

Appendix A:

The Names of Nāgabuddhi and Vajrabuddhi

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Attempting to understand the lives of South Asian Buddhists documented primarily in non-South Asian sources can be a difficult enterprise, impeded by barriers of language that cause names to be obscured or simply reinvented. Leonard van der Kuijp (2007: 1006) has recently argued that the original names of Longzhi 龍智 and Jingangzhi 金剛智 should now be understood as Nāgabuddhi/Nāgabodhi and *Vajrabuddhi respectively. A root-and-branch investigation of these important figures, whose lives lie at a confluence of Sanskritic, Sinic, and Tibetan traditions of Tantric Buddhism, while certainly desirable, is a task far beyond the scope of the present Appendix. For now, the following observations may be offered:

(1) The name Nāgabuddhi is attested in extant Sanskrit works reliably credited with Nāgabuddhi/Nāgabodhi's authorship: the *Guhyasamāja-maṇḍalopāyika-Vimśatīvidhi* ('*asyaiva Nāgabuddhi[pādaiḥ]*'), ed. Tanaka 2010: 688) and the *Samājasādhanavyavasthālī* ('*kṛtir ācārya Nāgabuddhi-pādā[nām]*'), ed. Tanaka 2012: 73), etc. These two works correspond to the *Dkyil 'khor nyi shu pa* (Sde dge 1810) and *Rnam gzhag rim pa* (Sde dge 1809) respectively, which are counted in a corpus of five works attributed to Klu'i blo or Klu'i byang [chub] by Bu ston (van der Kuijp 2007: 1015, nos. 1 and 3). The two forms Klu'i blo (*Nāgabuddhi) or Klu'i byang chub (*Nāgabodhi) are both found in about equal measure in the Tibetan Bstan 'gyur; this no doubt reflects the diversity of readings translated by the Tibetans. However, the name Nāgabodhi has barely any currency in the extant Sanskritic tradition.

(2) The Sanskrit source that gives the name Nāgabodhi, in a lineage of alchemists, is quite

remote from the Buddhist mainstream, namely the *Rasaratnasamuccaya* attributed to Vāgbhaṭa (v. 1.4, ed. Bāpaṭa 1890: 1). The pseudonym *Nāgajñāna adopted by Sundberg in Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 179, n. 27 has no currency whatsoever in original Sanskrit texts, nor is it supported by Tibetan sources.

(3) Any assumption that Vajrabodhi/Vajrabuddhi's teacher Nāgabuddhi lived too early to have been familiar with the *Guhyasamājantra* is untenable in the light of Tomabechi's (2008) findings that date major developments in the exegesis of the *Guhyasamāja* to the mid 8th century at the latest. Nāgabuddhi is reported to have been alive during Amoghavajra's visit to Sri Lanka in the 740s (cf. Goble 2012: 262–63) and even later (cf. Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 133–34). According to Haiyun and others following Amoghavajra's tradition, Nāgabuddhi is supposed to have lived for a hundred years (*T* 2081.783c25, annotation). This claim of a very long lifespan can be accepted even if exaggerated by one or two decades. An individual born in the 640s or 650s could have mastered the *STTS* in his youth, taught the system in the late 7th century, and expounded the *Guhyasamāja* throughout the first half of the 8th century. The report of Nāgabuddhi's advanced age has some credibility in that it originates in his own lifetime, among persons said to have known him. In the more fragmented and fantastic milieu of 12th-century Tantric Buddhism, by contrast, 'it is said that he [Nāgabuddhi] will live for two thousand years' (in the words of the *Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyus*, trans. Robson 1979: 235).

(4) It is apparently believed by some traditionalists that the *Guhyasamāja* (solely associated with

Nāgabuddhi's oeuvre in the Sanskrit corpus) is fundamentally unconnected to the *STTS* (with which Nāgabuddhi is associated in East Asia)—such that the Tibetan and Chinese teaching lineages are similarly unrelated. This is now unsupported. By the middle of the 8th century both Tantras were part of a large Tantric corpus that is recognizably similar in the accounts of Amoghavajra (cf. Giebel 1995), in the Indo-Sinic tradition, and Śāntarakṣita (cf. Moriguchi 1993), in the Sanskrit tradition. Although different versions of the corpus are articulated in different transmissions, these varied corpora nonetheless share crucial similarities: eighteen constituent texts, or a very large size (e.g., '16,000' stanzas); a set core of texts, including one or both of the *STTS* or *Guhya-samāja*; and the classification of most or all texts as *mahāyogatantra*. An eighteenfold corpus is alluded to in the Sanskrit tradition with expressions such as *aṣṭādaśaśatagrantha-śrīSamāja* (Nāropā's *Sekoddeśatikā*, ed. Sferra 2005: 68). Some exegetes familiar with the *Guhya-samāja* expressed the view that the *STTS* was its *mūlatantra* (see, e.g., Moriguchi 1993: 185).

(5) The tradition of Nāgabuddhi's tremendous longevity and his studentship under Nāgārjuna, conveyed in both Chinese and Tibetan lineage histories, is widespread in the Sanskrit tradition. It reached beyond Tantric Buddhism and into alchemical works such as the aforementioned Vāgbhaṭa's *Rasaratnasamuccaya* 1.4 (ed. Bāpaṭa 1890: 1). Nāgabuddhi's fame as an adept extended even to late non-Buddhist scripture such as *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* III 19.75 (ed. Kṣemarāja Śrīkrṣṇadāsa 1935: 221r) et al. It is unlikely that this South Asian 'common knowledge' about Nāgabuddhi's age refers to a Nāgabuddhi distinct from either the Tibetan or Chinese tradition—'prima facie incredible', in van der Kuijp's words (2007: 1008).

As for Vajrabodhi/Vajrabuddhi:

(1) Regarding the old back-translation of Jingangzhi as *Vajrabodhi, van der Kuijp rightly points out that *zhi* 智 usually never translates *bodhi* (2007: 1006). Although *jñāna* is by far the most common word translated by *zhi* 智,

it undoubtedly also, if secondarily, translates *buddhi*. See for example Hirakawa's index to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (T 1558, 1559): *gauravādi-buddhi* 自黑等智, *buddhyantara* 別智, and other expressions translating *buddhi* with *zhi* 智 are attested (1977: 401, 415, 425). Under the headword *zhi* 智 in Hirakawa's Chinese–Sanskrit dictionary (1997: 605–7, §1626) there is, further, *buddhyabhāva* 智即無, *buddhivadha* 智害, *buddhiśabdārcis* 智聲光 etc.

(2) The Sanskrit name of Jingangzhi was recorded as *Vajra-buddhi or -bodhi in Chinese transcription during his lifetime. In the year 730, in the well-known *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄, his name is transcribed as Variluo-puti 跋日羅菩提 (T 2154.571b27), EMC pronunciation *-bəkdeh. This catalogue was widely read; it was probably the source for Haiyun, who gives the similar-looking gloss *Vajrajñāna < Fur'luo'niangnan 嚩囉二合吉孃二合囊 (T 2081.786b19, copied with inserted Siddhamātrkā in T 2706.504b15–16). In all likelihood these semi-learned 'corrections' drew on the crude lexicographical material used by Tantric Buddhists of the Tang (e.g., T 2134.1217c29). These same sources may have informed the writing of the 9th-century portrait inscriptions discussed by Sundberg in Sundberg and Giebel (2011: 179, n. 27). In the 9th century there seems to have been a fad among Chinese Tantric monks to adopt fanciful back-Sanskritizations of monastic names. *Arthanarta 阿囉他捺哩茶, the alias of Yicao 義操, is an example. Likewise, Chen (2013: 129–30) has identified *Prajñācakra 般若斫迦, the pseudonym of Zhihuilun 智慧輪 (d. 879), as 'very likely Chinese' in ethnicity.

(3) It so happens that Vajrabuddhi is the initiatory name of the Bodhisattva Vajratikṣṇa in the *STTS*: *tataḥ sarvatathāgatair 'Vajrabuddhir Vajrabuddhir' iti vajranāmābhīṣekeṇābhīṣiktaḥ* (ed. Horiuchi 1983 I: 60 §99). This passage was of course known to Jingangzhi, whose translation here employed the normal Chinese rendition of *buddhi*, *jue* 覺 (T 866.231c5–6); Amoghavajra's translation here preferred *hui* 慧 (T 865.211c1–3). It may be that Vajrabuddhi received his name after identifying with Vajratikṣṇa during initiation. This possibility seems especially compelling in view of

the fact that Vajratikṣṇa is the manifestation of Mañjuśrī in the *STTS*. It was, after all, Vajrabuddhi's 'sincere vow to go to the land of China to pay his respects to Mañjuśrī and spread the Buddhist dharma' (Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 138); and likewise Vajrabuddhi's chief disciple Amoghavajra sought to enshrine Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai 五台山 'as the preeminent seat of Imperial Buddhism and its inextricable relationship to Esoteric Buddhist practice in the Tang Dynasty' (Goble 2012: 253).

(4) Finally, there is a previously unremarked connection between persons called Nāgabuddhi and Vajrabuddhi in the exegetical literature surrounding Buddhaghōṣa. Tenuous though this connection may be, it is enticing enough to mention here with the aim of stimulating further investigation. First, a Sanskrit verse attributed to a Nāgabodhi-sthavira is quoted in the 13th-century *Viśuddhimārgasāṅgī* (-*sannaya*?), as was noticed by Godakumbura (1943: 91). This verse has not been traced in any Sanskrit or Tibetan

work credibly attributed to Nāgabuddhi (email, Kimiaki Tanaka, June 2014); but, as Godakumbura implies, the Tantric Buddhist author is the only person named Nāgabodhi/Nāgabuddhi to whom it may be credited. Secondly, one Vajrabuddhi wrote a subcommentary on the Pali Vinaya, the *Anugaṅṭhipada*, some time after Buddhaghōṣa's *Samantapāsādikā*. Internal features of this subcommentary locate its author in South India, as opposed to Sri Lanka, and date it to between the 7th and 9th centuries, according to Petra Kieffer-Pülz (2013). This approximate time and place is consistent with Vajrabuddhi's early activity. Although Vajrabuddhi seems to have worked only with Sanskrit texts in China, Kieffer-Pülz has determined that the author of the *Anugaṅṭhipada* 'was familiar with Sanskrit texts and capable of translating them into Pāli' (2009: 145, n. 8). Such erudition indeed seems to be the work of a monk who 'for six years ... studied the *vinaya* of the Mahāyāna and Hinayāna' (六年學大小乘律, *T* 2157.875b6; cf. trans. Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 134), as Vajrabuddhi is said to have done.

