

## Article

# The Siddha with a Thousand Faces: Non-Tantric and Tantric Elements in the Construction of the Buddhist Siddha in \*Jñānākara's Commentary to the Introduction to the [Path of] Mantra

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**Abstract:** This paper is a continuation of an earlier study published by the current author dedicated to the virtually unexplored tantric Buddhist scholar of the *phyi dar* period, \*Jñānākara (11th century), through the textual analysis of his masterpiece, the *Introduction to the [Path of] Mantra* (Skt. \**Mantrāvatāra*), now available only in the Tibetan translation as *Gsang sngags 'jug pa*. In the previous paper, I have discussed the broader historical framework of the eleventh-century Indo-Tibetan world and \*Jñānākara's role in establishing, what I called, the "orthodoxy of tantric practice". I have also provided a critical edition of the root text, the \**Mantrāvatāra*, accompanied by an English translation. While the previous study focused mainly on the debatable and highly controversial issue of tantric sexual initiations adopted by the monastics and hermeneutical tools employed by \*Jñānākara to refute the literal interpretation of tantric scriptures, the current paper will concentrate on the exposition of tantric practice understood as the accumulation of causes and conditions (*hetu-pratyaya*) leading to the status of the siddha. This paper will trace tantric and non-tantric elements in \*Jñānākara's construction of the Buddhist siddha that integrated the *kāya* doctrine of the Yogācāra. My analysis will be based on \*Jñānākara's auto-commentary to his root text, the *Commentary to the Introduction to the [Path of] Mantra* (Skt. \**Mantrāvatāravṛtti*, Tib. *Gsang sngags 'jug pa 'grel pa*) which has not received any scholarly attention so far. Special attention will be paid to the intertextual dimension of his discourse that integrates the Mahāyāna models of the bodhisattva path.



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## 1. \**Mantrāvatāra*: The Tantric Buddhist Manual

The \**Mantrāvatāra*, and its commentary, \**Mantrāvatāravṛtti*,<sup>1</sup> is a manual of instruction that introduces the appropriate tantric path. Thus, it is designed to give instructions to tantric practitioners on how to practice correctly. Consequently, it also provides answers to the dilemmas related to controversial tantric practices, such as initiation that involves copulation (Wenta 2018). A person who would seek out such instructions would have been either a potential *mantrin* who wishes to take tantric initiation, or a fully initiated tantric practitioner who has doubts with regards to some aspects of his practice. As a literary genre, the "introduction" (Tib. '*jug pa*, Skt. *avatāra*) is widely attested in Buddhist literature. The most famous texts of this genre are perhaps Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* (Tib. *Dbu ma la 'jug pa*) and Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Tib. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*), but there are numerous other examples. Comparable in some ways to the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and other bodhisattva manuals, such as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* or Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasamgraha*, the \**Mantrāvatāra* is an introduction to the basic precepts of tantric Buddhism, as \*Jñānākara understood them, in the sense that it contains all the necessary key points the practitioner needs to know, and it is relatively easy to understand. Primarily devoted to the exposition of correct tantric practice and clarifying doubts, \*Jñānākara's \**Mantrāvatāra* is an example of tantric *prakaraṇa* (Szántó 2015, pp. 755–61). Along with other treatises of this kind, this

manual, characterized by its “descriptive or argumentative, essay-style exegetical writing”, provides an evidentiary basis for the reconstruction of the varied intellectual landscape of esoteric Buddhism in medieval India and Tibet (*ibid.*).

While the *\*Mantrāvatāra* is written in verse, the *\*Mantrāvatāraṛtti* is composed in mixed verse and prose. Moreover, the commentary is structured on the five hermeneutical principles of the *sūtra* commentary as formulated in Vasubandhu’s *Vyākhyāyukti*, namely, “intention”, “summarized meaning”, “meaning of the words”, “connection”, and “objections and responses”. For the first category, “intention”, *\*Jñānākara* lists a number of things. Primarily, the purpose of the commentary, he says, is to examine each word of the summarized meaning (given in the root text) by examining its profound implied meaning (Tib. *zab mo dgongs don*, Skt. *gambhīra-abhiprāya*). He explicates his intentions further saying that, since the *mantranaya* teachings have given rise to a variety of unjustified interpretations promoted by “frauds” who, on the account of their impurities, accept tantric scriptures literally and, subsequently, fall into the trap of “unjustified denial” and “false attribution”, it is mandatory to write a treatise in order to bring about the understanding of the unmistakable meaning (*phyin ci ma log pa’i don rtogs shing go bar byed pa’i phyir*). In the second category, the “summary”, *\*Jñānākara* enumerates the individual topics to be dealt with in the text. The summary takes on a form of fifteen questions that are brief and easy to understand (Wenta 2018). In the “meaning of the words”, the fifteen individual topics identified in the summary undergo a thorough analysis by the method of commenting word-by-word. The fourth category, “connection”, is generally intended to bring out the connection either between preceding and subsequent words (*sgra snga phyi mtshams sbyar ba*), or between topics within the body of the text (*don phan tshun mtshams sbyar ba*). As such, “connection” is related to both the syntactic structure and textual structure. *\*Jñānākara* is mostly concerned with the second type of connection, which allows him to navigate the textual structure of his argumentation as it relates to the connection between individual topics discussed in the root text. The fifth category, “objections and answers” is based on a form of a debate extremely popular in classical Indic literature, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. *\*Jñānākara*’s line of argumentation is structured in such a way as to expose the falsity of the opponent’s position (*pūrvapakṣa*) in order to refute it. The opponents are clearly identified as his fellow tantric colleagues, labelled rather pejoratively as “small-minded people” (*blo chung rnams*), “false teachers” (Tib. *dam pa ma yin pa’i bla ma*, Skt. *asat-guru*), or “non-Buddhist sectarians” (*mu stegs can*). The methodological device employed to object and rebut their argument is based on the well-known six principles of tantric hermeneutics (Tib. *mtha’ drug*, Skt. *ṣaṭkoṭi*).

Generally speaking, the purpose of the commentary, *\*Jñānākara* says, is to provide a word-by-word exegesis on the root text, i.e., *\*Mantrāvatāra*. Indeed, the relation between the root text and the commentary is primarily one of a root text’s expansion into a more detailed doctrinal exposition; nevertheless, the commentary is also an interesting example of intertextuality integrating the Mahāyāna scriptural tradition into the tantric exegesis without officially marking it as quotations. Thus, together with the officially acknowledged citations, mostly from the so-called “approved tantric scriptures” (Wenta 2018), the commentary also includes numerous tropes, themes, and even phraseological similarities stemming from the Mahāyāna textual sources that are, however, not officially acknowledged. The textual reuse that is borrowed “silently” most probably points to the fact that *\*Jñānākara* was a scholar who absorbed the authoritative Mahāyāna teachings to such an extent that he was simply unaware that he was reproducing this specific textual material in his explanation. On the other hand, *\*Jñānākara*’s consistent reliance on the Mahāyāna models may have been caused by a clear intention of assigning the continuity of specific cultural and doctrinal traits to the understanding of the Buddhist siddha in concurrence with his own tradition.

## 2. Mantrasādhana: Integrating Pāramitānaya and Mantranaya

The structure of the *mantrasādhana* delineated in \*Jñānākara's tantric manual is explained in terms of causes and conditions (*hetu-pratyaya*). The successful accumulation of all the causes and conditions alone makes it possible to reach the goal of *mantrasādhana*, namely, the level of the siddha. The cause consists of a special kind of trainee endowed with a body, speech, and mind that came about as a result of accumulating many good deeds in previous lives (Wenta 2018, p. 536). The conditions consist of a set of tantric practices, such as formal initiation into a *maṇḍala*, meditation on the four *brahmavihāras* and chosen deity, mantra recitation, and others.<sup>2</sup> The expected fruit of engaging in those practices is the purification of the special trainee from the great many sins (Skt. *pañcānantarya*, Tib. *mtshams med lnga*) and also attaining the body of a Buddha or a bodhisattva (Wenta 2018, p. 537). \*Jñānākara specifies this by stating the following:

If one were to ask, what will happen if one practices [mantrasādhana] in that way? It is said: **“he becomes free from all great sins”** [means] The sin that has been incurred having committed the five sins will be cleared. If one were to ask, is it all? [No]. **“He becomes an equal to a bodhisattva who has practiced the pāramitānaya for many eons”** [means] He becomes equal to *bodhisattvas* who have practiced the *pāramitānaya* for many eons in this lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

The above passage squarely locates itself within the intellectual debate concerning the relationship between the *pāramitānaya* and the *mantranaya* that the Buddhist tantric authors of that period grappled with. Unlike Abhayākara Gupta (12th century) who advocated for the *mantranaya* to be the only method capable of achieving Buddhahood, other authors, such as Ratnākaraśānti (11th century), Tripiṭakamāla, and Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna supported the view that the difference between the *pāramitānaya* and the *mantranaya* does not lie in the goal, but merely in the method. In this regard, \*Jñānākara seems to follow the mainstream ideas of his time, such as those of his contemporary, Ratnākaraśānti, who in his *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, drew a distinction between enlightenment through the way of perfection, which is long and painful, and enlightenment through the way of mantras, which is quick and without pain (Tomlinson 2018, p. 361). \*Jñānākara makes a similar argument: using an example (*dṛṣṭānta*) of a feeble person or an ox-drawn cart, he draws an analogy between the limitations encountered by practitioners pursuing the *pāramitānaya* that require the period of the three incalculable eons to reach the enlightenment, and the mantrin, who reaches the same goal in this lifetime, because he “relies on the [mantric] power that is unequalled” (Wenta 2018, p. 535).

The accelerated procedures of the *mantranaya* attain the goal, namely, the status of a bodhisattva in this lifetime. The transformation enacted through the performance of tantric practices, such as the conduct of application consisting of the meditation sessions, mantra recitation, and worship of the deity, is not nominal, but total, inasmuch as it ushers the type of empowerment that is manifested in a total transformation of an individual when this [karmic] cause that is a specific being endowed with a name (Tib. *ming*, Skt. *nāman*), lineage (Tib. *rus*, Skt. *gotra*), caste (Tib. *rigs*, Skt. *jāti*), ego clinging (Tib. *bdag 'dzin*, Skt. *ātma-grāha*), etc., transforms into the body of a Buddha or bodhisattva, which enables him to acquire immeasurable qualities.<sup>4</sup> \*Jñānākara's concept of “transformation” into the body of a Buddha or a bodhisattva ends with the acquisition of the bodhisattva-like “enjoyment body” (*saṃbhogakāya*) and “emanation body” (*nirmāṇakāya*) that enable the siddha to engage in the sublime pleasures related to the teaching of the dharma and operate in the world for the benefit of others. In integrating the *kāya* doctrine of the Yogācāra into his concept of the siddha, \*Jñānākara seems to adhere to the common conceptual framework that have influenced the exegetical efforts of tantric Buddhist authors. For Tripiṭakamāla, for example, a practitioner of the *mantranaya* achieves the three bodies that enable him to “facilitate the perfect fulfilment of the needs of all sentient beings through the perfection of giving” (Onians 2002, p. 104). In the same vein, Sujayaśrī describes the coveted goal of the tantric Heroes as the acquisition of the three bodies in order to compassionately meet the needs

of themselves and others and, thus, benefit sentient beings (Onians 2002, p. 204). Finally, Ratnākaraśānti, who, in his commentary, the *\*Śuddhamati*, famously refuted Haribhadra's four *kāya* doctrine, and assigned a central role to the three bodies, which, according to his explanation, connect the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and unenlightened sentient beings "through a shared reality that is perceived in different ways" (Seton 2015, p. 126).

### 3. The Mantrin, the Five Superknowledges, and Travelling to the Buddha Fields

Addressing the question of the kind of results (Tib. *'bras bu*, Skt. *phala*) that await the *mantrin* who has successfully completed all the causes and conditions of *mantrasādhana* delineated in the previous section,<sup>5</sup> \*Jñānākara turns to the following description:

In this way, the *mantrin* who, in this lifetime, is endowed with excellent causes and conditions, completes all the *bhūmis* and plays with the five superknowledges; he is also able to travel, in this very lifetime, to the world of Akaniṣṭha or Abhirati, etc., which are utterly pure Buddha fields.<sup>6</sup>

The above depiction of the *mantrin's* career follows a typical journey of a Mahāyānist bodhisattva, elucidated, for example, in the *Daśakabhūmikasūtra*, *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, or *Mahāyānasamgraha*. In these treatises, a bodhisattva travels upwards through the ten different stages called the *bhūmis*, which are correlated with the ten specific levels of perfection (Williams 2009, p. 202), usually beginning with the state of joy (*pramuditā*). The second part of this passage resembles the description of the eighth *bhūmi* found in Chapter 20 of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*, which reads "playing with the superknowledges [means:] playing with these superknowledges, [the *bodhisattva*] passes from Buddha field to Buddha field."<sup>7</sup> Further explanation clarifies that on this eighth *bhūmi*, a bodhisattva can travel spontaneously and at will to the infinite universes (*lokadhātu*), perceive magical emanations (*nirmāṇakāya*) of the Buddhas, and play with superknowledges.<sup>8</sup> This is the level of the *cakravartin* because just like a universal monarch, a bodhisattva traverses in his physical body (*maṃsakāya*) everywhere in the trichiliomegachilocosm with no obstacles, hindrance, or enemy stopping him.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of five (or six)<sup>10</sup> *abhijñās* or superknowledges is comprised of a more or less standardized list including divine eye (*divyacakṣu*), divine ear (*divyaśrotra*), capacity to know thoughts of others (*paracittajñāna*), ability to recollect previous lives (*pūrvanivāsānusmṛti*), and various wondrous powers (*ṛddhi*), such as flying in the air or walking on water. This list, characterizing the spiritual perfection of a Buddha or bodhisattva,<sup>11</sup> is common across the Mahāyāna<sup>12</sup> and Pāli sources,<sup>13</sup> and perhaps reflects a continuity with the yogic tradition attested in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra-cum-Bhāṣya*.<sup>14</sup> The bodhisattva manuals, such as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*<sup>15</sup> and *Mahāyānasamgrahāṅkāra*<sup>16</sup>, describe the *abhijñās* in terms of a bodhisattva's special power (*prabhāva*), and as the result of accomplishing the one-pointed concentration. The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* says that the purpose of possessing these powers is to persuade sentient beings to adopt the Mahāyāna path and consequently release themselves from *saṃsāra*.<sup>17</sup> In the Buddhist tantras, however, the concept of the five mundane *abhijñās* (without the sixth, transmudane one) is present in the *kriyātantras* and *yogatantras*,<sup>18</sup> but disappears altogether in the later *yoginītantras*.<sup>19</sup> The reason for this conceptual change can be explained by the fact that unlike the earlier classes of tantric Buddhist scriptures, the *yoginītantras* absorbed to a far greater degree transgressive and antinomian elements borrowed from the Śaiva-Śākta repertoire, and thus dissociated themselves from the Mahāyāna models.

\*Jñānākara's inclusion of *abhijñās* as a quality of an accomplished *mantrin* was possibly determined by several factors. First, this concept was extremely popular in the *Mahāyānasūtras*. Since \*Jñānākara's intention was to depict the *mantrin* as a special type of bodhisattva differing in method, but pursuing the same goals, it is easy to understand why he would rather adhere to the set of superknowledges characteristic of a bodhisattva. This indeed seems to be intended through \*Jñānākara's repeated statements that all these journeys through the ten *bhūmis* and expeditions to the Buddha fields will be finalized by a

*mantrin* within a single lifetime,<sup>20</sup> and not during the three incalculable eons, as in the case of a bodhisattva.<sup>21</sup> Second, the presence of the five *abhijñās* is attested in the early *kriyātantra Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*, which \*Jñānākara certainly knew, for he quotes from it in his criticism of violations stemming from transgressive tantric practice (Wenta 2018, p. 526). In the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*, the five *abhijñās* feature as one of the *siddhis* bestowed on the practitioner by the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī standing before him “face to face”, after he has been summoned by the *mantrin*, in a typical kriyātantric method, through external rituals and mantras. Among other *siddhis* that follow the Mahāyāna template, and are often listed in the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* alongside the five *abhijñās*, is the attainment of all the bodhisattva *bhūmis* or the ability to travel to various realms of Brahmā or Akaniṣṭha in a physical body. These are also construed in line with the Mahāyānist paradigm of *buddhakṣetras* (“Buddha fields”) as the chance to spread the dharma among the bodhisattvas, Buddhas, and other fortunate beings. Thus, \*Jñānākara’s description follows one conceptual layer in the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa’s* depiction of the accomplished *mantrin* that is certainly based on a classical trend of the Mahāyānist bodhisattva, which had its established presence in the Buddhist tantras, prior to the advent of the *yoginītantras*. Third, the five *abhijñās* are also listed in the *Guhyasamājantra*, a *yoganiruttaratantra* and the tradition to which \*Jñānākara belonged (Wenta 2018). The *Guhyasamāja* (12.49ab–59ab) mentions the same list of five superknowledges (but preceded by the word “*vajra*”) mentioned above, where the respective function of each *abhijñā* mirrors the role it holds in pre-tantric sources.<sup>22</sup> In the *Guhyasamāja*, the five *vajra-abhijñās* of the Buddha enable the *mantrin* to resemble the Buddha’s body (*buddhakāya*) and, as in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*, enable him to travel (*vicaret*) anywhere in the infinite universes (*lokadhātu*) with *vajra* body, speech, and mind.

\*Jñānākara’s depiction of a successful *mantrin* draws upon the established image of the bodhisattva and his five superknowledges. This portrayal was consistent with the depiction of the accomplished *mantrin* in the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* and the *Guhyasamāja*, which asserts continuity between the bodhisattva model and the early depictions of the *mantrin* in tantric Buddhist literature. \*Jñānākara’s appropriation explicitly repudiates the image of a transgressive *siddha* involved in procuring the low-level magical *siddhis* of attracting, subjugating, killing, etc.

#### 4. The Agent and His Actions

Next follows a description of the accomplished *mantrin* through the set of philosophical categories pertaining to an agent and his actions (Skt. *kāraṇa-karma*). The allusion to the theory of action becomes central at this point, providing, as it were, the philosophical ramification for a coherent explanation of the purpose of engaging in “spiritual actions” or, in \*Jñānākara’s terms, of fulfilling “conditions” pertinent to *mantrasādhana*. Before turning to \*Jñānākara’s views on this issue, let us first briefly summarize the positions of the Yogācāra and the Madhyamaka. Both schools of thought argue in favour of the existence of a causal relationship between the agent and the action, but their respective theories of causality differ. The common view is that the Yogācāra typically construes the agent as a fixed, independent, and self-existing entity who, as the cause of the action, exists independently of the action itself. On the other hand, Madhyamaka represented by Nāgārjuna’s *Madhyamakāvātāra*<sup>23</sup> criticizes the Yogācāra notion of the agent as *svabhāva*—that is, an eternal and immutable entity—claiming, instead, that every action requires an agent, who has the capacity to “act”;<sup>24</sup> therefore, if an agent is permanent and immutable as the Yogācāra claims, he cannot act, so he cannot be the cause of any action. If there is no cause, there is no action, which leads to nihilism. Nāgārjuna’s way to escape the trap of nihilism is to argue that the relationship between the agent and the action is characterized by mutual dependency (*pratītya*),<sup>25</sup> and since the agent changes in relation to the action, it cannot be a *svabhāvic* entity.

Although \*Jñānākara was deeply indebted to the Yogācāra, he seems to have assessed these kinds of arguments far more realistically than the Yogācāra did. It is obvious that he was more interested in a consistent theory of action that would explain the consequences

of engaging in spiritual actions or “conditions” without falling prey to moral nihilism ensuing from the non-existence of action. Since \*Jñānākara’s theory of the tantric path focuses centrally on how agents can ripen their mind stream<sup>26</sup>—a task that he understood primarily as the accumulation of wholesome results of actions—and how this ripening effects the psychophysical organism, \*Jñānākara saw the agent not as a fixed entity assuming a privileged status over the actions he is engaging with, but as an agent directed and influenced by spiritual actions along a path of spiritual development and, ultimately, as an entity capable of changing. In the scheme of tantric praxis, \*Jñānākara’s delineates three kinds of spiritual actions the agent engages in that bring consequence for a type of change the agent undergoes. Let us examine these spiritual actions in more detail.

[As for the question], he is similar to the agent and his actions—that should be known as three-fold: (1) he is endowed with a fervent effort, (2) one-pointed mind, and (3) he is endowed with the right view.<sup>27</sup>

The first action is fervent effort (Tib. *brtson pa ’grus*, Skt. *utsāha*) which, according to the explanation given in \*Jñānākara’s commentary, means “exerting oneself very hard towards virtues (Tib. *dge ba’i phyogs*, Skt. *kuśalapakṣa*) with such a great effort as if one were to put out a fire on the head”.<sup>28</sup> This idea is in direct continuity with the description of a bodhisattva found in Chapter 12 of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Engle 2016, p. 968), which reads: “A bodhisattva’s exceptional effort [ . . . ] resembles the effort of a person whose head has caught fire to put out the flames”. \*Jñānākara’s understanding of ‘effort’, however, is clearly based on Asaṅga’s *Abhidharmasamuccaya*<sup>29</sup>, where effort is defined as a “firm mental effort aimed towards virtues (*kuśala*) [ . . . ]”. This description is repeated, for example, in Sthiramati’s *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇavibhāṣya*<sup>30</sup>, where “effort” is described as an “antidote to laziness [that is to say,] the exertion of the mind toward virtue”.<sup>31</sup> The emphasis put on exerting oneself towards virtues is not surprising, especially taking into account the extent to which \*Jñānākara dedicates his treatise to the refutation of the perverse tantric path, which, in his understanding, is based on the cultivation of the ten unwholesome deeds (Wenta 2018). \*Jñānākara’s project was to reinstate the value given to the “physiomoral” (Mrozik 2007) dimension of the body and, therefore, to the correlation between the accumulation of the wholesome deeds and the body.

The first “action” is connected with the second attribute of the *mantrin*—the agent, namely, his one-pointed mind (*citta-ekāgratā*), specified as the ability to remain stable in the meditative equipoise on the object of concentration, even if [disturbed by] rain, sun, wind, drum, and sound of the conch.<sup>32</sup> \*Jñānākara delineates two aspects of one-pointed concentration. First is the practice of meditative equipoise (Tib. *mnyam par gzhaq*, Skt. *samāhita*), when one engages in one-pointed concentration on oneself and the deity (during a meditation session). Second is the one-pointed concentration characterized by a firm conviction that everything is just an illusion that takes place outside the meditation session, literally when one “has risen”, which corresponds to the state of *vyutthāna* [Tib. *langspa*].<sup>33</sup> The commentary specifies that the first meditative practice involves drawing the image of one’s chosen deity on a cloth, etc. Then, a *mantrin* should, first of all, recite the purity *mantra*: “All phenomena are pure by nature, I am pure by nature”.<sup>34</sup> In the next stage, an adept meditates turning everything into emptiness, etc. and then, he is instructed to meditate on the four immeasurables: (1) loving kindness towards all, (2) compassion, (3) empathetic joy, and (4) equanimity. Then, he should perform visualization of his chosen deity either as a solitary hero or in the entourage of the deities, according to the ritual prescriptions.<sup>35</sup> Once the adept has realized the emptiness of all the *dharma*s and attained the identification with his chosen deity, he perceives any object as a magician’s illusion, appearing as if it was “real”, but actually existing as a mere illusion.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, in the typical exegetical style intended for refutation, \*Jñānākara delineates several external factors that are classified as obstacles preventing the *mantrin* from establishing the one-pointed concentration. These are the ill-suited places, companions, and intentions. The commentary specifies that ill-suited places are places other than those

taught as the places of achievement, such as the Mahābodhi (i.e., Bodhgayā), places where non-Buddhist sectarians (Tib. *mu stegs can*) promulgate their teachings, and places where many people congregate, such as marketplaces.<sup>37</sup> Ill-suited companions are described as people who are passionate, dull, lethargic, elated, hateful, greatly jealous, uninitiated, and those who do not trust the [way of the] *mantras*. The practitioner should keep company with those of equal or superior virtues.<sup>38</sup> The ill-suited enjoyments are those things that act as the cause of a total distraction to the *mantrin's* mind, namely, women and alcohol, and those things that give birth to great attachment.<sup>39</sup> The ill-suited intentions are characterized as negative cognitive processes fueled by desire, hatred, ignorance, egoity, jealousy, etc. The commentary specifies that one should not let the mind engage in [mental operations] preceded by these intentions.<sup>40</sup>

The third attribute is the right view (*samyagdr̥ṣṭi*), characterized by \*Jñānākara as the ability to have faith in the eventual fruition (lit. “ripening” [of the mind stream]) without denying its cause and effect.<sup>41</sup> Generally speaking, “ripening” (Skt. *vipāka*) is adopted in Buddhism to refer to the fruition of past actions and the causality of karma that matures through the volitional performance of wholesome or unwholesome deeds executed by the body, mind, and speech. In the context of the bodhisattva manuals, such as Śāntideva’s *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, however, the metaphor of “ripening” is used to describe the bodhisattva’s function as the agent that causes the ripening—or, in other words, effects—the spiritual maturation of other beings.<sup>42</sup> In this way, “ripening” assumes a moral and ethical dimension as it purports to highlight the bodhisattva’s ability to transform sentient beings into vessels of enlightenment as they advance on their path. The persons who are spiritually ripe are distinguished by their agility of the mind and the fitness of the body, both of which are considered pivotal for the removal of emotional and cognitive obscurations as well as mental afflictions.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, here \*Jñānākara departs from the ethical and altruistic framework of this concept and focuses solely on its theoretical aspect, understood as the interdependence of cause and effect. This choice was perhaps motivated by \*Jñānākara’s intention to highlight the Yogācāra background of his tantric manual that is clearly based on the Sautrāntika idea of the mind stream (*citta-santāna*). For \*Jñānākara, *mantrasādhana* causes the ripening of the mind stream.<sup>44</sup> In order to explain it, \*Jñānākara incorporates an agrarian metaphor<sup>45</sup> to show that the sole “thing” that becomes transformed during the three conducts of the tantric path is the mind that, just like a seed sowed in a carefully prepared fertile soil, first shoots a sprout, and then produces a fruit. The sole purpose of engaging in the three conducts of tantric practice is to provide the perfect conditions for the ripening of the mind, which is the real cause of the entire practice, in order to obtain the accomplishment.

In emphasizing the critical role played by the mind in tantric soteriology, \*Jñānākara follows Ratnākaraśānti who, arguing against Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamākavatārabhāṣya*, stated that the Buddhahood cannot equal to the cessation of the mind and mental factors (Brunnhölzl 2011, p. 135). For Ratnākaraśānti, the exponent of the Nirākāravāda-Yogācāra view, the ultimate goal of both the *prajñāpāramitānaya* and the *mantranaya* is the elimination of all mental forms (*ākāra*) generated by the erroneous latent tendencies, in order to attain the mind’s true nature of non-dual self-awareness of a Buddha (Seton 2017, p. 6). This non-dual awareness consists of bodhisattva’s transmudane awareness and pure mundane awareness effecting a total transformation of the basis (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*), a concept attested in classical Yogācāra scriptures, in which “the basis of ordinary existence is transformed into the enlightenment of a Buddha through the process of yogic realization”.<sup>46</sup> Ratnākaraśānti advocated a new interpretation of the Nirākāravāda, in which the non-dual awareness of Buddha, although free of mental forms (*ākāra*), intentionally and out of compassion retains some cognitive error (*bhrānti*) that helps to benefit sentient beings by direct interaction with them via the material bodies of a Buddha (Seton 2019, p. 367). The conscious preservation of a cognitive error was paramount to Ratnākaraśānti’s concept of Buddhahood, which hinged, for the most part, on the reformulation of the classical three-*kāya* doctrine of the Yogācāra (Seton

2015, pp. 93–120). For Ratnākaraśānti, enlightenment as the *svābhāvīkākāya* (= *dharmakāya*) is not only the undefiled *dharmadhātu* of transmudane awareness, “completely free of adventitious error”, but also the acquisition of the *sāmbhogīkākāya* and the *nairmāṇīkākāya* of the pure mundane awareness, manifesting due to cognitive error, in order to serve others. On the next pages, we shall see the extent to which \*Jñānākara’s theoretical model of *mantrasādhana* that causes the ripening of the mind stream, is, similarly to Ratnākaraśānti’s views, grounded in the acquisition by the siddha of the two material bodies of a Buddha in order to compassionately serve others.

### 5. Siddhis of the Siddha

Next, \*Jñānākara turns to the exposition of the *siddhis* or “accomplishments” that constituted a primary marker of reaching the mastery in the tantric technology of perfection. A siddha, literally “an accomplished one”, is first and foremost someone who possesses supernatural powers (*siddhis*) that allow him to gain the control over the laws of nature. In early tantric literature, both Śaiva and Buddhist, the *siddhis*, are usually classified into three categories: low, intermediate, and highest (Vasudeva 2012). Among the highest and intermediate *siddhis*, one often finds raising a *vetāla*; the procurement of sexual partners through the *yakṣiṇī-sādhana*; the obtainment of a magical sword (*khadga*); and the preparation of magical pills (*guṭīkā*), eye ointments (*āñjāna*), and foot ointments (*pādapracāra*) for ensuring immortality, invisibility, swift footedness, or locating buried treasures. All these themes share in the same magical substratum of beliefs and themes revolving around the archetype of a sorcerer or spell-holder (*vidyādharma*),<sup>47</sup> a proto-siddha, who is first and foremost a seeker of supernatural powers (*siddhis*). The low *siddhis* usually include the category of hostile magic (*abhicāra*), such as subjecting to one’s will (*vaśīkaraṇa*), creating hostility (*vidveṣa*), and paralysis (*stambhana*). \*Jñānākara’s exposition of the *siddhis* departs from this general tantric model, and, instead, defines *siddhis* as a special type of body, place,<sup>48</sup> and enjoyments that distinguish the *siddha* from ordinary people. He explains it as follows:

If someone were to ask, what [kind of] *siddhi* is achieved by a *siddha* endowed with these actions? The body, place and enjoyments are superior to those of ordinary people, that is to say, he achieves lordship over his lifespan and is totally liberated from future rebirths of eight *akṣaṇas* (leisureless states). He meets, etc. with the Buddhas who have manifested in the world and he engages in the five sense objects; knowing [their essence] he is unfettered [by their afflictive power]. [Furthermore] he is capable of bringing benefit to oneself and to others.

The commentary elaborates on these issues in the following words:

**“He achieves lordship over his lifespan”** [means:] If he desires, he can stay even for eons; if he sees the benefit for sentient beings, he can take another body.<sup>49</sup>

**“He is totally liberated from future rebirths, without leisure”** [means:] Having seen the benefit for the sentient beings, he can take rebirth in those eight leisureless states, out of his own will, [but never] due to *karma* and disturbances (*kleśas*) of *samsāra*.<sup>50</sup>

**“He meets with the Buddhas, etc. who have manifested in this world”** [means:] He meets with the Buddhas, etc. who have manifested in all respects in this world, or he meets with the true *dharmā* established by them. As for the word “etc.” included [in the *pāda*] [it means:] he is not to be separated from the friendship of the Bodhisattvas.<sup>51</sup>

**“He engages in the five sense objects, but does not become fettered by them”** [means:] He knows [the way] to enjoy them as *rūpa-vajra*, etc. which appears as his own mind in the aspect of the grasped. In the same way with aggregates (*skandhas*), elements (*dhātus*), and sense-bases (*āyatana*s), he knows them as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and worships them in accordance with this understanding. The places of worship, he also understands as having a single taste,

which is the mind in its aspects of object-subject (*grāhya-grāhaka*). Even though he enjoys [them], since he knows their single taste, he does not become fettered [by them]; on the contrary, this [enjoyment] produces many great merits.<sup>52</sup>

**“He is capable of bringing benefit to oneself and to others”** [means:] he has the power to bring the pleasure of higher rebirth and liberation to oneself and to others in the far future.<sup>53</sup>

\*Jñānākara draws upon the common idea of the Buddha’s body, notable for the physical marks of a great man (*mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇa*), specifying that the siddha’s superior body has a golden colour and is ornamented with major and minor marks, etc.<sup>54</sup> This concept was adopted in the Mahāyāna “path manuals”, such as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*<sup>55</sup> or the *Mahāyānasūtrāṅkārā*<sup>56</sup> to describe the excellent physique of a bodhisattva reaped through the karmic fruition of virtuous deeds.<sup>57</sup> The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* goes even further and says that one receives the name “bodhisattva” only “when he begins to cultivate actions which produce the [thirty-two] marks”.<sup>58</sup> The context in which \*Jñānākara refers to the siddha’s body as endowed with major and minor marks of the Buddha suggests the Yogācāra doctrine of *saṃbhogakāya*. In classical Yogācāra, the body of the Buddha in its physical form (*rūpakāya*) distinguished by its thirty-two marks and eighty minor signs constitutes the *saṃbhogakāya* (*saṃbhogikakāya*), the “enjoyment body”.<sup>59</sup> According to Makransky (1997, p. 107), the reason for the inclusion of the *rūpakāya* under the *saṃbhogakāya* was to match the Yogācāra concept of the three bodies (*trikāya*) with the description of Buddhahood attested in the Prajñāpāramitā literature. The *saṃbhogakāya* is sometimes called the “reward body” (Nagao 1991, p. 191), for it was conceived as the reward for the accumulation of innumerable virtues in the past lives of Gautama Buddha, transcending the eighty years of his human life. \*Jñānākara certainly draws upon this idea, for he consistently states that the body is the result of wholesome deeds of body, speech, and mind performed in previous lives (Wenta 2018, p. 536).

The “enjoyment body” is important, for it is the basis for experiencing the enjoyments of Mahāyāna-dharma. As Asaṅga’s *Mahāyānasamgraha* (Brunnhölzl 2018, p. 685) states, “without the *saṃbhogakāya*, the bodhisattvas would have entered the great *bhūmis* would not enjoy the dharma”. The *saṃbhogakāya* is sometimes referred to as the “communal enjoyment body”, the word “communal” highlighting the idea that this particular body participates in the pleasure and joy of sharing the enjoyment of the Mahāyāna dharma in the company of Buddhas and bodhisattvas (Makransky 1997, p. 223). This is indeed alluded to by \*Jñānākara, who refers to the special enjoyments of the siddha as those comprising of the true dharma teachings in the company of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Needless to say, \*Jñānākara’s portrayal of the siddha’s enjoyments is certainly far away from the sexual enjoyments promoted by the *Guhyasamājantra*,<sup>60</sup> where the satisfaction of all desires and sensual indulgence in intimate intercourse with a young girl forms part and parcel of tantric practice. The “enjoyment body” also relates in a distinctive way to the altruistic concept of the Mahāyāna doctrine of the benefit for oneself and the benefit for others (Nagao 1991, pp. 110–11), which features as the last item in \*Jñānākara’s list of *siddhis*. On the one hand, the “enjoyment body” is the actual body in which the Buddha attains enlightenment, thus fulfilling the personal benefit. On the other hand, however, the “enjoyment body” is also the actual body in which the Buddha teaches the dharma to his closest disciples, thus bringing the benefit to others.

Despite this obvious lack of originality, \*Jñānākara’s description of the “enjoyment body” has an interesting twist, which betrays his *Guhyasamāja* legacy. This is discernible in his understanding of the sensory experience that draws upon the *Guhyasamāja*’s idea that the five senses in their pure forms are the deities.<sup>61</sup> The divinization of the senses, which in \*Jñānākara’s own words should connote the understanding of one’s own senses as identical to the “Buddhas and bodhisattvas” is linked to another salient feature of tantric innovation, namely, the relocation of the object of worship to the individual’s psychophysical constituents, which is also attested in Śaiva and Śākta traditions. The *Cakrasamvartantra*

adheres to a similar idea when it says: “one should experience everything, whatever comes naturally within the path the sense powers, as being composed of buddhas (*buddhamaya*), through the yoga of ultimate equipoise” (Gray 2011, p. 48). The method that effectively enabled the adept to divinize the senses was built upon the concept of purification (*viśuddhi*),<sup>62</sup> which, on the cognitive level, connoted the disappearance of impurities that veiled the intrinsic purity of mind with thought constructs (*vikalpa*). The true pureness, which transcends the subject–object duality (or, in Yogācāra terms, the perceived object [*grāhya*] and the perceiving subject [*grāhaka*]) and leads to the eradication of conceptual constructs depends on the mind that has successfully removed ignorance and reached the level of non-dual gnosis (*advayajñāna*), or gnosis free of thought constructs (*nirvikalapajñāna*). This coveted state, attested both in Buddhist and Śaiva–Śākta traditions, was sometimes expressed through the aesthetic idiom as the “single taste” (*ekarasa*), a term which, in harmony with \*Jñānākara’s description, symbolizes the bliss or pleasure of tasting/relishing derived from the sensory engagement with the objects, free from the impurity of thought constructs, that bears soteriological implications.<sup>63</sup>

Another aspect that reflects \*Jñānākara’s intention to depict the tantric path in continuity with the Mahāyāna, and his attempt to distance himself with the dubious powers of the siddha sorcerer, is the reference to the “lordship over one’s lifespan” (*āyurovaśitā*) and “liberation from future rebirth” (*utpannavāśitā*). These are borrowed from the list of the ten sovereigns performed by a bodhisattva by means of his power of mastery (*vaśitā*). In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (II.4.10), the mastery of ten powers characterizes the bodhisattva who abides in the eighth, totally pure “pleasurable state free of signs and free of effort”. This eighth state—one of the twelve pleasurable states (*vihāras*), where the bodhisattva abides pleasurable, at all times, everywhere and is able to accumulate virtues in a variety of ways (Engle 2016, p. 1260)—is the outcome of the attainment of the ten forms of knowledge, including the knowledge about the non-origination of all entities, the knowledge that all entities are neither produced nor destroyed, and so on. Other Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Mahānāyaprajñāpāramitā*<sup>64</sup> or Asaṅga’s *Mahāyānasamgraha*<sup>65</sup> understand the *vaśitās* as masteries acquired by a bodhisattva through the attainment of six perfections (*parāmitās*) that define the Buddha’s “truth body” (*dharmakāya*). Thus, the lordship over one’s lifespan is acquired by means of fulfilling the virtue of generosity (*dānapāramitāparipūri*), and lordship from future rebirths is acquired by the fulfillment of the virtue of morality (*śīlapāramitāparipūri*).<sup>66</sup> In reclaiming the two masteries as tantric siddhis *par excellence*, \*Jñānākara shows little originality of thought, for his project of repossessing bodhisattva for tantric goals attempted to depict the siddha as someone possessing powers, but powers that distinguish the bodhisattva who has achieved the attainment of the perfections. This is also in conformity with what tantric Buddhist scriptures imagined the Buddha or the bodhisattva to be. In the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi* (Hodge 2003, p. 379), Vairocana gives the following answer to Vajrapāṇi’s question: what is a Buddha? “One who has accomplished the Ten Levels, and has attained the Ten Masteries (= *vaśitās*) [ . . . ] is called a Buddha”.

## 6. The Siddha and His Conduct

At last, \*Jñānākara turns to the exposition of the siddha ideal as the behavioural model in the tantric technology of perfection. Posing as an imaginary interlocutor, \*Jñānākara asks about the conduct of the siddha, who has accomplished the *siddhis*. Within the framework of the bodies described above, the siddha’s conduct situates itself between the concepts surrounding the “enjoyment body” and the “emanation body”. In this regard, the first three among the siddha’s compartments, which include the experience of sublime pleasures in the Buddha fields and the acts of worship, imply the “enjoyment body”. The next three references to the siddha’s conduct locate themselves within the context of the emanation body projected by a bodhisattva to benefit unfortunate beings.

He takes delight in the pleasure of enjoyments in all places and at all times.  
Likewise, he also offers worship to the noble ones, in accordance with his means.

Through display of [a wonderful] variety of magical powers [he benefits and refutes] those who are to be trained. He gives coolness and heat, etc. in an instant, to those who are in hell. Likewise, he teaches different doctrines to different sentient beings. Just like the medicinal properties of a great magical tree, [the *siddha*] brings benefit to all [beings] by being seen, heard, touched, and remembered.

The commentary elaborates upon the specific issues in the following words:

**“In all places and at all times”** [means:] The Completely pure Buddha fields, or the realm of gods, etc. here and there.<sup>67</sup>

**“He takes delight in the pleasure of enjoyments”** [means:] He himself enjoys sublime forms of enjoyments, etc. that are superior to that of ordinary people.<sup>68</sup>

**“Likewise, he also offers worship to the noble ones, in accordance with his means”** [means:] Just like his practice, in the same way to the Noble Ones as well, he offers the innumerable clouds of offerings to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and Arhats, and also Pratyekabuddhas. As for pleasing his chosen deity, [here] too, he introduces [these enjoyments] in such form at each time, becoming more and more noble.<sup>69</sup>

**“He benefits and refutes those who are to be trained”** [means:] To those who suffer from various kinds of illnesses and troubles, he increases things like enjoyments, lifespan, etc. and pacifies different kinds of sufferings. To those who are exceedingly cruel, and wrathful, and who inflict suffering on others, he tames them after having emanated a wrathful form of the deity, fond of killing, holding in his hand various weapons. Moreover, in accordance with [inclinations] of sentient beings, he tames them by displaying various kinds of magical feasts: going in the sky, emitting blazing fire (from his upper body) and bringing down water (from his lower part), etc.<sup>70</sup>

**“He gives coolness and heat, etc. in an instant, to those who are in hell”** [means:] To those beings who are in hot hells, he gives coolness by bringing down a cool breeze or a fragrant rain, etc. As for those beings who are in cold hells, he gives [them] heat, having emanated the heap of fire, etc.<sup>71</sup>

**“Likewise, he teaches different doctrines to different sentient beings”** [means:] He gives different *dharma* teachings to sentient beings: gods, humans, demigods, etc. [who have various] interests, and to those who speak different languages, in accordance with [their specific] interests, through [the use of their] respective languages.<sup>72</sup>

**“Just like the medicinal properties of a great magical tree, he brings benefit to all [beings] by being seen, heard, touched and remembered”** [means:] For example, [just like] the great medicinal tree, regardless of whether it is cut by hatred or love, it brings benefit either way, similar with the *siddha*, whatever the sentient beings’ state of mind, whether it is the state of attachment or anger, [if the *siddha*] is either seen by the eye, or heard by the ear, or touched by the body, or being remembered, in all cases, the benefit will manifest.<sup>73</sup>

The first part of \*Jñānākara’s commentary refers to the concept of pure Buddha fields (*buddhakṣetra*), the realms created by a specific Buddha or a bodhisattva as a result of his enlightenment that was a distinctive soteriological innovation of the Mahāyāna. One of the earliest descriptions of the *buddhakṣetras* is found in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*, which promoted the idea that the future rebirth in the pure Buddha fields should constitute the goal of a bodhisattva’s virtuous practice that was not distinct from enlightenment (Halkias 2013, p. 8). Within the altruistic framework of the bodhisattva’s career, the Buddha fields were also conceived as a result of compassion that formed a part of skillful means (*upāyakauśalya*) to end the suffering of sentient beings (*ibid.*). The *buddhakṣetras*

were in a distinctive way linked to the Mahāyānist concept of the “enjoyment body” and the devotional practices that included the worship of various Buddhas and bodhisattvas belonging to those realms (Williams 2009, p. 181). The Buddha fields, thus, played an important role in the Mahāyāna system of salvation in the sense that the very cosmological structure with its spatial conceptualization related to specific Buddhist doctrine and practice made salvation possible (Wallis 2002, p. 61). Although the *buddhakṣetras*, as the sublime realms where the bodhisattva travels with the purpose of merit making and spreading the dharma, are attested in the *kriyātantras* and *caryātantras*, they gradually lose their importance, and are effectively replaced by the sacred geography of the power seats (*pīṭhas*). The pinnacle of this replacement is attested in the *yogīnītantras*, the earliest of those being the *Catuṣpīṭhatantra* (Szántó 2013).

The second part of \*Jñānākara’s depiction of the siddha’s conduct is built upon the “emanation body” (*nirmāṇakāya*) which, due to its supernatural powers, is often called the “body of magical transformation” (Williams 2009, p. 181). In this body, the bodhisattva works for the benefit of others. In describing the siddha’s ability to travel in the sky, emit fire and water from the upper and lower parts of his body, and emanate the body of a wrathful deity, \*Jñānākara seems to be referring to the two separate categories of magical powers of the bodhisattva attested in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*: the *pāriṇāmikī* and the *nairmāṇikī ṛddhis*. The *pāriṇāmikī ṛddhi* are the “transformational miraculous powers” when “the bodhisattva travels upward [into the heavens]” in his physical body, and when “fire blazes forth from the upper part of the body, while jets of cold water stream from the lower part of the body”<sup>74</sup>. This specific power is also considered one of the Buddha’s famous miracles and may be regarded as an attempt to incorporate the Buddha’s powers into the repertoire of the bodhisattva (Fiordalis 2012, p. 104). The *pāriṇāmikī ṛddhi*—which includes, among other powers, the bodhisattva’s capacity to shake a nearby village or the three realms through the mastery of the one-pointed concentration—are distinguished from the second group of powers, that is, the “creative miraculous powers” (*nairmāṇikī ṛddhi*) or the ability to create magical bodies, either resembling oneself, some other beings, or even objects<sup>75</sup>. While referring to the siddha’s ability to produce the “emanation body” (*nirmāṇakāya*) of a wrathful deity fond of killing, with the intention of taming evil beings, \*Jñānākara aligns with *Bodhisattvabhūmi*’s description of the *nairmāṇikī ṛddhi* as well as with the inherent purpose that producing magical bodies entails. The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* clarifies that the sole purpose of taking on the appearance of a wrathful deity is to frighten beings who, terrified of Vajrapāṇi’s great power, “develop faith, [and a] high degree of esteem”. This is in order to “impose spiritual self-discipline upon the large body of beings”<sup>76</sup> or, in other words, tame them.

The trope of the Buddha displaying miraculous powers for the sake of the conversion of non-Buddhists is a common theme in Buddhist literature, the earliest antecedents being already found in the Pāli suttas. In this regard, Granoff (1996, p. 81) pointed out that the conversion of non-Buddhists and the competition with rival ascetic groups was one of the main reasons for the Buddha’s performance of miracles in Buddhist literature, which equated the Buddha’s powers with the power of the gods. This paradigm of conversion finds its currency in tantric Buddhist literature, where the origins of wrathful tantric Buddhist deities are often depicted through the trope of a peaceful deity assuming a wrathful form, indispensable to tame evil classes of beings, including the non-Buddhist gods. One example that prominently illustrates this point is given by the eighth century author \*Akṣobhya who, in his commentary (*pañjikā*) on the *Vajrabhairavatantra*, describes the meditative process of generating oneself as a wrathful Vajrabhairava from a peaceful form of Mañjuśrī.<sup>77</sup>

Another consequence of possessing the *pāriṇāmikī* and the *nairmāṇikī ṛddhis* is the supposition that these magical powers enable the bodhisattva to penetrate the three bad destinies among the residents of hell, the animals, and the ghosts (*pretas*) that would ultimately effectuate their final deliverance (*vimukti*) from the suffering of bad destinies. This is attested in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, where it is said that the body of the buddhas

and great bodhisattvas emit rays and the emanation bodies to enter the three bad destinies. The passage continues saying that when this happens, then “the fire is extinguished and the boiling water cools down in the hells”, and upon the purification of the mind, the damned, the animals, and the ghosts are reborn amongst the gods and humans.<sup>78</sup> \*Jñānākara’s depiction of the *siddha*, who bestows either coolness or warmth to those damned to the torments of either hot or cold hell, certainly draws upon the conceptual framework of the *Mahāprajñāparāmitāsūtra*, and perhaps intends to highlight the fact that the ability to give comfort to beings who find themselves in the bad destinies constitutes a salient feature of the perfection of generosity (*dānaparipūri*). Both the *Mahāprajñāparāmitāsūtra*<sup>79</sup> and the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*<sup>80</sup> link the bodhisattva’s ability to dispel suffering that the beings undergo due to hunger, thirst, cold, illness, danger, or desires, to the practice of the perfection of generosity, and it seems viable to assume that \*Jñānākara’s reason to include this specific trope was motivated by his intention to stress this point as well.

The next item on the \*Jñānākara’s list of the *siddha*’s conduct is his ability to teach dharma to different audiences and communicate with them in various languages. This is a reference to “rhetoric” (*nirukti*), one of the three types of unlimited knowledge (*pratisaṃvid*), acquired by a bodhisattva on the ninth *bhūmi*. The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*<sup>81</sup> and *Bodhisattvabhūmi*<sup>82</sup> describe *nirukti* as the capability to comprehend all the languages spoken by *devas*, *asuras*, *yakṣas*, *nāgas*, *garuḍas*, and other beings. The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*<sup>83</sup> specifies that the *nirukti**pratisaṃvid* is crucial for the teaching of the dharma, which can be conducted only through speech.<sup>84</sup>

\*Jñānākara ends the list of *siddha*’s compartments with the metaphor of medicine-tree (*bhaiṣajyvrkṣa*) and its healing properties. This trope is found in various *Mahāyānasūtras*, such as the *Upāsakaśīlasūtra*, where the episode from the previous life of the Buddha narrates the account of the vow made by the Buddha. During his illness, the Buddha pleads to obtain a “body like the tree of medicine”, that would heal all people only by seeing it, smelling it, or touching it.<sup>85</sup> The *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* frames the same trope in the context of the bodhisattva’s vow who, comparing himself to the king of medicinal trees, utters an oath: “may anyone who hears my voice, touches my body, or imbibes my blood, flesh, bone, or marrow, be healed of all illnesses”.<sup>86</sup> Despite different variants of these motifs found in the Mahāyāna literature, the closest textual parallel to \*Jñānākara’s description is given in the *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra*. This early Mahāyānasūtra teaches various types of concentrations (*samādhis*) that combine the gnostic insight and the magical powers in the heroic progress of the practitioner. The *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra* refers to the bodhisattva as both the king of medicine and the medicinal tree: the former is the cure for the afflictions of poisonous emotions, while the latter heals all sicknesses, regardless of whether it is a full tree or a tree cut into pieces. Similar to \*Jñānākara’s description of the *siddha*, the mental state of the people who see, touch, or remember the bodhisattva does not have any bearing on the bodhisattva conduct; he always acts altruistically for the benefit of others. The *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra* (Lamotte 2003, pp. 136–37) elaborates as follows:

O Dṛḍhamati, it is like the great king of medicaments (*mahābhaiṣajyarāja*) tree called Darśanīya, ‘Pleasant to behold’: persons who see it find the cure for their sickness (*vyādhi*). So it is with the bodhisattva in Śūraṅgamasamādhi: beings who see him find the cure for craving (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*) and delusion (*moha*).

O Dṛḍhamati, it is like the medicament tree (*bhaiṣajyvrkṣa*) called Saṃpanna, ‘Complete’: those who use its root (*mūla*) find the cure to their sickness (*vyādhi*); its trunk (*gaṇḍa*), knots (*saṃdhi*), pith (*sāra*), bark (*tvac*), branches (*śākhā*), leaves (*pattra*), flowers (*puṣpa*) and fruit (*phala*) can also cure sickness; whether it is standing (*samucchirta*), dried out (*śuṣka*) or cut into pieces (*khaṇḍaśaś chinnā*), it can cure all the sicknesses of beings. So it is with the bodhisattva in Śūraṅgamasamādhi: there is not one moment when he is not benefitting beings; he always dispels their torment (*upadrava*); he expounds the Dharma to them and practices the four means of winning over (*saṃgrahavastu*) and the perfections (*pāramitā*) so

that they can obtain liberation. Whether people respect him or not, whether they benefit him or not, the bodhisattva uses every means to bring them to security (*kṣema*) [ . . . ].

The analogy between the conduct of the bodhisattva and the medicament tree in the *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra* suggests two fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. First, bodhisattva embodies enlightenment inasmuch as his activity performed with the intention of helping sentient beings is compared to the healing process in which the three poisonous wounds of craving, hatred, and delusion are cured. The employment of healing as the metaphor of enlightenment is attested in a wide range of Buddhist literature, from the *avadāna* collection (Granoff 1998) to the Mahāyāna scriptures that promoted the figure of the bodhisattva Bhaiṣyaguru (Birnbäum 1979). Second, the bodhisattva in his role of the healer of all the sickness who devotes his entire life to easing the suffering of others, regardless of whether he is respected or mistreated, points to the bodhisattva's vow of cultivating *bodhicitta*, that is the intention of enlightenment for the sake of others. It is noteworthy that this rhetoric is quite reminiscent of a similar passage from Chapter 3 of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* where bodhisattva expresses his benevolence during the process of the awakening of *bodhicitta* in these words: "Those who will falsely accuse me, and others who will do me harm, and others still who will degrade me, may they all share in Awakening".<sup>87</sup> \*Jñānākara's reuse of the same analogy to describe the conduct of the siddha serves as the basis for the similar argument, namely, that the compassionate bodhisattva attitude who benefits even those beings whose mind is filled with anger or attachment, secures its place as the ultimate tantric goal. In another passage, \*Jñānākara makes the argument about the underlying importance of compassion in the cultivation of *bodhicitta* even more explicit by saying that if the mantrin is disgusted by *saṃsāra* and devoid of great compassion to help sentient beings, he achieves *nirvāṇa* through the path of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, which amounts only to a minor *siddhi*.

## 7. Conclusions

This article has provided a textual analysis of the siddha depicted in \*Jñānākara's *\*Mantrāvatāravṛtti* and demonstrated his efforts to appropriate a Mahāyāna imagery and ideas to construe a version of the Buddhist siddha with its uncanny resemblance to the conceptual framework attested in the depictions of the Mahāyānist bodhisattva. For \*Jñānākara, the siddha is a bodhisattva, through the acquisition of the bodhisattva's body and five superknowledges as well as completing the path consisting of the *bhūmis*. These are obtained in the course of the *mantranaya* procedures that accelerate the ripening of the mind stream in a single lifetime. \*Jñānākara also returns to the earlier Buddhist conceptualization of the body and shows that the acquisition of the bodhisattva's body is in fact reaped through the performance of virtuous deeds and through the actions of fervent effort, one pointed concentration, and right view. This enables the siddha to obtain the bodhisattva's body, which is modelled on the two bodies systematically developed in classical Yogācāra, namely, the "enjoyment body" and the "emanation body". Although \*Jñānākara never uses either of these technical terms, the conceptual ramifications of the siddha's accomplishments and the siddha's conduct are clearly established in those two categories. Despite the emphasis on the bodhisattva's features, \*Jñānākara has taken care to preserve the continuity with his tantric legacy. This is attested in the post-*Guhyasamāja* depiction of the sensory experience that becomes divinized, establishing the locus of sensory enjoyment characterized by a "single taste", free of impurity of thought constructs. In terms of appropriation of the Mahāyāna doctrine, \*Jñānākara's portrayal of the siddha is distinguished by the selection of relevance. This selection was dictated by \*Jñānākara's attempt to depict the siddha as someone possessing special powers, however, not dubious powers of the siddha sorcerer engaged in killing or paralyzing the wicked ones, but powers of a conservative Mahāyāna framework that reflected bodhisattva's ethics. Each selection was related to, what I have called elsewhere, the "making of tantric orthodoxy", that is an attempt to sanitize those elements of tantric practice that were viewed as controversial.

By setting the bodhisattva model as a coveted aim of the tantric siddha, \*Jñānākara has certainly achieved his goal.

\*Jñānākara's exegetical efforts follow the scholastic tendencies of his time to synthesize the *mantranaya* and the *pāramitānaya*, articulated, for example, in the works of Ratnākaraśānti. This synthesis has come to define mainstream tantric Buddhist scholasticism and was discernible on many levels, from assumptions that the perfection and the mantra ways differ merely in method, not in goals, to the concept of enlightenment characterized as the acquisition of the bodies of a Buddha that integrated the *kāya* doctrine of the Yogācāra. For \*Jñānākara specifically, the basic principles of this synthesis rested on the adaptation and incorporation of the bodhisattva path expounded in the classical works of this genre, such as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*. \*Jñānākara was certainly well versed in the bodhisattva manuals, for he features as the co-translator of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, together with Nag tsho lo tsā ba, one of Tibet's greatest translators. Moreover, in view of the intertextual dimension of \*Jñānākara's siddha exposition, one may argue that the Mahāyāna sources continued to provide the basic theoretical models for spiritual typologies for the tantric Buddhist authors active in that period.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For the edition and translation of the entire text of the *\*Mantrāvatāra*, see Wenta (2018).

<sup>2</sup> For the explanation of the three conditions, see Wenta (2018, pp. 536–38).

<sup>3</sup> *de ltar spyad pas cir 'gyur zhe na/sdīg chen kun las grol nas ni zhes bya ba smros te/mtshams med pa lnga la sogs pa byas pa'i sdīg rnam byang bar 'gyur ro/de tsum du zad dam zhe na/bskal pa du mar spyad pa yil/byang chub sems dpa' dang mtshungs 'gyur zhes bya ba la/pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshul la zhugs pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnam kyis bska pa mang por 'bad pa byas pa dang/tshe 'di nyid la mtshungs par 'gyur ro/Comm. Derge, p. 396.*

<sup>4</sup> *yongs 'gyur rung ba'i rkyen zhes bya ba ni ming dang/rus dang/rigs dang/bdag 'dzin la sogs pa dang ldan pa'i sems can gyi rgyu 'di la sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa'i sku dang/yon tan dpag tu med par 'gyur du rung ba'i rkyen gyis sbyor ba'i spyod pa yin pas yongs 'gyur du rung ba'i rkyen zhes bya ba'o/Comm. Derge, p. 396.*

<sup>5</sup> *de ltar rgyu rkyen phun sum tshogs pa dang ldan pa'i sngags pas 'bras bu ci zhig 'thob par 'gyur zhe na/Comm. Derge, p. 398.*

<sup>6</sup> *de ltar rgyu rkyen phun sum tshogs pa dang ldan pa'i sngags pa de ni skye ba 'di la sa rnam rab tu gnon cing mngon par shes pa lngas rtshe zhing 'og min gyi 'jig rten nam/mngon par dga' ba la sogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi zhing yongs su dag pa rnam su yang tshe 'di nyid la 'gro bar nus par 'gyur ro/Comm. Derge, p. 398.*

<sup>7</sup> *abhijñāvikrīḍānatā yābhir abhijñābhir vikrīḍan buddhakṣetrād buddhakṣetraṃ samkrāmati [ . . . ]* (Lamotte 2001, vol. 5, p. 2018).

<sup>8</sup> (Lamotte 2001, vol. 5, pp. 2018–20). The ability to play with superknowledges “without making any mental effort” (*cittānābhogena*) is also one of the features that distinguishes the bodhisattva on the eighth *bhūmi* from the ordinary Śrāvaka ascetic, who although has purified his mind through various *dhyānas* and *samāpattis*, still has to “give an impulse to his mind and directs his mind towards the *abhijñās* (*abhijñāya cittam abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*)”, see Lamotte (2003, p. 29).

<sup>9</sup> (Lamotte 2001, vol. 5, p. 2019). In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (I.5.1.1 in (Engle 2016, p. 319)), the ability to travel to the infinite universes in the *trisāhasramahāsāhasra-lokadhātu* such as Brahmāloka or the realm of Akaniṣṭha in the coarse body and returning back is part of a bodhisattva's miraculous power, called *ṛddhi*, which is one of the *abhijñās*.

<sup>10</sup> The five *abhijñās* were subsumed under the mundane path (*laukikamārga*), while the sixth *abhijñā* belonged to the transmudane path (*lokottaramārga*), since it was identical to the liberating insight (*nirvāṇa*) (Deleanu 2006, pp. 31–34; Clough 2012, pp. 77–78; Fiordalis 2012, p. 107). In the post-canonical Theravāda literature, the sixth *abhijñā* was discarded from the list of *abhijñās* (see Clough 2010, p. 411). In the Mahāyāna texts, such as the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* or the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, the distinction between the mundane and the transmudane *abhijñās* is still attested (Fiordalis 2012, p. 108).

<sup>11</sup> In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (chap. 5), the attainment of *abhijñās* by a *bodhisattva* is a sign of his power (*prabhāva*) and gives him ability to traverse all the infinite realms. The correlation between the possession of the *abhijñās* and the ability to reach innumerable universes is what distinguishes him from the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas who, although endowed with the *abhijñās*, can only reach two or three thousand realms (I.5.4. in Engle 2016, pp. 353–54; see also Katz (2010, p. 266)).

<sup>12</sup> (Lamotte 2001, vol. 1, pp. 268–271; vol. 4, pp. 1486–509) gives an extensive bibliography on the *abhijñās* in original sources of Pāli and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

<sup>13</sup> For the concept of five or six *abhijñās*, see de La Vallée Poussin (1931, p. 293); Clough (2010); Katz (2010, pp. 28–29).

- 14 (Wallis 2002, p. 76). Sarbacker (2012, pp. 203–4), following Larson, states that the powers of Patañjali’s *Yogasūtras* can be categorized into two groups. The first group consists of knowledges that include the powers of *abhijñā*, such as knowledge of the past and future, sounds of beings, previous births, and the minds of others.
- 15 *Bodhisattvabhūmi* 1.5.1 in (Engle 2016, p. 1373).
- 16 *Mahāyānasamgrahāṅkāra*, chap. 7, see Jamspal et al. (2004, p. 55).
- 17 Asaṅga’s *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (chap. 3, section 1 in Rahula and Boin-Webb 2001, p. 234) gives the following explanation: “What does one do by means of superknowledge (*abhijñā*)? One wins over [beings] to the Teaching (*śāsana*) by means of physical and vocal actions and reading thoughts (*cittādeśanā*), and one duly exhorts beings [to aim] for release (*nihsaraṇa*), having understood their character, and their comings and goings (*āgatigati*) [in *samsāra*]”. The same explanation is given in Asaṅga’s *Mahāyānasamgraha* (X.27), where the six *abhijñās* form the twenty-one qualities of the *dharma*-body (see Brunnhölzl 2018, p. 90). See also the explanation given in Sthiramati’s *Sūtrāṅkāravṛttibhāṣya* (Tg. vol. 215, f. 82a–82b), where the display of *abhijñās* is to ripen sentient beings: see (Engle 2016, p. 333).
- 18 In the early *kriyātantras*, such as the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* and the *Susiddhikarasūtra*, the five *abhijñās* often appear in the set of other categories that betray their Mahāyānist origins, such as the ascent of the bodhisattva through the *bhūmis*, travel to different *buddhakṣetras*, and perceiving the bodhisattvas ‘face to face’ (see e.g., *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* (MMK) (1964) 10.9; 11.57; 11.159; 14.103). In the *Susiddhikara* (Giebel 2001, p. 191), accomplishing the five *abhijñās*, and realizing the stages of a bodhisattva, belong to the highest *siddhis*. A similar classification is attested in the second *ṣaṭka* of the early Śākta tantra *Jayadrathayāmala* (2015, 2.3.49–54, f. 13r9–13v3), which mentions by name three of the five *abhijñās* (without, however, referring to them as *abhijñās*), namely, clairvoyance, clairaudience, and mind reading as the highest (*uttamā*) type of *siddhi*. In the *caryātantra* *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi* (Hodge 2003, p. 58), the attainment of five superknowledges is part of the method called “the gate of pure *bodhicitta*”, which is described as a *samādhi* by which all the obscurations are dissolved. Buddhaghūya in his commentary on the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi* (Hodge 2003, p. 58) clarifies that “with the divine eye, distant forms can be seen, without being obstructed even by mountains and walls and so on. With divine ear, distant sounds can be heard without being obstructed by mountains and walls and so on. One will know whether the minds of others have attachments or are free from attachments and so forth. One will recollect what one did and where one dwelt in former lives. One will attain the bases of supernatural powers (*ṛddhipāda*)”. In another passage of the same text (Hodge 2003, p. 209), the five *abhijñās* are obtained through *samādhi* without perceptual forms. The *pañcabhijñā* features in chapter 23 of the *yogatantra* *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, where the lord Ākāśagarbha describes the method of attaining the *pañcabhijñā* of all the Tathāgata families abiding in the Vajrasattva-samādhi while meditating on the tathāgatas and bodhisattvas abiding in one’s own body (Kwon 2002, p. 282). In another section of the same chapter, the STTS describes the method of attaining *siddhis*, such as Buddhahood, “by means of generating and realizing the five supernatural knowledges of all the families of the Tathāgatas through the yogas of the deities of all the families” (Kwon 2002, p. 285).
- 19 Note that the reference to the five *abhijñās* is absent in the proto-yoginītantra *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinījālasaṃvara* (See Negī 2018).
- 20 See (Wenta 2018, p. 535) for the image of a feeble person or an ox-drawn cart to draw an analogy between the limitations encountered by practitioners pursuing the non-tantric paths that require a period of the three incalculable eons to reach the enlightenment, and the tantric path, known for its fastness.
- 21 In the *Mahānāyasaṃgraha* (V.6) by Asaṅga we read that *bodhisattvas* complete their ascent through all the ten *bhūmis* during three incalculable eons: see (Brunnhölzl 2018, p. 218).
- 22 The *Guhyasamāja* (12.49ab–59ab, ed. Matsunaga 1978, p. 42) gives the following list of *pañcabhijñās*: *vajra*-eye (*vajracakṣus*), giving the ability to see the Buddhas abiding in the three *vajras*; *vajra*-ear (*vajrasrotra*), enabling to hear whatever sounds are uttered as if they were in your ear; *vajra*-mind (*vajracitta*), making it possible to know the thoughts of all beings; *vajra*-recollection (*vajranivāsa*), enabling to remember one’s past lives; and *vajra*-miraculous powers (*vajraṛddhi*), enabling to expand the eons with ornaments made of clouds of the Buddhas. For the six *abhijñās* in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (chap. 5), see (Engle 2016, p. 312–41).
- 23 For the detailed explanation of Nāgārjuna’s theory of *kāraṅka-karma* and his critique of Yogācāra’s notion of agent as *svabhāvic* entity, see Lusthaus (2002, pp. 201–6).
- 24 According to semantic analysis, *kāraṅka* is derived from the Sanskrit root  $\sqrt{kr}$  ‘to act’.
- 25 *Madhyamakāvātara* (v.12): “agent depends on (*pratītya*) action, and action also depends on agent to occur (*pravartate*). We see no other way (*nānyat paśyāmah*) of effectively establishing (*siddhi kāraṅgaṃ*) [them]”, Lusthaus (2002, p. 205).
- 26 Quoting from an unidentified tantra, he says: “Moreover, it is said in a tantra: ‘If you enter the practice of *mantra-sādhana* that causes the ripening of one’s own [mind] stream, you should abandon these things: ill-suited places, ill-suited companions, ill-suited material objects, and ill-suited thoughts’”, *de yang rgyud las rang rgyud rab tu smin par bya ba’i sngags pa bsgrub pa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa na/gnas mi mthun pa dang/grogs ma yin pa dang rdzas* (N: *rnam*) *ma yin pa dang/bsam pa ma yin pa gnas spang* (D: *spyad bar bya’o zhes gsungs pa yin no*/Comm. Derge, p. 397.
- 27 For the Tibetan text, see (Wenta 2018, p. 539).
- 28 *de la brtson pa ’grus shin tu ’bar ba ni mgo la me ’bar ba gsad pa la shin tu brtson pa ltar dge ba’i phyogs la gcig tu brtson pa’o*/Comm. Derge, folio 399.

- 29 Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (chap. 1. 10 in [Rahula and Boin-Webb 2001](#), p. 10).
- 30 *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇavibhāṣya* 26b4, ed. [Kramer \(2015\)](#), p. 301).
- 31 *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇavibhāṣya* 26b4, ed. [Kramer \(2015\)](#), p. 301): *vīryaṃ katamat, kausīdyapratipakṣaḥ kuśale cetaso 'bhyutsāhaḥ*. For a translation of *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇavibhāṣya*, see [Engle \(2009\)](#), p. 287).
- 32 *sems dmigs pa la rtse gcig pa ni dmigs pa la mnyam par gzhas pa'i tshes char dang nyi ma dang rlung dang rnga dang dung gi sgra la sogs pas kyang ma g.yo ba'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 399.
- 33 *dmigs pa'i don la rtse gcig gzhas ces bya ba ni mnyam par gzhas pa'i tshes ni bdag gi de nyid dam/lha'i de nyid la rtse gcig tu byas la/langs pa'i tshes ni thams cad sgyu ma lta bur mos pas spyod pas so/Comm. Derge*, pp. 397–398.
- 34 *'jig rten pa'i las kyi mtha' ngan pa rnam par gyengs pa'i rgyu thams cad spangs nas rang gi 'dod pa'i lha'i ras bris la sogs pa bris nas/dang por sva bhA va śu ddha H zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i sngags bzlas la/Comm. Derge*, pp. 395–396.
- 35 *stong pa nyid du sgom zhing/byams pa la sogs pa tshad med pa rnams bsgom pa dang/rang gi 'dod pa'i lha dba' bo gcig pu 'am/dkyil 'khor gyi lha yang rung cho ga bzhin du/Comm. Derge*, p. 396.
- 36 For a discussion about the realization of emptiness and perceiving the phenomena as illusion in the context of the Yogācāra concept of the three bodies (*trikāya*), see [Hodge \(2003\)](#), p. 33). For these two concepts as explicating the relative and absolute truths, see [Gómez \(1977\)](#), p. 231).
- 37 *gnas ma yin pa ni byang chub chen po la sogs pa sgrub pa'i gnas bstan pa las gzhan pa mu stegs byed kyi gnas dang/tshong 'dus skye bo mang po 'dus ba'i sa rnams spangs pa'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 397.
- 38 *groggs ma yin pa ni 'dod pa dang gnyid dang/rmugs pa la dga' ba dang/zhe sdang dang phrag dog che ba dang/dbang ma bskur ba dang/gsang sngags la dad pa med pa rnams spangs la/bdag pas yon tan lhag par gyur pa 'am/bdag dang mnyam pa dang lhan cig gnas pa'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 397.
- 39 *longs spyod ma yin pa ni sngags pa sems rnam par g.yeng bar byed pa'i rgyu bud med dang/chang la sogs pa lhag par zhen pa skye ba'i gnas su gyur pa rnams spangs pa'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 397.
- 40 *bsam pa ma yin pa ni 'dod chags dang zhe sdang dang gti mug dang nga rgyal dang phrag dog la sogs pa sngon du song ba'i sems kyi 'jug pa spang ba'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 397.
- 41 *yang dag pa'i lta ba dang ldan pa ni rgyu dang 'bras bu la skur pa mi 'debs shing rnam par smin pa la yid ches pa'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 399.
- 42 For the “ripening” in Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, see ([Mrozik 2007](#), pp. 50–53). For a detailed description of “ripening” in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, cf. *vipākaphala*, see [Engle \(2016\)](#), pp. 478–524).
- 43 *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, in ([Engle 2016](#), p. 478–79).
- 44 See note 26 above.
- 45 For the Tibetan text and translation of this passage, see ([Wenta 2018](#), pp. 538–39).
- 46 *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* 9.12 (see [Jamspal et al. 2004](#), p. 78). For the overview of this concept in various Mahāyāna sources, see ([Makransky 1997](#), pp. 62–68).
- 47 The epithet *vidyādhara*, given to the person who has mastered the execution of tantric rituals and gained various supernatural powers (*siddhis*), seems to belong to the early stratum of tantric literature. It is often found in esoteric Buddhist texts, but rarely in the Śaiva tantras, except for the *Niśvāsattvasaṃhitā*, where it appears as the most common goal of *sādhana* ([Goodall and Isaacson 2016](#)). In 673 C.E., Chinese monk Yijing, on his sojourn in India, reports the existence of a corpus of Buddhist tantric scriptures referred to as the *vidyādharaṭṭaka*, the “Basket of Spell-holders” (see [Hodge 1992](#), p. 10; [Gray 2009](#), pp. 2–3; [Davidson 2002](#), p. 24). This is perhaps the earliest and the only attested reference to a large corpus of esoteric Buddhist texts with clear links with the world of wizardry. Nevertheless, the theme of *vidyādhara* and the magical powers associated with gaining its status was part of the matrix of Indian non-sectarian literature, predating the emergence of tantric sects. The most famous example is perhaps the lost Prakrit text known as the *Brhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya, which narrates the journey of the prince gradually becoming a *vidyādhara* ([Hatley 2007](#), p. 99). As far as the sectarian literature is concerned, Jaina and Vaiṣṇava sources also attest to the importance of becoming a *vidyādhara* as the goal of *sādhana* ([Goodall and Isaacson 2016](#), p. 60).
- 48 The place of the *siddha* is a fabulous palace of gods, etc. and his enjoyments comprise of the *dharma* teachings, etc. (*gnas dang longs spyod ni lha'i gzhal yas khang la sogs pa dang/chos gyi longs spyod pa la sogs pa dag go/Comm. Derge*, p. 399).
- 49 *tshes la dbang sgyur ba ni 'dod na bskal par yang gnas shing sems can gyi don mthong na lus gzhan len pa'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 399.
- 50 *mi khom par skye ba las gtan du grolzhes bya ba/mi khom pa brgyad po de dag tu sems can gyi don mthong nas rang gi 'dod pa'i dbang gis skye ba len pa ni srid kyi/las dang nyon mongs pa'i rgyus de dag tu mi skye ba'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 399.
- 51 *sangs rgyas 'byung dang phrad sogs dang zhes bya ba ni tshes rabs thams cad du sangs rgyas 'byung ba dang phrad pa 'am/de'i dam pa'i chos gnas pa dang phrad pa'o/sogs pas bsdu ba ni byang chub sems dpa' rnams dang 'groggs pa dang mi 'bral pa'o/Comm. Derge*, p. 399.
- 52 *'dod yon lnga po shes bzhin du spyod la 'ching bar mi 'gyur dang zhes bya ba la' 'dod pa'i yon tan lnga po rang gi sems gzung byar (D: bar) snang ba nyid gzung rdo rje la sogs pa longs spyod du shes shing/phung po dang/khams dang/skye mched rnams sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpar rtogs pas mchod pa dang/mchod pa'i gnas rnams sems gzung 'dzin gyi rnam pa can du ro gcig par shes pas longs spyod kyang 'ching bar yang mi 'gyur la bsod nams chen por yang 'gyur ba'o/Comm. Derge*, pp. 399–400.

- 53 *bdag gzhan phan skyed nus pa'o zhes bya ba ni/ma 'ongs pa'i dus ring po dag tu bdag dang gzhan gyi mtho ris dang thar pa'i bde ba skyed nus pa'o/Comm. Derge, p. 400.*
- 54 *lus mi las khyad par du 'phags pa ni gser kyi kha dog dang/mtshan dang dpe byad kyis brgyan pa la sogs pa la'o/Comm. Derge, p. 399.*
- 55 See *Bodhisattvabhūmi* III. 5.1–2, see [Engle \(2016\)](#), pp. 1330–35).
- 56 See *Mahayānasūtrālaṅkāra* Chap. 2, transl. in ([Jamspal et al. 2004](#), p. 19).
- 57 In this regard, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (III.5.3, see [Engle 2016](#), pp. 1327–31) provides a detailed description of the thirty-two marks and eighty signs correlating each virtuous deed with a corresponding physical mark. For example, the imprint of a wheel on bodhisattva's hands and feet is acquired through traveling here and there in order to protect sentient beings from various calamities, etc., while the mark of having an upper part of the body like that of a lion is because bodhisattva acts courageously in relation to the interests of sentient beings.
- 58 *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* v. 2, 690, quoted in ([Mrozik 2007](#), p. 71).
- 59 According to [Makransky \(1997\)](#), pp. 106–7), the earliest correlation between the thirty-two marks and eighty signs of the great man with the enjoyment body is attested in Chapter eight of the *Abhisamāyalaṅkāra*. For the discussion of various Mahāyāna texts that lack the formal classification of the Buddha's body under the *saṃbhogikakāya*, see ([Makransky 1997](#), pp. 176–79).
- 60 *Guhyasamājatantra* 7. 1ab–6cd (ed. [Matsunaga 1978](#), p. 20); 7. 17ab–28cd (ed. [Matsunaga 1978](#), p. 21–22)
- 61 *Guhyasamājatantra* 7.7ab–14cd (ed. [Matsunaga 1978](#), p. 21–22): The five objects of the sense organs correspond to the five Buddhas, namely, sight to Vairocana, sound to Ratnaketu, smell to Amitāyus, taste to Amoghavajra, and touch to Akṣobhya.
- 62 For the concept of *viśuddhi*, see ([Sferra 1999](#), pp. 83–103; [Gray 2011](#), pp.45–60).
- 63 The concept of “single taste” (*sāmarasya*) in its cognitive aspect as the transcendence of subject–object duality resulting in the experience of ‘fusion’ is also attested the Śākta tradition of the Krama. See, e.g., the [Mahānāyaprakāśa of Śitikaṅṭha with Commentary \(1918\)](#), 8.6), which describes union as the equal taste of the perceived object and the perceiving subject (*vedyavedakasāmarasyaṃ melāpasiddhānāṃ melāpahi*). The concept of *samarāsaya* is also attested in the following passage of the *Paramārthasāra* of Abhinavagupta (kārikās 10–11 in [Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi 2011](#), p. 110): “the ultimate principle is of an undelimited nature (*aparicchinnasvabhāva*), inasmuch as it is free of all mental constructs, which are themselves delimiting factors. Therefore, the master says: ‘it is pure’, free of stain, due to the absence of the soot-like impurity found in thought construct. Similarly, [the master says: that the ultimate principle is] serene (*sānta*), reposing [ever] in its absolute nature, in unison (*sāmarasya*) with its *śakti*, for there is no disturbance (*kṣobha*) arising from the dichotomy between the knower and the known”. *Paramārthasāra kārikā* 43 ([Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi 2011](#), p. 204): “*brahman* is an equal essence (*sarvasamarasikaraṇa*) consequent upon the experience: ‘I am all this’ (*ahaṃ idaṃ sarvaṃ*)”. This passage resembles the *Hevajratantra*'s discussion (I. 8. 39–41 in [Snellgrove 1959](#), p. 77) of a single-flavour as the aspect of the state of *sahaja*: “Whatever things there are, moving and motionless, all these things I am. They are accepted as being equal and the same by those who have realized the truth and find everywhere the same flavour. To be equal is to be the same, and of this the manifestation is the flavour. There is a single substance of the one same flavor, and in this sense, it is said that
- “The whole of existence arises in me,  
In me arises the threefold world,  
By me pervaded is this all,  
Of nought else does this world consist.”
- See also *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi* ([Hodge 2003](#), pp. 52–53) “On sole-taste of tathāgata's liberation, abandonment of the obscurations of the emotional afflictions and wrong understanding and the complete transcendence of the basis of habitual tendencies to selective conceptualization. They are all of one state”. And Jayaratha's commentary on Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* (*Tantrāloka of Abhinavagupta*, 4. 172): “So in this way, here—in the transcendent abode whose nature is I-awareness—all this, namely, object, instrument of knowledge, subject and knowledge expanding in the diversity of forms is nothing but consciousness, it shines as one-flavour” (*tadevaṃ atra—ahaṃparāmarśātmany akule dhānini, prameyaṃ pramāṇi pramātā pramā ca ity etatsarvaṃ nānārūpatayojjimbhamāṇaṃ cinmātrameva—tadekarasatayāvabhāsatēh*).
- 64 For the *vaśītās* in the *Mahānāyaprajñāpāramitā*, see [Lamotte \(2001\)](#), vol. II, p. 368).
- 65 *Mahāyānasamgraha* X.3. in [Brunnhölzl \(2018\)](#), p. 625).
- 66 The *Mahānāyaprajñāpāramitā* ([Lamotte 2001](#), vol. II, p. 366): “*dharmakāya* of the buddhas consists of white dharmas (*śukladharmasvabhāvalakṣaṇa*) because it has attained ten masteries (*vaśītā*), one of them is mastery of life (*āyurvaśītā*), which has been acquired by means of fulfilling the virtue of generosity (*dānapāramitāparipūri*), and (*utpattivaśītā*) acquired by the fulfillment of the virtue of morality (*śīlapāramitāparipūri*)”.
- 67 *yul dang dus ni de dang der zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos te/sangs rgyas kyi zhing yongs su dag pa rnam sam lha'i gnas la sogs pa de dang der ro/Comm. Derge, p. 400.*
- 68 *'byor pa'i bde ba la spyod cing zhes bya ba la/mi las khyad par du 'phags pa'i gzugs la sogs pa'i longs spyod kyi bde ba gya nom pa la bdag nyid spyod pa'o/Comm. Derge, p. 400.*

- 69 *de bzhin 'phags pa rnams la yang ci nus par ni mchod pa dang zhes bya ba la/bdag spyod pa de bzhin du 'phags pa rnams la yang ste/sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' rnams dang dgra bcom pa dang rang sangs rgyas rnams la yang mchod pa'i sprin rab 'byam dpag tu med pa dbul zhing/rang 'dod pa'i lha mnyes par byed pa la yang skad cig re res kyang gong nas gong du khyad par du 'phags par 'jug pa'o/Comm. Derge, p. 400.*
- 70 *phan gdags tshar gcod kyis 'dul ba'i zhes bya ba la sogs pa la/nad dang 'tshes ba sna tshogs kyi gnod pa rnams la ni/sdug bsngal sna tshogs zhi bar byed cing tshes/dang longs spyod la sogs pa rgyas par byed do/shin tu gdug cing gtum la rang bzhin ngan pa gzhan la 'tshes ba rnams la ni kro bo shin tu mi bzad pa lag na mtshon cha sna tshogs 'dzin cing gsod pa la dga' ba lta bur sprul nas 'dul bar byed do/gzhan yang sems can rnams dang rjes su mthun par nam mkha' la 'gro ba dang/me 'bar ba dang/chu 'bebs pa la sogs pa rdzu 'phrul sna tshogs bstan pas 'dul bar byed do/Comm. Derge, p. 400.*
- 71 *dmyal la sogs par yud tsam la 'ang bsil dang drod sogs sbyin pa dang zhes bya ba na/tsha ba 'di dmyal ba rnams su ser bu'i bsil ba dang spos kyi char la sogs pa 'bebs pas bsil ba sbyin par byed do/grang ba'i dmyal ba rnams la ni me'i phung po la sogs pa sprul nas dro ba sbyin par byed do/Comm. Derge, pp. 400–401.*
- 72 *de bzhin sems can sna tshogs la chos rnams sna tshogs ston pa ste zhes bya ba la/lha dang mi dang lha ma yin la sogs pa sems can mos pa dang/skad sna tshogs can rnams la so so'i skad kyis mos pa bzhin du chos sna tshogs ston pa'o/Comm. Derge, p. 401.*
- 73 *sman gyi ljon shing chen po ltar/mthong dang thos dang reg pa dang/dran pas kun la phan 'gyur ba'o/zhes bya ba la/dper na sman gyi ljon shing chen po la zhe sdang gis gcad dam dga' bas bcad kyang rung ji ltar yang phan 'dogs par byed pa yin pa ltar grub pa'i skyes bu de la yang sems can rnams kyi chags pa'i sems sam/sdang ba'i sems kyis kyang rung/mig gis mthong dam/rna bas thos sam/lus kyis reg gam/sems kyis dran yang rung/ci nas kyang phan pa 'byung ba yin no/Comm. Derge, p. 401.*
- 74 *Bodhisattvabhūmi I.5.1.1.1 in Engle (2016, p. 324).*
- 75 *Bodhisattvabhūmi I. 5.1.1.2.1 in Engle (2016, p. 334).*
- 76 *Bodhisattvabhūmi I.10.2.6.11 in Engle (2016, p. 641).*
- 77 \*Akṣobhya describes this process as follows: “First, one visualizes Mañjuśrī in a peaceful form; then, one realizes that with a peaceful body one cannot train the wrathful beings. [Having reached this understanding], one has to visualize him with the sun in his heart, the ray of which will intimidate those wrathful ones. Then, one realizes that those very wrathful ones are not tamed, and one merges himself with Mañjuśrī and with the sun that is presided over by the blazing vajras at the end. They shot out and go above the head of those very wrathful ones and they are tamed. But even though the extremely wrathful ones are intimidated, they are not tamed by these vajras either; it is then that one assumes the body of Mahā[vajra]bhairava, and this form will cut them down. The yogin [who visualizes himself as Vajrabhairava] also tames the *samgraha-devatās*, because they are merely servants. As for those extremely wrathful ones, these are Brahmā, Indra, Īśvara (=Śiva), and Kumāra. They are said to be devoured, as will be explained below”. *dang por 'jam pa'i dpal de nyid kyis bdag nyid kyi zhi ba'i skus ldang ba rnams 'dul ba ma yin par gzigs te/thugs kar nyi ma gnas par bya ste/de'i 'od zer gyis sdang ba rnams bsdigs te/. 'on kyang rab tu sdang ba dag mi 'dul bar gzigs nas/yang bdag nyid dang nyi mar bcas pa/rdo rje 'bar bar byin gyis brlabs shing de'i sprul pa rnams 'dul ba de dag gi spyi bo'i steng du/gnas te bsdigs pa na yang shin tu rab tu sdang ba rnams 'dul ba ma yin no/de nas ni yang 'jigs byed chen po'i sku 'dzin par gyur pas/de dag tshar bcad de/. de dag rnal 'byor pa des rkang [em.; kyang ed.] rjes su spyod pa tsam yin pas na/bsdu ba'i lha rnams kyang 'dul ba yin la/shin tu rab tu sdang ba de rnams ni/tshangs pa dang/brgya byin dang/dbang phyug dang/gzhon nu rnams gsol bar mdzad pa zhes 'chad par 'gyur ba'o/. \*Akṣobhya's *pañjikā*, pp. 380–382.*
- 78 For the passage of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, see Lamotte (2001, vol. 5, p. 1917).
- 79 For the passage of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, see Lamotte (2001, vol. 2, p. 565).
- 80 *Bodhisattvabhūmi I.5.2.1 in Engle (2016, p. 353).*
- 81 For the passage of the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, see Jamspal et al. (2004, p. 257).
- 82 *Bodhisattvabhūmi I. 17.1 in Engle (2016, p. 992).*
- 83 See note 81 above.
- 84 For the explanation of the four *pratisaṃvids* in Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasamgraha*, see Griffiths et al. (1989, p. 140–143).
- 85 For the metaphor of medicine-tree in the *Mahāyāna-sūtras* researched by Demiéville, see (Tatz 1985, p. 47).
- 86 See note 85 above.
- 87 *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 3. 16 in Crosby and Skilton (1998, p. 21).

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