The Three Meditations of the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala

Shinobu YAMAGUCHI

1. The Trisamādhi Ritual in Newar Buddhism

Newar Buddhists, who have lived in Kathmandu Valley since early periods, perform various kinds of rituals. In Newar Buddhist rituals, pūjā (offering worship) and homa (fire offering ritual) are commonly practiced. Among them, Trisamādhi is one of the most popular rituals. In most pūjās and homas, Newar Buddhist priests first perform Gurumaṇḍalapūjā, which is also one of the most fundamental rituals in Newar Buddhism. After the Gurumaṇḍalapūjā, they perform the Trisamādhi ritual. In this ritual, the priest meditates on the maṇḍala in which Cakrasaṃvara, considered a Buddha in the Tantric Buddhist pantheon, is the central deity.

Trisamādhi consists of processes of visualization (sādhana). They are (1) Ādiyogasamādhi (Meditation of the First Yoga), (2) Maṇḍalarājāgrīsamādhi (Meditation of the Highest King of the Maṇḍala), and (3) Karmarājāgrīsamādhi (Meditation of the Highest of the Ritual) or Sūkṣmayogasamādhi (Meditation of the Fine Yoga). These three processes are found in Indian Tantric Buddhist texts such as the *Sarvavajrodāya*, the *Durgatipariśodhanatantra*, the *Pinḍikṛtasādhana* and so on. In the first process, Ādiyogasamādhi, the priest has a dim visualization of a maṇḍala and worships the maṇḍala. In the second process, Maṇḍalarājāgrīsamādhi, the priest meditates upon the maṇḍala in detail. Then in the third process, the priest draws the maṇḍala into his body.

2. The Cakrasaṃvarasamādhi

Newar Buddhist priests perform the Trisamādhi according to the Sanskrit text entitled *Cakrasaṃvarasamādhi*. There are many printed texts and manuscripts regarding this text. Many mantras and descriptions of the ritual in this text are identical to the ones in the *Śrīsaṃvaratrayodaśātmakārcanavidhi* (TTP, No.4655, Vol. 82, 280, 5, 2-283, 2, 3). There are two versions of the *Cakrasaṃvarasamādhi* : one is a longer

version ; the other is an abridged version. The longer version contains the three processes of visualization of the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala, namely, (1) Ādiyogasamādhi, (2) Maṇḍalarājāgrīsamādhi, and (3) Sūkṣmayogasamādhi. In addition, it contains the muttering prayer (jāpayoga) and the offering worship of Bali (balipūjā) after the visualizations. On the other hand, in the abridged version, the detail meditation of the maṇḍala in the second samādhi and the whole third samādhi are omitted. The following explanation is taken from the longer version of the text.

In the Ādiyogasamādhi of the *Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍali*, a priest first meditates on the deity Saṃvara, who has a white body and two arms, after meditating on emptiness (śūnyatā). Then, the priest considers himself as Saṃvara. This meditation is the commencement of the visualization of the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala. The meditation of the white-colored and two-armed Saṃvara is mentioned in the Indian Buddhist Tantric text, the *Samvarodayatantra* (SU)¹⁾

After the meditation of Saṃvara, the priest places twenty-four seeds (bīja) such as puṃ, jām, om, āṃ, etc., on the veins of his body for purification²⁾. These seeds represent the initial letters of the twenty-four sacred places, such as Pullīramalaya, Jālandhala, Oḍiyāna, Arbuda and the like. These sacred places are situated in the eight directions of the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala to be visualized in the second process of Trisamādhi, namely, Maṇḍalarājāgrīsamādhi.

After this purification ritual, the priest meditates on Saṃvara as a central deity of the maṇḍala. Here, Saṃvara is blue-black colored (kṛṣṇa), has four faces and six arms and embraces his consort. Next, the priest meditates on four gatekeeper goddesses such as Kākāsyā, Ulūkāsyā, etc., and four yoginīs such as Yamaḍāṭī, Yamaḍūtī and so on that surround Saṃvara. Here, the maṇḍala consists of nine deities. The Saṃvaramaṇḍala consisting of nine deities is not found in Indian Buddhist texts such as the *Samvarodayatantra*, the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* compiled by Abhayākara Gupta in the eleventh or twelfth century, or the *rGyud sde kun btus* compiled at Ngör Temple in Tibet in the nineteenth century.

Then, the priest respectively meditates on the sun, Viśvavajra, Vajra-earth (vajrabhūmi), Vajra-chain (vajrabandha), Vajra-fence (vajraprākāra), Vajra-canopy (vajravātāna), etc. From this meditation, he creates the maṇḍala as a vessel in which the deities of are placed. After the meditation of the vessel, the priest again meditates on

Cakrasaṃvara who is accompanied by his consort. Then, he meditates on the other twelve deities of the maṇḍala. This maṇḍala consists of thirteen deities.

Next, the priest immediately meditates that Samayamaṇḍala and Jñānamaṇḍala (Jñānacakra) should be united. In this part of the text, it is not clear whether the maṇḍala of nine deities is Samayamaṇḍala or not. It is also not clearly defined whether the maṇḍala of thirteen deities is Jñānamaṇḍala or not. The text says, “Facing the Jñānacakra in the air, [the priest] should bow to it. Then [he] should draw it to the complete Samayamaṇḍala” (jñānacakram ākāśadeśe dṛṣṭvā abhimukham abhisampūjya samantasamayamaṇḍale praveśayet). This unity of Samayamaṇḍala and Jñānamaṇḍala is very similar to the system found in Indian Buddhist Tantric texts such as the *Sādhanaṃālā*. Ādiyogasamādhi ends with the worship of the maṇḍala and so on.

In the second process, namely, Maṇḍalarājāgrīsamādhi, the priest first meditates on Caturbrahmavihāra. After this, he begins to meditate on the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala. Here, the maṇḍala consists of sixty-two deities. The priest first meditates on Vāyumaṇḍala, Agnimaṇḍala, Varuṇamaṇḍala, and Pṛthivīmaṇḍala respectively. On the Pṛthivīmaṇḍala, he meditates on Mt. Sumeru, a house where deities reside (kūṭāgāra), Viśvavajra, a lotus and the letter hūṃ. Then, he meditates on the central deity Cakrasaṃvara and his consort Vajravārāhī. The iconographical features of the two deities are almost identical to those of Cakrasaṃvara and his consort in the Ch. 12 of the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (NPY).

Around the central deity, four ḍākinīs, namely, Ḍākinī, Lāmā, Khaṇḍarohā, and Rūpiṇī are situated. Around the four ḍākinīs, there are three circles, namely, Cittacakra, Vākcaakra, and Kāyacakra, each of which has the nature of Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya, and Nirmāṇakāya respectively. Each cakra has eight spokes (ara) in the eight directions. Therefore, three cakras contain twenty-four spokes in total. On these spokes, twenty-four sacred places such as Pullīramalaya, Jālandhara as mentioned above are placed. In those sacred places, twenty-four ḍākinīs, accompanying their consorts (ḍāka), reside³⁾.

The eight ḍākinīs in Cittacakra are called Khecarī (those who go in the air). The ḍākinīs in Vākcaakra and Kāyacakra are respectively called Bhūcarī (those who go on the ground) and Pātālavāsini (those who live under the ground). This means that the

deities of the maṇḍala are placed in the air, on the ground, and under the ground. Here the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala is considered as a three-dimensional one. Outside the three cakras, the four female gatekeepers and four yoginīs are situated.

After the meditation of the maṇḍala the priest places Kāyacakra on his head, V-ākcaakra on his throat, and Cittacakra on his heart. Then, he immediately combines the three cakras into one. This act clearly signifies the preparation for drawing the maṇḍala into the priest's body. After combining the maṇḍalas, the text doesn't immediately mention the third samādhi, that is, the yoga for drawing the maṇḍala into one's body. The four kinds of consecrations (abhiṣeka)⁴⁾ and the pūjā of the maṇḍala follow the act of combining the maṇḍalas.

After that, the third process, namely, Sūkṣmayogasamādhi starts. First, the priest meditates on Sahajasamvara, who is white-colored, has one face and two arms. Then, he considers himself as Sahajasamvara. After this meditation, he begins to draw each deity of the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala into his body. After entering the priest's body, the deities are released all over the body. As mentioned above, the *Cakrasaṃvarasamādhi* includes the muttering prayer (jāpayoga) and Bali offering (balipūjā) following the three meditations.

3. Conclusion

The *Cakrasaṃvarasamādhi* seems to mention that the system of the three processes of visualization (trisaṃādhi) is common to the system in Indian Tantric Buddhist texts such as the *Sarvavajrodaya*, the *Pinḍikṛtasādhana* and so on. In the *Sarvavajrodaya*, the ascetic meditates on Vajrasattva and identifies himself with the deity in the first samādhi. Then, in the second samādhi, the ascetic, who was identified with Vajrasattva in the first samādhi, creates other deities of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala.

On the other hand, the *Cakrasaṃvarasamādhi* in Newar Buddhism refers to the visualization of the maṇḍalas consisting of nine deities and thirteen deities in the first samādhi. In the second samādhi, however, the text mentions the maṇḍala consisting of sixty-two deities. The former maṇḍala has a different iconographical system from that of the latter. In the meditations of the *Cakrasaṃvarasamādhi*, there is no consistency between the first and the second samādhi. It is not like the systems found in the *Sarvavajrodaya* and so on.

There is a difference in the ways of sādhanā between the Yogatantras and the Anuttarayogatantras. In the Yogatantras, such as the *Sarvavajrodaya*, the priest often meditates on a maṇḍala by gradually performing the hand gestures (mudrā). On the other hand, in the Anuttarayogatantras which give special reference to the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala and Hevajramaṇḍala, the ascetic realizes a maṇḍala rather momentarily without mudrās. Regarding this, Newar Buddhist priest Rev. Ratnakajī Vajārācārya stated that mudrās are not necessary for the meditation of the Saṃvaramaṇḍala and Hevajramaṇḍala. It is probable that instant or immediate meditations have already been performed in the sādhanas of the Saṃvaramaṇḍala and Hevajramaṇḍala. Trisamādhī is rather a progressing or gradual system of meditation. It seems that those instant meditations of Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala originally did not require the system of Trisamādhī, which has a gradual feature. In the texts of Lūyīpāda school and Ghaṇṭāpāda school, which mention the visualizations of the Saṃvaramaṇḍala, Trisamādhī is not found.

Newar Buddhist priest Rev. Bhadrīratna Vajārācārya explained that all visualizations of the maṇḍala have the system of Trisamādhī in Newar Buddhism. The *Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala* seems to have been made with the intention of adopting the system of Trisamādhī, although it originally did not need it.

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- 1) In SU, this meditation is called 'dvibhujasaṃvarayoga' or 'dvibhujaherukayoga'. In SU, the meditations of two-armed saṃvara are performed in the homa ritual, for paralyzing one's body and so on. (Tsuda, Shinichi, *The Saṃvarodayatantra: Selected Chapters*, Tokyo, 1974, p.109 and p.138)
 - 2) Newar Buddhist priest Rev. Ratnakajee Vajārācārya called this act 'nāḍīśodhana.'
 - 3) The names of the twenty-four couples are almost the same as the ones in NPY.
 - 4) Here the priest receives four abhiṣekas, namely, Mukutābhiṣeka, Vajrābhiṣeka, Ghaṇṭābhiṣeka, and Nāmābhiṣeka from five Buddhas. And the priest also gives the same kinds of abhiṣekas to five Buddhas.

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(Associate Professor, Chukyo Women's University, Ph.D.)