The Encoding of Mantras and Its Methods in Tantra:

Focusing on Descriptions in the *Bhūtaḍāmaratantra*

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1. Introduction One way that Tantric literature maintains its secrecy is by using the secret language (or twilight/intentional language) known as *sandhyā-bhāṣā* (or *sandhā-bhāṣā*).¹⁾ Furthermore, in Buddhist Tantric literature, there are contexts in which certain words are used with special meanings,²⁾ and words that are used like codes can be found. Also, *mantroddhāra*, which includes methods of mantra encryption and decryption, can be used.³⁾ This includes methods of encrypting and meditating on mantras by using specific words and figures, and similar methods are also found in Hindu Tantric literature.⁴⁾ The aim of this article is to clarify the characteristics of mantra encryption in the Hindu *Bhūtaḍāmaratantra* (HBT) by presenting the method of encryption in the *Hevajratantra* (HT) and the method of mantra encryption in the HBT. In the Buddhist *Bhūtaḍāmaratantra* (BBT), mantras are not encoded as in the HBT. Therefore, by comparing the mantras in the BBT and HBT, we will consider how the HBT incorporates mantras found in the BBT.

2. Mantra encryption in the HT Mantra encryption is described from 2.9.14 in the HT. Devī asks Vajrapāṇi, “Please explain what *mantroddhāra* is like,”⁵⁾ and he replies. If we read the commentary *Yogaratanmālā*, we can understand that this section is made up of encoded mantras. It can be said that there are two main ways of encoding mantras in the HT: (I) correspondences between words and letters, and (II) the method of specifying each letter. These two methods are combined for encoding and decoding mantras. There are sentences where letters are referred to as *hūṃ-kāra* or *ghu-kāra*, and so not all are explained by the above two methods. If we examine these two methods, we notice that method (I) is used when specifying vowels or *om*, and method (II) is used when specifying consonants. Each of the mantras described without encoding in chapter 1.2 more or less tallies with the mantras encoded in 2.9.14ff. In addition, the correspondence between each deity and each vowel explained in 2.4.20–23 is necessary for decoding the mantras in 2.9. There follow some contrasting examples of correspondences between words and letters in (I): *om* = *vai-*

rocana, *varṇādhīpa*, *varṇeśvara*; *a* = *nairātmyā*; *ā* = *vajrā*; *i* = *gaurī*; *ī* = *vāriyoginī*; *u* = *ḍākinī*, *vajraḍākinī*; *ū* = *pukkasī*; *ṛ* = *śavarī*; *ṝ* = *caṇḍālī*; *ḷ* = *ḍombinī*; *ḹ* = *gaurī*; *e* = *caurī*; *ai* = *vetālī*; *o* = *ghasmarī*; *au* = *bhūcarī*; *aṃ* = *khecarī*; *r* (*repha*) = *vahni*, *hutāśana*; *ṃ* = *śūnya*. Vowels or *oṃ* and *anusvāra* are indicated by words such as deity names or *śūnya*. Some examples of specifying consonants are as follows: *prathamasya dvitīyakam* = *kha*; *dvitīyasya tṛtīyakam* = *ja*; *tṛtīyasya caturthakam* = *ḍha*. The sibilants (*śa*, *ṣa*, *sa*) and the aspirate (*ha*) are referred to as *uṣman*, and when it says *uṣmāṇāṇ ca caturthakam*, this specifies *ha*. When the same *bīja* is repeated, the number of repetitions is indicated by the word *triṇūita* or *dviguṇīkṛtya* (i.e., in the case of the letter *hūṃ* described as *triṇūita*, it becomes *hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ*).

3. The method of encoding mantras in the HBT The HBT Mss. Bo and Ba used by Bhattacharyya⁶⁾ in his study include as their last chapter a chapter called “Mantrakoṣa” (“Manukoṣa”). This chapter is not found in the HBT Mss. N1, N2 and N3, and there is no corresponding chapter in the BBT. This chapter is quoted under the title *Bījanighaṇṭu* in a book compiled as the *Tantrābhidhāna*,⁷⁾ and it tallies closely with Mss. Bo and Ba. “Mantrakoṣa” is referred to as “Mantrakoṣa” in the BT and *Yakṣaḍāmaratantra*,⁸⁾ indicating that similarities existed not only in the HBT but also in the *Yakṣaḍāmaratantra*. This chapter can be said to consist of three parts, each of which presents different corresponding words, and each part is further composed of three types of content. That is: (1) words corresponding to each vowel are listed, then (2) words corresponding to consonants are listed, and (3) each corresponding word is used to present the *bījas* and the words corresponding to those *bījas* are listed. That is to say, the *bīja* of each deity is presented by using the words of (1) and (2). In (1), only the words corresponding to the letters *A* to *Aḥ* are listed, and no complicated process can be found. One word is assigned to one vowel in the 1st and 3rd parts, but three words are assigned in the 2nd part. The enumeration of consonants in (2) is the enumeration of words corresponding to *Ka* to *Kṣa*. One word is assigned to one consonant in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd parts. In the 3rd part, the word *halī* / *hanī* is added after the last word, but it is unknown to what this letter corresponds. Using the corresponding words for vowels and consonants, the process of (3) explains which words correspond to *bījas* such as *oṃ*, *hūṃ*, *phaṭ* and *śrīm*. Compared to the above list of vowels and consonants, the process is slightly more complicated. The following is an example in the 1st part.

*caṇḍīśaḥ kṣatajārūḍho*⁹⁾ *dhūmrabhairavyalaṅkṛtaḥ*¹⁰⁾ ¹¹⁾
*nādaḥ*¹²⁾ *viṣṇupriyātmakaḥ*¹³⁾ ¹⁴⁾ // *śrīṃ* // ¹⁵⁾

"Caṇḍīśa (= śa) is mounted on Kṣataja (= ra), adorned with Dhūmrabhairavī (= ī);
 The *bīja* connected with Nādaḥ (= ṇ) is Viṣṇupriyātmaka."

As described here, *śrīṃ* is shown by using words corresponding to each letter, and the corresponding word *viṣṇupriyātmaka* is presented. The corresponding *bījas* are described after the explanation of each *bīja* in the published edition and Mss. Ba and Bo, but the explanations and *bījas* often do not correspond. Also, words not mentioned in (1) and (2) are sometimes used. In this regard, it can be pointed out that similar words may have been used to indicate the same letter. Next, let us consider encoded mantras in the HBT. Mantras in the HBT are encoded by the methods presented above. I would like to examine mantra encryption in the HBT, using two mantras in the BT. First, the following mantra is called *sarvabhūtāmāraṇamantra* in the BBT.¹⁶⁾

BBT Skt. *oṃ vajrajvāle hana 2 sarvabhūtān hūṃ phaṭ*¹⁷⁾ **BBT Chinese** 唵 嚩日羅入嚩_{二合}隸_去
 賀曩 賀曩 薩哩嚩_{二合}部旦_引 吽 發吒_{半音}¹⁸⁾ **HBT Skt.** *viṣaṃ ca vajrajvālena hanayugmam ataḥ*
*param || sarvabhūtān tataḥ kūrcaṃ astrāntaṃ manum īritam ||*¹⁹⁾

In the HBT, *viṣa* = *oṃ*, *kūrca* = *hūṃ*, *astra* = *phaṭ*, and *hana-yugmam* is *hana hana*. If this sentence is decoded, it becomes *oṃ vajrajvālena hana hana sarvabhūtān hūṃ phaṭ*, which is almost identical to the BBT. Next, the *śmaśānavāsini-ākaraṇamantra* in the BBT reads:

BBT Skt. *oṃ hūṃ kaṭṭa 2 sarvabhūtinīnāṃ samayaṃ anupālāya hana 2 *bandha*²⁰⁾ *2 ākrama 2 bho*
bho mahāraudraśmaśānavāsini āgaccha śighraṃ dhruṃ phaṭ || **BBT Chinese** 唵 吽 羯茶 羯
 茶 薩哩嚩_{二合}部旦_引多_引喃 薩摩野摩羯波_引羅野 賀囉 賀囉 滿馱 滿馱 阿_引訖囉_{二合}摩訶_引迦哩沙_{二合}野
 普 摩賀_引嚩捺哩_{二合}尾濕摩_引舍_引曩嚩_引悉爾 阿_引誡蹉 尸伽朗_{二合} 度嚩 發吒_{半音}²¹⁾ **HBT Skt.** *viṣaṃ*
prāthamikaṃ kālabījaṃ dviḥ kṛtaṃ īritam / prāleṣaṃ atha bhūteśabījaṃ kaṭṭa dvayaṃ punaḥ / tataḥ
sarvabhūtinīnāṃ padaṃ bhagavataḥ punaḥ / vajradharasya samayaṃ anupālāya saṃlikhet /
**hanabandhākramapadaṃ*²²⁾ *samuddhṛtya dvayaṃ dvayaṃ / bho bho rātrāv iti padāt*
*śmaśānavāsiniḥ padam / āgaccha śighraṃ kūrcastraṃ bhūtinīyāhvānakṛmanuḥ |*²³⁾

The sentence in the HBT can be decoded as *oṃ hrīm hūṃ hūṃ oṃ hrīm kaṭṭa kaṭṭa sarvabhūtinīnāṃ bhagavataḥ vajradharasya samayaṃ anupālāya hana hana bandha bandha ākrama ākrama bho bho rātrau śmaśānavāsini āgaccha śighraṃ hūṃ phaṭ*.²⁴⁾ It can be seen that this mantra and that in the BBT are almost identical. The words *bhagavataḥ vajradharasya samayaṃ* in the HBT are *samayaṃ* (薩摩野) in Ms. G and the Chinese translation of

the BBT, and there are no words corresponding to *bhagavataḥ vajradharasya*. The corresponding passages in Mss. T1, T2, and A have *sarvataṭhāgatasamayam*, and the above sentence in the HBT seems to have been incorporated into the mantra after changing *sarvataṭhāgata* in these Mss. to *bhagavataḥ vajradharasya*. We can infer that the author of the HBT wished to avoid using the Buddhist word *sarvataṭhāgata*.

4. Conclusion As mentioned above, mantras from the BBT are encoded in the HBT. In the HBT, a method such as *prathamasya prathama*, which is seen in HT, is not used. The correspondences between sounds and words in the HBT belong to a tradition different from the HT, and they can also be said to belong to a different tradition from that of the Vaiṣṇavas presented by Tokunaga 1990. It has also become clear that the HBT followed the mantras of the BBT. However, it seems that encryption was applied after having taken measures to avoid the use of Buddhist terminology.

Notes

1) Eliade and Trask (1958) shows that the words *saṃdhā-bhāṣya* and *saṃdhā-vacana* can be found in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* and cites some previous research on these terms, as well as listing some corresponding words in the *Dohakoṣa* (Eliade and Trask 1958, 249–254). Bharati (1965, 164–180) discusses *sandhābhāṣā* and *sandhyābhāṣā* and gives some of the corresponding words of *sandhā-bhāṣā* in the HT (which he seems to call “*sandhā-terminology*”) (ibid., 174–175), as well as listing corresponding words in the *Dohakoṣa* (ibid., 175–176). Wayman (1968, 794–795) and Davidson (2002, 263) also list words in the HT.

2) For example, there are contexts where the word *mudrā* seems to refer to a female partner (e.g., HT 1.5.4 [Snellgrove 1959, 1, 16]).

3) The methods of mantra encryption in the HT are outlined in Snellgrove 1959, 1, 117 and are also presented in Sakai 1955 and Yoritomi 1977. Bharati (1965, 119) presents keywords corresponding to each *bīja*. The word *mantroddhāra* also appears in the HBT, but only the encoded mantra of Kulasundarī is mentioned after Unmattabhairava says, “Let me explain *mantroddhāra*. Listen properly” (*mantroddhāraṃ pravakṣyāmi yathāvad avadhāraya* / [N1 4a4, N2 3a2–3a3, Bo 5a7–5b1, Ba 5a3–5a4, N3 2a6, M p. 15]). Therefore, the definition of *mantroddhāra* in the HBT is unclear. There is no corresponding sentence in the BBT.

4) Regarding encryption related to *mantroddhāra*, there are the following studies: *Tantrābhidhāna* published by Avalon; Padoux 2011; descriptions in the *Uddhārakoṣa* composed by Raghu Vira and Taki from quotations from various Tantric works (Vira and Taki 1938, with a list of words and *bījas* in appendix 8); studies addressing *mantroddhāra* in the HT by Sakai 1955 and Yoritomi 1977; Hikita’s (1997) discussion of *mantroddhāra* centered on the *Sātvatasamhitā*; and a study by Tomabechi (2007) dealing with mantra encryption using figures in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra* and the Śaiva *Vīṇāśikhatantra*.

5) Snellgrove 1959, Fallow and Menon 1992, 2–9–14. 6) Bhattacharyya 1933. 7) Avalon and Bhattachāryya 1937.

8) *mantrakoṣam idaṃ bhūṭayakṣaḍāmaratantrayoḥ* (Avalon and Bhattachāryya 1937, 34), *mantrakoṣam idaṃ bhūṭayakṣaḍāmaratantramtrayoḥ* (Ba 41a10–41a11), *mantrakoṣam idaṃ tu bhūṭayakṣaḍāramantramtrayoḥ* (Bo 58b7–58b8).

9) Bo *latajārūḍho*. 10) Bo *dhūmrabhairavayalaṃkṛtaḥ*, Ba *dhūmrabhairavayalaṃkṛt*.

11) Bo omits, Ba // 9 //. 12) Avalon and Bhattachāryya 1937: *nāḍabindusamāyukto*. 13) Ba omits, Avalon

and Bhaṭṭāchārya 1937: *viṣṇupriyā matam*. 14) Bo *śrīm*, Ba omits. 15) Bo 53b7–54a1, Ba 38a12–38b1, Avalon and Bhaṭṭāchārya 1937, 28. 16) As space is limited, I have omitted the variants of the HBT and BBT manuscripts. Only emendations are shown. 17) A 2a1, T1 1b5, T2 1b6, G 1b3. 18) T No. 1129, 548c24–548c25. 19) N1 2a7–2b1, N2 2a2, Bo 2b6, Ba 2b3–2b4, N3 omits, M p. 6. 20) Emend. G, T1, T2, A *vandha*. 21) T 1129, 550c2–550c6. 22) Emend. N1 *hanarādhākramapadaṃ*, N2 *haladharamkramapadaṃ*, Bo *hanavandhakromampapadaṃ*, Ba *hanavadhākramapadaṃ*, N3 *haladharākramapadaṃ*, M *hanavadhākramapadaṃ*. 23) N1 7b6–8a1, N2 4b9–4b11, Bo 10a2–10a5, Ba 10b2–10b6, N3 5b5–5b7, M p. 31. 24) The beginning of this mantra, *om hrīṃ hūṃ hūṃ*, seems to correspond to the mantra described in the BBT just before the *śmaśānavāsiniākarṣanamantṛa* as the *paramahṛdaya* mantra, which is *om hrīḥ hūṃ aḥ* (G 4a6, T1 9a2, T2 8a1, A 12a4), and is described separately from the *śmaśānavāsiniākarṣanamantṛa*.

Abbreviations and Primary Sources

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