūnya* 自性空). As this world is supposed to be unreal, merely illusory, things do not exist as realities, but merely as relations, so to speak ("relationalism"). The term nihilism is categorically rejected by this school. To discuss this highly controversial doctrine *en passant* is, of course, impossible. Explain simply: The VOID means conceiving of the whole [universe] with all its [things], mobile and immobile, as the revelation of the VOID [the absolute], the mind being free from such notions as: taker and taken (*grāhya-grāhaka* "object and subject," "unfolding,") etc.

Goethe seems to have had something similar in mind when he writes (Faust, Part II):

"In solitude throne goddesses sublime,  
"Round them no place is, and still less a time.  
"Only to speak of them the brain doth swim".....  
"Whither the way?"  
"MEPHISTOPHELES  
"No way! To the Unreachable,  
"Ne'er to be trodden! A way to the Unbeseechable,  
"Never to be besought! Art thou prepared?  
"There are no locks, no latches to be lifted;  
"Through endless solitude shalt thou be drifted.  
"Hast thou through solitudes and deserts fared!"  
"Naught will thou see in the ever empty Far,  
"Not hear thy footstep where 'tis prest,  
"Nor find firm ground whereon to rest."

(Bayard Taylor's Translation).

For a valuable contribution to the conception of VOID see A. Wayman, "Notes on the Sanskrit Term *Jñāna*", JAOS, V. 75, p. 258 ff.

Gods and goddesses are evoked (S. *ākārshana*, *āvāhana*, 召請, T. *spyān hdren pa*) from the “realm” of the VOID. They are its manifestations or hypostases. The VOID transforms itself into them according to the functions they are expected to discharge. This is what happens in the *sādhana*, the nucleus and axis of the ritual.

The *Sādhana-mālā* says that “by the fire of the VOID” the five “aggregates” (the phenomenal personality of the *sādhaka* [hierophant], the performer of a *sādhana*) are consumed.<sup>(2)</sup>

The reality of the self, then, is the deity to be invoked first. However this vision does not appear slowly like the gradual opening of a lotus flower but with lightning speed like the happenings in all great creative moments. It seizes the officiant with an ecstatic rapture which carries him away from his ego and his surrounding. Only a few elect, well-trained priests are capable of this psychological metamorphosis.

This is the first step. It is called “self-realization” (T. *bdag-bskyed*).

Having thus risen to the dignity of a god, more specifically, the god he wishes to invoke, the officiant proceeds to the second great act, the “creation in front,” T. *mdun bskyed*.

Here, it seems, the doctrine of a double truth asserts itself. In order to make its deepest ideas assimilable to the faithful, Buddhism made use of a dichotomy which is also found in other systems of speculations, namely that of a conventional truth (*samvṛtti-satya*, 世俗諦, T. *kun rdzobs bden pa*) and sublime truth (*paramārtha-satya*, 真諦, T. *don dang poḥi bden pa*) which rules supreme in the realm of the superrational. Only this truth gives access to the deepest insight reserved for the elect. Accordingly, the god (or buddha) has, in a sense, a Janus face. We have on the one hand his *samaya-rūpa* (三昧形) or phenomenal aspect under which the Buddha has taken a vow to manifest himself to suffering beings in order to protect, comfort and rescue them. The emblems he carries, such as ornaments, flowers, weapons, are symbols of his activity. On the other hand the gods under their gnostic forms (S. *jñāna-rūpa*; I have so far been unable to discover the Chinese equivalent for this term) are beyond

(2) This is a large compilation dating from the 11th century. It consists of 312 *sādhana*s in Sanskrit, edited by Benoytosh Bhattacharyya. Vol. I (Baroda 1925), Vol. II (Baroda 1928). CLXXVII+623 pp.

all human conceptions and, strictly speaking, expressions of the inexpressible.<sup>(3)</sup>

Finally the mind of the *sādhaka* is sufficiently sublimated for the last creative act. Now he realizes the identity of the phenomenal and noumenal, *samsāra* and *nirvāna*, in other words biunity *yuga-naddha* (雙運, T. *zung hjug*). He conceives now the cosmos as a manifestation with its five hypostases. Their names, locations and emblems are:

direction	name	<i>mudrā</i>	colour	throne	attribute
Centre	Vairocana	<i>dharmacakra</i>	white	lion	<i>cakra</i>
N	Aksobhya	<i>bhūmisparṣa</i>	blue	elephant	<i>vajra</i>
W	Ratnasambhava	<i>varada</i>	yellow	horse	<i>ratna</i>
S	Amitābha	<i>dhyāna</i>	red	peacock	<i>padma</i>
E	Amoghasiddha	<i>abhaya</i>	green	<i>kinnara</i>	<i>viṣvavjra</i>

The officiant invites these buddhas to enter the holy water flask, to purify it and transform the water into *amṛta* (甘露), the potion of immortality and wisdom. This double function of the water explains the juxtaposition of longevity and wisdom in the most frequent epithet of Amitāyus (*ayur-jnāna*, 壽智).<sup>(4)</sup>

The creation of the five “buddhas of consecration,” who are usually called the five Tathāgatas (五如來; the term *dhyāni* buddha, not quite appropriate, seems not to be found in the scriptures) in the holy water flask (*kalaṣa*, 淨水瓶, T. *bum pa*) is called T. *bum bskyed*.

The idea of the identity between god and world in its extreme form leads, if not to the conception, at least to the elaboration of those more or less

(3) The question whether the *samaya-rūpa* deities or the *jnāna-rūpa* deities are the first to be created will be discussed in the forthcoming translation of Mkhas grub rje's General System of the Tantras (*Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa rgyas par bṣad pa*) by the present writer and Alex Wayman.

In the *Śrīcakra-sambhāratāntra* edited [and translated] by Kazi Dawa-Samdub [Tantrik Texts under the general editorship by A. Avalon, London 1919] we read (p. 34, n. 1): “The Deities created by the Mind are of two classes, viz.: Jnāni (Yeshe-pa) and Bhakta [sic!] (Damtshig-pa). *The latter are those first imagined and they invite the Jnāni-devatās, wait upon, serve, and worship them* [italics by the present writer]. At length the Jnānis are absorbed in the Bhaktas; the latter in the Mantras; these into the Bija and finally all disappear in Shūnyatā.”

(4) The Tibetan translation *tshe dang ye ges* shows that *āyur-jnāna* is to be understood as a *dvandva* compound. See the interesting stanza from the *Aparimitāyur jnāna-maṇḍala-vidhi* (in *Bstan-hgyur*, *Rgyud*; TSI f. 210 a 4): “I bow to the Lord, whose bodily essence is boundless life, the Guide whose voice possesses the fivefold knowledge, whose mind preserves [us] with gracious compassion.”

complicated cosmograms called *maṇḍalas* (曼陀羅, T. *dkyil khkor*) which play such an important part in late Buddhist initiations.<sup>(5)</sup> The solemn act of entering the *maṇḍala* (*maṇḍala-praveṣa*) does not fall within the scope of this article.

These three acts—self-realization, realization of the deities in front (in their twofold aspect), and realization in the holy water flask—constitute three distinct levels in which the *sādhana*, like a stūpa, rises to its summit. The walls of this edifice, to continue the simile, are filled in by salutations, offerings, Confessions of sin, hymns, and prayers, as mentioned before. With the reaching of the climax, the “order of creation” (T. *bskyed rim*) of the *sādhana* is completed. More offerings, hymns, prayers and benedictions, bring the ceremony to an end in the second part, *rdzogs rim* or “order of consummation.”

So far we have spoken chiefly of the internal acts of the officiant. But they alone would not suffice to establish that synchronization of his threefold activity with that of the deity. There are sacred texts to recite and bodily movements to perform in order to establish a complete parallelism or better identity of the personality of the priest and the godhead.

There exist minute instructions regarding the chanting (rhythm, intonation, and speed) of the sacred texts. They are noted down in a peculiar score which is said to reflect a very old tradition. The art of chanting has to be learned by young novices from a special instructor, who is often identical with the preceptor (T. *dbu mdzad* “chief actor”). The exercises are called T. *sbyang sgra* “voice training.”

But the most important passages in the texts are those which are termed *mantra* and *dhāraṇī* (咒, also 總持). Without entering upon a discussion of the subtle differences between the two, we want merely to point out that they are represented by (a) Sanskrit syllables (often meaningless to the uninitiated), such as OM, HŪM, and many others; (b) words, such as *āgaccha*, *ehi* meaning “come!” and *praticcha* “accept!” “receive!”; (c) phrases, mostly a mixture of (a) and (b), as in the familiar OM MAṆI PADME HŪM “OM, the jewel in the lotus, HŪM,” the famous evocation and invocation formula of the most popular deity in Mahāyāna, Avalokiteśvara. Syllables which serve to evoke a deity are called “germ syllables” (*bija-mantra* 種子).

(5) For *maṇḍala* initiations see the very informative book by Giuseppe Tucci, *Teoria e Pratica del Maṇḍala con particolare riguardo alla moderna psicologia del profondo*, Rome, 1949. Also see Alexandra David-Neel, *Initiations lamaïques*. Paris 1930. The “System of the Tantras” deals extensively with the topic.



The functions of *dhāraṇīs* are very much diversified. They may be creative, destructive, invocatory, apotropaic, etc. Their history can be traced back to Vedic times, but they are certainly much older. Their importance in the ritual cannot be overemphasized.<sup>(6)</sup>

The *dhāraṇīs*, even though correctly recited, would lose their efficacy if they were not accompanied by proper hand gestures ("seals", *mudrā*, 手印). This is the name for certain elaborate movements of the hand, especially the fingers, which are often very expressive. For instance, a closed right fist with the index and small fingers outstretched representing bull's horns, expresses a threat to evil spirits which disturb the lama while he is officiating. There exist about 150 seals, I believe. They, too, must be practised by young novices because, here as everywhere in the ritual, much depends on a precise execution. The ritualistic functions of body, speech, and mind of the *sacerdos* must be perfectly coordinated with those of the Lord Himself, and a complete identity between the two must be established.

These desultory notes will suffice to give the reader a general idea of the structure of major Lamaist rites. Some special points will be clarified in the footnotes.

### PREPARATIONS

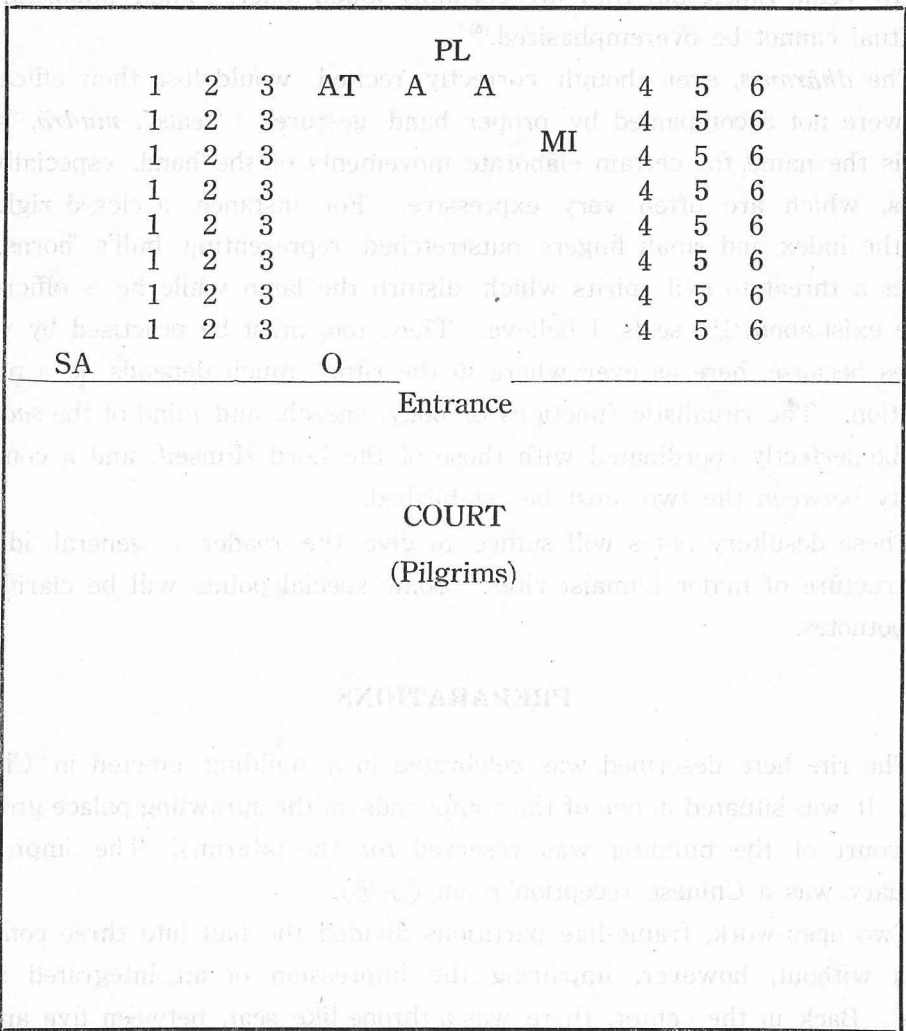
The rite here described was celebrated in a building erected in Chinese style. It was situated in one of the compounds on the sprawling palace grounds. The court of the building was reserved for the pilgrims. The improvised sanctuary was a Chinese reception room (正房).

Two open-work, frame-like partitions divided the hall into three compartments without, however, impairing the impression of an integrated single whole. Back in the center, there was a throne-like seat, between five and six feet high, with seven cushions on top. This was the accommodation prepared for the Grand Lama. In front of the throne, somewhat to the left, as seen from the entrance, an altar-table had been improvised by piling up several red

(6) For the distinction between *mantra* and *dhāraṇī*, see G. Tucci, "Notes on the Lankavatāra," Indian Historical Quarterly IV (1928), No. 3 (not accessible to me at present), also Chou I-liang, "Chinese Tantrism," HJAS, Vol. VIII, pp. 241-332, passim. The most recent work to deal with the subject is H. van Gulik, "Siddham," Sarasvati-Vihara Series, Vol. 36 [July 1956], 230 [240] pp, of which pp. 155-231 are excellent plates showing specimens of *siddham* writing. The essential part of the *dhāraṇī* is called *hr̥daya-dhāraṇī* (心咒). See the dictionary *Hobogirin*, Tokyo 1929, ff. p. 222a.

SKETCH OF THE IMPROVISED CHAPEL

(Out of scale)



- Legend: A = Abbots.  
AT= Altar Table.  
MI = Mongolian Incarnation.  
O = Observer (author).  
PL = Pan chen lama.  
SA = Subsidiary altar.  
1, 2, 3 = Seats of Tibetan Choir.  
4, 5, 6 = Seats of Mongolian Choir.

cushions. Its front was hidden behind a shining-white piece of satin with a border in gold brocade. From it blazed forth a gold-embroidered crossed *vajra*,<sup>(7)</sup> the emblem of the Vajra-yāna. This particular form of the *vajra*, seen at a distance, looked like a Maltese cross with curved outlines. The altar-table was set with numerous ritualistic objects. Near its front edge there stood in a row seven small golden bowls, which in part were filled with water. Behind these bowls, there was another set of five offerings, and behind these were a row of seven and another of eight objects of gold and cloisonné, also used in ritual offerings. Besides, a framed painting of the Buddha of Longevity and a golden *vajra* were on display. Two silver flasks (one of them spoutless), hidden under a checkered silk cover, contained consecrated water, and two small gold vessels of exquisite workmanship, one filled with grains of uncooked rice to feed the demons and the other with mustard seeds to drive them away, completed the equipment on the altar-table. Its use will become clear from the text of the ritual.

In the left-hand corner of this improvised chapel, there was a subsidiary table raised to the level of the Pan chen lama's seat. On it was a silver tray with several golden tubes connected with a white strip of silk. My informants were reticent as to their use; possibly they contained libations for some minor deity. By the end of the service they had disappeared. My exposed position limited, of course, my range of observation. Another water-pot of silver was on this extra table. On its opening lay a small object of peculiar shape called in Tibetan *dung chos*. It too was of gold and looked like a halved sea-shell.

The number of lamas who took part in the ceremony was rather small. The preliminary formalities (*purvamga*, T. *sngon du gtong ba*) required for a successful performance of the rite, such as the quest for the site, the request made to the owner for the use of it, the preparation of the place (cleansing,

(7) In Vajra-yāna, Vajra-sattva, who represents the most abstract form of the buddha concept has taken a special development in as much as he is the most sublime hypostasis of the *vajra-dhātu*, the supreme notion of the absolute. He is regarded as the *ādī*-(original or primary) *buddha*, of whom all other buddhas are reflections and with whom the officiant while performing the creative act of the *sādhana* ("theurgy") enters into a mystic union. For certain aspects of Vajra-dhara see the present writer's *Yung-ho-kung*, Vol. I, pp. 111-113, and for his iconographical representation *ibid*, pl. XXIV, 3. This is the nearest approach made by Buddhism to monotheism. Vajra-dhara is, then, like Christ in the Colossians (III, 11) "all and in all," coextensive with the cosmos. By building up this ideology, Buddhism just followed a trend which was already prefigured in the Upanishads, and ancient Buddhist tendencies.

purification from demons, dedication and consecration) had been completed privately. When I arrived, between two and three o'clock, the court in front of the sanctuary was already filled with a kneeling crowd, the women dressed in their best, wearing all their fineries, in contrast to the men, who wore their drab, untidy gowns. All chattered gaily away to overcome their tension while waiting for the great event for which they had paid with privations and hardship, and part of their most valuable property, their herds. Two lamas ushered me to my seat in the first row to the left, close to the entrance. The room began to fill with lamas. They filed, in touching the door frame with their foreheads, made three prostrations, and then, joining the palms of their hands in token of reverence, muttered the salutation which every follower of the Yellow Church remembers, the *dmigs brtse ma* (Mongolian *migjim*):

Treasure house of grace and mercy, Avalokiteṣvara, Guardian-god of deepest wisdom, Bodhisattva Mañjuṣrī, Conqueror of the host of Tsong demons, Vajrapāṇi Powerful, Ornament of Tibet's Sages, Holy Teacher kha pa: Lying prostrate at thy feet, I pay Thee worship.

It is the invocation of Tsong kha pa, founder of the Reformed Church, and the three deities supposed to be incarnate in him, representing ego-free compassion (慈), super-wisdom (智), and mystic powers (力) respectively.

Thereupon the lamas with downcast eyes proceeded to the seats assigned to them according to their rank, the Tibetans to the left, the Mongols, facing them, to the right of the entrance. They sat down, bent their legs in "Buddha" posture, and arranged their gowns tightly over their knees so as to form a level square over their thighs, leaving no part of the body exposed.

The Mongolian lamas took no active part in the celebration of the rite. The priests were portly gentlemen, especially those who had chosen to follow the Pan chen lama from Tibet into exile. The most remarkable among them was the precentor (T. *dbu mdzad* "chief actor"), an elderly bearded man with sharply chiseled features. He occupied the first place in the first row, closest to the throne.

Meanwhile, more sacred objects were carried in and arranged in front of the seat of the Grand Lama. There were, among other items, a golden tray for the *maṇḍala* offering (to be mentioned later), a golden *vajra* and a silver bell; a small bowl serving as a lamp, another very small *vajra* around which a thin cord spliced of five strands of various colors was wound. A lama unwound the thread and connected it with the afore-mentioned *dung chos* on



the second altar-table, leaving the *vajra* in front of the Grand Lama. Thus a visible connection between the throne and the second altar was established.

On the throne there was another object, the presence of which was rather surprising here. It was a bowl made of a human skull (S. *kapāla*), such as has been used since times immemorable by "savages" as drinking vessels and in certain magic rites. In Tantric rites, skulls serve as cooking pots for preparing food for the so-called terrible deities (T. *drag-gced*). Its use in the rite of mild Amitāyus will be explained later.

This specimen was mounted on a open-worked triangular stand (T. *thab* "hearth") made of gold and showing a flame pattern. Its lid, likewise of gold, and decorated with embossed scrolls indicating the steam rising from the food in the bowl, was surmounted by a golden knob in the shape of the end of a *vajra*.

We had to wait a long time before anything happened. The whispers of the pilgrims died down, the tension rose, the eyes of those who could see it were fixed on a curtain from behind which the god-priest was supposed to make his appearance. All of a sudden the curtain opened and he entered, escorted by two high lamas, clad in gorgeous canonicals. Slowly he ascended the seven steps of a movable stair. Now his benign face emerged from behind the throne, and solemnly he sat down in the same posture as the other lamas. Another surprise awaited us: in the bend of his right arm he cradled a pug-nosed, bright-eyed Peking dog, a breed much affected by lamas. Carefully he placed the pet on a cushion to his right. (Later I heard a comment from one of the worshipers that this dog was really an incarnation free from all defilement, both physical and mental).

Meanwhile a lama placed a small golden statue of Amitāyus, a sacred book wrapped in yellow silk, and a small golden *stūpa* (pagoda) before the priest. These three symbols represent the three mysteries (三密) of body (身), speech (口), and mind (心) of the Buddha. Now the two lamas who had escorted the Grand Lama to his seat stood immobile and tall at the sides of the Grand Lama's seat, forming an impressive group with the Priest enthroned above them—a triad often represented in Buddhist art.

In contrast to their stolid faces, the soft eyes of the Pan chen rin po che wandered with unconcealed curiosity over the congregation, greeted me with a fleeting smile, and, as the low entrance door (which remained of course open) obstructed his view, he bent his head to survey leisurely the motley crowd

outside. Those worshipers who were able to see him were overawed by the *tableau vivant*.

A slight stir was created when a late-comer was ushered in by several lamas and given an extra seat to the left of the Pan chen close to his throne. He, too, wore the religious habit of a high lama, a bright yellow silk gown with a fur collar. He appeared to be a minor Mongolian incarnation. He turned his clean young face with its bright ecstatic eyes in mute devotion up to the Grand Lama, who smiled benignly down upon him. The precentor meanwhile waited anxiously for the signal, and then he intoned solemnly in a warm, rich bass:

### NAMO GURU MANJUGHOSHAYA

Then he continued with salutation to the Guide Manjughosha:

I offer prayers to Thee, incomparable Vajra-dhara.

Who art self-originated *dharmadhātu* of unchanging great bliss,

Who art the perfect enjoyment body shining like the rainbow.

Who possessest the metamorphic body which dances in many aspects.

The choir of lamas joined him, and by now the whole chapel reverberated with their well-trained powerful voices. Mighty sound-waves traveled through the open doors and windows, hovered over the heads of worshipping pilgrims who zealously counted their beads and broke against the walls of the court.

## I. THE TIBETAN RITUAL

### "Ritual of Long Life"

Based on the *Tshe cho ka hchi med*

*hdod hjo dbang gi rgyal po*.

(4 plus 46 folios, 38 by 10.5 cms., five lines to the page in excellent Peking print, dated Ch'ien-lung 27, 12th month [1747]).

### Self-realization (*bdag bskyed*, *Selbstverwirklichung*)

The body of the ritual is preceded by an Introitus (S. *purvamga*, T. *sngon du gtong ba*).

The ceremony begins with the familiar Refuge Formula, usually in a versified form, pronounced three times. It reads: [folios 1a-2a] "Until I shall

have attained to enlightenment, I take my refuge in the Buddha, the Norm (S. *dharma*, 法, T. *chos*), and the Noble Assembly of the Monks (T. *tshogs mchog*), in order to benefit myself and others (S. *sva-parahita*, 自利利他, T. *bdag dang gzhan don sgrub slad du*)."

This vow is followed by the pledge to direct one's mind toward enlightenment. "Listen ye buddhas and bodhisattvas who abide in the ten regions: In order to attain complete enlightenment, I direct my mind from now on toward [this goal]."

In repeating these two vows, the lama approaches the most solemn moment in this part of the ritual. It is the creative moment in which he releases those hidden energies in his subconscious visualized as the form of the god he is invoking. (See Introduction.) This is what Faust feels when he inspects the "sign of the macrocosm": "Am I a god?—so clear mine eyes! In these pure features I behold Creative Nature to my soul unfold."

The officiant now lives through his first vision, namely the emergence of a moon disc, the symbol of enlightenment, in his heart. On it there appears suddenly the syllable *HRĪḤ*, emitting red beams which penetrate into the Country of Bliss.<sup>(8)</sup> There they evoke the Bhagavān Amitāyus, who is co-substantial with the *guru* Vajradhara (Vajrasattva), the Supreme Buddha. In this ritual Amitāyus appears as first of a group of nine. He is enthroned in his *mandala*, that is to say, surrounded by his eight aspects.<sup>(9)</sup> Now he is

(8) Sukhāvati (極樂 or 淨土), the Paradise of Amitābha-Amitāyus. Later, when this buddha was imagined to be one of the five "cosmic gods," in the center of a "cosmogram" (*mandala*), each of the four other buddhas who occupy the four quarters of the compass was given a paradise of his own. But Sukhāvati the "Western Paradise" always eclipsed the other four in "popular" Buddhism.

(9) His spiritual father Amitābha "Infinite Light," here very appropriately called father "Lord of the World," is the absolute victor over untimely death and the refuge of all living beings who need his protection. As there are nine kinds of untimely death (*akāla-mṛtyu*, 不時死), there are also nine Amitāyus in this rite. These nine kinds of untimely death are probably introduced to match the nine types of Amitāyus schematised to emphasize the "cosmic" character of this deity, with the original form of Amitāyus in the center and the emanations in the four cardinal and intermediate points of the compass. Three ways were found in order to bring the innumerable light emanations each of which transform themselves into apparitions of Amitāyus more palpably to the mind. One was to place one figure in the center and one on the eight basic lines of the *mandala* scheme (for which see F. D. Lessing, "The Eighteen Worthies Crossing the Sea," in Reports of the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China, No. 38, Stockholm 1954, p. 126), which would symbolize their omnipresence in the cosmos. Another was to draw a *mandala* with the whole background filled with miniature figures of Amitāyus. Finally temple walls were provided with small niches and each niche was filled with a miniature figure of the god made of clay.

imagined as revealing himself in Space in front of the officiant, who absorbs the beams of light in his own heart.

[f. 2b] The officiant praises Vajrasattva-Amitābha, the most sublime form of Vajradhara.

There follows the offering of eight oblations, the indispensable preliminary to the special offerings made later.<sup>(10)</sup>

After this the officiant renews his vow of refuge and his pledge to devote himself to striving toward enlightenment.

This part of the rite concludes with a meditation on the four “infinite things”<sup>(11)</sup> [fol. 3a] With the sentence, “May the deities of the conclave return to their places!” the officiant dismisses the deities.

A new act of realization is introduced with the *dhāraṇī*, OM SVABHĀVA ĆUDDHĀḤ SARVADHARMĀḤ SVABHĀVA-ĆUDDHO’HAM “OM. All *dharma* are intrinsically (*svabhāvena*, 自性) VOID.” OM ĆŪNYATĀVAJRA SVABHĀVA-ĀTMAKO HAM “OM. I am the very essence of the *Ćūnyatā-jñāna-vajra* (indestructible knowledge of the VOID).”

These two *dhāraṇīs* bring to the hierophant the certitude that all objective and subjective “data” (*dharma*) are VOID, that is to say, without substance. They are nothing but illusory, elusive relations. The recitation brings about the conditioning of the consciousness so that the dichotomy of the phenomenal and the transcendent disappears.

Now the officiant envisions within the VOID the syllable RAṂ which unfolds into a sun disc. On the sun disc appears a syllable HŪṂ out of which a crossed thunderbolt develops. Its nave is marked by a syllable HŪṂ which emits rays pervading the cosmos. The beams which descend create a *vajra* foundation (*vajra-bhūmi*, 金剛地), while those which spread horizontally create a *vajra* enclosure, and those which spread upward a *vajra* tent. The whole is surrounded with impenetrable fire, glittering in all colors. [fol. 3b] In the center of the enclosure a syllable PAṂ is seen.<sup>(12)</sup> It takes the shape of a

(10) The offering act itself is accompanied by formula; OM SARVA-TATHĀGATA-APARIMITA-ĀYUR-JNĀNA-SA-PARIVĀRA ARGHAM PRATĪCCHA, etc. “OM! All ye Tathāgatas of Infinite Life and Wisdom, receive the water, etc.”

(11) S. *catur-apramāṇa*, 四無量, T. *tshag med bzhi*. These four wishes are called “boundless” because they include all living beings. They are: (1) S. *maitrī*, 慈, “joy-dispensing loving kindness,” (2), *karuṇā* 悲, “compassion which saves from suffering,” (3) *muditā* 喜, “happiness after liberation from suffering,” (4) *upekṣā* 捨, “absolute equanimity free from bias.”

(12) This is the first syllable (really the *anlaut*) of the word *padma*, but with a nasal *auslaut*.



full-blown double lotus (S. *viṣva-padma*). Out of the lotus rises the syllable HŪṂ which changes into a crossed thunderbolt. On the nave of the thunderbolt is the white syllable BHRŪṂ which transforms into a palace (T. *gzhal yas khang*) with four walls and four gates.<sup>(13)</sup>

This is the end of the "self-realization."

### Mdun bskyed

[fol. 4b] From the syllable PAM springs a white eight-petaled lotus flower. In its center there appears a syllable A, the mother of all phenomena.<sup>(14)</sup> It transforms into a moon disc, the symbol of enlightenment. [Fol. 5a] Again the officiant mutters the formula, OM SVABHĀVA, etc. as well as OM ĀYUR-JNĀNA-HRĪḤ-ĀROLIK HŪṂ HRĪḤ, etc., both as quoted on fol. 3a. But here the result of the act is different. Now the officiant becomes aware of the truth that the absolute (S. *tattva*, T. *de yho na nyed*)<sup>(15)</sup> of his own ego from the standpoint of transcendent truth free from all phenomenalizations, *nishprapaṇca* (無戲論), is identical with the absoluteness of the deity.<sup>(16)</sup> From the VOID resound the syllables of the *dhāraṇī* OM NAMO BHRŪṂ ĀYUR-JNĀNA-HRĪḤ-ĀROLIK HŪṂ HRĪḤ, thundering throughout infinite space.

The absolute of the god being identical with himself, the officiant now contemplates his mind as transformed into a moon disc.<sup>(17)</sup>

[fol. 5b] The *dhāraṇī* changes into a flask filled with the water of immortality. Then the *dhāraṇī*, OM NAMO BHRŪṂ ĀYUR-JNĀNA HRĪḤ ĀROLIK HŪṂ HRĪḤ, is repeated. From the moon, together with the *dhāraṇī*, there proceed colored rays of light, from the points of which issue innumerable bodies of the Blessed Lord Amitāyus, penetrating infinite space. There appear clouds of offering gifts for the five Tathāgatas (S. *jina*, T. *rgyal ba*). The clouds turn into torrents of *amṛta*, which extinguish the fires which burn those

(13) The interesting description of the "cosmic" palace had to be omitted here; cf. the analysis of the *mandala* of Āṇi-cakra-samvara (or sambhāra) in *Yung-ho-kung*, Vol. I, p. 130 ff. For detailed description compare Kazi Dawa Samdub, *op. cit.*, 18 ff.

(14) See *Hōbōgirin*, pp. 1-5; also R. van Gulik, *op. laud.*, Frontispice for excellent illustration.

(15) On *tattva* see Paul W. O'Brien, S. J. "A Chapter on Reality from the Madhyānta-vibhāga-gātra," translated and annotated. (*Monumenta Nipponica*. Tokyo, Sophia University. Vol. IX, Semi-annual. No. 1/2 [1953]; Vol. X, Semi-annual No. 1-2, [1954]. To be continued).

(16) This difficult *salto mortale* out of the officiant's ego is elaborately discussed in the treatise: "General System of the Tantras". See Note 3.

(17) The moon is the symbol of gradual enlightenment. Note the contrast to the momentariness (*eka-kṣana*, 一刹) of the creative act at the beginning of the *Bdag Bskyed*.

who suffer in Hell. The *amṛta* satiates them, whereupon the light, together with the bodies of the gods, is reabsorbed.

[fol. 6a] After this introductory act, another sublime moment is reached. The officiant contemplates his own mind under the aspect of a moon disc, symbol of the mind of enlightenment, and, by making the corresponding seals and muttering the pertinent *dhāraṇīs*, transforms himself into the Bhagavān Tathāgata Amitāyus, the Well-determined One (T. *Çin tu rnam par nges pa*), King of Splendor (S. *tejas*, 威光). His radiant body has the color of red, as if framed by the light of 10,000 suns. His serene features show a faint smile. He has one face. His two hands, while making the seal of meditations, hold a flask filled with *amṛta* from which rises a jewel-bearing wish-granting tree.<sup>(18)</sup> The hair of the deity is tied in a chignon. He wears a precious diadem, earrings, a necklace, armlets, [fol. 6b] anklets, or a string of pearls. The god displays his body of glory (*sambhoga-kāya*, 報身)<sup>(19)</sup> adorned with all the marks of the great man (S. *mahā-puruṣa*). He wears a dress made of "divine" material<sup>(20)</sup>, his feet are in *vajra* position.<sup>(21)</sup> On his vertex there is a white syllable OM, on his throat a red syllable ĀḤ, and in his heart a white syllable HRĪḤ. With the words, OM PADMA UDBHAVAYE SVĀHĀ, "OM, Lotus-born One," the officiant touches the six spots on his body.<sup>(22)</sup>

[fol. 7a] Here a short prayer, worded in stereotyped phrases, is offered to Amitāyus: "Thou who art protector of all beings, god who hast defeated the

(18) In other passages the tree in question is referred to as an Aśoka tree (Jonesia Asoka, 無憂樹). Obviously the two are here considered identical.

(19) The second body ("aspect") of a buddha. For the three bodies (the metamorphic or apparitional body, *nirmāṇa-kāya*, 化身; the fruition body, body of beatitude or glory, *sambhoga-kāya*, 報身; and the absolute body *dharmakāya*, 法身), see the article BUSSHIN, 佛身 in *Hōbōgirin*.

(20) On the marks of the *mahāpuruṣa*, see A. Wayman, "Contributions regarding the thirty-two characteristics of the Great Person," (in a volume dedicated to Dr. W. Liebenenthal, published by the Santiniketan University). "Divine" (S. *divya*) material (T. *lha rāzas*) is a qualification applied to "divine" clothes, food, etc., which, being outside the limitations of *prāṇīya-samutpāda*, 十二因緣, are neither man-made nor produced by nature. and therefore imperishable. (See Note 26).

(21) The *vajra* position is the most restrained seat of a buddha, with both knees bent, both legs folded, and the soles of the feet turned upward, the traditional sitting posture of Čākyamuni under the Tree of Enlightenment.

(22) The *Sādhana-mālā* mentions only five spots. There are definite rules concerning self-consecration by touching the body and reciting *dhāraṇīs*, analogous with the making of the sign of the cross with Christians. Self-consecration by muttering OM ĀḤ HŪM is performed by joining the palms of the hands, fingers outstretched, lightly touching the forehead, throat, and chest, thus purifying body, speech, and mind. This, at least, seems to be the popular way of explaining the *dhāraṇī* in Mongolia. The theological symbolry as found in the formularies for liturgies is more involved. So, for instance, OM ĀḤ HŪM is prescribed in the *Sādhana-mālā* for the realization of non-duality (OM ĀḤ HŪM *ity anen-anayor advaitam adhimuncet*).

irresistible host of *Māra*, who recognizes all things according to their essence, thou, blessed one, come to this place!”<sup>(23)</sup>

At this point the officiant has the vision that all these deities fill the space in front of him. He receives them with the ordinary eight offerings, as in the preceeding act.

### Bum bskyed

Now the last and most solemn act begins, the preparation of the water used in consecration.

The first step is the recitation of the formula, JAḤ HŪM BAṂ HOḤ. Non-duality (S. *advaita*) is herewith established. Again the syllable HRĪḤ in the heart of the officiant emits rays which invite the five gods of consecration (S. *abhisheka*) with their retinue. They, too, are regaled with the eight offerings. The officiant prays for the bestowing of *abhisheka* upon him by all the *Tathāgata*. He begins with the famous formula of “baptism” which forms the basis of the liturgy: the Bath of the Buddha (*Buddha-snāna*). [fol. 7b].

“Even as the gods (*devas*) offered a bath [to the Buddha] when he was just born.

So I offer [to you] a bath of pure divine water.”

OM SARVA TATHĀGATA ABHIṢEKA SAMAYA [!] ḤRIYE  
ĀH HŪM OM.

“All [ye] Tathāgatas, consecrate [me] in the blessing of your vow.  
ĀH HŪM”.

At this point the officiant feels that the consecrated water fills his whole body, purifying it from all defilements, and that the excess of the water issues from his vertex and is transformed into Amithābha, who becomes his head ornament. The officiant asperses the offerings with consecrated water (*amṛta*) and dematerializes them. From the VOID emerge huge precious flasks which contain the eight offerings dissolved in a light originating from the syllable OM. They are described as non-material (S. *a-pratigāḥa*, 無礙) and as filling the whole Space (S. *ākāṣa*, 虛空).

After this offertory, Amitāyus is saluted with a hymn of praise:

“Lord of the guides of the world, Conqueror of all kinds of untimely death, Refuge of all unprotected suffering beings, Amitāyus, I salute Thee”<sup>(24)</sup>

(23) This invitation is identical with the second stanza of the ritual called the “Bath of the Buddha” (T. *khruś gsol*), of which an annotated translation by the present writer awaits publication.

(24) This is another stereotyped phrase taken from the formularies. See note 23.

The officiant then meditates with utmost concentration.<sup>(25)</sup> He concentrates on the syllable HRĪḤ which rests on the moon disc in his heart. Around it, arranged in a circle, the syllables of the *dhāraṇī* revolve. The HRĪḤ in the center emits rays, which for the benefit of living beings purify, etc. the unclean liquid in the vessels.<sup>(26)</sup> The beings receive the blessings (S. *adhissthāna*, 加持 “sustaining power”) of the body, speech, and mind of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Briefly speaking, the noble qualities (*guṇa*, 功德) of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are gathered and absorbed into the *dhāraṇī* garland.

Now the officiant mutters a number of the *hṛdaya-dhāraṇīs* beginning with OM NAMO BHRŪM ĀYUR-JNĀNA HRĪḤ AROLIK HRĪḤ HŪM, etc.

The sustaining power, or blessing prayed for is produced this way. In his heart the officiant has Amitāyus of the five mystic families, on his vertex Amitāyus of knowledge (S. *jñāna*, 智慧). With the light within his heart, he attracts the whole assembly of deities belonging to the retinue of Amitāyus, buddhas, bodhisattvas, *dākinīs*, and divine and human protectors of the doctrine. All these are absorbed by Amitāyus who resides on the vertex of the officiant. They are dissolved into the *amṛta* of life, so that the officiant [fol. 9b] is completely filled with it from the vertex to the soles of his feet. It becomes the support of his body and the substratum of his mind, and [through it] he obtains the *siddhi* of immortality. His three “gates” become the body, speech, and mind of Amitāyus.

If the officiant wants to present an offering cake (S. *bali*, 胡食), he purifies the white *bali* with *amṛta* and dematerializes it with the formula SVABHĀVA, etc. Furthermore he imagines that the OM produces a precious vessel filled with heavenly offering substances (T. *lha rdzas*).

The *jñāna-rūpa* deities take now their seats in the space in front of him, and he invites them to partake of the meal, with the sacred formula, OM SARVA-TATHĀGATA A-PARIMITA-ĀYUR-JNĀNA-SA-PARIVĀRA IDAM BALIM KHA-KHA-KHĀHI KHĀHI, repeated three times. Then he pronounces the offering formula and recites a hymn in praise of the buddhas of consecration.

(25) S. *eka-citta*, *ekāgra*, etc., 一心.

(26) Unclean because it is subject to *pratītya-samutpāda* (see Note 20), the process of interdependent sequence. From the standpoint of absoluteness, all phenomena are conceived as (illusory) unfoldings (*prapañca*, 戲論) of the absolute in the sphere the *pratītya-samutpāda*. From the standpoint of phenomenism, the phenomena are reflexes of the absolute in an illusory interdependence. The Tibetan word for “supporting power” in the next sentence is *byin gyis brlabs pa*. The Chinese terms vary: 神力, 願力, 加持力, 加被, 加持, of which the latter has found general acceptance, especially in Tantrism. In the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (p. 100-101 of the Sanskrit text [edited by Bun'yū Nanjō, Kyoto 1923]), it is set forth that bodhisattvas acquire their higher attainments and deeper insights only through the mystic power of the Buddha which he instills in them.



Thereupon he dismisses the *jñāna-rūpa* deities, dedicates his merits to his fellow-men, and renews his pledges.

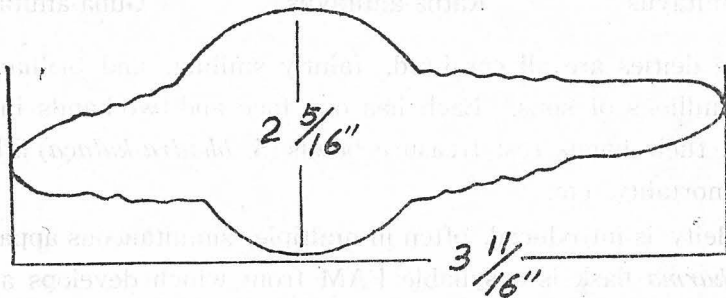
If the officiant, while performing the consecration of bestowing long life, uses a *maṇḍala* of powdered colors, he must [fol. 10a] first make the necessary structural lines.<sup>(27)</sup> If he uses a *maṇḍala* painted on canvas, nothing else is needed but the flasks with consecrated water. If he wishes to go beyond this, five flasks with consecrated water and the *karma-kalaṣa*<sup>(28)</sup> or water flask are required. In the abbreviated procedure only a *vijaya-kalaṣa* and a *karma-kalaṣa* filled with offering substances and fragrant water are needed. Furthermore a ceremonial dress, a *dung chos*, and a *dhāraṇī* thread<sup>(29)</sup> are required.

(27) See Note 9.

(28) Two types of flasks for holy water (*kalaṣa*, 淨水瓶 T. *bum pa*) are constantly mentioned in the formularies, the *karma-kalaṣa* (T. *las bum*) "act flask" without a spout and the *vijaya-kalaṣa* (T. *rnam rgyal gyi bum*) "victory flask," with a spout roughly resembling an S. The form of the *kalaṣa* is standardized. Its importance in the ritual will justify a few words about its symbolry. The sprinkler, made of bright peacock's feathers represents the glory (*tejas*, 威光) of the buddha; the white umbrella-shaped "cap" symbolizes dome-shaped protecting heaven like the *harmikā* in a *stūpa* (塔); its long spout means longevity; its wide belly suggests increasing "gifts of grace" (*siddhi*), its firm foot stability in faith, the silk scarf around its neck is an offering to the five *tathāgata* (五如來) created during the *bum bskyed* section of the service.

The flask which Amitāyus holds on the palms of his hand, in his lap is called in T. *tshe bum*, "flask of longevity."

(29) The *dung chos* (see diagram) is made of copper (often gilt), or as here of pure gold. It has the shape of a round, shallow bowl with two projecting parts. Water is emptied over the longer projection. The shorter projection has eleven transversal grooves, corresponding to the six *pāramitās* and the "five roads" (T. *lam lnga*).



The *dung chos* is placed on top of the spoutless holy water flask in front of the officiant and partly filled with water. A small *vajra* (called *dhāraṇī vajra*, T. *gzungs rdor*) is placed on top of the *dung chos*, crossing it. It is attached to a thread twisted together of five strands of different colors symbolizing the five kinds of knowledge (*jñāna*). This thread is called the *dhāraṇī* thread (S. *dhāraṇī-sūtra*, T. *gzungs thay*) because it is supposed to transmit the *dhāraṇīs* muttered by the officiant from his heart to the water he is consecrating. He seizes the free end of the *dhāraṇī-thread* and holds it against his heart.

A little water is poured from the "victory flask" (S. *vijaya-kumbha*, T. *rnam rgyal bum pa*) into the *dung chos*. It is blessed by recited *dhāraṇīs*. Then the *dhāraṇī-vajra* is removed, the *dhāraṇī-thread* is wound around the *vajra*, the consecrated water is poured from the *dung chos* into the flask upon which the *dung chos* rested. This is done in three times, while the syllables OM AH HŪM are muttered. The drops of consecrated water when swallowed secure longevity and expel diseases.

The offerings are to be blessed, purified with *amṛta*, and dematerialized with the formula SVABHĀVA, etc.

The eight offerings are repeated.

[Instructions to the officiant. If nine flasks are used, the nine aspects of Amitāyus have to be evoked]. In the *vijaya-kalaṣa* there originates from the syllable PAM a red eight-petaled lotus. On each petal appears the syllable A, and from each of these syllables originates a moon disc. On each moon disc an elongated red HRĪḤ appears. All the HRĪḤ issue beams of light which make obeisance and offerings to the "saints" (S. *ārya*, T. *hphags-pa*). They free men from all sins and obscurations and raise them to the rank of Amitāyus. These beams are withdrawn and absorbed by the [eight] HRĪḤ. [fol. 11a].

The complete *maṇḍala* of Amitāyus is arranged in the following order:

NW	N	NE
Akshobhya-amitāyus.	Karma-amitāyus	Samanta-darṣin-amitāyus.
W	C	E
Padma-amitāyus	Vairocana-amitāyus	Vajra-amitāyus.
SW	S	SE
Jñāna-amitāyus	Ratna-amitāyus	Guṇa-amitāyus.

All these deities are all coral-red, faintly smiling, and brilliant as if surrounded by millions of suns. Each has one face and two hands in the *dhyāna* position. On their hands rest treasure bowls (S. *bhadra-kalaṣa*) filled with the water of immortality, etc.

A new deity is introduced, often in multiple, simultaneous apparitions. [fol. 11b] In the *karma* flask is a syllable PAM from which develops a lotus, and on the lotus is the letter A which changes into a moon disc. On the moon disc appears a syllable HŪṂ which is transformed into a crossed thunderbolt marked by the syllable HŪṂ. This assumes the form of a two-armed *Amṛta-kundalin* of green-blue color, with an angry-smiling expression. [fol. 12] With his right hand he presses a thunderbolt against his breast, and with his left hand he rests a bell with a *vajra* handle against his thigh. He is adorned with serpents and precious ornaments. His upper garment consists of silk, and he wears his apron of tiger skin. His left leg is stretched. He has a white OM on his vertex, a red ĀḤ on his throat, and in his heart on a seat which

rests on a moon disk a red HRĪḤ marked by a green HŪṢ. From it issues light which attracts from Paradise the *gurus* (lamas), buddhas, and bodhi-sattvas, in the same way as the Buddha Amitāyus. Then follow the stanzas from the Buddha-snāna:

“Thou who art the Protector of all living beings, God, [fol. 12b] who hast defeated all the irresistible hosts of Māra, who hast perfectly realized the essence of all things in their entirety, Gloriously Perfected One, I pray thee, appear at this place with thy retinue.”

They are greeted with stanzas from the ritual, “The Bath of the Buddha.”

This section concludes with offering seats to the divine guests using the *dhāraṇī*, OM KAMALA-YESTVAM.

[fol. 14] Again a syllable HRĪḤ glows in the heart of the god-priest, inviting the five “families” of deities. Then the officiant implores the Tathāgatas to confer on him consecration, and once more he offers a bath in the same way as described above. Again the officiant feels his entire body filled with consecrated water as before.

The effect of this process differs from the previous ones inasmuch as the metamorphic body, not the enjoyment body, of Amitābha becomes the head ornament. [fol. 14b]<sup>(30)</sup>. The officiant prays, “This sacrificial water, made of divine substances, which has become the *pratītya-samutpāda*, I offer to you, the buddhas and your sons.<sup>(31)</sup> Enjoy it and bestow the *siddhi* of long life.”

Next the officiant lifts up a mirror as symbol of beautiful forms (*rūpa*, 色), a conch-shell, used as musical instrument in Lamaist ceremonies, for pleasant sounds (*śabda*, 聲), a fruit for sweet tastes (*rasa*, 味), a flower for fragrant smell (*gandha*, 香), and a silk scarf for soft touch (*sprashtavyam*, 觸), each time reciting: *pratīccha* “receive!” This is the offering made to please the five senses of the Buddha (*panca-kāma-guṇa-pūjā*, T. *mchod yon lnga*).

[fol. 15a] There follow the offerings to the nine Amitāyus, each of whom

(30) In ordinary rituals, as for instance at the conclusion of the *Buddha-snāna*, all the five “cosmic buddhas” (see Introduction, Table, page 6) are supposed to be seated as a crown on the head of the *sādhakas*, with Amitābha occupying the center. They are represented on the five-lobed crown or diadem (*panca-tathāgata-mukuta*, 五佛冠) worn by the lamas when celebrating such solemn rites as “consecration” (*abhisheka*, 灌頂) and “burnt offering” (*homa*, 護摩). Sometimes we find diadems with the seed-syllable instead of the picture of the buddha on each lobe.

(31) A son of the buddhas (*buddha-putra*) is a bodhisattva, “born from the buddha’s mouth,” destined to continue the Buddhist lineage. In a wide sense it means all of the buddha’s disciples, which includes all of sentient beings.

is addressed with a stanza of four lines. For example:

“Who turnest the mighty and great wheel of the LAW (i. e. preachest the Buddhist doctrine),

“Who dispellest all sufferings of living beings in the fraction of a moment,

“Thee I greet, Buddha Amitāyus.”

At this time the officiant enters the following meditation: The syllable HRĪḤ in his heart emits light which coils around the *dhārāṇī* thread<sup>(32)</sup> and stimulates the five Buddhas of Consecration in the flask of consecrated water to send down a rain of *amṛta* which fills the container which is imagined to be coextensive with the universe.

[fol. 16b] The officiant recites, OM NAMO BHRŪM ĀYUR-JNĀNA-HRĪḤ ĀROLIK HŪṂ HRĪḤ. Then he recites one hundred times OM VAIROCANA-ĀYUR-JNĀNA-SIDDHI-SAMAYE HŪṂ.

All the remaining eight Amitāyus are invoked with the same words, except for certain substitutions required by their names.

With the formula, MAHĀ-SAMAYE-SATTVA ĀH HŪṂ PHAT, amendments are made for inadvertent omissions.

[fol. 17a] Now the water in the *dung chos* is consecrated by the formula, OM VAIROCANA ĀYUR-JNĀNA-SIDDHI-SAMAYE HŪṂ. It is the water of wisdom.

After performing some minor offerings the officiant charges<sup>(33)</sup> the Buddha with expelling all hindrances.

With all these acts the ritual passes its climax and now moves through the consummation order (*rdzogs rim*) to its end.

The important ceremony of “Entering the *Maṇḍala* of Amitāyus,” to which I had been looking forward, was not solemnized for lack of time and space. The Pontiff had to perform it mentally, by way of meditation, the lamas said.

## CONCLUSION

A few remarks may be required to complete the description of the framework begun in the section called Preparations. The activities during

(32) See note 29.

(33) The Tibetan word is *bcol*, which implies that the *sādhaka* through performing the rite has won the authority to demand *siddhi* from the god he has evoked.



the ceremony were, as far as I was able to observe, not greatly varied, nor was it easy to relate them from memory to definite passages of the texts which I could consult. But before describing those acts which had a direct bearing on the performance, let me first report on an interlude.

There was an intermission during which the lamas and pilgrims relaxed and produced their eating bowls, while two novices threaded their way through the crowd distributing rice and tea. Another lama approached the throne, made nine prostrations before the Pan chen lama, thanked him solemnly for the entertainment, and pronounced a blessing (T. *ja mchod* "tea offering"). All partook of the meal and prepared for the next act.

When the chanting was resumed, a more direct participation of the Pan chen lama in the holy performance became noticeable. At one point he picked up the aforementioned, small, golden *vajra* with his right hand and held it over his heart. He now imagined that from the syllable *HRĪḤ* in his heart there issued five beams of light of different colors symbolizing the five-fold wisdom (*panca-jñāna*, 五智) represented by the five *tathāgatas*. He visualized this light as traveling through the *vajra* and the five-fold *dhāraṇī* thread and entering the water collected in the *dung chos*. The water now became *jñān-odaka* (智慧水), as mentioned in the text.

At another point the High Priest lifted up the tray withholding three offering cakes and, rotating it, pronounced a *dhāraṇī*. Another lama, his mouth covered with a scarf, received it reverently and carried it outside. The cakes were obviously an oblation for the god of the soil and other minor deities.

All of a sudden the lamas became silent. The Priest-god, closing his eyes, prayed for a long time for all whom he knew and also for the millions in all the worlds of which the Buddhists are conscious. Every being, be he friend or enemy, was included in the prayer. The Grand Lama now felt himself to be an omnipotent god. His education, environment, high office, personal experience, visions called forth by religious exercises, ecstasies as the fruit of trance-provoking rites had fostered this belief within him. Being lifted far above everything mundane, he felt like a bestower of blessings and happiness for all six classes of living beings.

Both the lamas and the noblemen who had permission to remain in the hall during the service approached the altar in single file and with downcast eyes received the saffron-colored "potion of long life" (T. *tshe chang*), which the Pan chen rin po che dispensed with a small golden spoon from the

gold-lined skull bowl, mentioned above. It was most touching to observe the expression of deep devotion on the weather-beaten faces of the nomads.

When I stepped up to the throne, there was a Tangut pilgrim in front of me so overawed that, absorbed in silent prayer, he did not dare raise his head. The Pan chen lama waited patiently for quite a while, then tapped the closely cropped head with the staff which he used to dispense blessings, in order to encourage him to receive the potion. In addition to the drop of potion of long life, every one received a few white pills made of flour and sugar and wrapped in white paper. These were the pills of longevity (*T. tshe ril*), the greatest treasure besides the consecrated amulet thread for the participants to carry home with them.

## II. ANALYSIS AND PARTIAL TRANSLATION OF THE WU-LIANG-SHOU JU-LAI KUAN KUNG-YANG I-KUEI

### 無量壽如來觀供養儀軌

(*Taishō Issaikyō* No. 930, V. 19, p. 67 ff.)

Translated into Chinese by Amoghavajra (eighth century),

### Preparations

At that time Vajrapāṇi, in the great congregation of the Buddha Vairocana, rose from his seat, joined his hands in adoration, and spoke to the Buddha thus: "For the benefit of sentient beings, who are to live in the coming age of defilement, acquiring bad *karma*, I have preached the *dhāraṇī* of Amitāyus and the practice of the Three Secrets (of body, speech and mind), realizing the buddha vow and obtaining the rebirth in the Pure Land with the rank of a bodhisattva, which would not be possible with only little merit and without the means (*upāya*) of knowledge (*jñāna*). Therefore, it follows that by means of this teaching and by right recollection [the seventh step in the Noble Path] and right practice certainly a rebirth as the highest being in the Land of Supreme Beatitude will take place. Anybody, be he layman or monk, who wants to be reborn in the Pure Land, must first enter the *maṇḍala* (*maṇḍala-praveṣa*) and obtain consecration. Then he must seek from a teacher (*guru*) [instruction in] reciting the ritual.

"Thereupon [he may proceed] to an exquisite place, or wherever he may sojourn in order to anoint and purify it and construct a mound [altar] there.

Above this place he spreads out an awning, and all around he suspends flags. On the altar he arranges eight *mandālas*. He grinds white sandalwood into a perfume and smears it on the seat of the individual deities. To the west [of the place smeared with sandalwood powder] he places an image of Amitāyus.

"The officiant takes a seat east of the altar, facing the image in the west. He either spreads a straw mat or he takes up a seat on a low, little bench. Three times every day he strews all kinds of flowers, burns all kinds of incense and places there the two types of holy water [namely for the face and the feet, *argha* and *pādyā*]. He may take bowls or cups made of gold, silver, copper, stone, or earthenware, which have never been used before, fill them with perfumed water, and place them on the altar. At the four corners of the altar he puts four "auspicious" flasks (*bhadra-kalaṣa*). He then prepares incense, lamps, perfumed ointment (*vilepana*), food, and drink, to the best of his ability. Each vessel he will bless individually and offer them up with reverence.

"The *sādhaka* bathes daily and dresses in new, clean garments, or he recites *dhāraṇīs* in lieu of taking a bath. Now he [begins to] meditate until he realizes that all beings are by their very nature pure, but they are obscured by adventitious defilements (客塵) which prevent them from seeing the truth, but cause them to lose their insight (*bodhi*), submerge them in the *samsāra* and expose them to infinite calamities. He resolves, therefore, to explain to them the consecration of the Three Secrets [body, speech, and mind] so that he himself and they obtain purity.

"Thereupon [Vajrapāṇi] joined his hands together, forming a lotus, and recited three times the *dhāraṇī* which purifies the three actions [*dhāraṇī* omitted].

"Through the consecratory power of this *dhāraṇī*, the inner or spiritual bath of purification is accomplished.

"Each time when [the officiant] enters the sanctum, he assumes a respectful, dignified attitude in front of the main deity, joins his hands in the lotus shape, closes his eyes, transports his mind into Paradise, imagining himself standing in the presence of Amitāyus and his retinue of the bodhisattvas, prostrating himself, five parts of his body touching the ground, and worshiping in front of each buddha and bodhisattva while muttering the *dhāraṇī* of general salutation.

"Then [the officiant] touches the ground with his right knee, joins his

palms against his breast, devoutly and sincerely confesses all his sins committed from beginningless time. He expresses his sympathy with all meritorious actions performed by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, the *çrāvakas*, the *pratyekabuddhas*, and all living beings. Furthermore he visualizes in the various world systems (*lokadhātu*) of the ten quarters all the fully enlightened *tathāgatas* and prays to them to turn the Wheel of the Law. He also requests all *tathāgatas* who [are about to] offer the show of entering nirvana to remain in this world.

"Furthermore he takes a solemn pledge, saying, 'All the merits I have accumulated by worshiping the buddhas, confessing my sins, taking joy in the merits acquired by others, and praying to the buddhas [to stay in this world and save all living beings from suffering], this whole, immeasurable stock of merits I dedicate for the benefit of all living beings, so that they may be reborn in paradise beholding the Buddha and the *Dharma* ("LAW") and experience supreme enlightenment.'"

After the preparation the text continues (p. 69 a) with a description of the body of the rite, enumerating the individual acts to be performed. All of these follow a simple pattern. It therefore suffices to give only one, the first, in translation, omitting the explanation of the *dhāraṇīs* and seals which would involve special study as well as drawings of the seals.

"[The officiant] takes up the *paryanka* ["Buddha"] seat, or the semi-*paryanka* seat, the right leg resting on the left thigh. Anointing his hand with fragrances [sandalwood], he first makes the "seal" of the *samaya* of the Buddha family [follows a description of the *mudrā*]. After that he contemplates the clear and well defined thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of the Buddha Amitāyus.

"Thereupon [the officiant] mutters the *dhāraṇī* of the *samaya* of the Buddha family.....three or seven times. Then he places the "seal" on [his] vertex and releases it. By making the seal and reciting the *dhāraṇī*, he arouses all the buddhas of the Buddha family to come to the assembly and consecrate and protect [the officiant], so that he may speedily obtain purification of his bodily actions, destruction of sins, and increase of merits and wisdom."

The individual instructions and directions are contained in the following table in a condensed form.



No.	Name of Seal	Vision	Dhāraṇī	Movement	Purpose
1	<i>Samaya</i> of the buddha family	Major and minor marks of the Buddha.	<i>Samaya</i> of buddha family.	Placing seal on vertex.	Summoning of Buddha and bodhisattvas
2	<i>Samaya</i> of the lotus family	Avalokiteśvara with divinities of lotus family.	<i>Samaya</i> of lotus family	Placing seal to the right of vertex.	Arousing of lotus family for consecrate and protection
3	<i>Samaya</i> of the <i>vajra</i> family	Major and minor marks of Vajragarbha with retinue of <i>vajradharas</i>	<i>Samaya</i> of <i>vajra</i> family	Placing seal to left of vertex	Arousing of <i>vajra</i> family for consecrating and protection
4	Donning armor	All living beings clad in armor of compassion	Protecting the body	Sealing the five spots of his body	Self-protection.
5	<i>Vajra</i> stick of the earth.	Imagines self as occupying <i>vajra</i> seat.	—	Sealing ground three times	Purification and perfection of <i>dhātu</i>
6	<i>Vajra</i> walls	Bright flames from seal	—	Encircling self three times with seal	Creation of impenetrable <i>vajra</i> enclosure
7	Great Ākāṣa-garbha	Emanation of offering substances from seal	Ākāṣagarbha	Tying seal	Making "real" the offering gifts
8	—	Syll. HRĪH shining in 10 quarters	—	—	Melting of "sin obstacles" of those of meeting light
9	Buddhafist	—	—	Tying seal, sealing the earth	Transformation of <i>dhātu</i>
10	Chariot	Proceeding to Paradise	Chariot	Turning thumb towards self	Making carriage for gods
11	Receiving deities	Gods ascending chariot	Reception	Waving	Obtaining <i>siddhi</i>
12	Horseheaded Avalokiteśvara	—	Expelling demons	3 circular movements to left, 3 to right	Expelling demons
13	Seal of <i>vajra</i> net	—	<i>Vajra</i> net	—	Keeping out deities
14	Fire "court"	Emanation of light from fire court surrounding walls (cf. 6)	—	Turning seals to right three times	Protection of sanctuary
15	Seal of perfumed water ( <i>argha</i> )	Washing feet of deities	Producing <i>argha</i>	Lifting up water vessel 3 times	Self-purification
16	Flower seat	Innumerable lotuses in paradise	OM KAMALA SVĀHĀ	—	Obtaining <i>vajra</i> seat for officiant beyond the 10th stage
17	Wide, great, infallible jewel seal	Torrents of offering gifts raining upon Amitāyus and assembly	—	—	Obtaining of boundless accumulations of merits by officiant

The offering gifts produced by the actions described in No. 17 of the table bring to the officiant and those on whose behalf the rite is performed innumerable "accumulations of merits" (S. *punya-skandha*, 功德蘊), boundless as space. From incarnation to incarnation they will be reborn from a lotus in the assemblies of all the buddhas and obtain the five magic powers (S. *rddhi-pada*, 神通). [They will be able to] multiply their persons numberless times, so as to rescue all suffering beings and establish them firmly in their blessings, so that not only in their present lives they will enjoy boundless fruits, but also in their coming incarnation they will be reborn in the Pure Land.

A short hymn in Sanskrit is inserted here. If the officiant each day regularly chants this hymn, praising the merits of the Buddha, urging Amitāyus to let his infinite light shine upon the officiant, then his *karma* obstructions will all melt away, and body and mind will become calm and clear, and his thoughts serene. While he sits continuously, remembering and reciting without fatigue, his mind gains purity and speedily experiences *samādhi* ("concentration"). He will envision his body as completely filled with cleanliness and whiteness, as if a pure moon were reflected in his heart...

More instructions are given and concomitant visions are described. This leads finally to the goal of the rite: rebirth in the paradise of Amitābha-Amitāyus.

The rest of the ritual contains nothing of interest in the context of this essay.

### III. COMPARISON OF THE CHINESE AND TIBETAN RITUALS

One of the chief divergences between the Chinese and Tibetan rituals here presented is the greater simplicity of the former. Before starting upon a detailed study of the discrepancies, one should not lose sight of the different nature of the two texts. It is clear that the Chinese text is intended merely to give general directions, leaving most of the details to the officiant. The Tibetan text, on the other hand, guides the officiant through all the complicated acts which constitute the solemn rite. In the Chinese formulary, such important items as the entering of the *mandala* and the obtaining of consecration are merely mentioned as preliminaries while the identification of the officiant with the deity in its triple aspect of *samaya-rūpa*, *jñāna-rūpa*, and cosmic hypostasis (*bum bskyed*) is not even hinted. In this connection, it should be noted that the *Sādhana-mālā*, containing among its 400-odd *sādhana*s, pieces of quite different ages, has no such elaborate and complete

liturgies as we find in the current handbooks of ritual used in Tibetan temples.

While most of the important steps present in the Tibetan liturgy are scattered through the *Sādhana-mālā*, they have not been brought into such a systematic order as the Tibetan liturgies present. Tibetan *sādhanas* may be compared in a restricted sense with a piece of music, say a sonata, with a more or less clear profiling. In the Chinese text the phantasmagorical interplay of letters born from the VOID, beams of light which condense into visions of persons and things as imaginary objectifications of the absolute, the dissolution of these visions and their return through intermediate stations into the VOID do not stand out with the same clarity.

Nevertheless, the elements from which the rituals are built are identical here and there. There are the same movements (seals or *mudrās*), the same recitations of powerful *dhāraṇīs*, the same visions, and so forth, but the strict rules controlling the offerings, their consecration, and their transformation are absent. While the obtaining of *siddhi* is parallel in the Chinese and Tibetan liturgies, the important role of the gnostic aspect of a deity seems to be something undeveloped in Chinese Tantrism, and the three steps of realization (*bdag bskyed*, *mdun bskyed*, and *bum bskyed*) are not mentioned either. The first and least likely possibility is that the elaborate form of the rituals developed in India at a time when *Vajrayāna* had already been transplanted to China (at the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth centuries) and its development had more or less come to a standstill in that country. Another hypothesis would be that the forms we know from Tibet were originally developed in India but were lost in the original Sanskrit. I am inclined to believe, however, that the Tibetan liturgists themselves were responsible for the richer forms of which we have given an example here.

The Chinese ritual then distinguishes itself from the Tibetan basically by its general structure. Far from being an unfolding of internal dramatic action leading to some sort of climax, it is a concatenation of individual acts which lack psychological cohesion and logical sequence. This, from an artistic point of view, seems rather to be a drawback. As has been pointed out, ritual is a product of art to which all the other arts cultivated by religion are made subservient: architecture, painting, sculpture, and—not to be forgotten—play-acting. Here the arts of recitation and of gesturing, nay, even in certain cases, of dancing, are to be considered. And the dogma too, with its hair-splitting theories which sometimes appear to the uninitiated as idle logomachy,

was woven into this highly esthetic tapestry and is exploited to give substance to the whole performance. If we take all this into consideration, we may say that, as far as we are justified in taking this Chinese ritual as the archetype for other Tantric rituals in China, the Chinese performances are somewhat arid when compared with the clear structure and richer action, that is to say internal action, of the Tibetan. But this general statement may need modification after more texts have been subjected to comparative analysis.

In concluding, it may be pointed out that in general emphasis the two formularies also differ. While the Tibetan rite aims at the acquiring of *siddhis* and especially at the *unio mystica*, the Chinese formulary stresses rather the idea of *sukhāvatī*. That situation corresponds to the general religious attitude of the faithful. At the time when the Chinese text was translated from the Sanskrit, Chinese Buddhists had already been familiar with the ulterior vision of paradise for more than 500 years, a vision which in the Paradise School had all but eclipsed the notion of nirvana. In Tibet, on the other hand, the *fata morgana* of a paradise, though far from being unknown, had never taken such a firm hold on the religious imagination of the populace.

In other respects the coincidences and discrepancies reflected in the two types of ritual are so obvious that they hardly need further elucidation in this article.

China at the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century. Another hypothesis would be that the forms we know from Tibet were originally developed in India but were lost in the original Sanskrit. I am inclined to believe, however, that the Tibetan theorists themselves were responsible for the forms of which we have given an example here.

The Chinese ritual then distinguishes itself from the Tibetan basically by its general structure. Far from being an anthology of internal dramatic actions leading to some sort of climax, it is a concatenation of individual acts which lack psychological cohesion and logical sequence. This is due to an old and at times seems rather to be a drawback. As has been pointed out, ritual is a product of art to which all the other arts contribute by religion and made into a certain pattern. The art of religion and a gesture may lead to certain cases of dancing are to be considered. And the degree to which the human splitting threads which sometimes appear as the uninitiated in the ceremony.