ON THE INDIAN ORIGINS OF THE TIBETAN PRACTICE OF DEPOSITING RELICS AND DHĀRANĪS IN STŪPAS AND IMAGES*

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Taking its point of departure in the Fifth Dalai Lama’s arguments in favor of the Indian origins of Tibetan practices of relic deposition, this study supplies an overview of relevant historical developments in the concept of ‘relic’ in Indian Buddhism, identifies the scriptural sources to which the Fifth Dalai Lama alludes, and discusses certain East Asian parallels. It is argued that relic deposition practices provide one specific example of a more general diachronic process of synthesizing various strands of Indian Buddhism on both the practical and theoretical levels, a process that did not stop at the Tibetan border.

TIBETAN BUDDHISM LARGELY CAME TO SEE ITSELF AS NO MORE THAN A FAITHFUL PERPETUATOR OF INDIAN BUDDHISM. FOR EXAMPLE, THE STANDARD SOWN TO HAVE BEEN INVOKED BY Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290–1364) FOR INCLUDING SCRIPTURES IN HIS KANJUR COLLECTION IS SOME PROOF OF THEIR EXISTENCE IN INDIA. THE QUESTION OF DEVIATION FROM INDIAN PRECEDENTS WAS OFTEN RAISED IN TIBETAN WRITINGS. THE PRESENT PAPER EXAMINES ONE SUCH INSTANCE WITH REGARD TO THE PRACTICE OF DEPOSITING RELICS AND DHĀRANĪS (GZUNGS-'BUL) IN STŪPAS AND IMAGES. IN TIBET AN ELABORATE PRACTICE OF DEPOSITING MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF RELICS AND DHĀRANĪS HAS LONG EXISTED (BENTOR, IN PREPARATION). TIBETANS HAVE COMPOSED VARIOUS MANUALS FOR THIS PRACTICE, AS WELL AS VARIOUS “INDICES” (DKAR-CHAG) LISTING THE ACTUAL CONTENTS OF IMPORTANT STŪPAS AND IMAGES (MARTIN, FORCOMING). ONE OF THESE MANUALS, WRITTEN BY THE FIFTH DALAI LAMA, CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING REBUTTAL, DIRECTED TOWARD CERTAIN PERSONS WHO CLAIMED THAT THIS ‘ELABORATE’ PRACTICE HAD NO INDIAN ORIGIN.

Some who are proud of their partial talent, who are intellectually [too] blind to see [what is in] the sūtra[s], śāstra[s], and commentaries without discrimination, who are taken by the god of desire, exclaim the [following] evil words out of their misconceptions. The Tibetan lamas insert dhāranīs in images, stūpas and so forth which they construct; yet in India there was no such practice. As for the origin of this, in some Indian books, apart from describing the insertion of just one special dhāranī, such as the ‘essence of Independent Origination’, even the least indication for the elaborate undertaking known nowadays does not appear. The majority of Indian cast images made of li-ma¹ are actually made without inserting dhāranīs. Also, in examining decaying clay images made here in Tibet in early times, we have seen no dhāranīs whatsoever inserted in them.” So they claim. This is Māra talking through their mouths. In the sūtras there are numerous teachings on the excelling merit of making clay images of the Tathāgata, however small, which contain relics (ring-bsrel)—in comparison to [the merit accumulated by] reverence with requisites to the Buddha together with many millions of communities of śrāvakas during countless years. There are also many kinds of relics—most importantly relics of the dharma-kāya, identified as dhāranīs. The existence of detailed manuals on the method of deposition of dhāranīs in India has been established by both scriptural authority and reasoning (lung rigs). Even if there is no indication for the deposition of dhāranīs in some Indian books, it cannot be concluded that this did not exist in India . . .

There are some li-ma images without dhāranīs. But as it is explained that Buddha Kaśyapa blessed the substance of li-ma, what kind of dhāranī could be superior to the blessing of a Buddha? . . .

It is most unreasonable to argue that there is no standard for depositing dhāranīs in some old clay images from early times. If, on account of occurring in early times something becomes reliable, then in Tibet the teachings of Bon are earlier than the Buddhist teachings (nang-pa’i bstan-pa), the system of Hwa-shang is earlier than that of Kamalaśīla,

¹ An especially appreciated alloy for images (see Tucci 1959; Dagyab 1977: 50–57).

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and the views of the Jo-nang-pa are earlier than those of the Great Victorious Tsong-kha-pa. When this is the case, the necessity of saying that the earlier are correct, while the later are not, will cause inextricable harm.2

In order to clarify these arguments, we need to survey the prior development of the concept of relics in India.

A. PHYSICAL RELICS

It is now well recognized that a wide range of views existed in India with regard to the cult of relics. While one influential doctrine asserted that the Buddha had passed into a state of nirvāṇa, which leaves nothing be-

5. Emmerick 1970: 7–8; see also Snellgrove 1987: 37.
7. See Schopen 1991 and references there.

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Indeed, Ānanda, the continent of Jambudvīpa is seven thousand yojanas in length and in breadth. In the north it is broad; in the south it has the shape of a cart. If it were made of the seven precious substances and some

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believing son or daughter of good family were to offer it to the Stream-Enterers, Once-Returners, Non-Returners, Arhats, Pratyekabuddhas, or to the community of monks of the four directions; or if someone were to establish for the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One, who attained complete nirvāṇa, a stūpa the size of an āmalaka fruit made from a lump of clay, and were to stick into it a stūpa-pole the size of an umbrella the size of a juniper leaf, were to make an image the size of a grain of barley, and were to put into it [or establish] a relic the size of a mustard seed, I say, Ānanda, the merit of the latter is much greater than the former.\footnote{MS B of the Sanskrit, in all the parallel sections, as well as the Tibetan versions of all three scriptures have the reading 'put into' (praksipt, bcug), while MS A of the Sanskrit has 'establish a relic' (dhātum pratiṣṭhāpayet), which may reflect a form of the relic cult not yet associated with stūpas or images (see Bentor 1988: 26–27).}

We will encounter other similar types of arguments. When the Fifth Dalai Lama mentions numerous teachings found in the sūtras, in which the making of clay images [or stūpas], even in miniature size, but containing relics, is taught to be of superior merit to countless offerings made to śrāvakas [and so forth], he is probably referring to scriptures such as the Ādbhuta dharmaparyāyā, Kāśyapa or Mahākārṇa sūtras.\footnote{Bentor 1988: 41. This is a translation from the Ādbhuta dharmaparyāyā.}

During the centuries, in its outer form, the stūpa came to symbolize the teachings, the enlightenment, the path to enlightenment, the qualities of the Enlightened One, the Buddha, and reality as it is, that is to say the dharma body. Inside were deposited relics of the physical manifestation of the Buddha and other Buddhist personages. Hence, both physical and abstract aspects of the Buddha are found in the stūpa.\footnote{Also the Pañcakūṭa-Dhāraṇī (Toh. 516 and 886) contains similar arguments in stressing the superiority of offerings to a stūpa of a Tathāgata containing relics as small as a mustard seed.}

The cult of images was another solution to the problem of the presence or the representation of the Buddha in the samsāric world (Collins 1992: 235–36). Furthermore, the various solutions to the presence or representation of the Buddha were conjoined. Relics were deposited not only in stūpas but also in images. In fact, according to some of the Pāli commentaries, "An image was considered important only if relics were enshrined in it" (Rahula 1956: 126). It may be recalled that the Fifth Dalai Lama specifically discusses the deposition of relics and dhāraṇīs in images. A reference to an image containing a relic is found already in the canonical text, the Bhiksuni-vibhaṅga (Schopen 1993: 218, and n. 32). Archaeology, as well, provides evidence of the deposition of relics in images. For example, the base of an eight-foot-tall Buddha image in Nāgarjunakōṇḍa (site no. 6) contained a reliquary similar to those found in stūpas.

Between the legs, 1\%2 long and 3\%4" broad, is a socket drilled on the upper part of the padmāksana which was hidden from view by the perfection of its close-fitting stone stopper (pl. XIV–A). On removing the stone piece of stopper, the hole was found to be ½" in diameter and 1\%4" deep, and in it was found a gold tube ½" high and 1\%4" in diameter (p. XIV–B). This tube contained 95 pearls, one of them measuring ¼" in diameter and the rest smaller than mustard seeds, and bone (?) ash that had slipped into the cavity as the bottom of the tube had been opened. The mouth of the tube was closed by hand pressure. The ash has not been examined but it may be of bone.\footnote{Ramachandran 1953: 14. I would like to thank G. Schopen for this reference.}

B. RELICS OF THE DHARMA

The Buddhist teachings are another solution to the problem of the Buddha’s presence—he who has gone to nirvāṇa—in the samsāric world. The Buddha was conceived to be present or represented not only in his relics and images, but also in his teachings, the dharma.\footnote{Schopen 1975; Mitomo 1984; Williams 1989: 167–84; Boucher 1991; Harrison 1992, etc.} Frequently, the latter was represented as superior. The teachings were regarded as the true body of the Buddha, superior to his physical remains. The tensions between these two views were accommodated, to some extent, again, in the theory of the multiple bodies of the Buddha. One of the preoccupations of the Mahāyāna sūtras is with "an equation of the presence of the dharma-paryāyā with the presence of the Buddha" (Schopen 1975: 175). Such a view is found in "texts like the Sad-dharma-puṇḍarikā and Suvannaprabhāsottama, texts in which ‘the text or book as a source of sacred power’ is a fundamental preoccupation. This preoccupation, though little studied, is a clear characteristic of much of early and middle Mahāyāna sūtra literature" (Schopen 1982: 105). Our concern here will be limited to the dharma in its written form. The worship of the book, as containing the presence or representation of the Buddha, found an...
expression, among others, in the deposition of Buddhist scriptures in stupas. Such a practice is mentioned, for example, in the Pratyutpanna Sūtra.

Here, in the present age, they receive my teaching: They will distribute and make offerings to these relics; Calmly and carefully they will accept and study what the Buddha has taught, They will all recite it and have their commission. They will place it in stupas and in the mountains. . . .

These verses are found in the early translations of the Sūtra into Chinese, dating from at least the early third century C.E.17 Excavations of stupas revealed Buddhist Sanskrit texts as well. In fact, some of the most important discoveries of such manuscripts in the modern age, including those found in Gilgit and Central Asia dated to the 6th–7th centuries, may have been the result of such a practice.18

The cult of the book “had to contend at every step with the historical priority and the dominance of the stūpaphetic cult of early Buddhism in the milieu in which it was attempting to establish itself” (Schopen 1975: 168). Therefore, even though the cult of the book was originally antipathetic to the stūpa cult, it was partly modelled on the relic cult. Special attention was already given in scholarly works to the passages in the Aṣṭasahasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra (chapters 3 and 4), which advocate the worship of that same Sūtra as superior to the worship of the Buddha’s relics in stupas.19 This is based on the argument that it is the teachings rather than the physical body of the Buddha that have enabled him to attain enlightenment. The style of argument in the passages in question consists of a comparison of one written copy of the Sūtra to the entire world filled with the relics of the Tathāgata. In correlation to the argument found in the Adhutadharmaṇaraparāyuṇa cited above, the relics are found here on the other side of the scale. During the centuries, however, “the cult of relics eventually coalesced with the cult of the book” (Harrison 1992: 76).

The great majority of Indian stupas did not contain entire scriptures, but only parts of them. Hsüan Tsang observed the practice of placing written fragments of the scriptures, called dharmakārta, in small stupas, which were in turn collected in a large stupa (Hsüan Tsang, II:146–47). The most common piece of scripture deposited in stupas was the verse of Interdependent Origination, considered to be the epitome of the Buddhist teachings.20 Numerous clay seals stamped with the verse of Interdependent Origination were found within stupas, mostly from the second half of the first millennium C.E. (Taddei 1970). As Boucher (1991: 15) has shown, this verse “became a manifestation of the Buddha’s real presence at cultic centers . . . in the same way as relics were thought to infuse the living presence of the Buddha in stūpas.”

A scriptural authority for the practice of depositing the verse of Interdependent Origination in stupas is found in the Pratityasamutpāda Sūtra (Toh. 212, 520 and 980):

“If a devoted son or daughter of good family were to make on an unestablished place (apratiṣṭhite deṣe or praṇātha) a stūpa the size of an āmalaka fruit—with a yaśṭi the size of a needle and an umbrella the size of a bakula flower—and were to put in it the verse of the Dharma-relic of Pratityasamutpāda, he [or she] would generate brahmic merit (brahmamapuryaṃ prasseva):” After their death, they will be born in Brahma worlds.21

The description of a miniature stūpa here is very similar to that of the Adhutadharmaṇaraparāyuṇa, yet the physical relic is replaced with the dharma relic of the verse of Interdependent Origination. From the style of argument, it is clear that also here, as in the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra mentioned above, well-established practices were used as the basis for comparison. The

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16 Chapter 13, verses 8–9, translation by Harrison, forthcoming. Note that here also the Buddha’s teachings are explicitly called relics.
17 Paul Harrison, personal communication, Sept. 17, 1992. According to him, these verses are found in “Lokākṣema’s version,” i.e., T. 418 at 911b27–28. However, this part of the text, with its verse translations of the gāthās, is part of Redaction B, and may date from the later revision (probably early 3rd century C.E.) of the original translation by Lokākṣema.
18 It is also possible that Buddhist scriptures were deposited in stupas in a practice analogous to the Jewish geniza (such as the famous one in Alexandria), that is to say, damaged books were ‘buried’ in a stūpa. Against this possibility, we may say that sources such as the Pratyutpanna Sūtra and others cited in Schopen 1975, Mitomo 1984, and Harrison 1992 not only conceive the written scriptures as relics, but also suggest placing them in stupas.
20 Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetum teṣām tathāgato hy avadat teṣām ca yo nirodha evaṃ vādī mahāsramanāḥ, “Those dharmas which arise from a cause, the Tathāgata has declared their cause. And that which is the cessation of them, thus the great renunciant has taught” (tr. Boucher 1991:11).
21 Translated by Salomon and Schopen 1984: 117. The last sentence was added by the author.
The principle that a verse encapsulates the essence of the Buddhist teachings and may be deposited in stūpas and images was extended around the middle of the first millennium C.E., with the emergence of a new genre of Buddhist Mahāyāna literature, called the dhrāṇī sūtra. Several of these sūtras advocate the practice of depositing their entire text, or at least the dhrāṇī or other mantras taught in them, inside stūpas. The reason for that, according to the Guhyadhātu,

Wherever this text (chos-kyi rnam-grangs, dharmaparyāya) resides, a hundred thousand, ten million, as many as there are sesame seeds, Tathāgatas reside; bodily relics (sku gdang ring-bsrel) of inexplicable numbers of Tathāgatas reside; the eighty-four thousand heaps of dharma reside.

Here, as the earlier Mahāyāna scriptures, this dhrāṇī sūtra equates its presence with the presence of the Buddha. And like the developments surveyed above, the presence of this text is considered tantamount to the presence of the bodily relics of the Tathāgata. Moreover, like the verse of Interdependent Origination, this dhrāṇī sūtra is regarded as the equivalent of the dharma in its entirety. In other words, this dhrāṇī sūtra is synonymous with the various concepts of relics we have observed so far. The word dhrāṇī, which seems originally to have referred to the memorization of the teachings of the Buddha, has acquired additional meanings (Lamotte 1976: 1863–64). Here, the text and, as we shall see below, also its various mantras, are equivalent to the Buddha, his relics and the teachings. Indeed, the Guhyadhātu instructs one to place this text within a stūpa or image.

The Blessed One said: Vajrapāṇi, if someone were to write this text (chos-kyi rnam-grangs) and place it inside a stūpa, [that stūpa] would become a stūpa of the

22 For other Indian works, see below.
24 On dhrāṇīs, in general, see Winternitz (1939, II:380–87); Lalou (1957); Lamotte (1976: 1854–77); de Jong [Matsunaga] 1984: 95–96; etc.

25 Some of these dhrāṇī sūtras were studied by Schopen (1982, 1985) and Scherrer-Schaub (forthcoming).
26 The full name of this sūtra is Sarvatathāgatathādāhāhrdaya-guhyā-dhātukaṇḍa-nirmādā-nāma-dhrāṇī-mahāyānasūtra (Toh. 507, 883; P. 141, 508; Tog Palace, no. 469, vol. 102, pp. 1–19).
27 This translation of khar-yas-khar-yas was suggested to me by Geshe Thubten Tandhar.
28 A reference to the entire corpus of the teachings of the Buddha.
relics (ring-bsrul) of the vajra essence of all Tathāgatas. It would become a stūpa blessed by the secret essence of the dhārani of all Tathāgatas. It would become a stūpa of ninety-nine times as many as there are sesame seeds Tathāgatas. It would be blessed as the stūpa of the uṣṇīṣa and eye of all Tathāgatas. If someone were to insert it into any image or stūpa of the Buddha, that image of the Tathāgata would be blessed as if it were made of the seven precious substances.30

Note that, here, images serve as receptacles for these relics along with stūpas.

Additional dhārani sūtras teach that the presence of their mantras within a stūpa is equal to the presence of the actual Buddhas and their physical relics. The Vimāloṣṭa31 says:

If someone were to make a stūpa and eight stūpas, write this hrdaya of the vidyā mantra,32 insert it in the stūpa[s], and place [them] on top of a mandala, it would be as if they had placed inside each stūpa the bodily remains (sku-gdung) and relics (ring-bsrul) of Tathāgatas as many as there are grains of sand in ninety-nine hundred thousand million billions of Ganges Rivers. It would also become the essence of relics (ring-bsrul-gyi snying-po).33

Similarly, the Raśmivimala says,34

If any noble son were to write this secret mantra (gsang sngags) diligently ninety-nine times, were to place it on the four sides of the stūpa-pole (srog-shing, yastī) and were to write, as well, the very book of this ritual and place it within the stūpa-pole; if he were to perform such a ritual it would be as if he has established a stūpa-pole for ninety-nine thousand stūpas. Furthermore, it would be as if he has established ninety-nine thousand stūpas containing relics.35

The last example we will give here is the Bodhi-garbha.36

Vajrapādi, any son or daughter of good family or monk or nun or lay [man or woman] who makes a good stūpa at a junction of four roads,37 or in front of a mountain, or at a bank of water, or at an entrance to a town, or at a major road, and inserts into that stūpa the phyag-rgya38 of this dhārani and also puts up a yastī, the stūpa of that son or daughter of a good family will be called a stūpa of bodily relics of the Tathāgata . . . will be called a stūpa of the essence of the Buddha, will be called a stūpa of the essence of the Tathāgata.39

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32 For the different categories of mantras such as hrdaya, upahṛdaya, vidyā, mantra, etc., see Mkhhas-grub-rje 1968: 117. Various such mantras are taught in Vimāloṣṭa.
34 Bodhi-manḍalāṅkāra-nāma-dhāraṇī-upapāra, included only in the Phug-brag Kanjur (microfiche, Institute for the Advanced Studies of World Religions, cf. Jampa Samten 1992: 120). Another version was found in Dunhuang, P.T. 555 (Scherer Schaub, forthcoming).
35 Reading bhi for ghī.
36 A type of mantra.
37 Lag-na-rdo-rje rigs-kyi bu-'am/ rigs-kyi bu-mo-'am/ dge-srong-ngam/ dge-slong-ma-'am/ dge-bsnyen-ma gang-zhig gis/ lam-ghī ghī nmo-'am/ ri-drung-ngam/ chu-'gram-mam/ smon-dbyar gzi sgo-'am/ lam-po cher mchod-rtan legs-
The prescriptions of these dhārani sūtras were actually put into practice. Such dhāraniś were found deposited in stūpas in the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka, Tibet, China, Korea and Japan. It should be noted that such dhāraniś were not found just within stūpas, but also inside images. The Vimalaśīḍha Dhārāṇī excavated at Paharpur, for example, was written on a small clay tablet which was encased in a small terracotta image of the Buddha. This image was, in turn, placed within a stūpa.41 In Ratnagiri the Vimalaśīḍha Dhārāṇī is found on the back of an image of the Bodhisattva Lokeśvara (Mitra 1981–83, 1: 104).

When the Fifth Dalai Lama mentioned Indian books that speak of the insertion of one special dhārani in images, he most likely had in mind the dhārani sūtras mentioned above. The Tibetan tradition classifies four of these dhāraniś related to stūpas, along with the verse of Interdependent Origination, in a category called the Five Great Dhārāṇīs (gzungs chen sde lnga). These five are: 1. Gsugs-tor nam-rgyal (Uṣṇīṣavijaya), 2. Gsugs-tor dri-med (Vimalaśīḍha), 3. Gsang-ba ring-bsrel (Guhyadhātu), 4. Byang-chub rgyan 'bum (Bodhiśagarbha)ālankāralakṣa), 5. Rten-bsrel snying-po (Pratīyaśamutpāda). These are indeed the dhāraniś found most frequently in stūpas and on stone tablets throughout the Buddhist world.

Also these dhārani sūtras advocate their own cult in preference to the well-known and established practices associated with relics and dhāraṇa relics. When the Fifth Dalai Lama says, “there are also many kinds of relics—most importantly relics of the dharmakāya identified as dhāraniś,” he probably relies on the standpoint of these dhārani sūtras. This position is shared by other Tibetan writers, who find support in the dhārani sūtras. Citing the Guhyadhātu,42 the First Lcang-skya said: “Four [types] of relics were taught. Among them, the relics of the dharmakāya, the dhārani mantras, were taught as superior.”43 At the time these Tibetans wrote, a complete synthesis of the various depostitions within stūpas and images had already taken place. It is the last phase in the development surveyed here that is dominant in these Tibetan writings. Another indication of this is the name for the practice of depositing the sacred objects within stūpas and images, called in Tibetan gzungs-bul (offering dhāraniś) or gzungs-gzhug (inserting dhāraniś); gzungs (dhāraniś) being the general name for all the deposits, including physical relics, dhāraṇiś, books and so forth.

To conclude, the Buddha was conceived to be present or represented in his physical relics, images and teachings. In our case the teachings are either entire books containing the teachings, or the verse of Interdependent Origination, or dhāraniś considered also to be the essence of the Buddha, his relics and his teachings.44

D. INDIAN ORIGINS

The final point discussed by the Fifth Dalai Lama is whether detailed manuals for the practice of depositing dhāraniś and relics exist in India. He does not point out any such existing manuals. He declares only that their “existence in India has been established by both scriptural authority and reasoning.” The scriptural authorities cited by Tibetan authors for such manuals are mostly the sūtras encountered above, the Adbhutadharma maparyāya, Kūtāgāra, Mahāraṇa, and Pratīyaśamutpāda sūtras, as well as the various dhārani sūtras. In addition, also the Subahupariṇīcchā, one of the four basic kriyā tantras is mentioned. While this tantra does not...

42. Chandra and Dikshit 1936: 124–25 and plates LIX-LX there; see also Dikshit 1938: 84.
43. See Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (p. 240.4), The Fifth Dalai Lama (p. 409.6), Padma-‘phrin-las (p. 318), ‘Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa (vol. II, p. 487.6), Kong-sprul (p. 103), Krang-dbyi-sun (p. 2507).
44. The passage translated above.
45. Note that Scherrer-Schaub (forthcoming) comes to a different conclusion: “If the dhārani very often have an apotropaic value or function, in our case the ‘apotropa’, with its etymology of ‘deviating or deflecting’ (greek apotrépein) intervenes between cause and effect (hetuphalasambandha), in other words it acts at the core of the causation theory. But the main feature of the ritual itself is to be a ‘cleansing ritual’, that is to say it purifies from evil and thereby it reflects future existences toward pure or happy abodes.” No doubt, the texts provide many justifications for this conclusion, as well.
elaborate on the practice,\textsuperscript{46} it does mention images containing relics, along with similar stūpas. One of the few Indian works treating this subject is the relatively late Vajrāvallī by Abhayākaragupta (1064?–1125?).\textsuperscript{47}

Whenever you wish to make a special homage to relics (\textit{sku-gdung}) of the Tathāgata, you should at the time of making [an image or stūpa] leave the head or back of an image or the center of a stūpa hollow. When completed, you should write on birch bark with saffron or bezoar: \textit{namo bhaṅgavate sākyamunaye tathāgatāya arhate samyak-sambuddhāya om mune mune mahāmūneye [read: mahāmūneye] svāhā; ye dharmā hetu prabhavā hetun teṣṭān tathāgato hy avadat teṣṭā ca yo nirodhā evaṃ vādī mahāsrāmanātha,} and also special dhāraṇis.

Wrap around the relic which has been putried through the bathing ritual. While reciting: \textit{om mantra-dhāraṇi-garbha} svāhā \textit{(om to the one which has as its essence [womb]), mantras and relics svāhā}, place them in the hollow space. Then recite \textit{om vajra-dhāru-garbha} svāhā \textit{(om to the one which has as its essence [womb])} the \textit{vajra} relic svāhā and block the door to the hollow space with \textit{vajra} plaster. Perform the consecration \textit{(rab-gado) as above.}\textsuperscript{48}

The relics and \textit{dhāraṇis} deposited here are certainly not as numerous as in later Tibetan rituals. They specifically consist only of the relics of the Buddha and the \textit{dhāraṇi} of Buddha Śākyamuni, together with the verse of the “essence of Interdependent Origination.” Again, their deposition applies equally to both stūpas and images. The process of wrapping the \textit{dhāraṇis} around the physical relics emphasizes their equal status. This is expressed, as well, by the mantra recited during their insertion into the stūpa or image. The stūpa or image has for its essence both mantras and physical relics \textit{(mantra-dhāru-garbha).}

Attention should be drawn to the fact that various relics, books and \textit{dhāraṇis} were found also within Buddhist images in China, Korea and Japan. For example, the Seiryōji Buddha, which was brought to Japan from K‘ui feng in China by Chōnen, contained various objects sealed within a cavity in 985 C.E.\textsuperscript{49} Besides the objects themselves, a catalogue was enclosed in the image. These objects included: inner organs made of textiles,\textsuperscript{50} the Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā, the \textit{Suvannaprabhāsa,} and \textit{Saddharmapuṇḍarikā} sūtras; pictures of Śākyamuni Buddha, Mahājñāna, Samantabhadra and Maitreya; coins, mirrors, bells, beads, fragments of textiles, as well as a small wooden pole which seems to be a \\textit{yaṣṭī (sroŋ-shing).} A Japanese image of the Bodhisattva Jizō (Kṣitigarbha), dated to 1249, which was opened, at the Köln museum in 1983, contained a reliquary that was not opened, sūtras, including the \textit{Saddharmapuṇḍarikā Sūtra, dhāraṇi,} small images of Śākyamuni, Amitābha and Kṣitigarbha, pictures of Amitābha, etc., as well as a catalogue of its contents.\textsuperscript{51} A stone stūpa at Puligusa in Korea contained a \textit{Raśmiśivama Dhrāraṇi Sūtra} printed in 751 C.E., “reliquary vessels, Buddhist images, tiny pagodas, incense sticks, pieces of silk,” a bronze mirror, etc. (Goodrich 1967: 377). In 770 C.E. the empress Shōtoku of Japan ordered the production of one million small pagodas, each containing one of four \textit{dhāraṇis.}\textsuperscript{52} The Hangchow pagoda in China, which collapsed in 1924, revealed within its hollow gzhag-goi/\textit{de-nas} \textit{om vajra-dhāru-garbha} svāhā/ \textit{zhes brjod-cing rdo-rje'i dag-pas stong-pa'i sgo bkag-nas snga-ma bzhin-du de rab-tu gnas-par bya'o} (Derge Tenjur, vol. 75, pp. 127.5–128.1; see also P. vol. 80, p. 111.4.2–6). A version of the Sanskrit text can be found in Lokes Chandra 1977: 170.5–171.3.

Henderson and Hurvitz 1956; and see also Kidder 1972: 127–46.

\textsuperscript{46} The first chapter of the tantra has the following: “For the sake of purifying sins, at a pure and isolated place, constantly make clay or sand stūpas of the Sūgata containing the essence of Interdependent Origination. Offer praises, garlands, perfumes and butter lamps to images or stūpas containing relics (\textit{ring-bser}). With the highest devotion make offerings of parasols, victory banners, music.” \textit{gsang-zhing dben-pa sa-yi phyogs-su ni / jin-pa'am ni bye-ma-las byas-pa'i/ bde-gsugs mchod-rten rten-brel snying-po-can/ sldig-pa shyar ba'i phyir ni rig-tu gdal/ ring-bser-can-gyi sku-gzugs mchod-rten-l'as bstan-cing phreng-bras di dang mar-me dbul/ gungs dang rgyal-mtshan ba-dan rol-mo dang/ mchog-tu dad-pa-yis ni mchod-par bya Toh. 805, Derge Kanjur, vol. 96, p. 238).

\textsuperscript{47} For Abhayākaragupta see, Bühnemann 1992. Another Indian source mentioned by Kong-sprul (p. 102) was written by Vanaratna (1384–1468).

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Gang-gi-tshe de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i sku-gdung-la bkur-st'i khyad-par bya-bar 'dod-pa'i de'i sgrub-pa'i dus-nyid-du sku-gzugs-kyi du-a'm rgyab dang mchod-rten-gyi with srong-par bya'o/ grub-pa-na gor-gur-gum dang gi-wang-dag-gis/ namo bhaṅgavate sākyamunaye tathāgatāya arhate samyak-sambuddhāya om mune mune mahāmūneye svāhā. Ye dharmā hetun prabhavā hetun teṣṭān tathāgato hy avadat teṣṭā ca yo nirodhā evaṃ vādī mahāsrāmanātha,} and also special dhāraṇis.

\textsuperscript{49} The textiles included heart, lung, liver, kidneys, stomach, intestines, etc.

\textsuperscript{50} Goepper 1984; see also Cachia 1987.

\textsuperscript{51} Carter 1955: 46–53; Hickman 1975. Note the importance of \textit{dhāraṇis} in the early history of printing!

These examples demonstrate that there were in East Asia also practices of depositing relics, books, and dhāraṇīs, which more nearly than the Indian cases approach in complexity the Tibetan practices criticized by certain Tibetan authors. The problem of the Indian origins of these East Asian practices needs to be investigated, as part of the larger historical picture. It is hoped that further research on the content of Indian stūpas and images also will be carried out, so that the nature of the Indian influence can be further specified.\(^{53}\)

E. A TIBETAN EXAMPLE

In order to illustrate the Tibetan practice of depositing relics and dhāraṇīs, I conclude with a translation of one of the earliest Tibetan passages on the subject that has come down to us. It was written by Rje-bsun Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1147–1216) as part of a work entitled Arga’i Cho-ga Dang Rab-tu Gnas Don Gsal-ba. In comparison to later Tibetan works, Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan’s manual is concise. Still, it includes most of the elements found in later Tibetan ritual works:

The present topic is the method of inserting relics and so forth into stūpas so that they abide there. In general, there are four types of relics: 1. bodily relics, 2. bodily relics which are like mustard seeds, 3. hairs and nails, which are called relics of the garb, 4. dhāraṇīs, which are called relics of dharmakāya. The relics of dharmakāya are the five dhāraṇīs taught to be placed in stūpas: Uṣṇīṣavijaya, Vimalakīrti, Guhyadhūkaraṇḍa, Bodhitārāntakaraṇḍa, Pratītyasamutpāda. Furthermore, the lamas taught that writing mantras endowed with blessings that appear in the tantras and sūtras and inserting them so as to abide [in stūpas] would [produce] immeasurable merit and great blessings.

As for the levels of abidings of these [relics], even if there is no space for abiding at the very top [of the stūpa], one should insert, so as to abide in the upper wheel [of the stūpa], names, beginning with that of the Buddha up until one’s own root guru, well scented with saffron and so forth, together with the three letters om  마련 hūn and with [the formula of] prostration and taking refuge. In short, write the names of the completely perfect [members] of one’s own lineage. Then insert, so as to abide, the mantras of one’s own yi-dam deity. Om vajra dyuse svāhā is the mantra of a firm life-wood (srog-shing, yaṣṭi), which abides on the four sides of the life-wood or, in case of something like an image, on its heart. Om sar-vavidya svāhā is the mantra of Great Knowledge. Insert it to abide in the harmikā of a stūpa or the head of an image. Then in the vase [of a stūpa, the bum-pa], insert so as to abide dhāraṇī-mantras of stūpa and any dhāraṇī endowed with blessing.

Further insert, so as to abide, dhāraṇī-mantras of Mahāyoga Tantra, then of Yoga Tantra, then of Čaryā Tantra, then of Kriyā Tantra. If the interior is spacious and is not filled with dhāraṇīs, insert [dhāraṇīs] in the upper part of the vase and below that the Tantras and Piṭaka sections [of the Kanjur]. Also, the dhāraṇīs inserted so as to abide on top are the supreme among the tantras, the so-called heart [mantra, snying-po, hṛdaya]\(^{54}\) and dhāraṇīs. The [specification of] tantras and sūtras that are to be inserted at the base (rmaṇa)\(^{55}\) appears in other ritual works and detailed manuals of rituals.

Even though [some] say that relics of lamas abide in the harmikā, I consider that it accords with the dharma if they abide as high as possible, since [the lamas] are the essence of all the Buddhas. If there are [also] relics of the Tathāgata, combine the [relics of the lamas] together with [the relics of the Tathāgata] without [any distinction of] superior and inferior, adorn with grain, incense, and precious substances and insert to abide. One should not insert into stūpas remains of people other than lamas and supreme personages.\(^{56}\) It appears from the scriptures that this would harm sentient beings. If you nevertheless insert remains, examine them carefully, mix them with clay, make them such that their essence is dhāraṇīs and relics [see above], make them into tsha-tshus and insert them to abide. According to my opinion, it is appropriate if you do so also for supreme personages.

Write dhāraṇī-mantras of the dharma protectors, such as Mahākāla, Gaṇapati, Jambhala, the seventy-five pure-type protectors, and so forth. [Make them] abide in the lotus [throne]; command the protectors. Also insert the five medicinal herbs, the five grains, the five scents,

\(^{53}\) It is true that in most cases the content of Indian images and stūpas had already been removed at the time of excavation. Yet, not many Indian images have been x-rayed. Seals found on the backs of images, carrying the verse of the “essence of Interdependent Origination” and perhaps other dhāraṇīs need further research. Evidence for the practice of blessing the sense-bases (in Tibetan, skye-mched byin-brilab) of Pāla-Sena images is hardly available.

\(^{54}\) See Mkh as grub rje 1968: 117.

\(^{55}\) This is also the name of a part of the stūpa below the four steps (the bang-rim bchil).

\(^{56}\) Also, according to the Vinaya-kṣūndaka-vaṣtu of the Dharmaguptaka, “Ne pas enterrer de cadavre sous le stūpa d’un Buddha” (Barens 1962: 271).
the five precious substances and the five essences [which are]
the twenty-five extracts. Then draw the wheels of the
nine yākṣas and nine yakṣīs as they appear in the
Dpa'-bo [Gchod-tu] Grub-pa Tantra. Glue [the wheels]
with butter and honey, generate them and make pleasing
offerings.

Before anything abides inside [the stūpa or image],
perform a short consecration [of the relics and dhāranis].
Then insert them to abide and, finally, attach the bottom
piece [of the stūpa or image] with the wheel[s] which are
made to please the yakṣas.

Even though I heard and saw many other procedures
for the abiding of dhāranis, they are not embelished
with scriptural authority and reasoning. As for this [my
instructions] I consulted tantras and śāstras and embel-
lished [my account] with the advice of lama[s], as well.69

The types of relics listed here are identical to those
known in India, with the exception of a further division
of bodily relics.60 The list of dhāranis covers five of the
dhāranis stūtras discussed above. These relics are depos-
ited within stūpas or images according to a hierarchical
order which reflects the relative holiness of these sacred
objects, an interesting subject in its own right. A more
detailed discussion of the content of Tibetan stūpas and
images is the subject of another study that I am pres-
ently preparing. Here, only the fifth category of relics,
common especially among the Bka'-bgyud-pa and
Rnying-ma-pa, will be mentioned.61 These are the relics

58 Toh. 544; ToG Palace 504, vol. 102, p. 973.1–2; see also
59 Da ni mchod-rten-gyi dang du ring-brel la-sogs-pa
bzhugs-su gzugs-pa tshul-khna/ sphyi ring-brel ni rnam-pa zhi
ste/ sku-gdung-gi ring-brel dang/ sku-gdung nyungs [read:
yungs]-bru la'i-bu'i ring-brel dang/ dbu-skra dang sen-mo la
sku-bal-gyi ring-brel zhes brjod-pa dang/ gzungs-nams-la
chos-kyi sku'i ring-brel zhes brjod-pa yin-no/ chos-kyi sku'i
ring-brel-la mchod-rten-gyi dang du bzhugs-par bshad-pa'i
gzungs lnga yin-yi/ gtsug-tor rnam-rgyal dang/ gtsug-tor dri-
med/ gsang-ba'i ring-brel za-ma-tog/ byung-chub snying-po
rgy-an 'bum/ rten-brel snying-po rnam-pa yin-no/ gzhan-yang
gsang-snags-kyi rgyud-sde dang/ mdo-sde-sas 'byung-ba'i
snags byin-rabs-can-rnam rnis-nas bzhugs-su bceu-na
bso-ga dpag-tu med-'cig byin-rabs che'o-zhes bla-ma-
rnams gsun-gno/ de dag bzhugs-pa'i rim-pa ni/ tog dang tog-
la bzhugs sa med-na-'ang/ 'khor-lo'i thog-ma sangs-rgyas-nas
bzung-nas bdag-gi rtsa-ba'i bla-ma'i bar-gyi mchod-rnam-
rnas/ gur-gum sogs-pa'i dtra dang-pa yi-ge gsam dang spel-pa-
'am phyag-'tshal-ling skyabs-su 'gro-po dang bcsas-pa spel-
la bzhugs-su gzugs-mdor-na rang-gi bgyud-pa-rnam rongs-
rdzogs-pa'i mthan bri/ de nas rang-gi yi-dam-gyi th'ai
gsang-snags-rnam bzhugs-su gzug-go/ Om vajra dbyul Svädå/
bzes bya-ba ni srog-shing brtan-pa'i snags yin-te/ srog-shing gi phyogs byi dang/ sku-gdus la-ba yin-na thugs-
kar bzhugs-sol/ Om sarva-vidyä Svädå zhes bya-ba ni rig-pa
chen-mo'i snags yin-te/ mchod-rten-gyi byi dang sku-gdugs-
kyi dbur bzhugs-su gzugs-go/ de nas bum-par mchod-rten-gyi
gzungs-snags dang/ gzungs byin-rabs-can mtha' dag bzhugs-
su gzugs-ste/ de'ang thog-mar rnal'byor chen-pa'i rgyud-kyi/
de nas rnal'byor-gyi rgyud-kyi/ de nas snyod-pa'i rgyud-kyi/
de nas bya-ba'i rgyud-kyi gsangs-snags-rnam bzhugs-su
gzugs-ste/ rang yangs-shing gzungs-kyi ma khengs-na/ bum

60 On Tibetan classifications of relics, see Bentor (forth-
coming).
61 Chos-kyi-grags-pa (pp. 281–83), Padma-'phin-las (p. 305),
Kong-sprul (p. 102).
of the dharmakāya (chos-kyi sku'i ring-bsrel), as distinguished from relics of the dharma (i.e., dāhāranis and books). The relics of the dharmakāya are small stūpas and tsha-tshas,\textsuperscript{62} which are said to symbolize the dharmakāya. We have seen above (§ A) that the theories on the multiple bodies of the Buddha, among their other manifold implications, explain the worship of the physical relics of the Buddha, which are attributed to the Form Body. Interestingly, according to the fivefold concept of relics, also the dharmakāya (the Non-form Body) came to have relics.

CONCLUSIONS

Indian and Tibetan stūpas and images have contained a variety of items, all of which are classified as relics: repositories of the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha, offerings, and 'omens'. Upon his death, the Buddha left behind two legacies: his physical relics and the body of his teachings. Various teachings have located the absent Buddha either in his physical remains or in his words. Later also, images served to locate the Buddha in the samsāric world. Concepts of relics may have developed further because of tensions between these various views. They were also influenced by trends emphasizing the power of mantras and dhāhāranis. Possibly also, problems of access to the physical relics or to sites housing them influenced a particular stand.\textsuperscript{63} It should be noted, however, that in Tibet the problem that physical relics of the Buddha were in short supply was solved by means of 'multiplying relics'.\textsuperscript{64} Hence Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan assumes that one may deposit a relic of the Tathāgata (see above). However, the various answers to the question of locating the Buddha 'gone to nirvāṇa' were synthesized. Already in India, both stūpas and images had been made that contained both physical and dharma relics, thereby encompassing the various trends. In Tibet the different types of relics which had evolved throughout the history of Buddhism came to be used for sacralizing stūpas and images. With regard to the question of the Indian origins of Tibetan practice, the various types of relics deposited in Tibetan stūpas and images, with the possible exception of mustard seed like relics,\textsuperscript{65} have precedence in India. They are found in archaeological excavations of stūpas and images, and are mentioned in Buddhist scriptures and in testimonies of Chinese pilgrims to India. Yet, even though the process of synthesizing the various deposits can be found already in India, it did not reach there the degree of elaboration it would acquire in Tibet. We can say that the basic notions of the Tibetan practice are certainly based on Indian precedents. But the comprehensive nature of the Tibetan practice is yet another indication of the elaborate and comprehensive nature of Tibetan Buddhism.

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\textsuperscript{62} Small clay tables stamped by molds, here in the shape of stūpas.

\textsuperscript{63} According to Schopen 1975, problems that new sects had of access to major Buddhist sites in India were important for

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