The Dwelling Place of Maheśvara in Indian Esoteric Buddhism:
Focusing on Descriptions of ekaliṅga in the Bhūtaḍāmaratantra

FUJII Akira

1. Introduction

There are certain words designating specific practice places in Chinese translations, such as Dazizaitian Ci 大自在天祠, Dazizaitian Miao 大自在天廟, or Dazizaitian Gongdian 大自在天宮殿. This paper aims to clarify what kind of places these translations represent, and what intention the Esoteric Buddhists had in describing these places. For the investigation, I list the descriptions found in several tantras centered on the Bhūtaḍāmaratantra (BT), in which the contents are approximately the same for both the Buddhist and the Hindu versions, determine what features they have in common, and what is intended in each case.

2. Ekaliṅga in the BT

BT¹) is a noteworthy tantra for considering the relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism because there is a version each in both religions, with similar contents. The Buddhist version of this text has Sanskrit originals, Tibetan translations, and a Chinese translation. The Chinese translation was done from a northern Indian Sanskrit manuscript in Chunhua 淳化 5 (AD 994) by the Indian monk Fatian 法天. This paper presents the text from various manuscripts,²) since there is no critical edition, as yet. Below are listed descriptions translated into Chinese as Dazizaitian Ci or Dazizaitian Gongdian in the Buddhist version of the BT from Sanskrit and Tibetan translations, and a Hindu version, as follows:

Buddhist ver.: rātrau ekaliṅge gatvā sahasraṃ japet / ³) Hindu ver.: gataikaliṅgaṃ yāminyāṃ japād aṣṭasahasракam / ⁴)

In the Chinese translation, the word ekaliṅga is described as Dazizaitian Gongdian and in
The Dwelling Place of Maheśvara in Indian Esoteric Buddhism (Fujii)

Tibetan as ling ga gcig pa. However, although described as Dazizaitian Gongdian in Chinese, it is unclear what the Sanskrit word ekaliṅga indicates. Some clarification emerges in considering the following examples below:

**Buddhist ver.:** ekaliṅgaṃ āgacchati / yadi nāgacchati tatkṣanād eva mriyate //

**Hindu ver.:** gatvaikaliṅgaṃ sampūjya āgacchati / vāmapādenā cākramyāṃvahāṃ sapta dināni ca // mahādevaḥ samāgatyā rājyaṃ yacchati kānikam // yadi yacchati nāgataḥ mriyate śuṣyate dhruvam //

That is, the Chinese translation of ekaliṅga is Dazizaitian Ci Gongdian and in Tibetan it is ling ga gcig pa. Here, clearly ekaliṅga and Mahādeva (Śiva) are related. Therefore, it can be presumed that ekaliṅga, which is associated with the Chinese translation of 大自在天 in the text, refers to a place where Śivaliṅga is established. There are several other descriptive examples of ekaliṅga, which cannot be given here for lack of space. It appears to be, to some extent, the practice of ekaliṅga referring to the place of Śivaliṅga, at least in the BT. In addition, because the translators, in most cases Fatian, had translated ekaliṅga as Dazizaitian Gongdian, the word ekaliṅga came to be recognized as a Mahādeva shrine. Ekaliṅga has been passed on in the Hindu BT version with this sense.

3. The Dwelling Place of Maheśvara in Other Esoteric Buddhist Texts

Further, it needs to be considered whether the Buddhist sādhaka does involve the “practice of going to Śivaliṅga” by checking other Buddhist tantras. The ritual regarding ekaliṅga is mentioned in the Mañjuśrīyamālakalpa. It has also been cited by Maeda as follows:

tam paṭaṃ krodharājasya pariṇghyā viveke sthāne gatvā ekaliṅgē maheśvarasyāyatane tam liṅgam viṣarudhirarājikāṁjikenābhajyā ... maheśvaraliṅgōṃ vāmapādenākramya krodhamantram tāvaj japet yāvan maheśvaraliṅgo madhye sphutita iti ...

The Chinese translation in this context regards ekaliṅga maheśvarasyāyatana as Moxishouluo Linge Miao 摩醯首羅凌誦廟, which has the transliteration of Linge (liṅga).

Next, it is said that the sādhaka stamps the liṅga with his left foot and recites the mantra until it breaks into two. This practice appears similar to the process concerning the liṅga in the BT. Likewise, similar practices can be found in the Guhyasamājatantra and the Jingangsatuo Shuo Pinnayeihtian Chengjiu Yigui Jing.
Comparing the descriptions in the *BT* with those in the *Mañjuśrīyamālakalpa*, there is less precision concerning stamping, but what is shared in common is that the *sādhaka* steps on a certain object in a Mahādeva shrine.

4. The Definition of *ekaliṅga* in Hindu Literature

*Ekaliṅga* is clearly defined in the other Hindu texts following the *BT*. The *Tantrasāra*\(^{(16)}\) cites a definition of *ekaliṅga* by quoting the *Nilatantra* and *Mahāphetkārīya[tantras]*.\(^{(17)}\) The description used in the *Tantrasāra* can be seen in the *Brhannīlatantra*, which is said to be equivalent to the published extended version. The definition of *ekaliṅga* in the *Tantrasāra* and *Brhannīlatantra* is “a place where there is only one *liṅga* in a certain range (5 krośa).”\(^{(18)}\) However, there is no clear indication that the definition of *ekaliṅga* as used in the *Nilatantra* precedes or occurred at the same time as *ekaliṅga* was used in the Buddhist tantra. Given that the description of *ekaliṅga* in the Hindu tradition cannot be found in the Buddhist one, and that there are no prior texts including this definition, it appears to be that the Hindu definition cannot be equated with the definition of *ekaliṅga* as used in the Buddhist tantra. In addition, the word *ekaliṅga* as a deity appears in an inscription dating from AD 971 (Vikrama 1028), and it has been reported that its use involves a relationship with the Pāśupata sect.\(^{(19)}\)

5. Conclusion

In conclusion: 1) *Dazizaitian Gongdian* in the *BT* refers to an actual practice place of *ekaliṅga*; 2) by expressing *ekaliṅga* in Chinese translated words such as *Dazizaitian Gongdian*, it is likely that the translating monk of the 10th century AD clearly understood that *ekaliṅga* was a Maheśvara shrine; 3) in considering the understanding of practice with Mahādeva in the *BT* or through its description in parallel with the word *Maheśvarasyāyatana* in the *Mañjuśrīyamālakalpa*, *ekaliṅga* can also be identified as a place of Śivaliṅga; 4) within Buddhism we can see scenes where *ekaliṅga* is linked with a practice of acts of stamping a *liṅga* or statue; 5) a 10th century AD inscription indicates that a form of belief in *ekaliṅga* existed at that time, in which has some relationship with the Pāśupata sect; and 6) it is highly likely that any definition derives from later times, but *ekaliṅga* is defined in the Hindu literature, and it is a technical term. Based on these considerations, it is possible to conclude that Buddhist *sādhakas* probably went frequently to
Hindu temple (or a small shrine) where they undertook the practice of ekaliṅga. Furthermore, this practice involving the act of stepping on a certain object with the left foot reminds us of the surrender of Mahādeva by Vajrapāni, which is described in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*. Examples can be cited of ekaliṅga understood as a place suitable for fulfillment, and it was probably used as a place of practice in this sense. It remains unknown where the word ekaliṅga originated. However, if we infer from the inscription dated before the year AD 994 that the *BT* was translated into Chinese, that a description of an object of worship as ekaliṅga is intended, and that ekaliṅga represents the shrine of Śiva, then the possibility that this word itself was borrowed from Hinduism cannot be completely denied. Only later within Hinduism did ekaliṅga receive a clear definition.

### Notes

1) It is estimated as dating from the 7th to 8th centuries AD (see Bhattacharyya [1930] p. 356).
2) As space is limited, I have omitted specific details and presented only the location of each manuscript.
3) A1 19b3–19b4, T1 12b3–12b4, T2 14a5, G 6b2. 4) N1 13a5, N2 7b11, B 17a2, M p. 55. 5) T no. 1129, 551c25–551c26. D 244a1–244a2, P 38b4, sT 54b5–54b6, Ph 201b5. 6) A1 39a4–39b1, T1 23a7–23b1, T2 26a5–26b1, G 11b6–12a1. 7) N1 22b6–22b7, N2 13a4–13a6, B 30a3–30a6, M p. 102. 8) T no. 1129, 555c11–555c13. D 250a5–250a6, P 44b8–45a1, sT 63a7–63b1, Ph 211a7–211a8. 9) See Fujii [2016] for evidence that the Buddhist version of this text precedes the Hindu version. 10) Maeda [1973] p. 401. 11) Vaidya [2003] viṣarudhirāṃjikā-. 12) Sastri [1989] pp. 560–561 (in Part 3). Vaidya [2003] p. 437. 13) T no. 1216, 80a2–80a4. D no. 543, 279a5–279a6. P no. 162, 243b4–243b5. 14) See Matsunaga [1978] p. 40, p. 68 and Matsunaga [1998] p. 75, p. 126. D no. 442, 110a3–110a4, 123b7–124a1. T no. 885, 482a19, 492b23–492b24. Ekaliṅga as a place of practice in this text has already been reported by Bühnemann (see Bühnemann [1996] p. 490 n. 107). 15) See T no. 1272, 309b14–309b16, 313c17–313c18, 319b7–319b10. 16) Benerji indicates the date as AD 1580 (Benerji [2007] p. 208). Pal shows the possibility of it being compiled around AD 1590 (Pal [1981] p. 3). 17) See Pal [1981] p. 72. Čaṭṭopādhyāya [2010] pp. 408–409. Śrīvāsta [2007] p. 532. In the Phetkūrītantra, Vidyām in this part is Tārāṃ. 18) Kaul [1984] p. 7. 19) Bhandarkar [1908] p. 152, 167.

### Abbreviations and Primary Sources

BT (Buddhist ver.) Āśā Archives DP no. 3695(A1). Matsunami no. 273(T1), no. 274(T2). Bandurski no. Xc14/50(G). D no. 747. P no. 404. sTog Palace no. 698(sT). Phug Brag no. 519(Ph). T no. 1129. BT (Hindu ver.) NGMCP no. B134-12(N1), no. B135-45(N2). Bhandarkar no. 295(B).

Čaṭṭopādhyāya, R. M., ed. 2010. Śrīmad Krṣṇānanda Āgamavāgīśa Kṛṣṇa Vṛhat Tantrasāraḥ. Kolikata: Navabharāta Pāvaliśārs. (Bengali script) Mishra, G. R. 2016. Śrī Bhūta-Dāmara tantram. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan. (M)

Vaidya, P. L., ed. 2003. Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgraha. Part II. Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 18. Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute.

Kaul, M., ed. 1984. Brhamiṇī Tantra. Delhi: Butala.
The Dwelling Place of Maheśvara in Indian Esoteric Buddhism (Fujii)

Sastri, T. G., ed. 1925. *The Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. 3 Parts. Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica Series nos. 57, 58 and 59. Trivandrum: Government Press. Reprint, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989.

Śrīvāstava, M., and Ś. Rāya, eds. 2007. *ŚrīKṛṣṇānanda Āgamavāgīśa Kṛta Vṛhat Tantrasāra*. 2 vols. Vārāṇasi: Prachya Prakashan.

Matsunaga, Y. 1978. *The Guhyasamājatantra*. Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan.

**Bibliography**

Benerji, S. C. 2007. *A Companion to Tantra*. Delhi: Abhinav Publications.

Bhandarkar, M. A. 1908. “An Ekaliṅgī Stone Inscription and the Origin and History of the Lakulisa Sect.” *The Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22: 151–167.

Bhattacharyya, B. 1930. “The Cult of Bhūtaḍāmarā.” In *Proceedings and Transactions of the Sixth All-India Oriental Conference*, 349–370. Patna: The Bihar and Orissa Research Society.

Bühnemann, G. 1996. “The Goddess Mahācīnakrama-Tārā (Ugra-Tārā) in Buddhist and Hindu Tantrism.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 59 (3): 472–493.

Fujii Akira. 2016. “Bhūtaḍāmaratantra ni okeru hatsuwasha: Bukkyō bunken to shivaha bunken to no hikaku o tōshite” ブータダーマラ・タントラにおける発話者: 仏教文献とシヴァ派文献との比較を通じて. *Tōyō daigaku daigakuin kiyō* 53: 141–159.

Maeda Takashi. 1973. “Mikkyō no keisei” 密教の形成. *IBK* 21 (2): 400–402.

Matsunaga Yūkei. 1998. *Himitsu shūe tantora no kenkyū* 秘密集会タントラの研究. Matsunaga Yūkei chosakushū 松長有慶著作集 5. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.

Pal, P. 1981. *Hindu Religion and Iconology According to the Tantrasāra*. Los Angeles: Vichitra Press.

**Key words**  *Bhūtaḍāmaratantra*, ekaliṅga, Mahādeva, Maheśvara

(University Student, Toyo University)