

ŚĀKYAMUNI'S ENLIGHTENMENT ACCORDING TO THE YOGA TANTRA

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According to the Yoga Tantra, Śākyamuni attained to the supreme and perfect enlightenment not at Buddhagayā but in the *Akaniṣṭha Ghanavyūha* Paradise.⁽¹⁾ In the *Sarvatathāgatattva-saṃgraha* (=STTS), the *mūla tantra* of the Yoga Tantra class, the event of Śākyamuni's enlightenment is described in the manner of a dialogue between all the assembled *Tathāgatas* and *Siddhārtha*. The gradual ascent from the fundamental understanding of the mind (*citta*) through the intermediate stages of mystical experience to the crucial moment culminating in *Siddhārtha's* Buddhahood is outlined in five consecutive stages called the five *abhisambodhis* (in Tibetan *mñon-par-'tshan-rgya-ba* or *mñon-par-byañ-chub*); each *sambodhi* being characterized by its own particular *mantra*, state of meditation and appropriate visualization.⁽²⁾

Before embarking on discussing in some detail the five *adhisambodhis*, let us consider briefly the circumstances which preceded them and the actual site at which they took place. In STTS in the introductory passage which is followed by the description of the *abhisambodhis* we read that Buddha *Vairocana* as the supreme of the *Pañcatathāgatas* surrounded by an entourage consisting of *Tathāgatas* and *Bodhisattvas* was residing in the abode of the king of the *Akaniṣṭha* gods. It was therein that all the *Tathāgatas* assembled together because *Siddhārtha* sat down under the *bodhi* tree with a firm resolve to gain the state of supreme Buddhahood.

In the *Vajrasekhara*, the explanatory *tantra*, it is said that Śākyamuni after his arduous ascetic feats reached the final Stage (*sa-mtha'*).⁽³⁾ Having received the garment consecration he took residence in the *Akaniṣṭha Ghanavyūha* abode under the name of *Mahāmati*, and made a final resolve to become a Buddha for the sake of all living beings.

The most important commentaries on the STTS were written by three renowned Indian scholars, namely Buddhaguhya, Śākyamitra and Ānandagarbha. They provided us with the following interpretations relevant to the circumstance of Śākyamuni's enlightenment.

Buddhaguhya and Śākyamitra maintained that Śākyamuni from the time of his birth as *Siddhārtha* and the son of *Śuddhodana* to the moment of practising severe austerities on the banks of the *Nairāñjanā* River had all the essential characteristics of a *Bodhisattva* of the tenth Stage (*bhūmi*). After six years of ascetic vicissitudes he entered into four successive trances (*dhyāna*).⁽⁴⁾ It was during the fourth trance that the Buddhas of the ten directions interrupted his meditation and having instructed him that it was impossible to gain Buddhahood by meditation alone, they left his perfected physical body (*viṣṭākakāya*) on the bank of the *Nairāñjanā* River and conducted his knowledge body (*manomayakāya*) to *Akaniṣṭha* where they first bestowed upon him the diadem consecration (*mukuṭābhīṣeka*) and then made him pursue the five *abhisambodhis*. After the completion of the fifth *abhisambodhi* *Siddhārtha* attained to the supreme Buddhahood.

Immediately after that he performed the four Miraculous Activities,⁽⁶⁵⁾ went to the summit of Mt Meru to proclaim the *Yoga Tantra* teachings, and then descending down to earth he joined his physical body and performed the remaining deeds of his earthly life.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Ānandagarbha in his *Tattvāloka* explains that after amassing the store of merit and knowledge (*puṇyajñānasambhāra*) for three incalculable *kalpas* and when he was born in his last life as a *Bodhisattva* of the tenth Stage, *Śākyamuni* entered the four *dhyānas* in the *Akaniṣṭha* abode. He was drawn out from his meditation, received the diadem consecration and then became a perfect Buddha by means of the five *abhisambodhis*. After the performance of the four Miraculous Activities and the proclamation of the *Yoga Tantra* on the summit of Mt Meru, he descended to earth and was born as the son of *Śuddhodana* and accomplished the remaining activities of the twelve Buddha Acts.

A modified version of *Śākyamuni*'s enlightenment is provided in the *rDo-rje-sññ-po-rgyan-rgyu* quoted by *Bu-ston* where it is said that *Śākyamuni* on hearing supplications, left *Akaniṣṭha*, took residence in the *Tuṣita* Heaven where he proclaimed *Dharma* to the resident gods and then was born into the *Śākya* Clan.

What is then the essential notion of the *Akaniṣṭha* Paradise? *bSod-nams-rtse-mo* (1142–1182), the second of the five *Sa-skyā* masters explains in his General Introduction to the *Tantras* that it is for the benefit of *Jambudvīpa* that the best of the *Śākyas* penetrate into the Supreme Truth (*paramārtha*) in the *Akaniṣṭha* Heaven just as it is stated in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* that the perfect Buddhas gain their Buddhahood in *Akaniṣṭha* and then through their *nirmāṇakāyas* manifest themselves on the earth. As for the saying in the STTS that *Vairocana* and his entourage resided in *Akaniṣṭha* in the place of the king of the gods, it implies that the *Akaniṣṭha* gods are the *Bodhisattvas* of the tenth Stage. As for the exact location of *Akaniṣṭha*, some people say that it is a pure and aloof abode, some consider it as the residence of *Maheśvara*, and yet other people thinking in terms of this world's impermanence assume it to be an indestructible sphere. These explanations, continues *bSod-nams-rtse-mo*, are rather inadequate because they do not define *Akaniṣṭha* as the place with its precincts divided into different sections, and as the residence of the Buddhas manifested in their *sambhogakāyas* who give instructions to the *Bodhisattvas* of the tenth Stage. The most comprehensive explanation, according to *bSod-nams-rtse-mo*, comes from the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* where it is said that the whole ocean of different worlds is contained within the palm of the *Tathāgata Vairocana* who, abiding in his perfect Wisdom, resides together with the Great *Bodhisattvas* (*Mahābodhisattva* = *Bodhisattva* of the tenth Stage) in the *Ghanavyūha* Sphere, the abode of the perfect Buddhas manifested in their *sambhogakāyas*. Within the *Ghanavyūha* Sphere there are several different realms one of which is destined for the Buddhas in their *nirmāṇakāyas* who in due succession of their heroic achievements appear in *Jambudvīpa*.

There are of course other descriptions and interpretations of the *Akaniṣṭha* Paradise but for our purpose here it will be sufficient to become aware that for the *Yoga Tantra* the *Akaniṣṭha* abode denominates the residence of the Buddhas manifested in their *sambhogakāyas* and the place of enlightenment of the Great *Bodhisattvas*.

Now we come to consider the first *abhisambodhi*. In the STTS it is described as follows.

The *Tathāgatas* manifested themselves in their *sambhogakāyas* before the *Bodhisattva Siddhārtha* and addressed him in these words: “O noble son, how will you gain the perfect Buddhahood (*sambodhi*) while you are enduring all the sorrows (*sarvaduhkha*) on account of your unawareness (*anabhijñā*) of the Truth (*tattva*) of all the *Tathāgatas*?” *Siddhārtha* emerged from his imperturbable (*āśphānaka*)⁽⁷⁾ meditation and begged saying: “O Lord *Tathāgatas*, please instruct me. What is the essence of the *Tathāgatas* and how am I to accomplish it.” The *Tathāgatas* answered: “O noble son, pondering in your mind enter into an equipoise and reciting this self-perfected *mantra* achieve the goal: OM CITTA-PRATIVEDHAM KAROMI.” The *Bodhisattva* addressed the Buddhas: “O Lord *Tathāgatas*, I perceive in my heart a form of a lunar disc.” And the *Tathāgatas* explained: “O noble son, this mind (*citta*) is the Clear Light by its own nature (*prakṛti-prabhāsvara*). As one purifies it, so it becomes just as a white cloth stained with colour.”

In the *Vajraśekhara* we read in the relevant passage that the *Bodhisattva Mahāmāti* was awakened from his meditation by the *Tathāgatas* by pronouncing the *mantra* OM VAJRA-UTTIṢṬHA and by snapping their fingers. As he arose from his meditation he perceived an ocean of Buddhas and bowing before them he asked them for instructions and the Buddhas spoke up:

“What is like the sphere of activities of the mind? They said. As for the mind, it is the perfect discernment (*pratyavekṣanā*). Having heard the voice of all the *Tathāgatas* he remained for a long time deliberating in his mind but did not perceive the form of his mind. Having exhausted all the different possibilities he made a request: O Lord *Tathāgatas*, I do not perceive the form of my mind. What are like then the primary characteristics (*mtshan-nīd*) of the mind? The the *Tathāgatas* said: It is difficult to know the mind’s sphere of activity. We give you this *hrdaya* OM CITTA-PRATIVEDHAM KAROMI. Perform a subtle recitation! Having received this pure spell, he pondered it over in his mind accordingly and in that very instant he duly perceived a lunar disc.

What is this mind? Is it the source of the defilements (*kleśa*) or is it the mind of virtue or non-virtue (*kuśala-akuśala*), or is it the mind endowed with the seed of the primordial substratum (*ālaya, kun-gzi*)? After receiving and understanding the substance of *Dharma*, *Siddhārtha* adhered to the Six *Pāramitās* and became a purified being. Totally free from the defilements he amassed for a long period of time the store of merit and knowledge. Just like the full moon, pure and unimpeded in its brightness, his mind too, on account of the perfect merit and knowledge, was like the full moon; it was in a state of neither becoming nor non-becoming (*bhāva-abhāva*). In the same way just like the full moon, the great merit and knowledge showed themselves as a moon. Being endowed with the store of merit and knowledge he perceived the lunar disc of his mind. He rejoiced and showed devotion and then he spoke once more: O Lord Protectors, I, being free from all defilements and impurities perceive my mind, free of the subject-object relation, as a lunar disc.”⁽⁸⁾

It is evident from the above citation that the fundamental notion of the first *abhisambodhi* is the understanding of the true nature of the mind (*cittadharmatā*).

Buddhaguhya and Ānandagarbha disagree as to the clarity and appearance of the lunar disc. Buddhaguhya in his *Tantrārthāvatāra* says that *Siddhārtha* saw a lunar disc which was empty inside and which resembled the part of the moon of the first day of the month. Firstly, he argues, *Siddhārtha* saw a lunar disc because he abandoned all the impurities of the *skandhas*, *dhātus*, *āyatanas*⁽⁹⁾, the subject-object manner of thinking and so forth by means of the undisputed tenet of the Teaching that all the *dharmas* have no true nature of their own. But this vision of a lunar disc was impaired because after the elimination of the haze (*khug-rna*) of the dust of the *samsāra*'s impregnations (*vāsanā*) his mind became purified but since it was endowed with somewhat minute impregnations of *Dharma*, pure from eternity, the form of the lunar disc remained imperfect. So long as the accumulation of merit and knowledge remain imperfect, there is no vision of one perfect moon. However on account of one's knowledge together with the appropriate fruition, the residence (*gnas*) of the impregnation of the pure and timeless *Dharma* comes into vision.

Ānandagarbha argues that it was a vision of a perfect lunar disc because *Siddhārtha*'s mind was abiding in its own true nature and by its own nature the mind is the Clear Light ('*od-gsal*). This notion of the mind as the Clear Light is very much stressed by *Bu-ston* in his Introduction to the *Yoga Tantra*. *Bu-ston* also elaborates on another interpretation which purports that in this *abhisambodhi* through the means of meditation and the recitation of the *mantra*, the mind's foundation as *dharmadhātu*, beginningless and infinite, becomes manifested as having the nature of the sixteenfold *Śūnyatā*, and then as the consequence of the supramundane knowledge being born within oneself, one perceives a lunar disc. He further elaborates that in the first instant the relative truth (*kun-rdzob*) perceives a vision which is like a mirage (*mig-yor*) but subsequently the *dharmatā* of the mind endowed with perfect understanding (*abhisamaya*) manifests itself, assuming the form of a lunar disc.

Yet another interpretation of this *abhisambodhi* is provided by Śākyamitra in his *Kosalālamkāra*. *Siddhārtha* had difficulties in becoming a Buddha by means of the four *dhyānas*, says Śākyamitra, because the *āsphānaka* meditation is a state of a total isolation in which the bodily and mental activities are suspended. By entering such a meditation he became completely isolated and consequently unable to pursue the activities for the benefit of other living beings; and this was the chief reason why *Siddhārtha* failed in his efforts and was awakened from his meditation. Furthermore the conversation that ensued between the *Bodhisattva* and the Buddhas demonstrates the teacher-disciple relationship. The knowledge in the manner of reciting *mantras*, the characteristics of the pledges (*samaya*), the consecrations, the wisdom of the sages, and the benefit of others come from the teacher. Thus without respect for one's *guru*, it is impossible to achieve the fruition of the *mantras*. *Siddhārtha* was a disciple endowed with excellent qualities and with sense-faculties perfected he was well disposed to gain Buddhahood. However, although his accomplished merit and knowledge became a perfect repository for the primary cause (or motivation-*hetu*), his maturation-state was not completely perfect because there existed an abstacle of inspiration (*luñ*). *Siddhārtha*, continues Śākyamitra, by discerning in his mind and by meditation alone did not progress towards the supreme goal. Discerning in one's mind or applying one's mind for the sake of understanding the *skandhas* and the rest, or retaining it in a state

without a meditative object, or even *pratyavekṣaṇa* combined with meditation are insufficient. The inefficacy of the above means was compensated by providing *Siddhārtha* with a self-perfected *mantra*. Thus with the help of such a perfect *mantra* he pursued in his mind the notion of the True Nature in order to bring to perfection his own nature (*bdag-gi-ño-bo*) in compliance with the primary cause. Then in order to demonstrate the kind of knowledge which he apprehended the store-consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), perfectly pure, became present in the form of the Mirror-like-Wisdom (*ādarśajñāna*).

The second *abhisambodhi*. Next the *Tathāgatas* in order to increase the knowledge of *Siddhārtha's* translucent mind taught him the manner of raising the thought of enlightenment of the Great *Bodhisattvas* with the following *mantra*: OM BODHICITTAM UTPADAYĀMI, and they instructed him to comprehend this *hṛdaya* of the *Tathāgatas* as the thought-generating *Samantabhadra*. Since his mind was purified from the subject-object impregnations, he perceived it as All-Good (*Samantabhadra*) and as the primary cause of all the perfect thoughts of all living beings, and also as the Mind-essence of all the *Tathāgatas*. This kind of germinated thought of enlightenment resulted in gaining the Wisdom of Sameness (*samatājñāna*).

According to *bSod-nams-grags-pa*, *Siddhārtha* perceived here in a direct manner the true nature of the mind (*cittadharmatā*), which he equates with *śūnyatā*.⁽¹⁰⁾ According to Buddha-guhya, in the first *abhisambodhi* one is blessed (*byin-gyis-rlabs*) and reaches the level of perfection resulting from the study of the *Pāramitās* and the practice of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmis*. In the second *abhisambodhi* one acquires the mind which has the nature of enlightenment gained and perfectly understood by the *Tathāgatas*. The thought of enlightenment as a *hṛdaya* is the Mind of the *Tathāgatas* which comprises the wisdom of all the Omniscient Ones.

Bu-ston equates the mind's true nature with the Clear Light and explains that once the mind becomes purged from the subject-object impregnations, all the subtle impurities are removed and the mind becomes translucent. The purification from the impregnations is accomplished at this stage by the Supreme Truth and as the mind understands its own true nature to be the Clear Light, it becomes further expanded by the perfect knowledge (*abhisamaya*).

In the third *abhisambodhi*, in order to fortify and to make steady the thought-generating *Samantabhadra* of all the *Tathāgatas*, *Siddhārtha* received the following *mantra*: OM TIṢṬHA VAJRA; and he was instructed to envisage a *vajra* inside the lunar disc resting in his heart. At this stage the thought generating *Samantabhadra* assumed the form of a *vajra* imbued with the essence of all the *Tathāgatas*. His mind became endowed with the five-pronged *vajra* symbolizing *Śūnyatā* which had the nature of the Five Buddha-Wisdoms, and in particular he gained in this *abhisambodhi* the Discriminating Wisdom (*pratyavekṣaṇa*) of perfect and unerring understanding.

In the fourth *abhisambodhi* in order to stabilize the *Samantabhadra-vajra*, *Siddhārtha* was given to recite and to contemplate the following *mantra*: OM VAJRA-ĀTMAKO 'HAM. This being accomplished, the spheres of the Body, Speech and Mind of all the *Tathāgatas* through their blessing penetrated the *vajra* in the *Bodhisattva's* heart. Next the *Tathāgatas* bestowed upon him the *vajra-name* consecration of *Vajradhātu*. As a result the *Bodhisattva Vajradhātu* perceived himself as having the Body of all the *Tathāgatas*. Furthermore, as the *mahāmudrā*

of the Body-sphere of the Five Buddha-Families, the Secrets of their Speech-sphere, and the *vajra* of their Mind-sphere penetrated the *vajra* in *Vajradhātu's* heart, he became endowed with the Body-sphere (*sku-dbyiñs*) of *Vairocana*. Having been thus imbued with the *vajra*-nature of all the *Tathāgatas*, he perceived himself as possessing a *Tathāgata*-Body. In addition to that, since the goal of liberation (*rnam-par-thar-pa*) in its own nature is the Clear Light, *Vajradhātu* obtained here the Active Wisdom (*krtya-anuṣṭhāna-jñāna*) of pursuing the welfare and good of all the living beings.

With the *mantra* OM YATHĀ-SARVATATHĀGATĀS-TATHĀ-AHAM, bestowed during the fifth *abhisambodhi*, the *Bodhisattva Vajradhātu* gained the supreme Buddhahood as *Vairocana* who represents or epitomizes all the Buddhas, and who is manifested at this stage as *Mahāvairocana* in his *sambhogakāya*.

From the *vajra*-form of the third *abhisambodhi* there evolved a Buddha-Body of the fourth *abhisambodhi* with which *Vajradhātu* identified himself, but he did not as yet fully perceive it as being endowed with the major and minor auspicious bodily marks (*lakṣaṇa & upalakṣaṇa*). It was in the fifth *abhisambodhi* that he completely understood, perceived and gained a perfect Buddha-Body and acquired the Absolute Wisdom (*dharmadhātu-jñāna*) becoming thus a perfectly enlightened Buddha.

On the completion of the five *abhisambodhis* the newly enlightened Buddha received consecrations⁽¹¹⁾ to stabilize his Buddhahood. All the Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas* became manifested and then the main teachings of the *Yoga Tantra* were pronounced.

The five *abhisambodhis* by being placed at the beginning of the *mūlatantra*, the STTS, serve as a declaration or a manifest of the *Yoga Tantra's* position and they are meant to provide a general framework for various practices expounded in the main body of the *Yoga Tantra* teachings. By attributing this particular manner of experiencing the five *abhisambodhis* to *Śākyamuni* Buddha, the *Yoga Tantra* justifies its practices and all its scriptures assume the same importance and validity as the canonical scriptures of other schools. Furthermore through this particular exposition of the five *abhisambodhis* the *Yoga Tantra* demonstrates that the manner of gaining enlightenment as presented by other traditions (especially the *triyānas*) is quite inadequate, and in particular it demonstrates that philosophy or thinking alone does not bring about a spiritual realisation. The previous traditions and philosophies connected with them are not rejected as such but they are made use of as a starting point. It is insufficient to train the mind alone but it is necessary to imbue it with the essence and nature of the *Tathāgatas*. The *Yoga Tantra* takes for granted the knowledge of different philosophical schools and makes use of them for its own purposes. Philosophy as such, it is quite evident, is consigned to the very first stage of spiritual life. It reaches its apex in the first *abhisambodhi* or perhaps even that much cannot be said for already at this stage an intervention of the *Tathāgatas* is apparent.

If we examine the terminology employed to explain the successive *abhisambodhis* we can see clearly that the *Yoga Tantra* introduces some unification into all different philosophical interpretations of the reality and shows indirectly a basic unity of those interpretations provided that one retains a clear awareness of their different levels of reference. We encounter constantly the technical terminology which refers to the nature of the mind (*cittadharmatā*), to the nature

of the relative and absolute reality as explained by the *śūnyatā* or *ālayavijñāna* interpretations, and of course the *trikāya* theory. Different terms such as *cittatā*, *dharmatā*, *śūnyatā* or *prabhāsvāra* are employed almost at the same time as an indication that they refer to the same reality from different angles or through different approaches. It is only when they are as if combined together that one is able to gain a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the whole reality before one embarks on the mystical experience portrayed in the five *abhisambodhis*.

Finally in the five *abhisambodhis* one can see the Yoga Tantra's contribution to the Buddhist thought and religious practices, namely the method of visualization and gradual identification with the supreme Buddhahood, the introduction of consecrations as necessary aids and the use of various objects such as vajra or moon which receive a special symbolic meaning.

Notes

- (1) Here below are listed the main sources for this short study.

Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha; Facsimile reproduction of a tenth century Sanskrit manuscript from Nepal. Reproduced by Lokesh Chandra and David L. Snellgrove. Śatapiṭaka Series vol. 269, New Delhi 1981. This work contains an excellent introduction by David Snellgrove in which he gives a succinct summary of the whole *tantra* and gives lists of different *maṇḍalas*.

Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha nāma mahāyāna sūtra; A critical edition based on a Sanskrit manuscript and Chinese and Tibetan translations. Edited by Isshi Yamada, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. Printed in New Delhi, 1981; pp.3-10.

Vajrasīkhara-mahāguhyayogatantra; Tibetan translation in the Tibetan Tripitaka (=T.T.), Peking Edition of the Otani University, No. 113, vol. 5, pp.1-3

Tattvāloka of Ānandagarbha, T.T. No. 3333, vol. 71, pp. 146-212.

Kosalālamkāra of Śākyamitra, T.T. No. 3326, vol. 70, pp. 191-203.

Tantrārthāvatāra of Buddhaguhya, T.T. No. 3324, vol. 70, pp. 33-73.

rGyud-sde-spyi'i-rnam-par-bzag-pa skal-bzan-gi-yid-'phrog ces-bya-ba by Paṅ-chen bSod-nams-grags pa. Published by the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharamsala, 1975.

rGyud-sde-spyi'i-rnam-par-gzag-pa by bSod-nams-rtse-mo, in the Sa-skya-pa'i bka'-'bum, the Toyo Bunko 1968, vol. 2, folio 41a onwards.

rNal-'byor-rgyud-rgya-mtshor-'jug-pa'i-gru-gziñs-žes-bya-ba by Bu-ston, The Collected Works of Bu-ston, part 11, Śatapiṭaka Series vol. 51, fol. 1-11.

- (2) It might be of use to outline here briefly Śākyamuni's enlightenment as presented by other Buddhist schools. For this short exposition I make use of *bSod-nams-grags-pa's* introduction to the tantras listed in the previous note.

According to the *Śrāvaka* Vehicle Śākyamuni raised the thought of enlightenment before Mahā-śākyamuni and then accumulated merit and knowledge during three successive aeons. At the end of amassing merit and knowledge he was born as Siddhārtha and son of Śuddhodana. At the age of thirty-five, on the 15th day of the last month of the spring and at dusk he subdued Māra. At midnight while he was seated in meditative equipoise he manifested the path of preparation, the path of vision and the path of meditation. At dawn he gained the perfect Buddhahood. He performed these acts as a man. At the age of eighty he passed into nirvāṇa and the continuance of his knowledge was cut off like an extinguished candle.

According to the *Prajñāpāramitā* school Śākyamuni after the three aeons of amassing merit and knowledge and pursuing the Bodhisattva Stages reached his final state. He then received from the Buddhas a consecration known as 'Great Light'. Next during the first and second instances of his adamant concentration he gained *Dharmakāya* and *Sambhogakāya* becoming thus a perfect Buddha. His *Sambhogakāya* took residence in the *Akaṅkṣṭha* Heaven and his *Nirmāṇakāya* performed the twelve Buddha acts in *Jambudvīpa*.

In the *anuttara tantras* such as the *Kālacakra* or *Hevajra* we find no explanation of Śākyamuni's

enlightenment. It is however expounded by Āryadeva's and Jñānapāda's schools. These two schools put forward basically the same exposition. They set forth two possibilities concerning a Bodhisattva's last life and enlightenment. One is that a Bodhisattva of the tenth Stage is bound to one more rebirth and the other that a Bodhisattva of the tenth Stage gains Buddhahood during that very last life. Thus according to these schools Śākyamuni after amassing his merit and knowledge through the practice of the *Pāramitās* entered in the *Akaṅkṣṭha* Heaven a state of concentration known as 'Space-pervading'. The Buddhas interrupted his meditation, summoned a divine maiden called Tilottamā and bestowed upon him the third consecration. Then he pursued the successive *abhisambodhis*. At midnight through dissolving into three successive kinds of Emptiness he perceived the Clear Light of the Universal Emptiness. By doing this he gained the union (*zun-'jug*) of learning. After receiving the fourth consecration he performed the Buddha acts, and then entering into a meditation which was like a *vajra* he purified all obstructions to knowledge and gained the union beyond learning becoming thus a perfect Buddha.

- (3) For an exposition of the Bodhisattva *bhūmis* see Har Dayal's *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, London 1932, reprinted in Delhi, 1970.
- (4) For different kinds of meditation see *Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation: Theory and Practice*, edited by Minoru Kiyota, Honolulu, 1978, and Edward Conze's *Buddhist Meditation*, London 1956.
- (5) The four Miraculous Activities (*cho-'phrul-rnam-pa-bzi*) are the following ones: 1. Blessing (*byin-gyis-rlöbs*), 2. Consecration (*dbañ-bskur-ba*), 3. Meditative concentration (*tiñ-ñe-'dzin*), and 4. Wondrous Acts (*phrin-las*); bSod-nams grags pa folio 5b.
- (6) The twelve Buddha Acts described by bSod-nams-grags-pa are listed in the following order: 1. Descent from the *Tuṣita* Heaven, 2. Entering the womb, 3. Birth, 4. Learning and skilfulness in arts, 5. Enjoyment with women, 6. Departure from the palace, 7. Practice of austerities, 8. Approach to the place of enlightenment, 9. Defeat of Māra, 10. Gaining enlightenment, 11. Proclamation of *Dharma*, 12. Passing into *parinirvāṇa*.
- (7) Thus in STTS page 7 and translated into Tibetan (T.T. vol. 4, p.219-4-7) as *mi-g.yo-ba'i tiñ-ñe-'dzin*. This *samādhi* is also referred to as *āśpharaṇaka* in different texts.
- (8) *Vajraśikhara* p. 3-1-1 to 7.
- (9) For these technical terms see Th. Stcherbatsky's *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* and the Meaning of the word *Dharma*, reprinted in Delhi 1970.
- (10) On the various aspect and interpretation of this term see T.R.V. Murti's *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, 1955, reprinted 1970.
- (11) The consecrations as a part of the five *abhisambodhis* are not explained in great detail by the commentaries. A good interpretation of them in this connection can be found in bSod-nams-rtse-mo's introduction to the tantras folio 43b onwards. I may add here that the four consecrations bestowed upon the newly enlightened Buddha are interpreted in terms of the Buddha Bodies. The first consecration is called the Vajrasattva consecration and it bestows the nature of *Svabhāvakāya*; the second one Vajradharma bestows *Sambhogakāya*; the third of Vajraratna bestows the Buddha *lakṣaṇa* and *upalakṣaṇa*; and the fourth of Vajrakarma bestows the nature of *Nirmāṇakāya*.