# Sarvabuddhasamāyogadākinījālaśamvara

The Sarvabuddhasamāyogadākinījālaśamvara (henceforth Samvara) is a significant transitional scripture between what later came to be viewed as the yogatantra and the yoginitantra (or yoganiruttara) classes (Tanaka, 2010, 340); in modern scholarship, it is sometimes referred to as the "proto- yoginitantra" (Tomabechi, 2007, 904; Sanderson, 2009, 147). Along with the Guhyasamājatantra, it bridges the gap between the type of esoteric Buddhism that by and large still operates within the realm of ritual purity and that of transgressive, antinomian esoteric revelation. The Samvara was instrumental in introducing significant Saiva elements into Buddhism, including the practice of enacting the pantheon in communal worship, the imagery of the cremation ground, and the almost the almost fully versified compositional style as opposed to mixed verse and prose (Sanderson, 2009, 148-156). The text already existed in some form in the early 8th century (Giebel, 1995, 179-182; Tomabechi, 2007, 904-905; Sanderson, 2009, 145-146).

# Sources and Related Works

Until very recently, access to the Samvara was possible only through its Tibetan translation (Dpal sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro ma sgyu ma bde ba'i mchog ces bya ba'i rgyud bla ma; D 366/P 8) and scattered testimonia (both quotations and incorporations) of a few dozen verses in the original Sanskrit. However, it is now known that, although long overlooked (having been purchased in Nepal in 1898; Lévi, 1899, 85), one manuscript (Ms. SL 48) kept at the Collège de France, Bibliothèque de l'Institut d'études indiennes, is an almost complete codex unicus of the Śamvara. It contains only the first nine of the text's ten chapters. Despite the long chapter 9 being copied with the omission of an extensive passage and the short chapter 10 missing entirely, at least 90% of the text is now available in the original. Judging on the basis of paleographical and codicological features, the manuscript was most likely copied during the late 11th century and was a product of a scriptorium located in the Pala Empire, or a Nepalese scriptorium closely imitating the style of Pala scribes and manuscript production. An edition is in preparation (Griffiths, Sanderson & Szántó, forthcoming).

The circumstances behind the creation of the Tibetan translation are not clear. The text is transmitted in both the "old" (rnying ma) and the "new" (gsar ma) canons, that is to say the Nyingma Gyubum (Rnying ma rgyud 'bum) and the Kanjur (Bka' 'gyur), but only the former names the translators as the Indian Vajrahāsa and the Tibetan Rin chen mchog of the Sma clan. It is possible that there was a complete earlier translation made during the Tibetan Imperial Period, which was later revised. To date, only a part of chapter 5 has been identified as a translation of the *Śamvara* among the Dunhuang manuscripts (Tanaka, 2010, 330), which otherwise contain ample evidence that the *Śamvara* was well known at least after the collapse of the Tibetan Empire (Dalton & van Schaik, 2006, 196, 291). Furthermore, the \*Adhyardhaśatikāţīkā (D 2647/ P 3471), a treatise by Jñānamitra translated during the Imperial Period, also refers to the Samvara and its etiological myth (Kanaoka, 1966; Davidson, 2002, 242-245). Thus Tibetan awareness of the text must date back still further.

The Śamvara was not transmitted to China, but the text did not remain entirely unknown there. In fact, the earliest known reference to the text is in a Chinese work, the *Jingangding jing yujia shibahui zhigui* (金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸;Introduction to the Yoga of the 18 Sections of the *Vajraśekharatantra*; T. 869 [XVIII] 286c9ff.), composed by Amoghavajra between 746 and 774 CE (Giebel, 1995, 179–182; Tomabechi, 2007, 904–905; Sanderson, 2009, 145– 146; Tanaka, 2010, 330). The passage in question is a short description of the scripture, with a very clear reference to teachings contained in chapter 1 and, as shown by Tanaka (2010, 330–332, reiterating earlier publications in Japanese), chapter 9.

While no such classification seems to have gained currency in Indian exegesis, the Tibetan canon calls the *Śamvara* a "continuation *tantra*" (*uttaratantra*), which would suggest that the *Śamvara* we now have is not the "basic *tantra*" (*mūlatantra*), despite this being the way in which at least one 9th-century Indian author refers to it (Wedemeyer, 2007, 477).

There is, however, a supplementary scripture, the *Sarvakalpasamuccaya* (*Rtog pa thams cad 'dus pa zhes bya ba Sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro ma bde ba'i mchog gi rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma*; D 367/P 9), which the Tibetan tradition classifies as the "continuation to the continuation *tantra*" (*uttarottaratantra*). However, this supplementary scripture is referred to as the *Śamvarottara* by at least one Indian exegete, Ratnākaraśānti (Dwivedi & Rinpoche, 1992, 17).

The situation is made even more complex by the fact that the "old" canon preserves a short text simply called the *Buddhasamāyoga*, which is arranged in this canon as if it were the lost basic *tantra*. Moreover, the five chapters of the *Sarvakalpasamuccaya* are numbered 18 to 22, implying a seven-chapter lost text between the ten-chapter *Śamvara* and itself.

The Sarvakalpasamuccaya is certainly an Indian work, the original Sanskrit of which appears to be lost, with the exception of a handful of quotations. Besides the translation of the scripture, the Tibetan canon preserves a translated commentary (Rtog pa thams cad'dus pa zhes bya ba Sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro ma sgyu ma bde ba'i mchog gi rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma rnam par bshad pa; D 1662/P 2534) to this text by the exegete Ānandagarbha (perhaps late 8th or early 9th cent.). The Sarvakalpasamuccaya deals mostly with the encoding and decoding of mantras (mantroddhāra) of the Śamvara cycle. The encoding system taught here is an adaptation from the Śaiva Vīņāśikhatantra, making this passage one of the earliest instances of tantric Śaiva-Buddhist intertextuality (Tomabechi, 2007; see also Woodward, 2009, 30-34).

There were several commentaries to the Śamvara, none of which are known to have survived in the original, although some remain accessible in Tibetan. The Sarvabuddhațīkā of Ānandagarbha is perhaps completely lost and known only from a reference in Mahāmatideva's unpublished Tattvaviśadākhyā nāma Dākinīvajrapañjarapañjikā (National Archives, Kathmandu 5-20, fol. 7r). The longest known commentary (Dpal sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro ma sgyu ma bde mchog gi rgyud kyi don rnam par bshad pa; D 1659/P 2531), that of one Brgya byin sdong po (Sanskritized as \*Indranāla), is very likely not a genuine translation but rather a work authored in Tibet. \*Pramuditavajra's commentary (Dpal sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro ma sgyu ma bde mchog gi 'grel pa Mnyam sbyor gyi rgyan; D 1660/P 2532) is not very early, since he refers to previous commentators, Anandagarbha and

\*Praśāntamitra, and later (9th-10th cents.) scriptures, such as the Herukābhidhāna/Laghuśamvara, the Catuspithatantra, and the Vajradākatantra. Śākyamitra's commentary (Dpal sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi dka''grel; D 1661/P 2533) is recorded under the name of his master Indrabhūti. Parts of this work, a versified question-answer session between master and disciple, possibly dating to the 9th century, survive "scripturalized," as part of the Samputatilaka (transmitted together with the Samputodbhavatantra in Royal Asiatic Society Ms. Hodgson 37; Welcome Institute Library Ms. & 2; Asiatic Society Calcutta G 3828), a text that may also contain materials from Ānandagarbha's lost commentary. \*Praśāntamitra's commentary (Sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba'i dka' 'grel; D 1663/P 2535) likely dates from the 9th century, since tradition identifies him as a disciple of Jñānapāda, and because he does not quote works that can be suspected to be later than the 10th century.

Among satellite texts, the Tanjur preserves eight ritual manuals (D 1664-1671/P 2536-2543) attributed to the siddha \*Kukurarāja or \*Kukurāja (on whom, see Kanaoka, 1966), a ritual manual concerning communal worship (D 1672/P 2544) attributed to (an) Indrabhūti (parts of which have been translated and discussed in Davidson, 2002, 318-320), five manuals by \*Hūmkāravajra (D 1674-1678/ P 2546–2550) – possibly written in Tibet during the late Imperial Period – and several other, minor works. Satellite texts surviving in Sanskrit include an important, yet still unedited, meditation manual centered on the deity Heruka called Vajrajvālodayā Sādhanopayikā, by Ānandagarbha, which was not translated into Tibetan (for a partial edition and discussion, see Sanderson, 2009, 148-154; also see Isaacson, 2009, 112-113), two less detailed sādhanas of Heruka (ed. Bhattacharya, 1925–1928, 468–471), one by Kalyānagarbha and the other by an anonymous author, most likely Jñānapāda (Kikuya, 2000,1), and several minor works.

## **Precursors and Influence**

The Śamwara is still deeply rooted in the traditions of the *yogatantras*: this is evident from its liturgy (Sanderson, 2009, 145–146), its great concern with hand gestures and other ritual minutiae, and several dozens of verses that it incorporates from earlier texts. These include scriptures of the *Paramādya* cycle (Tomabechi, 2006, 103; 2007, 904, 918–921; Tanaka, 2010, 340), most notably the text that is now known as the \**Paramādyamantrakalpakhaņ*da (D 488/P 120), the *Vajramaņ*dālaņkāra (D 490/ P 123), parallels with which have already been noticed and discussed by Tanaka (2007), although he argues for the borrowing to have happened the other way around, and the *Trisamayarājakalpa* (D 502/P 134), an early and influential *kriyātantra* from which the *Śaņvara* not only borrows but to which it also makes explicit reference. The composition of the text in light of these precursors still awaits detailed study (Griffiths, Sanderson & Szántó, forthcoming).

The influence of the *Samvara* is only slightly better studied. A whole host of yoginitantras incorporate verses from it, sometimes verbatim. These scriptures include the Herukābhidhāna/Laghuśamvara (Sanderson, 2009, 154), which also seems to refer to it explicitly, the Vajradākatantra (Sugiki, 2002, 85, 105-106, 108-109), the Abhidhānottaratantra (Sugiki, 2002, 105-106, 108-109), and the Samputodbhavatantra (Tomabechi, 2006, 143-144; Szántó, 2013, 352, 354, 361). Many significant exegetical works and treatises quote the Samvara with or without reference. The popularity of the text seems to have reached its apogee in the 9th century, after which it slowly faded away in favor of the newer yoginitantras. Works from the 9th century that refer to the Samvara or incorporate passages from it include the Nāmamantrārthāvalokinī of Vilāsavajra (Tanaka, cited in Tribe, 1994, 406), the *Ātmasādhanāvatāra* of Jñānapāda (D 1860/P 2723), the Sūtaka or Sūtakamelāpaka (better known under the unattested title \*Caryāmelāpakapradīpa) of Āryadeva (Tomabechi, 2006, 87–90, 160, 206, 212, 279-282, 288-289; Wedemeyer, 2007, 365-366, 373-374, 466-468, 477-479; Sanderson, 2009, 145, 154), the Jñānasiddhi of (an) Indrabhūti (Tomabechi, 2006, 138, 164, 206; Sanderson, 2009, 155-156), the Pradīpoddyotana of Candrakīrti (Chakravarti, 1984, 20), the Vajrasattvanispādanasūtra of the same (Luo & Tomabechi, 2009, 13-15, 28), the Pañcakrama of Nāgārjuna and Śākyamitra (Tomabechi, 2006, 38, 80, 132, 143, 160-162, 164-165), the Vimśatividhi of Nāgabuddhi (Tanaka, 2010, 648-649), and the Tattvasiddhi of deutero-Śāntaraksita (Moriguchi, 1993, 181-184; Tomabechi, 2006, 160, 206).

# Language and Style

Excluding chapter colophons and short, identifying prose passages such as those containing the names

of hand gestures (*mudrās*), the text is entirely in verse. This is a significant feature for a text of this age, since it marks a clear break from earlier scriptures such as the *Guhyasamājatantra* or the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, which are cast in mixed verse and prose. By far the most common meter is *anuṣtubh*, other meters (e.g. *mañjubhāṣiṇī*, *nardaṭaka*, *āryā*, and some still unidentified) occurring only rarely. The chapters are of varying length: around 25 verses (chs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 10), around 70 verses (ch. 7), and around 100 verses (chs. 5 and 6); chapter 9 comprises more than half of the entire text; the total is approximately 1,000 verses.

The language is on the whole regular Sanskrit, although there are several features coinciding with those of the aiśa/ārṣa register, such as double samdhi (e.g. prāpyatehaiva janmani), hypermetrical lines that can be scanned through contraction (e.g. reading tathāgatasya pravacane as tathāg'tasya pravacane), hypometrical lines that can be resolved with an epenthetic vowel (e.g. reading parşatsamniveśah syāt as parisatsamniveśah syāt), irregular stems (e.g. adhva for adhvan), and special declension endings (e.g. bhāvavān becomes bhāvām; presumably *balasā* means *balena*). The *Śamvara* is probably the first Buddhist tantric text to employ Apabhramsha (at least seven passages, the first in ch. 6 and the rest in ch. 9). Cliché lines abound: some of these have become "hallmark" verses of the text and often are among those adopted by later scriptures. All chapters end with the line "thus spoke the blessed one, the glorious Vajrasattva."

The tone of the *Śamwara* is even more arcane than that of other scriptures of its kind. The text was clearly intended from the outset to be susceptible to multiple interpretations. A synopsis of contents can only be tentative, even with the help of commentaries, since only very rarely can we find exegetical consensus about the buildup of the text, the sequence of topics, the boundaries between them, and their intended purpose.

## Synopsis of Contents

The text is referred to in a variety of ways, including the full title. The most often-used designation is  $\hat{S}amvara$  or Samvara (either consciously or through scribal dialect, with or without the honorific  $\hat{s}r\bar{r}$ -, sometimes followed by *-tantra*). This has caused some confusion in modern scholarship, as  $\hat{S}amvara$ was taken to be a reference to a related, but later, text – the *Laghuśamvara/Herukābhidhāna* (Szántó, 2008, 216–217; Tanaka, 2010, 329). We encounter less often the designations *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* (Tomabechi, 2006, 143) and *Mūlatantra* (Wedemeyer, 2007, 477).

The unwieldy title Sarvabuddhasamāyogadākinījālaśamvara is often used as a refrain in the text, forming precisely one anustubh hemistich. The intended meaning of this title is uncertain; the text's exegetes have analyzed it in a variety of ways. The compound appears to be a fusion of two Vidyāpīțha Śaiva scriptural titles, the Sarvavīrasamāyoga and the Yoginijālaśamvara (Sanderson, 2009, 156). Sarvabuddha means "all buddhas," but the compound may also allude to an older designation of Vairocana, the primordial buddha of the yogatantras. In its very first verse, the text also describes its supreme deity, Vajrasattva, as consisting of all buddhas. Samāyoga means "union," so the compound sarvabuddhasamāyoga could mean "the union of all buddhas," but for instance the Tibetan translation suggests that it was understood as "union with all buddhas." The word dākinī (usually translated as goddess, female spirit, and even witch) is interpreted in verse 7 of chapter 1, where it is derived from the verbal root *dai-*, "to go in the sky," as indicating the supernatural accomplishment of flying through space. However, the next verse interprets the word to mean the union of or with all buddhas, with the following verse giving an interpretation fusing the two above. One of the meanings of *jāla* is net, but references to the concept of illusion  $(m\bar{a}y\bar{a})$ in chapter 1 make it likely that trickery or magic was the intended meaning. The word samvara is analyzed as supreme (vara) bliss (śam). However, since in eastern India the palatal and dental sibilants are not reliably distinguished in writing, the word can also be read as samvara meaning covenant, vow, or binding, enveloping (for this probably intentional ambiguity, see Sanderson, 2009, 166–169). The wide range of possible meanings for each word and the multiple possibilities offered by the analysis of compounds allowed exegetes great freedom in their interpretations of this formula.

#### Chapter 1

The text starts unusually for a Buddhist scripture, inasmuch as it lacks the traditional etiological passage beginning with "Thus I have heard" (*evaṃ mayā śrutam*). Instead, it launches into a nearly theistic description of the chief deity, Vajrasattva. He is described as abiding eternally in everything, consisting of all buddhas, supreme bliss, self-born, the blessed one, the sole supreme deity, and neither

passion nor dispassion, but nothing in the middle either. This is followed by an interpretation of the title. The text then returns to describing Vajrasattva, who is now both passion and dispassion, both desire and liberation, the three times, the three worlds, and so on. The method taught here is said to grant all-buddhahood (i.e. liberation) in a single lifetime. The worship of external deities such as cast images is spoken of disapprovingly, as a true seeker obtains liberation through the seeker's own person, in this very life.

#### Chapter 2

The next chapter continues much in the same vein, addingthat buddhahood is reached through pleasure (*sukha*), and so there is no need for ascetic practices or restrictions in behavior, deeds, or diet. Instead, at all times one should maintain self-identification with the deity. Even men of small merit will thus reach accomplishment, and they incur no sin, whatever they do. The same applies to women as well. One should freely enjoy the sense objects and worship oneself.

#### Chapter 3

The idea of enjoying sensual pleasures is continued, here focusing on the enjoyment of women, for whom the practitioner will become irresistible. He will become able to fly in their company and will become known as a universal emperor.

#### Chapter 4

Chapter 4 continues with extolling the benefits of following the teachings of the scripture. All kinds of worldly and supernatural powers will be enjoyed by the practitioner, including taking the consorts of rival deities (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Kāma) and bestowing them on devotees. He will become able to display the deeds of the Buddha.

#### Chapter 5

After some formulaic initial verses, chapter 5 introduces one of the most significant innovations of the *Śaṃvara*, namely the practice of communal worship (usually called *gaṇacakra*, but here *gaṇamaṇḍala*). The practitioner is enjoined to host this event on a regular basis (daily, monthly, or yearly, presumably according to means). The practice is essentially an enactment of the pantheon, or rather, one of the six clans of deities that the text teaches. Should the number of participants not reach the desired number of deities, the missing places are to be occupied by simulacra made of metal or wood. The text stops abruptly from going into further detail and instead teaches six sets of verses called "consolation" or "encouragement" ( $\bar{a}\dot{s}v\bar{a}sa$ ), one for each of the six chief deities: Vajrasattva, Vairocana, Heruka, Padmanarteśvara, Vajrasūrya, and Paramāśva. The technical term used here does not have the same meaning as in the context of initiation, where it is a ritual assurance of the newly initiated by the officiant. Rather, the sets of verses contain a mixture of praises, doctrinal matters, practical injunctions, and myth (for an example, see Sanderson, 2009, 155–156).

#### **Chapter 6**

This chapter returns to the topic of communal worship and teaches further details, such as setting up the ritual space, preparing the participants and the substances to be used (including human blood and other transgressive substances in a skull-bowl), the songs and dances that are to be performed, and the mantras to be recited. Seemingly discussed in the same context, the rest of the chapter contains verses that are more characteristic of the initiation ritual. The disciple is led blindfolded in front of the mandala, he is made to cast a flower to establish affinity with a clan of deities (although here a single goddess is mentioned), the blindfold is removed, and he is sprinkled with water. He is made to taste the transgressive substances, is given pledges and vows, and is instructed not to torture himself with ascetic practices but to enjoy pleasure without fearing sin. The disciple then worships the officiant, who puts him into a state of possession (āveśa). The benefits of this practice are praised.

#### Chapter 7

The chapter begins with recommending various places for practice and/or for constructing the mandala, with customizations for each of the six clans. Various details for constructing the mandala are given: shape, size, and colors. After praises of each of the six chief deities, aspects of the initiation rite are discussed. The disciple requests entry, which is granted, provided that he has paid the requisite fee. This is described in further detail: whatever is dearest should be offered, including one's wife, who is then ransomed with an appropriate sum. Other offerings include livestock, jewelry, clothing, and chariots. The disciple is then given a tiara (*makuta*). Elements of the drawn mandala are given, such as the symbols to be used for the physical shape of the deities and the implements that they hold. Although texts such as the Sarvakalpasamuccaya or Ānandagarbha's *Vajrajvālodayā Sādhanopayikā* describe the subsidiary retinue in detail, the *Śaṃvara* itself does not offer a clear-cut description or even a precise enumeration of any deities with the exception of the six principal ones.

#### **Chapter 8**

The initial verses describe various gestures displayed to honor the six chief deities and to overpower Brahmanical gods. After this, a verse claims that all gestures described in dramatic treatises (*nṛtyaśāstra*) are gestures pertaining to Vajrasattva. The rest of the chapter describes further gestures and their respective benefits.

#### Chapter 9

The penultimate chapter makes up more than half of the entire text with nearly six hundred verses. It is at the same time the worst transmitted portion of the manuscript, with a large passage altogether omitted. This is available in Tibetan, and at least one verse can be recovered from a quotation (Wedemeyer, 2007, 373–374).

According to the numerous topical colophons, the chapter deals primarily with *mudrās*. However, here the term does not simply mean hand gestures, although a large number of these are also taught. The semantic range of the word is much extended to include iconographical implements, bodily postures, the color of deities, modes and articles of worship, sounds, types of gazes and smiles, spells, songs (in both Sanskrit and Apabhramsha), doctrinal outlooks that the practitioner should adopt, scales and rhythmical patterns, secret sign language, secret code words, and much other miscellaneous material.

#### Chapter 10

The final chapter is not available in Sanskrit, but it can be reconstructed relatively easily. It is rather short and teaches nothing truly new, as most verses here are simply reiterations of clichés from previous passages. The last two verses represent the exception; these can be recovered from a quotation (Tanaka, 2010, 648–649).

# **The Pantheon**

The *Śamvara* itself does not describe the iconography of its deities lucidly. What is clear is that there are six *mandalas* headed by each of the six chief deities. When these are arranged in a super *mandala*, it is presumably the chief deity of the respective

practitioner who takes center stage; the affinity between the practitioner and one of the six deities is established during initiation. There is some evidence to suggest that the *maṇḍalas* were also worshipped separately (Tanaka, 2010, 339). Clearer descriptions of the precise number of the respective retinues (usually 20, but one family, that of Paramāśva, has 22), their mantras and iconographical description can be found in the *Sarvakalpasamuccaya* and various satellite texts. The pantheon has been shown to be an expanded version of that of the *Paramādya* (Tomabechi, 2007, 919–921; Tanaka, 2010, 337–340).

Compared to other tantric cycles, portrayal of the pantheon in paintings or statuary is relatively scarce. One very significant group of artifacts in this respect is a hoard of bronze statuettes from Surocolo (Java, Indonesia), which was identified by Keiji Matsunaga as remains of a three-dimensional *mandala* of the Vajrasattva family (discussed in Tanaka, 2010, 339).

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