

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

Yael Bentor

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY

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 said 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 *dhāraṇīs* (*gzungs-'bul*) in stūpas and images. In Tibet an elaborate practice of depositing many different types of relics and *dhāraṇīs* 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, forthcoming). 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. "Tibetan lamas insert *dhāraṇīs* 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 *dhāraṇī*, such as the 'essence of Interdependent Origination', even the least indication for the elaborate undertaking known nowadays does not appear. The majority of Indian cast images made of *li-ma*¹ are actually made without inserting *dhāraṇīs*. Also, in examining decaying clay images made here in Tibet in early times, we have seen no *dhāraṇīs* whatsoever inserted in them." So they claim. This is Māra talking through their mouths. In the sūtras there are numerous teachings on the excellent 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 *dharmakāya*, identified as *dhāraṇīs*. The existence of detailed manuals on the method of deposition of *dhāraṇīs* in India has been established by both scriptural authority and reasoning (*lung rigs*). Even if there is no indication for the deposition of *dhāraṇīs* in some Indian books, it cannot be concluded that this did not exist in India . . .

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

It is most unreasonable to argue that there is no standard for depositing *dhāraṇīs* 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,

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

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 inexhaustible 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-

² *Yon-tan phyogs-re tsam-gyis dregs-shing/ mdo bstan-bcos dgongs-'grel ris-su ma-chad-pa-la lta-ba'i blo mig rnam-par ldongs-pa 'dod-pa'i lhas rjes-su bzung-ba la-la-dag-gis sku-gzugs dang mchod-rten sogs bzhengs-pa-la gzungs-gzhug 'bul-ba 'di-dag bod-kyi bla-ma-rnams-kyis byas-kyi/ rgya-gar-na med-do snyam-pa'i log-rtog-gi ngan smras-sgrog-cing/ de'i khungs-su/ rgya-gzhung 'ga'-zhig-na rten-'brel snying-po lta-bu'i gzungs-dmigs-bsal re-re tsam 'jug zer-ba las/ deng-sang yongs-su grag-pa 'di-'dra byed-pa'i 'phros zur-tsam-yang mi snang-ba dang/ 'phags-yul-gyi sku li-ma-rnams gar-lugs shas-che-bas gzungs-gzhug med-pa mngon-sum-gyis grub-cing/ bod-'dir sngon-dus bzhengs-pa'i lder-bzo zhig-pa rnams-la brtags tshes-yang gzungs-gzhug ji-bzhin mi 'dug-pa mthong-bas-so zhes zer mod/ de-dag ni bdud-kyis kha rnam-par phye-ba'i gtam-ste/ mdo-las/ sangs-rgyas nyan-thos-kyi dge-'dun bye-ba phrag du dang bcas-pa-la lo grangs dpag-tu med-par yo-byad-kyis bsnyen-bkur byas-pa las/ de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i sku-gzugs mtshon gang-pa ring-bsrel-gyi snying-po-can-zhig 'jim-pa-las bsgrubs-pa bsod-nams lhag-pa sogs mang-du gsungs-pas/ ring-bsrel-la mam-grangs mang-yang/ gtso-bor chos-sku'i ring-bsrel ni gzungs-la ngos-'dzin-pa'i-phyir/ gzungs-'bul tshul-gyi lag-len zhib-mo rgya-gar du yod-pa lung-rigs gnyis-kas 'grub-cing/ rgya-gzhung 'ga'-zhig-tu gzungs 'bul-ba'i gsal-cha med-pa tsam-gyis/ rgya-gar-du med-pa mi 'grub-ste/ . . . li'i rgyu-rnams-la sangs-rgyas 'od-srungs-kyis byin-rlabs mdzad-par bshad-pas/ li'i sku 'ga'-zhig-la gzungs-gzhug med-kyang sangs-rgyas-kyis byin-gyis brlabs-pa-las lhag-pa'i gzungs ci-zhig dgos/ . . . sngon-gyi lder-bzo rnying-pa 'ga'-zhig-la gzungs-gzhug tshad-ldan mi 'dug-go zhes zer-ba ni shin-tu mi rigs-te/ snga-rabs-kyi dus-su byung-ba rgyu-mtshan-du byas-te khungs btsun-par 'gyur-na/ bod-du nang-pa'i bstan-pa-las bon-po'i bstan-pa snga-zhing/ ka-ma-la-shî-la'i ring-lugs-las hva-shang-gi grub-mtha' snga-ba dang/ rgyal-ba tsong-kha-pa chen-po'i lta-ba'i bzheng-pa-las jo-mo-nang-pa'i lta-ba-dag snga-ba'i phyir-na/ snga-ma-rnams-dag-gi phyi-ma-rnams mi dag-go zhes smra dgos-par 'gyur-pa sogs gnod-byed mi zad-pa thog-tu 'bab-bo (pp. 400.6–403.4). (I would like to thank Geshe Thubten Tandhar for his help with this difficult passage.)*

hind, there is plentiful evidence to show that the Buddha was conceived as present in his relics. In addition, between these two extremes, a spectrum of solutions to the problematic status of the Buddha in the present world of *samsāra* was offered.³ Especially noteworthy are the implications of the various theories on the multiple bodies (*kāya*) of the Buddha,⁴ distinguishing his physical body, which gave rise to the bodily relics, from his body of *dharmas* (*dharmakāya*),⁵ and the other bodies of the threefold, fourfold and fivefold classifications. Though the body of *dharmas* does not leave any relics behind, as a phenomenon a relic is still possible. Just like the physical body, bodily relics are regarded as skillful means—benefiting sentient beings (see *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama*, ch. 2,⁶ *The Buddhābhidhāna-prātihārya-vikurvāna-nirdeśa Sūtra*⁷). Hence, tensions with regard to the location of the true Buddha could be partly reconciled by means of theories on the multiple bodies of the Buddha.

Archaeological evidence points to the prominence of the relic cult in the early centuries of Buddhist history. A stūpa enshrining the relics of the Buddha or other Buddhist personages is found at the center of a significant number of Buddhist monasteries, serving as the main focus of worship.⁸ Foremost among the relics in the early Buddhist period were the physical remains (*śarīra*, *dhātu*) of Śākyamuni Buddha. The *locus classicus* for accounts of the relics of the Buddha is the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, which relates how these relics were divided and enshrined in eight stūpas.⁹ The Buddhist scriptures contain further evidence for the practice of erecting stūpas and images containing relics. Most often, such evidence is in the form of praises to the practice and of the merit deriving from its performance. One example is a passage found almost verbatim in three different scriptures: the *Adbhutadharmaparyāya* (Bentor 1988), the *Kūṭāgāra Sūtra* (Toh. 332), and the *Mahāraṇa Sūtra* (Toh. 208).

Indeed, Ānanda, the continent of Jambūdvīpa 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

³ See Falk 1977; Eckel 1985, 1992; Schopen 1987, 1988; Trainor 1990; Collins 1992: 235; etc.

⁴ Nagao 1973; Reynolds 1977; Williams 1989: 167–84; Eckel 1992: 97–109; Harrison 1992, etc.

⁵ A translation recently suggested by Harrison (1992).

⁶ Emmerick 1970: 7–8; see also Snellgrove 1987: 37.

⁷ Schopen 1978: 332 and 1987: 223, n. 58. With regard to images, see Lancaster 1974.

⁸ See Schopen 1991 and references there.

⁹ *Dīgha Nikāya*, II.166–67, translated in Walshe 1987: 276–77.

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 Tathâgata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One, who attained complete *nirvâna*, a stûpa the size of an *âmalaka* fruit made from a lump of clay, and were to stick into it a stûpa-pole the size of a needle with 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]¹⁰ a relic the size of a mustard seed, I say, Ânanda, the merit of the latter is much greater than the former.¹¹

We will encounter other similar types of arguments. When the Fifth Dalai Lama mentions numerous teachings found in the sûtras, in which the making of clay images [or stûpas], even in miniature size, but containing relics, is taught to be of superior merit to countless offerings made to *śrâvakas* [and so forth], he is probably referring to scriptures such as the *Adbhutadharmaparyâya*, *Kûtâgâra* or *Mahârâna* sûtras.¹²

During the centuries, in its outer form, the stûpa 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 stûpa.¹³

The cult of images was another solution to the problem of the presence or the representation of the Buddha in the saṃsâric 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 stûpas but also in images. In fact, according to some of the Pâli 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 *dhâraṇîs* in images. A reference to an image containing a relic is found already in the canonical text, the *Bhikṣuṇî-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 Nâgârjunakoṇḍa (site no. 6) contained a reliquary similar to those found in stûpas.

Between the legs, 1'2" long and 5¾" broad, is a socket drilled on the upper part of the *padmâsana* 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 1¾" deep, and in it was found a gold tube ¾" high and ⅓" in diameter (p. XIV–B). This tube contained 95 pearls, one of them measuring ⅛" 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.¹⁴

B. RELICS OF THE DHARMA

The Buddhist teachings are another solution to the problem of the Buddha's presence—he who has gone to *nirvâna*—in the saṃsâric world. The Buddha was conceived to be present or represented not only in his relics and images, but also in his teachings, the *dharma*.¹⁵ 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 Mahâyâna sûtras is with “an equation of the presence of the *dharma-paryâya* with the presence of the Buddha” (Schopen 1975: 175). Such a view is found in “texts like the *Saddharmapuṇḍarîka* and *Suvarṇaprabhâsottama*, 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 Mahâyâna *sûtra* 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

¹⁰ 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’ (*prakṣipet*, *bcug*), while MS A of the Sanskrit has ‘establish a relic’ (*dhâtum pratiṣṭhâpayet*), which may reflect a form of the relic cult not yet associated with stûpas or images (see Bentor 1988: 26–27).

¹¹ Bentor 1988: 41. This is a translation from the *Adbhutadharmaparyâya*.

¹² Also the *Puṣpakuṭa-Dhâraṇî* (Toh. 516 and 886) contains similar arguments in stressing the superiority of offerings to a stûpa of a Tathâgata containing relics as small as a mustard seed.

¹³ For a comprehensive study of the stûpa, see Kottkamp 1992; specifically on the symbolism of the stûpa, see, for example, Harvey 1990.

¹⁴ Ramachandran 1953: 14. I would like to thank G. Schopen for this reference.

¹⁵ Schopen 1975; Mitomo 1984; Williams 1989: 167–84; Boucher 1991; Harrison 1992, etc.

expression, among others, in the deposition of Buddhist scriptures in stūpas. 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 stūpas and in the mountains, . . .¹⁶

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 stūpas 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 *stūpa*/relic 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 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-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 stūpas.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 argu-

ment 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 *Adbhutadharmaparyāya* 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 stūpas did not contain entire scriptures, but only parts of them. Hsüan Tsang observed the practice of placing written fragments of the scriptures, called *dharmasārīra*, in small stūpas, which were in turn collected in a large stūpa (Hsüan Tsang, II: 146–47). The most common piece of scripture deposited in stūpas 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 stūpas, 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 stūpas is found in the *Pratītyasamutpāda Sūtra* (Toh. 212, 520 and 980):

“If a devoted son or daughter of good family were to make on an unestablished place (*apraṭiṣṭhite deśe* or *pradeśe*) a stūpa the size of an *āmalaka* fruit—with a *yaṣṭi* 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 *Pratītyasamutpāda*, he [or she] would generate brahmic merit (*brāhmapuṇyaṃ prasavet*).” 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 *Adbhutadharmaparyāya*, 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

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 “Lokakṣema’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 Lokakṣema.

¹⁸ It is also possible that Buddhist scriptures were deposited in stūpas 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 stūpas.

¹⁹ Schopen 1975; Lancaster 1981; Mitomo 1984; Kajiyama 1985; Snellgrove 1987; Williams 1989: 164–84; Eckel 1992: 97–99; Harrison 1992, etc.

²⁰ *Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hy avadat teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃ vādī mahāśramaṇaḥ*, “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.

basic assumption is that, as the physical relics are the essence of the Buddha, so the verse of Interdependent Origination is the essence of the teachings. But the Buddha is present in his teachings rather than in his physical remains. Hence, this verse could be said to contain both the teachings and the Buddha.

When the Fifth Dalai Lama mentions that Indian books instruct one to deposit only one *dhâraṇî*, such as the “essence of Interdependent Origination,” he probably had in mind the *Pratītyasamutpāda Sūtra*.²² This sūtra is mentioned by name in other ritual manuals as the scriptural authority for the practice of depositing *dhâraṇîs* and relics (Padma-phrin-las, p. 306; Kong-sprul, p. 146, etc.).

So far, the deposition of the verse of Interdependent Origination was presented as an alternative to the deposition of physical relics in stūpas. The *Sūtra on the Merit of Building a Stūpa*, preserved in Chinese only (Boucher 1991), is similar to the *Pratītyasamutpāda Sūtra*. yet it provides the possibility of depositing within a miniature stūpa both the physical relics of the Buddha and the dharma in the form of the verse of Interdependent Origination. Similarly, I Tsing, who witnessed the practice of making stūpas in India in the seventh century, reports on the placing of both physical relics and the verse of Interdependent Origination within the stūpas (1896: 150–51). A much earlier Kharoṣṭī inscription on a relic casket in a shape of a stūpa found in the Kurram Valley in Pakistan not only includes the limbs of the *Pratītyasamutpāda*, it also contains record of the deposition of a relic of Śākya-muni.²³ In these cases, two practices which correspond to differing views on the true location of the Buddha have been synthesized into a single practice. According to I Tsing, physical relics and the verse of Interdependent Origination were deposited not only in stūpas, but in images as well. Other Indian examples (Boucher 1991: 14–15) show that the relic cult in stūpas was translated to images. The content of Tibetan images differs only slightly from the content of stūpas.

C. DHĀRAṆĪS AS RELICS²⁴

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 *dhâraṇî sūtra*. Several of these sūtras advocate the practice of depositing their entire text, or at least the *dhâraṇî* or other mantras taught in them, inside stūpas.²⁵ The reason for that, according to the *Guhyadhātu*,²⁶

Wherever this text (*chos-kyi rnam-grangs, dharma-paryāya*) resides, a hundred thousand, ten million, as many as there are sesame seeds, Tathāgatas reside; bodily relics (*sku gdung ring-bsrel*) of inexplicable numbers²⁷ of Tathāgatas reside; the eighty-four thousand heaps of *dharma*²⁸ reside.²⁹

Here, as the earlier Mahāyāna scriptures, this *dhâraṇî* 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 *dhâraṇî* sūtra is regarded as the equivalent of the dharma in its entirety. In other words, this *dhâraṇî* sūtra is synonymous with the various concepts of relics we have observed so far. The word *dhâraṇî*, 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

²⁵ Some of these *dhâraṇî* sūtras were studied by Schopen (1982, 1985) and Scherrer-Schaub (forthcoming).

²⁶ The full name of this sūtra is *Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhāna-hṛdaya-guhyā-dhātu-karaṇḍa-mudrā-nāma-dhâraṇî-mahāyāna-sūtra* (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.

²⁹ *Chos-kyi rnam-grangs 'di gang-na gnas-pa der/ de-bzhin-gshegs-pa 'bum-phrag bye-ba til-gyi gang-bu snyed gnas-shing/ de-bzhin-gshegs-pa khar-yas khar-yas zhes bya-ba snyed-kyi sku-gdung ring-bsrel-rnams gnas-so chos-kyi phung-po brgyad-khri bzhi-stong gnas-so* [the word *chos-kyi* is mistakenly repeated] (Tog Palace, vol. 102, p. 8.5–7). Paraphrased in Schopen 1982: 103, where the entire sūtra is summarized.

²² For other Indian works, see below.

²³ Mitra 1981–3, 2:412; see also Boucher 1991: 4.

²⁴ On *dhâraṇîs*, in general, see Winternitz (1939, II:380–87); Lalou (1957); Lamotte (1976: 1854–77); de Jong [Matsunaga] 1984: 95–96; etc.

relics (*ring-bsrel*) of the *vajra* essence of all Tathāgatas. It would become a stūpa blessed by the secret essence of the *dhāraṇī* 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 *dhāraṇī* 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 *Vimaloṣṇīṣa*³¹ says:

If someone were to make one hundred and eight stūpas, write this *hṛdaya* of the *vidyā* mantra,³² insert it in the stūpa[s], and place [them] on top of a *maṇḍala*, it would be as if they had placed inside each stūpa the bodily remains (*sku-gdung*) and relics (*ring-bsrel*) 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-bsrel-gyi snying-po*).³³

³⁰ *Bcom-ldan-'das-kyis bka'-stsal-pa/ lag-na-rdo-rje gang-zhig chos-kyi mnam-grangs 'di bris-te mchod-rten-gyi nang-du bzhag-pa de/ de-bzhin-gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi rdo-rje'i snying-po'i ring-bsrel-gyi mchod-rten-du 'gyur-ro/ de-bzhin-gshegs-pa thams-cad-kyi gzungs-kyi snying-po gsang-bas byin-gyis brlabs-pa'i mchod-rten-du 'gyur-ro/ de-bzhin-gshegs-pa til-gyi gang-bu snyed dgu-bcu rtsa dgu'i mchod-rten-du 'gyur-ro/ de-bzhin-gsheg-pa thams-cad-kyi gtsug-tor dang spyang-gyi mchod-rten-du byin-gyis brlabs-par 'gyur-ro/ gang-zhig sangs-rgyas-kyi gzugs-brnyan-nam/ mchod-rten thams-cad-kyi nang-du 'jog-par byed-na/ de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i gzugs-brnyan rin-po-che sna-bdun-gyi rang-bzhin-du byin-gyis brlabs-par 'gyur-ro* (Tog Palace, no. 469, vol. 102, pp. 12.7–13.4). This passage was partially translated in Schopen 1982: 104.

³¹ The complete name of this sūtra is *Samanta-mukha-praveśa-raśmi-vimaloṣṇīṣa-prabhāsa-sarva-tathāgata-hṛdaya-samaya-vilokita-nāma-dhāraṇī* (Toh. 599, 983; P. 206, 608; Tog Palace 557, vol. 104, pp. 517–43).

³² For the different categories of mantras such as *hṛdaya*, *upahṛdaya*, *vidyā*, *mantra*, etc., see Mkhas-grub-rje 1968: 117. Various such mantras are taught in *Vimaloṣṇīṣa*.

³³ *Mchod-rten brgya-rtsa-brgyad btap-pa-la rig-sngags-kyi snying-po 'di bris-te mchod-rten-gyi nang-du bcug-nas dkyil-'khor-gyi steng-du bzhag-na/ gang-gā'i klung bye-ba khrag-khrig 'bum-phrag dgu-bcu rtsa-dgu'i bye-ma snyed-kyi de-*

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, yaṣṭi*) 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

Vajrapāṇi, 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 a body of water], or at an entrance to a town, or at a major road, and inserts into that stūpa the *phyag-rgya*³⁸ of this *dhāraṇī* and also puts up a *yaṣṭi*, 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

bzhin-gshegs-pa-rnams-kyi sku-gdung dang ring-bsrel mchod-rten re-re'i nang-du bcug-par 'gyur-ro/ ring-bsrel-gyi snying-por yang 'gyur-ro (Tog Palace, vol. 104, pp. 529.7–530.2; see also p. 541.5–6 for a similar statement).

³⁴ The full name is *Raśmi-vimala-viśuddha-prabhā-nāma-dhāraṇī* (Toh. 510, 982; P. 218; Tog Palace 559, vol. 104, pp. 563–93).

³⁵ *Rigs-kyi bu ci-nas-kyang gsang-sngags 'di nan-tan-du dgu-bcu rtsa dgur yi-ger bris-te/ mchod-rten-gyi srog-shing-gi ngos-bzhir gzhug-go/ de'ang cho-ga'i gzhung-'di nyid-kyang bris-te srog-shing-gi nang-du gzhug-go/ cho-ga de-ltar byas-na mchod-rten dgu-khri dgu-stong-gi srog-shing btsugs-pa dang-'dra'o/ de'i gong-du'ang mchod-rten ring-bsrel-can dgu-khri dgu-stong bzhengs-pa dang 'dra'o* (Tog Palace, vol. 104, p. 575.1–3).

³⁶ *Bodhi-maṇḍālānkāra-nāma-dhāraṇī-upacāra*, 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 (Scherrer Schaub, forthcoming).

³⁷ Reading *bzhi* for *gzhi*.

³⁸ A type of mantra.

³⁹ *Lag-na-rdo-rje rigs-kyi bu-'am/ rigs-kyi bu-mo-'am/ dge-slong-ngam/ dge-slong-ma-'am/ dge-bsnyen-ma gang-zhig-gis . . . / lam-gyi gzhi mdo-'am/ ri-drung-ngam/ chu-'gram-mam/ grong-khyer-gyi sgo-'am/ lam-po-cher mchod-rten legs-*

The prescriptions of these *dhâraṇī* sūtras were actually put into practice. Such *dhâraṇīs* were found deposited in stūpas in the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka, Tibet, China, Korea and Japan.⁴⁰ It should be noted that such *dhâraṇīs* were not found just within stūpas, but also inside images. The *Vimaloṣṇīṣa Dhâraṇī* 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 *Vimaloṣṇīṣa Dhâraṇī* 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 *dhâraṇī* in images, he most likely had in mind the *dhâraṇī* sūtras mentioned above. The Tibetan tradition classifies four of these *dhâraṇīs* related to stūpas, along with the verse of Interdependent Origination, in a category called the Five Great Dhâraṇīs (*gzungs chen sde lnga*). These five are: 1. *Gtsug-tor rnam-rgyal (Uṣṇīṣavijaya)*, 2. *Gtsug-tor dri-med (Vimaloṣṇīṣa)*, 3. *Gsang-ba ring-bsrel (Guhyadhātu)*, 4. *Byang-chub rgyan 'bum (Bodhi[garbha]jalāṅkāralakṣa)*, 5. *Rten-'brel snying-po (Pratītyasamutpāda)*.⁴² These are indeed the *dhâraṇīs* found most frequently in stūpas and on stone tablets throughout the Buddhist world.

Also these *dhâraṇī* sūtras advocate their own cult in preference to the well-known and established practices associated with physical relics and dharma relics. When the Fifth Dalai Lama says, “there are also many kinds of relics—most importantly relics of the *dharmakāya* identified as *dhâraṇīs*,” he probably relies on the standpoint of these *dhâraṇī* sūtras. This position is shared by other Tibetan writers, who find support in the *dhâraṇī* sūtras. Citing the *Guhyadhātu*,⁴³ the First Lcang-skyā

said: “Four [types] of relics were taught. Among them, the relics of the *dharmakāya*, the *dhâraṇī* mantras, were taught as superior.”⁴⁴ At the time these Tibetans wrote, a complete synthesis of the various depositions 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 *dhâraṇīs*) or *gzungs-gzhug* (inserting *dhâraṇīs*); *gzungs* (*dhâraṇīs*) being the general name for all the deposits, including physical relics, *dhâraṇīs*, 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 *dhâraṇīs* considered also to be the essence of the Buddha, his relics and his teachings.⁴⁵

D. INDIAN ORIGINS

The final point discussed by the Fifth Dalai Lama is whether detailed manuals for the practice of depositing *dhâraṇīs* 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 *Adbhutadharmaṣāstra*, *Kūṭāgāra*, *Mahāraṇa*, and *Pratītyasamutpāda* sūtras, as well as the various *dhâraṇī* sūtras. In addition, also the *Subahuparipṛcchā*, one of the four basic *kriyā* tantras is mentioned. While this tantra does not

par byas-te/ mchod-rten de'i dbus-su gzungs 'di'i phyag-rgya-yang 'jug-te srog-shing-yang 'dzugs-par byed-na/ rigs-kyi bu-'am/ rigs-kyi bu-mo de'i mchod-rten ni/ . . . de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i ring-bsrel-gyi sku-gdung dang bcas-pa'i mchod-rten ces bya/ sangs-rgyas-kyi snying-po'i mchod-rten ces bya/ de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i snying-po'i mchod-rten ces bya'o (Phug-brag Kanjur Rgyud Tsha, vol. 116, fols. 65b6–66a3).

⁴⁰ Tucci, 1932/1988: 74; Liebenthal 1947: 23–24, 37; Schopen 1982 and 1985; von Hinüber 1987–88; Yuyama 1989.

⁴¹ Chandra and Dikshit 1936: 124–25 and plates LIX–LX there; see also Dikshit 1938: 84.

⁴² 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).

⁴³ The passage translated above.

⁴⁴ *Lta-bu'i rings [sic]-bsrel bzhi gsungs-shing/ de'i nang-nas chos-sku'i rings (sic)-bsrel/ gzungs-sngags mchog-du gsungs-de/* (P. 6301, p. 89.4.4–5). A similar statement is made by the First Panchen Lama, p. 801. For the four types of relics, see Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan below.

⁴⁵ Note that Scherrer-Schaub (forthcoming) comes to a different conclusion: “If the *dhâraṇī* very often have an apotropaic value or function, in our case the ‘apotropy’, 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 inflects future existences toward pure or happy abodes.” No doubt, the texts provide many justifications for this conclusion, as well.

elaborate on the practice,⁴⁶ it does mention images containing relics, along with similar stūpas. One of the few Indian works treating this subject is the relatively late *Vajrāvalī* by Abhayākara Gupta (1064?–1125?).⁴⁷

Whenever you wish to make a special homage to relics (*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: *namo bhagavate śākyamunaye tathāgatāya arhate samyak-saṃbuddhāya oṃ mune mune mahāmune* [read: *mahāmune*] *svāhā; ye dharmā hetu prabhavā hetun teṣān tathāgato hy avadat teṣān ca yo nirodha evaṃ vādī mahāśramaṇaḥ*; and also special *dhāraṇīs*. Wrap them around the relic which has been purified through the bathing ritual. While reciting: *oṃ mantra-dhātu-garbhāya svāhā* (*oṃ* to the one which has as its essence [womb], mantras and relics *svāhā*), place them in the hollow space. Then recite *oṃ vajra-dhātu-garbhāya svāhā* (*oṃ* to the one which has as its essence [womb] the *vajra* relic *svāhā*) and block the door to the hollow space with *vajra* plaster. Perform the consecration (*rab-gnas*) as above.⁴⁸

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 Sugata containing the essence of Interdependent Origination. Offer praises, garlands, perfumes and butter lamps to images or stūpas containing relics (*ring-bsrel*). With the highest devotion make offerings of parasols, victory banners, flags and music.” *gtsang-zhing dben-pa sa-yi phyogs-su ni/ 'jim-pa'am ni bye-ma-las byas-pa'i/ bde-gshegs mchod-rten rien-'brel snying-po-can/ sdig-pa sbyang-ba'i phyr ni rtag-tu gdab/ ring-bsrel-can-gyi sku-gzugs mchod-rten-la/ bstod-cing phreng-ba dri dang mar-me dbul/ gdugs 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).

⁴⁷ For Abhayākara Gupta see, Bühnenmann 1992. Another Indian source mentioned by Kong-sprul (p. 102) was written by Vanaratna (1384–1468).

⁴⁸ *Gang-gi-tshe de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i sku-gdung-la bkur-sti'i khyad-par bya-bar 'dod-na/ de'i tshe sgrub-pa'i dus-nyid-du sku-gzugs-kyi dbu'am rgyab dang mchod-rten-gyi dbus stong-par bya'o/ grub-pa-na gro-gar gur-gum dang gi-wang-dag-gis/ namo bhagavate śākyamunaye tathāgatāya arhate samyak-saṃbuddhāya oṃ mune mune mahāmune svāhā. Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetun teṣān tathāgato hy avadat teṣān ca yo nirodha evaṃ vādī mahāśramaṇaḥ zhes-pa dang/ gzung-kyi khyad-par yang bris-nas/ de-khrus-byas-pa'i gdung-la dkris-te oṃ mantra-dhātu-garbhāya svāhā/ zhes brjod-cing stong-bar*

The relics and *dhāraṇīs* deposited here are certainly not as numerous as in later Tibetan rituals. They specifically consist only of the relics of the Buddha and the *dhāraṇī* 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 *dhāraṇīs* 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 (*mantra-dhātu-garbha*).

Attention should be drawn to the fact that various relics, books and *dhāraṇīs* were found also within Buddhist images in China, Korea and Japan. For example, the Seiryōji Buddha, which was brought to Japan from K'ai feng in China by Chōnen, contained various objects sealed within a cavity in 985 C.E.⁴⁹ Besides the objects themselves, a catalogue was enclosed in the image. These objects included: inner organs made of textiles,⁵⁰ the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, and *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* sūtras; pictures of Śākyamuni Buddha, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra and Maitreya; coins, mirrors, bells, beads, fragments of textiles, as well as a small wooden pole which seems to be a *yaṣṭi* (*srog-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 *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, *dhāraṇīs*, small images of Śākyamuni, Amitābha and Kṣitigarbha, pictures of Amitābha, etc., as well as a catalogue of its contents.⁵¹ A stone stūpa at Pulguksa in Korea contained a *Raśmivimala Dhāraṇī 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 *dhāraṇīs*.⁵² The Hangchow pagoda in China, which collapsed in 1924, revealed within its hollow

gzhus-go/ de-nas oṃ vajra-dhātu-garbhāya Svāhā/ 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 Lokesh Chandra 1977: 170.5–171.3.

⁴⁹ Henderson and Hurvitz 1956; and see also Kidder 1972: 127–46.

⁵⁰ These included heart, lung, liver, kidneys, stomach, intestines, etc.

⁵¹ Goepper 1984; see also Cachia 1987.

⁵² Carter 1955: 46–53; Hickman 1975. Note the importance of *dhāraṇīs* in the early history of printing!

bricks tiny printed scrolls of the *Guhyadhātu Dhāraṇī Sūtra* dated to 975 C.E. (Edgren 1972).

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-btsun 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*, *Vimaloṣṇīṣa*, *Guhyadhātukaraṇḍa*, *Bodhigarbhālakṣa*, *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 āḥ hūm* 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 āyuṣe 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 sarvavidyā 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 Caryā 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 Tantra 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, hrdaya*]⁵⁴ and *dhāraṇīs*. The [specification of] tantras and sūtras that are to be inserted at the base (*rmang*)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 *isha-ishas* 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-brlab*) of Pāla-Sena images is hardly available.

⁵⁴ See Mkhas grub rje 1968: 117.

⁵⁵ This is also the name of a part of the stūpa below the four steps (the *bang-rim bzhi*).

⁵⁶ Also, according to the *Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu* of the Dharmaguptaka, "Ne pas enterrer de cadavre sous le stūpa d'un Buddha" (Bureau 1962: 271).

the five precious substances and the five essences [which are] the twenty-five extracts.⁵⁷ Then draw the wheels of the nine *yakṣas* and nine *yakṣiṣ* as they appear in the *Dpa'-bo* [*Gcig-tu Grub-pa Tantra*].⁵⁸ 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 *dhāraṇīs*]. 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 *dhāraṇīs*, they are not embellished with scriptural authority and reasoning. As for this [my instructions] I consulted tantras and śāstras and embellished [my account] with the advice of lama[s], as well.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ See Carelli 1941: 17–19; Bentor 1991: 116–17.

⁵⁸ Toh. 544; Tog Palace 504, vol. 102, p. 973.1–2; see also Mkhas grub rje 1968: 112–13.

⁵⁹ *Da ni mchod-rten-gyi nang-du ring-bsrel la-sogs-pa bzhugs-su gzhug-pa'i tshul ni/ spyir ring-bsrel ni rnam-pa bzhi ste/ sku-gdung-gi ring-bsrel dang/ sku-gdung nyungs [read: yungs]-'bru lta-bu'i ring-bsrel dang/ dbu-skra dang sen-mo la sku-bal-gyi ring-bsrel zhes brjod-pa dang/ gzungs-rnams-la chos-kyi sku'i ring-bsrel zhes brjod-pa yin-no/ chos-kyi sku'i ring-bsrel-la mchod-rten-gyi nang-du bzhugs-par bshad-pa'i gzungs lnga yin-te/ gtsug-tor rnam-rgyal dang/ gtsug-tor dri-med/ gsang-ba'i ring-bsrel za-ma-tog/ byang-chub snying-po rgyan 'bum/ rten-'brel snying-po-rnams yin-no/ gzhan-yang gsang-sngags-kyi rgyud-sde dang/ mdo-sde-nas 'byung-ba'i sngags byin-rlabs-can-rnams bris-nas bzhugs-su bcug-na bsod-nams dpag-tu med-cing byin-rlabs che'o-zhes bla-ma-rnams gsung-ngo/ de-dag bzhugs-pa'i rim-pa ni/ tog dang tog-la bzhugs sa med-na-'ang/ 'khor-lo'i thog-mar sangs-rgyas-nas bzung-nas bdag-gi rtsa-ba'i bla-ma'i bar-gyi mtshan-rnams/ gur-gum la-sogs-pa'i dri bzang-pos yi-ge gsum dang spel-pa-'am/ phyag-'tshal-zhing skyabs-su 'gro-ba dang bcas-pa spel-la bzhugs-su gzhug/ mdor-na rang-gi brgyud-pa-rnams yongs-su rdzogs-pa'i mtshan bri'o/ de-nas rang-gi yi-dam-gyi lha'i gsang-sngags-rnams bzhugs-su gzhug-go/ Oṃ vajra āyuṣe Svāhā/ zhes bya-ba ni srog-shing brtan-pa'i sngags yin-te/ srog-shing-gi phyogs bzhi dang/ sku-gzugs lta-bu yin-na thugs-kar bzhugs-so/ Oṃ sarva-vidyā Svāhā zhes bya-ba ni rig-pa chen-mo'i sngags yin-te/ mchod-rten-gyi bre dang sku-gzugs-kyi dbur bzhugs-su gzhug-go/ de-nas bum-par mchod-rten-gyi gzungs-sngags dang/ gzungs byin-rlabs-can mtha'-dag bzhugs-su gzhug-ste/ de-'ang thog-mar rnal-'byor chen-po'i rgyud-kyi/ de-nas rnal-'byor-gyi rgyud-kyi/ de-nas spyod-pa'i rgyud-kyi/ de-nas bya-ba'i rgyud-kyi gzungs-sngags-rnams bzhugs-su gzhug-ste/ nang yangs-shing gzungs-kyis ma khengs-na/ bum*

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 *dhāraṇīs* covers five of the *dhāraṇī* sūtras discussed above. These relics are deposited 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 presently preparing. Here, only the fifth category of relics, common especially among the Bka'-brgyud-pa and Rnying-ma-pa, will be mentioned.⁶¹ These are the relics

stod yan-chad-du de-dag bzhugs-su bcug-la/ de man-chad-du rgyud-sde dang sde-snod-rnams bzhugs-su gzhug-go/ de-'ang gzungs-rnams stod-du bzhugs-su gzhug-pa ni snying-po-'am gzungs/ zhes bya-ba rgyud-rnams-kyi nang-nas dam-pa yin-la/ rgyud-rnams dang mdo-sde-rnams rmang-du bzhugs-su gzhug-pa ni cho-ga dang las-tshogs phra-mo'i cho-ga dang bya-ba'i rnam-grangs gzhan 'byung-bas-so/ bla-ma-rnams-kyi gdung-rnams ni brer bzhugs-so zhes-kyang zer-na/ ji-ltar mtho-bar bzhugs-na chos dang mthun-par mthong-ste/ sangs-rgyas thams-cad-kyi ngo-bo yin-pa'i phyir-ro/ de-bzhin gshegs-pa'i ring-bsrel yod-na de-dang lhan-cig mtho dman med-par sbams-te 'bru dang spos dang rin-po-ches brgyan-la bzhugs-su gzhug-go/ bla-ma dang gang-zag mchog ma gtogs-pa'i rus-bu mchod-rten-gyi nang-du gzhug-par mi bya-ste/ sems-can de-la gnod-par 'gyur-ro/ zhes lung-las 'byung-ngo/ cis-kyang 'jug-na-'ang rus-bu zhib-par btags-la 'jim-pa dang bsres-te gzungs-kyi ring-bsrel-gyi snying-po can-du byas-la sātstshar btob-ste bzhugs-su gzhug-go/ gang-zag mchog-rnams-la-'ang de-ltar byas-na legs-so snyam-du sems-so/ padmar nag-po chen-po dang/ tshogs-kyi bdag-po dang/ jambhala dang gtsang-rigs-kyi mgon-po bdun-cu rtsa-lnga la-sogs-pa chos-skyong-ba-rnams-kyi gzungs-sngags bris-la bzhugs-te srung-mar bsgo'o/ gzhan-yang sman-lnga dang/ 'bru lnga dang/ dri lnga dang/ rin-po-che lnga dang/ snying-po lnga ste/ bcud nyi-shu rtsa-lnga-'ang gzhug-go/ de-nas dpa'-bo grub-pa'i rgyud-nas 'byung-ba bzhin gnod-sbyin pho dgu mo dgu'i 'khor-lo bris-la/ mar dang sbrang-rtsis bar-bsdams-te/ bskyed-la mnyes-pa'i mchod-pa bya'o/ nang-du bzhugs-pa thams-cad sngon-la rab-tu gnas-pa mdor bsdus-pa byas-la/ de-nas gdod bzhugs-su gzhug-par bya'o/ de-nas gnod-sbyin mnyes-par byas-pa'i 'khor-los zhabs bsdam-mo/ gzungs bzhugs-pa'i rim-pa gzhan kho-bos mang-du thos-zhing mthong mod-kyi/ lung dang rigs-pas ma brgyan-la 'di ni rgyud dang bstan-bcos-las-kyang mthong-zhing bla-ma'i man-ngag-gis-kyang brgyan-pa yin-no (Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, pp. 240.3.6–241.2.5).

⁶⁰ On Tibetan classifications of relics, see Bentor (forthcoming).

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., *dhāraṇīs* and books). The relics of the *dharmakāya* are small stūpas and *tsha-tshas*,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 *dhāraṇīs*. Possibly also, problems of access to the physical relics or to sites housing them influenced a particular stand.⁶³ It should

⁶² Small clay tables stamped by molds, here in the shape of stūpas.

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

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'.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,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.

the development of a new type of shrine in the early Mahāyāna.

⁶⁴ In Tibetan: *'phel-gdung*; see Bentor, forthcoming; Martin 1992.

⁶⁵ Cf. Martin 1992.

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