

The Ritual of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Maṇḍala*

Introduction

In this chapter I propose to examine the practice of visualizing *maṇḍalas*, focusing on one specific example: the *maṇḍala* called *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya* (*Zunsheng foding* 尊勝佛頂).¹ The introduction of visualization practice profoundly transformed Esoteric Buddhist ritual practice. It made physical images redundant, but ironically it also turned *maṇḍalas*, originally ritual spaces marked on the ground, into images of deities and objects of visualization in and of themselves. I begin by briefly reviewing the broad outline of this transformation.

Esoteric Buddhist ritual evolved from simple spell recitation into an elaborate visualization practice within a relatively short time. Increasingly more complex ritual scenarios emerged. For the purpose of the present discussion, I distinguish four distinct ritual scenarios: 1) recitation of spells without images, 2) recitation of spells in front of images, 3) a *maṇḍala* initiation ceremony for a class of ritual specialists, and 4) a visualization practice wherein the practitioner becomes one with the principal deity of the rite.²

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¹ For a recent discussion of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa cult, see Wang, ‘Changing Conceptions of “Mandala”’.

1. Recitation of Spells Without Images

At the core of Esoteric Buddhist ritual is the recitation of spells (*dhāraṇī*, mantra). Spells were recited for specific benefits, such as healing, procreation, wealth and worldly power, or defeating enemies. Over time spells came to be affiliated with specific deities, who either taught the spell or who appeared in response to its recitation. Such practices did not necessarily involve images. One would recite the spell over and over, and a deity, or a group of deities, might appear to confirm the success of the practice. A miraculous vision of a deity or deity group often demonstrates the efficacy of the *dhāraṇī*.

2. Recitation of Spells in Front of Images

With the introduction of image worship, this visionary display was replaced by miracles involving actual images. At the climactic moment of the recitation miraculous signs appeared around the image, which often, speaking in a loud voice, affirmed the success of the ritual. A rich body of Esoteric Buddhist rituals, affiliated with a variety of deities embodied in their images, came into being.

3. *Maṇḍala* Initiation Ceremony for a Class of Ritual Specialists

Esoteric Buddhism acquired a more distinct identity when a carefully constructed ritual of initiating ritual specialists, or *ācāryas*, was introduced. In the earliest known account of this ceremony, called the All-Gathering *Maṇḍala* Ceremony (*dubui daochang* 都

² As esoteric rituals evolved and became more complex, earlier and simpler rituals continued to be practiced. Some older and simpler forms were integrated into more complex scenario. Others were practiced alongside the new more complex rituals. New interpretations were offered for older forms of practice. Over time, Esoteric Buddhist rituals became extremely complex; given their incorporation and transformation of earlier practices they are often difficult for modern scholars to interpret. I offer here a tentative reconstruction of the ritual evolution that hopefully helps make sense of the seemingly chaotic complexity of this ritual tradition.

會道場/*puji buitan* 普集會壇) spelled out in detail in the *Collected Dhāraṇī Sūtras* (*Tuoluoni jijing* 陀羅尼集經),³ the entire pantheon of Esoteric Buddhist deities is invited to their seats on the *maṇḍala*, and candidates are initiated in front of them. This general initiation licensed *ācāryas* to perform the wide range of rituals affiliated with each of the deities. Rituals proved efficacious only when they were performed by *ācāryas* who had undergone the initiation. A distinct class of Esoteric Buddhist ritual specialists thus emerged. With this ceremony, the idea of a distinct Esoteric Buddhist pantheon was also introduced, although the pantheon itself would evolve and expand over time. In this way, two types of Esoteric Buddhist rituals came to exist side by side, one for securing the assistance of specific individual deities for this-worldly and otherworldly goals, and the other for initiating the ritual specialists who would then perform these rituals.

The All-Gathering *Maṇḍala* Ceremony appropriated and expanded preexisting practices. In earlier *maṇḍala* ceremonies, the practitioner would construct a *maṇḍala* around an image of a deity, often surrounding it with ritual implements or other subsidiary deities, and would then be initiated into the ritual affiliated with the principal deity. Initiated practitioners would then recite the deity's spell in front of it to secure specific this-worldly or otherworldly goals. By contrast, in the newly introduced All-Gathering Ceremony, the entire pantheon of deities was invited to the large *maṇḍala* and each newly initiated *ācārya* was instructed in the ritual of one of the many deities with whom the initiate was shown to have a special affinity.⁴

4. Visualization Practices

As elaborate visualization practices developed, images appear to have become somewhat redundant. Deities are visualized, rather than located in the animation of painted or sculpted representations.

³ T no. 901, dated 654.

⁴ These two types of *maṇḍalas* are sometimes called *Besson mandara* 別尊曼荼羅 and *Toe mandara* 都会曼荼羅 (Sawa, *Mikkyo jiten*, 618).

Visualization practice (in which the practitioner is instructed to form mental pictures of ritual actions or deities) played very little role in earlier forms of Esoteric Buddhist rituals, either for individual deities or for general initiation. But this practice grew in importance in the later stages of the evolution of these rituals. In rituals performed in front of painted or sculpted images, the emphasis shifted from deities represented in physical form to their visualization, and then to visualizing oneself as a given deity—the performer becomes the deity to which the ritual is directed.

Maṇḍala Ritual

Originally, *maṇḍala* initiation ceremonies both for individual deities and for general initiation began with the construction of physical *maṇḍalas*. Ritual manuals often describe this construction in considerable detail. As the ritual was recast primarily as a series of visualization practices, this step of *maṇḍala* construction also became an object of visualization. The practitioner was to imagine or visualize the *maṇḍala* itself.

When both became objects of visualization, images and *maṇḍalas* came to be assimilated with each other. Here I examine this development by looking at the rituals for the cult of the deity Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya. The *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya* (*Foding zuisheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂最勝陀羅尼經),⁵ contains an instruction on *maṇḍala* ritual.⁶ This is a *maṇḍala* constructed on the ground, at which the practitioner recites the *dhāraṇī*. One version mentions the vision of the Buddhas arriving and praising the practitioner,⁷ but no instruction for deliberate visualization is given in the *sūtras*. It is in the two ritual manuals for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī that we find carefully formulated instructions for visualization.

⁵ T nos. 967–971; 974A.

⁶ For a summary of different existing versions of this *sūtra*, see Tsukamoto, Matsunaga, and Isoda, *A Descriptive Bibliography*, 100–105.

⁷ T no. 967, 19: 352a.

The *Recitation Manual for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī* (*Foding zunsheng tuoluoni niansong yiguifa* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼念誦儀軌法),⁸ attributed to Amoghavajra's (705–774) translation, contains instructions for constructing a *maṇḍala* on the ground as a ritual space as well as instructions for visualizing the *maṇḍala*. At the culminating point of the ritual the practitioner visualizes himself becoming the principal deity. In this ritual the *maṇḍala* and the principal deity are both visualized, but they are kept distinct from each other. In contrast, the *Manual for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice* (*Zunsheng foding xiuyuqiefu guiyi* 尊勝佛頂脩瑜伽法軌儀),⁹ attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha (637–735) first offers a brief instruction for visualizing the *maṇḍala* and then a separate instruction for painting the central deity's image. The iconography of the visualized *maṇḍala* and the painting of the principal deity are virtually identical. Another more elaborate instruction for constructing the *maṇḍala* that follows describes the *maṇḍala* in greater detail. Again, the design of the central part of this larger *maṇḍala* agrees for the most part with the design of the painting described earlier in the manual. The distinction between the *maṇḍala* and the pictorial image has become blurred. Together these two manuals illustrate how the *maṇḍala* constructed on the ground gradually became an immaterial visualized representation. In the end, as we shall see, the practice turns into the visualization of the entire universe, or the undifferentiated (*wuxiang* 無相 'No Form') *dharmadhātu* (*fajie* 法界). Let's examine these texts in greater detail:

The Maṇḍala in the Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya

This *sūtra* addresses the fear of inferior rebirths filled with suffering, namely, rebirths as animals, in the hells, and as blind human beings and human beings living in poverty. In the narrative, when the god Indra comes to the Buddha requesting help for the god Shanzhu 善住 who has received the prediction of a series of such rebirths, rays

⁸ T no. 972.

⁹ T no. 973.

of light emerge from the Buddha's *uṣṇīṣa* at the top of his head, illumine all realms in the universe and, after encircling the Buddha three times, disappear into the Buddha's mouth. The Buddha is said to have then spoken the spell, or *dhāraṇī*, called 'Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya' (*Foding Zunsheng* 佛頂尊勝), which purifies all inferior realms and removes suffering from them. The Buddha then gives instructions about the use of this *dhāraṇī*, mentioning a variety of *dhāraṇī* practices.

A description of the *maṇḍala* appears in five texts.¹⁰ The *sūtra* exists in several translations, but the *maṇḍala* instruction in each version shares certain common features. The *maṇḍala* is square, flowers are scattered on it and incense is burnt. The practitioner touches the ground with his right knee and kneels, holding the hands together. He forms a *mudrā*, the two index fingers placed on the two thumbs, and puts it at his heart.¹¹ Meditating on the Buddhas, he recites the *dhāraṇī* one hundred and eight times.

The version attributed to Buddhapālita speaks of a vision at this point.¹² At the platform, namely the *maṇḍala*, flowers fall like rain from a large cloud; these flowers become the offerings to an astronomically large number of Buddhas; these Buddhas together praise the practitioner as the rare and true son of the Buddhas. Then the practitioner is said immediately to obtain the *Samādhi* of Unobstructed Wisdom (*Wuzhang'aizhi sanmei* 無障礙智三昧), or the *Samādhi* of the Adornment of the Great Enlightened Mind (*Daputixin zhuangyan sanmei* 大菩提心莊嚴三昧).¹³

The ritual scenario of this ritual is that of a *dhāraṇī* recitation followed by a vision. No visualization practice is mentioned.

¹⁰ *T* no. 967, 19: 351c27–352a7; *T* no. 968, 19: 354c8–17; *T* no. 969, 19: 357a2–10; *T* no. 970, 19: 361b1–18; *T* no. 971, 19: 363c27–364a5.

¹¹ *T* no. 967, 19: 352a1–3.

¹² *T* no. 967.

¹³ *T* no. 967, 19: 352a3–7.

*Amoghavajra's Translation of the Recitation Manual for
Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī (T no. 972)*

This manual begins by insisting that before *dhāraṇī* recitation it is necessary that the practitioner has seen the holy beings, received *abhiṣeka* (*guanding* 灌頂), and come to know, or learn the proper ritual for the principal deity. This is to take place at something called the *samaya maṇḍala*. This appears to refer to the general initiation ceremony. According to this text, then, only those who have been properly initiated can perform this Esoteric Buddhist ritual effectively.

The manual describes the ritual in two parts. In the first part the practitioner sets up a place of practice in a quiet spot in the mountains, or in a room ('pure chamber', *jingshi* 淨室). The practitioner is to paint an image of the deity designated as 'Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī'.¹⁴ On completion, he places the painting on the Eastern wall, facing him. At the spot where he carries out the recitation he sets up a *maṇḍala*. Several features of the *maṇḍala* construction here are strikingly similar to the account for the construction of the *maṇḍala* in the earlier *Collected Dhāraṇī Sūtras*,¹⁵ mentioned above. The ground is excavated to the depth of one and a half *hasta* ('hands'), and impure objects, such as broken tiles and bricks, bones, ashes, and hair, are removed from the soil. The place is filled in again with the cleaned soil and a flat square surface is painted over with cow dung mixed with water. A mantra called Aparajīta (*Wunengsheng* 無能勝),¹⁶ is recited to empower the cow dung. The surface is then painted with a mixture of powder and water, and the position of the nine seats for the deities are measured with a rope and marked. The seats are painted with ground white sandalwood. An umbrella is set up above, and flags hang above the *maṇḍala* on all four sides.

¹⁴ A description of Buddhoṣṇīṣa image appears in the *Collected Dhāraṇī Sūtras*, T no. 901, 18: 785c18–786b3. Ref., T no. 905, 18: 790a22–b5; 795a20–796a12.

¹⁵ T no. 901.

¹⁶ Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 1881. The mantras are identified by the numbers assigned to them in Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*.

In the morning milk gruel is offered. Vegetarian foods, to be offered at meal times, are listed. An incense burner is placed at each of the four gates of the *maṇḍala*. A water pot, filled with fragrant water and flowers or green leaf branches, is placed in each of the four intervening spaces. One lamp is lit in each of the four corners. Two bowls are filled with *argha*, or offering water, and placed in front of the seat of recitation. Rules are given for the kinds of bowls in which food offerings are presented and for preparing these bowls for presentation. The Aparajīta *dhāraṇī* is used to empower the water.

The chair for the person who recites the *dhāraṇī* is placed in front of the *maṇḍala*. The person who recites the spell is to bathe. The mantra for bathing given here suggests that bathing at this point may stand for a broader rite of purification.¹⁷ The mantra declares all dharmas and the practitioner's body to be pure.¹⁸

The *maṇḍala* described here in the manual translated by Amoghavajra may be read as an expanded version of the *maṇḍala* described briefly in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya*. As discussed above, the *Sūtra* specifies a square *maṇḍala* on which four water pots are placed and offerings of flowers, incense and lamps are made.¹⁹ According to the *Sūtra*, while carrying out the recitation of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī, the practitioner forms a specific *mudrā*, kneeling at the west side of the *maṇḍala*. Amoghavajra's

¹⁷ Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 1808.

¹⁸ For the instruction on bathing, the manual first refers to the *Susiddhikara Sūtra* (*Suxidi jieluo jing*, T no. 893, 18: 606a; *Mikkyo daijiten*, 1394b). It then describes different meanings of bathing: in bathing with the dharma, one contemplates the truth of all dharmas; if householders and renouncers observe *vinaya* rules and do not violate them, that is considered bathing; if at the three times of practice each day one pays respect to the Buddha in front of a Buddha image, repents, shows delight, requests teaching, makes a vow, and redirects earned merits properly, that is considered bathing; if one recites the purity mantra seven times for empowerment, that is considered purity bathing; if, while reciting the principal *dhāraṇī*, one contemplates that all dharmas are pure in essence, then that person also becomes pure (T no. 972, 19: 364c20–365a2).

¹⁹ T no. 967, 19: 351c29–352a2; T no. 971, 19: 961b3–11.

manual specifies the same *mudrā* for the reciting the Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī, but describes it in greater detail.²⁰

Significant differences also exist between the *maṇḍala* instructions in the *Sūtra* and in Amoghavajra's manual. For example, the *Sūtra* does not mention a specific group of deities to be called to the *maṇḍala* and does not mention Vairocana. In contrast, Amoghavajra's manual names nine deities and describes the arrangement of their seats on the *maṇḍala* in detail (Table 1): At the center is the seat for Vairocana Buddha (Pilushena Fo 毘盧遮那佛), and around this Buddha's seat are the eight seats for bodhisattvas. To the proper right of Vairocana's seat is the seat for the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanzizai Pusa 觀自在菩薩). Behind Avalokiteśvara's seat is the seat for the bodhisattva Maitreya (Cishi Pusa 慈氏菩薩). Behind Vairocana's seat is the seat for the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (Xukongzang Pusa 虛空藏菩薩). To the proper left of Ākāśagarbha's seat is the seat for the bodhisattva Samanthabhadra (Puxian Pusa 普賢菩薩). To the proper left of Vairocana's seat is the seat for the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi (Jin'gangshou Pusa 金剛手菩薩). Below Vajrapāṇi's seat is the seat for the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Weshushili Pusa 文殊師利菩薩). In front of Vairocana's seat is the seat for the bodhisattva Sarvanivāraṇaṣṅkambhī (Chugaizhang Pusa 除蓋障菩薩). To the proper right of Sarvanivāraṇaṣṅkambhī's seat is the seat for the bodhisattva Kṣtigarbha (Dizang Pusa 地藏菩薩).

TABLE 1 *Maṇḍala* seat arrangement of nine deities in Amoghavajra's manual.

Proper Right	Center	Proper Left
Maitreya	Ākāśagarbha	Samanthabhadra
Avalokiteśvara	Vairocana Buddha	Vajrapāṇi
Kṣtigarbha	Sarvanivāraṇaṣṅkambhī	Mañjuśrī

²⁰ T no. 972, 19: a22–23.

Later in the manual these deities are designated as ‘Vairocana Buddha and the Eight Great Bodhisattvas’.²¹ The list of these eight bodhisattvas is known from other sources. The *Sūtra of the Eight Bodhisattva Maṇḍala* (*Bada pusa mantuluo jing* 八大菩薩曼荼羅經),²² also attributed to Amoghavajra as its translator, teaches the visualization of these same eight bodhisattvas, listing their mantras and iconographies.²³

As noted above, Vairocana Buddha does not appear in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya*. Although Amoghavajra mentions Vairocana here, elsewhere in his manual the principal deity is unambiguously given as Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī.²⁴ Amoghavajra introduces a *maṇḍala* that appears to have had little to do with the Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī cult of the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya*.

The first part of Amoghavajra’s manual, summarized above, describes preparatory rites without mentioning visualization practices. The term *yoga* (*yuqie* 瑜伽) appears at the outset of the second part. In Esoteric Buddhist ritual manuals *yoga* refers to a standardized sequence of visualization and mantra recitation. This new section begins by listing the times for performing recitation: every day one is to recite the *dhāraṇī* at fixed times, either twice, at dawn and at sunset, or three times, adding noon, or four times, adding midnight for *yoga* practice.²⁵ At midnight *yoga* practice recitation is carried out with visualization. The remainder of the manual describes this *yoga* practice in detail.

Early in the outline of the *yoga* ritual the practitioner is told to visualize (*xiang* 想, ‘think’) Mount Sumeru inside the ritual space (*daochang* 道場), and at the top of Mount Sumeru, a pavilion dec-

²¹ T no. 972, 19: 365a14.

²² T no. 1167.

²³ A survey of the cult of the Eight Bodhisattvas appears in Tanaka *Indoniokeru mandara*, 58–66. See also Granoff, ‘A Portable Buddhist Shrine’; Pratapaditya Pal, ‘A Note on the Mandala’.

²⁴ T no. 972, 19: 364b12; 365a8; 367a22–24.

²⁵ T no. 972, 19: 365a7–8.

orated with seven jewels. Inside the pavilion Vairocana Buddha is surrounded by eighty *koṭis* of bodhisattvas, who have attained the tenth stage of the bodhisattva path. Here the *maṇḍala*, which earlier was constructed physically, appears to be reconstituted in the mind. Vairocana Buddha is at the center, surrounded by an astronomically large number of bodhisattvas. At the four gates and the four corners of the pavilion, or the visualized *maṇḍala*, are four bodhisattvas and eight bodhisattvas of offering (of inner and outer offering).²⁶ The practitioner is to visualize/contemplate (*guanxiang* 觀想) them in the act of presenting offerings.²⁷

The deities are brought to the *maṇḍala* and offerings are presented to them with a series of mantras, *mudrās*, and accompanying visualizations. For example, in presenting the offering of an unguent, a mantra is spoken and the corresponding *mudrā* formed,²⁸ and ‘owing to the power of the mantra’ the unguent flows like a sea of clouds as offering to the Tathāgana (Vairocana) and the holy beings (*maṇḍala* deities).²⁹ Similarly, flower garlands, burnt incense, food and drink, and lamps are offered with appropriate mantras and *mudrās*, and they all appear as if a sea of clouds. The practitioner is also instructed to contemplate, or visualize (*guanxiang*) banners, umbrellas, networks of flags, necklaces, robes, and colorful silk cloths, and these are said to flow like a sea of clouds, filling the entire universe, or dharma realm.³⁰

Recall that the instruction for constructing a physical *maṇḍala* in Amoghavajra’s manual seems to follow the *maṇḍala* instruction in

²⁶ The four bodhisattvas here may refer to the Four Great Bodhisattvas, namely Samanthabhadra, Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Maitreya (*Mikkyō daijiten*, 1022c.).

²⁷ *T* no. 972, 19: 365b24–28.

²⁸ Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 1519.

²⁹ *T* no. 972, 19: 366a15–20. The text of the mantra and the ritual function assigned to it in this sequence of rituals do not always match; for example, see the mantra given for offering the seat (Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 4) and offering of *argha* water (Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 178).

³⁰ *T* no. 972, 19: 366b17.

the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya* and specifies placing four carefully prepared water pots on the *maṇḍala*, and then presenting other kinds of offerings. Again, the *maṇḍala* instruction in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya* specifically mentions offerings of flowers, incense, lamps and food.³¹ Both follow well-established conventions for the performance of *maṇḍala* ceremonies.

The preparatory instruction for visualizing the *maṇḍala* and presenting offerings to the deities invited to it constitutes a distinct unit in Amoghavajra's manual and concludes with a set of verses.³² Then follows the main part of the visualization ritual in which the practitioner eventually visualizes his own body as that of the principal deity and carries out the recitation of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī.³³

The narrative of identification with the principal deity in this manual appears to be distinctive. The practitioner first visualizes (*guan* 觀) his own body as that of the Vajrapāramitā, the Buddha's Mother (Jin'gang Boluomi Fomu Pusa 金剛波羅蜜佛母菩薩).³⁴ He forms the *mudrā* of Vajrapāramitā and places it in four places on his body, namely, at his heart, forehead, throat, and crown. The Vajrapāramitā mantra is recited. With the *mudrā* placed above the forehead and the mantra recited three times, an *abhiṣeka* is performed. The practitioner puts on armor with the appropriate *mudrā* and mantra. The mantra of clapping palms is recited.³⁵

Then the practitioner imagines (*xiang* 想) that his body becomes the body of the principal deity. Here the deity is not explicitly named, although earlier, at the beginning of the manual, the image

³¹ *T* no. 970, 19: 362b7–11.

³² *T* no. 972, 19: 366b20–21.

³³ *T* no. 972, 19: 367a20–c1.

³⁴ *T* no. 372, 19: 366c3. The iconography of the deity is described; she holds in the left hand a lotus flower above which is a five-pronged *vajra* hammer; the right hand, with the palm facing upward, hangs down, forming the granting of wishes *mudrā*; she wears a crown and necklaces, and her facial expression is compassionate, prepared to save all sentient beings (*T* no. 372, 19: 367a). *Mikkyō daijiten*, 718bc.

³⁵ Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 1032.

of the principal deity is identified as that of Buddhhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī, as noted above.³⁶ The *mudrā* of the deity is described³⁷ and the text of the Buddhhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī is given.³⁸ The *mudrā* described here appears to be the same as the *mudrā* (described in slightly different words) given for the recitation of the Buddhhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya*.³⁹

While reciting the mantra, the practitioner is instructed to visualize, or contemplate single-mindedly, Vairocana.⁴⁰ The passage does not speak of the practitioner becoming one with Vairocana. Recall that the practitioner's body has become that of the principal deity, Buddhhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī. Vairocana, who, as we recall, is not mentioned in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya*, is the central deity of the *maṇḍala* described in Amoghavajra's manual, which had been first physically constructed and then visualized. The *maṇḍala* is the site of the recitation ritual both in the *Sūtra* and in Amoghavajra's manual. The affiliation of the Buddhhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī and its recitation with Vairocana may have its roots here.

The rite of empowering the rosary is then described. When the recitation with the rosary is concluded, the palms are held together above the practitioner's head (crown), and he makes the wish that all sentient beings obtain what they desire.

This marks the culmination of the ritual. Following this, the sequence of rites is repeated in reverse order. The practitioner forms the *mudrā* of the principal deity and recites the mantra seven, or three, times. The practitioner recites and forms the Vajrapāramitā *mudrā*, and forms the *mudrās* for the five kinds of offerings (of unguent, flower garlands, burnt incense, food and drink, and lamps), making these offerings with their respective mantras.⁴¹

Earlier, immediately before visualizing the *maṇḍala*, the practi-

³⁶ T no. 972, 19: 364b13.

³⁷ T no. 972, 19: 367a22–23.

³⁸ T no. 972, 19: 367a25–b28.

³⁹ T no. 967, 19: 352a1–3.

⁴⁰ T no. 972, 19: 367b29–c1.

⁴¹ As described earlier from T no. 972, 19: 366a4–b21.

tioner had been instructed to recite the *Acala* (*Budongzun* 不動尊) mantra and form the corresponding *mudrā*.⁴² With this he turns clockwise in the eight directions, then points the *mudrā* above and below, to remove *Māra*'s obstructions in the ritual space. Now, in dissolving the ritual space, the practitioner again forms the *Acala mudrā* and recites the mantra, this time turning counterclockwise in the ritual space.

The ceremony concludes with the rite of sending the deities away. The visualization in Amoghavajra's manual thus focuses on two separate topics, first the visualization of the *maṇḍala* and the offerings to the deities, then the visualization and identification with the principal deity. These two concerns are distinct and largely treated separately from each other, although the somewhat unexpected reference to *Vairocana* at the moment of the recitation of the principal mantra clumsily connects the two visualizations with each other.

*Śubhākarasiṃha's Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya
Yoga Practice Manual (T no. 973)*

The *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* describes its teaching as a yoga practice.⁴³ As noted above, in Esoteric Buddhist ritual manuals yoga refers to a standardized sequence of visualization and mantra recitation. The mantras, for the most part, are not specifically tied to any one principal deity, and thus may be incorporated into a variety of rituals for different principal deities. The sequences of visualization and mantra recitation are often taken from the *Vajrasāekhara sūtras* (*Jin'gangding jing* 金剛頂經), but the core sequence of mantras in the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* is more closely affiliated with the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經, T no. 848).⁴⁴ Again, this

⁴² T no. 972, 19: 365b16–22.

⁴³ T no. 973, 19: 368b12–13, 17–18.

⁴⁴ The yoga manual for *Cintāmaṇicakra Avalokiteśvara*, in two versions attributed to Amoghavajra (*Cintāmaṇicakra Yoga of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara*, or *Guanzizai pusa ruyilun yuqie* 觀自在菩薩如意輪瑜伽 T no. 1086) and

scenario of ritualistic yoga practice is not specifically tied to the Buddhōṣṇīṣa cult. Another manual, called, the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya* (*Cishi pusa lüexiu yu'e niansong fa* 慈氏菩薩略修愈識念誦法, *T* no. 1141), whose Chinese translation is attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha, follows the same scenario, listing a virtually identical set of mantras.⁴⁵ Our reading here focuses on the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual*, but takes into account what we can also learn from its close relationship with the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya*.

In Amoghavajra's *Recitation Manual for Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī* two narratives of visualization are kept largely separate: the practitioner first visualizes the *maṇḍala*, inviting the deities to it, making offerings to them; then, at the culminating point of the ceremony he visualizes himself becoming identical with the principal deity. Although the visualization of Vairocana, the central deity of the *maṇḍala*, is mentioned, it is with the principal deity Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī that the practitioner's body becomes identified.

In Śubhākarasiṃha's manual these two visualization narratives are more closely integrated into one.⁴⁶ The visualization of the

Vajrabodhi (669–741) (*Essential Instruction of the Cintāmaṇicakra Yoga of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara*, or *Guanzizai pusa ruyilun yuqie fayao* 觀自在如意輪菩薩瑜伽法要, *T* no. 1087) respectively, maps the ceremony for this deity as a Vajraśekhara ritual, incorporating a set of mantras taken from that *sūtra* (*T* no. 1086, 19: 206c18/*T* no. 1087, 19: 211b21).

⁴⁵ *T* no. 1141, 20: 950a1–600a24. For both *T* no. 973 and 1141 the texts reproduced in the *Taishō* collection are based on Japanese printed edition (Kyōhō period, 1716–1736), noting different readings in earlier manuscripts, which date back to the eleventh and twelve centuries. These titles do not appear in Chinese catalogues. *T* no. 973 is mentioned in the lists of texts brought by Engyō 圓行 (799–852) (839; *T* no. 2164, 55: 1072c2) and Eun 惠運 (789–869) (863, *T* no. 2168, 55: 1089a1). *T* no. 973, 19: 383b23–29. A colophon in *T* no. 1141 attributed to Enchin 圓珍 (814–891) mentions the date of 855 for its transmission (*T* no. 1114, 20: 595a9).

⁴⁶ The scenario of the ceremony sketched in the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice*

maṇḍala is the visualization of the deity Buddhōṣṇīṣa, represented as Vairocana and the Eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings. These deities wear the crown of Five Wisdoms (*wuzhi* 五智), and at the culminating moment of the ritual, the practitioner attains the Five Wisdoms. The practitioner becomes the deity Vairocana, also identified as the cosmic reality or *dharmadhātu* (*fajie* 法界). The *maṇḍala* represents both the deity Vairocana /Buddhōṣṇīṣa and the *dharmadhātu*.

Doctrinal Framing

Both the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* and the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya* open with verses on yoga; except for the opening verses paying honor to the deities appropriate for each manual, the verses setting out the doctrinal framework for the ritual sequence in the main part of the manual are virtually identical. These verses unpack the meaning of yoga, or more narrowly, of visualization, in doctrinal terms. To those who enjoy the cultivation of Formlessness (*wuxiang* 無相), these verses claim, yoga is taught; to those who seek goals in the realm of Form (*youxiang* 有相), [ritual practices of] forms are taught. Formlessness and Form are in the end ‘one and the same substance’ (*yiti* 一體), which is the true, great emptiness (*zhen dakong* 真大空).⁴⁷

Further elaboration on these verses appears in the prose section that follows:

The Teaching with Form seeks worldly goals, and is classified into the rituals of removing calamities (*chuzai* 除災, *sāntika*), of increasing benefits (*zengyi* 增益, *puṣṭika*), of conquering (*jiangfu* 降伏, *abhicāraka*), and of gathering and inviting [deities] (*shezha* 攝召). The Formless Teaching is the cultivation of yoga that seeks the supreme enlightenment. It is eternal, sudden, and appears as Form Body (*seshen* 色身), or the physical body, everywhere.⁴⁸

Manual does not mention setting up at the beginning a physical image in the ritual space, nor constructing a physical *maṇḍala*. The same scenario also appears in Śubhākarasiṃha’s *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya*.

⁴⁷ T no. 973, 19: 368b11–12.

This discussion distinguishes the external ritual and the internal yoga clearly, and yet it also insists on the unity or the ultimate identity of the two types of practice, which appear closely intermingled throughout the extended ritual instructions. The manual spells out the abstract unity of Form and Formlessness concretely for each step of the ceremony by placing instructions for external ritual action and yoga visualization side by side. Familiar elements of the ritual known from Esoteric Buddhist rituals that do not involve visualization are in this way given a new interpretation as visualization practices.

The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* discusses Image *samādhi* (*benzun sanmei* 本尊三昧) and Formless *samādhi* (*wuxiang sanmei* 無相三昧) in chapters 28 and 29, and Yixing's commentary on the *sūtra* (*Da Piluzhena chengfo jing shu* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, T no. 1796) offers an extended discussion of image worship that contrasts Form and Formlessness.⁴⁹ Yixing (一行, 672–727) collaborated with Śubhākarasiṃha in translating the *sūtra* itself, and 'recorded' (*ji* 記) the commentary in which he frequently cites Śubhākarasiṃha directly ('The *ācārya* says'). The *Buddhoṣṇāsa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual's* language of Form and Formlessness, I believe, derives from this discussion in the *sūtra* and the commentary.

Subsequent introductory verses map the ritual program of the *Manual* in highly abstract doctrinal terms. The actions of body, mouth, and mind are identified as the Three Mysteries (*sanmi* 三密), as are the Three Bodies of the Buddha (*sanshen* 三身), namely, the Response Body, the Transformation Body and the Dharma Body (*yinghua fashen* 應化法身). The cosmic Five Wheels (*wulun* 五輪; the wheels at the base of the universe of *vajra* [probably meaning gold], water, fire, wind, and atmosphere) are identified as the Five Wheels of Wisdom (*wuzhi lun* 五智輪), which in turn are identified as the Five Part Dharma Body (*wufen [fa]shen* 五分[法]身; the Buddha's Body Endowed with the Five Elements of Enlightenment).⁵⁰ The Five

⁴⁸ T no. 973, 19: 368c2–3.

⁴⁹ T no. 848, 18: 44a9–19; T no. 1796, 39: 782c–785a.

⁵⁰ T no. 973, 19: 368b14–15; ref., T no. 973: 19.371c16.

Wheels are also described as the wheels that encompass the entire *dharmadhātu*. These doctrinal categories reappear later in explaining the key stages in the unfolding of the ritual.

Five Wheel Contemplation

The ritual scenario set out both in the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* and the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya* begins with the purification of the universe and of the ground of the *maṇḍala*, then moves to the invitation of the deities to the *maṇḍala*, to the presentation of offerings, and to visualizing the practitioner's own body becoming that of the deity of the *maṇḍala*. At this point the text of the root mantra is given along with the ritual instruction for its recitation, and the ritual concludes with the rite of dismissing the deities.⁵¹

The ritual instructions of these two yoga practice manuals open with a distinctive visualization of the cosmic Five Wheels. This too is a topic spelled out in Yixing's *Commentary*,⁵² where this visualization is specified as an important part of the *maṇḍala* initiation.⁵³ According to Yixing, in constructing the *maṇḍala* the ritual master is to visualize (or contemplate) his own body, the ground, and the disciples to be ordained as representing the Five Wheels.⁵⁴ The instruction given in the yoga practice manuals follows the outline of Yixing's instruction, but additionally supplies the text of the mantra used for each step.

The practitioner is to enter a *samādhi* in which he contemplates or visualizes the syllable *raṃ* above the crown of his own head. With this 'triangular shape of wisdom fire,' he purifies the *dharmadhātu* by burning up the Five Skandhas and the Four Elements. Then, entering the Five Wheel *samādhi*, he visualizes parts of his body as the wheels of Vajra (below navel), Water (navel), Fire (heart), Heavenly

⁵¹ Hatta, *Shingon Jitten*, 244–245.

⁵² *T* no. 1796, 39: 661b3–c2, 727c8–28; ref., *T* no. 848, 18: 31a21–29.

⁵³ Shinohara, *Spells*, 160–161.

⁵⁴ *T* no. 1769, 39: 661b3; 25; 727c8–28; 728a14–15. This instruction appears twice, first in the section on 'entering the *maṇḍala*' and then in the 'the secret *maṇḍala*' section.

Wind (above eyebrows), and Atmosphere (above the crown), with the five syllables of *a*, *vaṃ*, *raṃ*, *haṃ*, and *khaṃ*.

The practitioner then carries out the Five Wheel consecration of the *maṇḍala* ground.⁵⁵ Here the same scheme of purification/consecration is applied to the ground on which the *maṇḍala* is to be constructed. The practitioner burns impurities and defilements in the ground. Then he sets up the Five Wheels.⁵⁶

The Maṇḍala Ceremony

In the two manuals attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha the invitation of the deities to the *maṇḍala* begins with ‘waking up’ the deities. In the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Manual* the deities, listed as ‘the Buddhas, Eight Buddhoṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings, or deities of the appropriate deity group’ arise from *samādhi* to descend to the ritual space out of compassion for sentient beings.⁵⁷ Then the principal and other *maṇḍala* deities are invited. At this point the visualization of the *maṇḍala*, or the ‘place where the principal deity resides’ is carried out.⁵⁸

In this visualization, the *maṇḍala* is placed on a jewel lotus flower base in a palace building; a large circle contains nine smaller circles, in each of which a deity sits. The large circle also contains eight jewel jars, twelve *vajra* hammers, and four jewel wheels. Above each mouth of the eight jars a *vajra* stands upright; these eight *vajras* together hold the four wheels. On each of the four sides of the [central] circle, a *vajra* lies horizontally. Colorful ribbons are attached to the jars and *vajras*, stretching everywhere in the large circle. The principal deity is Mahāvairocana. This brief summary concludes by referring to the ‘*maṇḍala* section’ for details on other *maṇḍala* deities.⁵⁹ A diagram of the visualized *maṇḍala* appears in the text reproduced in the *Taishō* edition (Figure 1).⁶⁰

⁵⁵ T no. 973: 19.368c19–369c16.

⁵⁶ The rite is carried out with Vajra Samaya (Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 1147) and the Trailokyavijaya (Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 1561) mantras and *mudrās*.

⁵⁷ T no. 973, 19: 370a1–3; T no. 1141, 20: 591c4–6.

⁵⁸ T no. 973, 19: 370a14–b7.

⁵⁹ T no. 973, 19: 370b6–7.

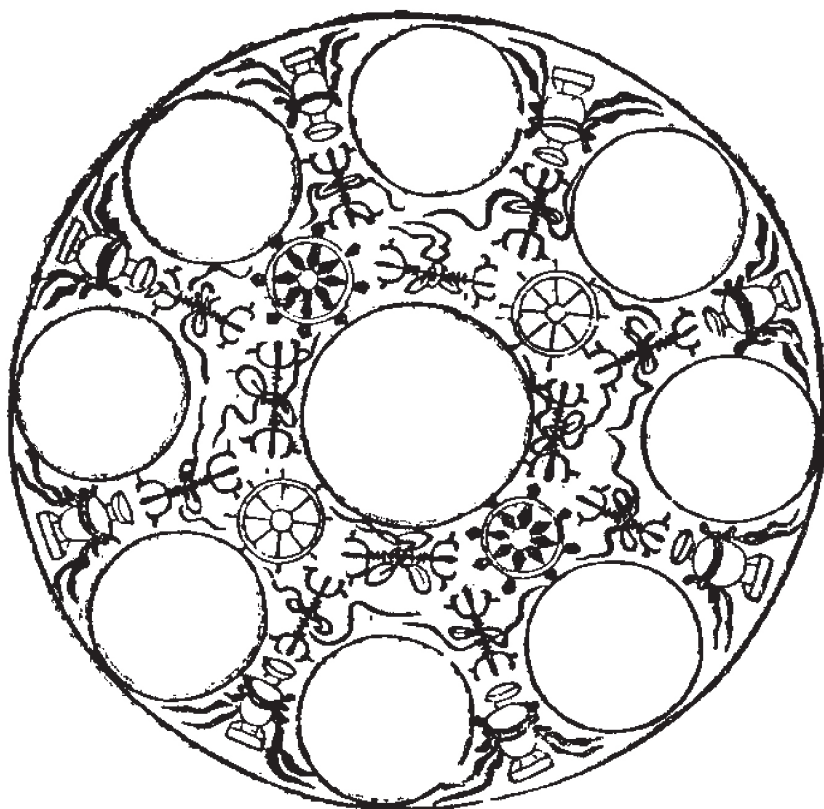


FIG. 1 Visualized maṇḍala in the *Taishō* edition.

⁶⁰ *T* no. 873 19: 370a. This passage describes a three-dimensional structure: eight water jars stand; each one holds a *vajra* above it. The four pairs of the eight upright *vajras* each hold a wheel, and the four wheels are connected with each other by horizontally placing four *vajras* around the central circle. The early instruction for *maṇḍala* initiation in the *Collected Dhāraṇī Sūtras* (*T* no. 901, AD 654) specifies that an elaborate structure (I believe a version of the post-Vedic ritual hut or *maṇḍapa*), is to be constructed above the elaborate *maṇḍala* marked on the ground. Five colored banners and flags cover this structure. This conception of the *maṇḍala* appears to lie behind the description of the three-dimensional visualized *maṇḍala* described at this point in the *Manual*.

The deities are invited to the *maṇḍala* and offerings are presented, each step marked by a mantra and a *mudrā*. The *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* describes the culmination of the ritual in two steps:

1. First, the practitioner realizes the Five Wisdoms through recitation of mantras. Four of the mantras are also matched with the Three Bodies of the Buddha: the *bodhicitta* mantra⁶¹ for the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom (*dayuanjing zhi* 大圓鏡智) is matched with the Dharma Body; the Wisdom of Undifferentiated Essence (*pingdengxing zhi* 平等性智)⁶² mantra and the Marvelous Contemplation Wisdom (*miaoguancha zhi* 妙觀察智)⁶³ mantra with the Response Body; the Culmination of the Expedient Means Wisdom (*fangbian jiujiing zhi* 方便究竟智)⁶⁴ mantra with the Transformation Body.⁶⁵ The *mudrās* to accompany these mantras are said to be shaped like the five-pronged *vajra*.
2. Then, as the practitioner forms Vairocana's Dharma Realm *Mudrā* and touches the five points of his body, he attains the Five Part Dharma Body. When he places the *mudrā* at his heart, his body becomes Tathāgata Vairocana's body, wearing the Buddha's Five Wisdom crown, which represents the Five Buddhoṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings and indicates the presence of the Five Wisdoms. Then, the practitioner empowers the five points [of his body] with the heart mantra and *mudrā* of the All Buddhoṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings.⁶⁶

⁶¹ T no. 622.

⁶² Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 319.

⁶³ Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 1809.

⁶⁴ Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 1119?

⁶⁵ No Buddha Body is mentioned for the Realization Wisdom Mantra (Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, no. 810). Mantras no. 122, 622, 319, 1119, and 810 in Hatta, *Shingon Jiten*, are known as the Five Aspects of Attaining Buddhahood Contemplation of the Vajraśekhara teaching.

⁶⁶ The discussion in which the Five Wisdoms represented by the Crown of

In this manual both the central deity of the *maṇḍala* and the deity with whom the practitioner becomes identified are Vairocana. The Five Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings are identified with the Five Wisdoms and the Buddha's Five Wisdom crown. In the painting of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya image described later in the manual, it is made clear that the deities that sit in the eight smaller circles surrounding Vairocana are the Eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings. The list of five Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings has been expanded into a list of eight.

Here we note that the visualization of the *maṇḍala* to which Vairocana and the Eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings are invited and the visualization and identification with Vairocana wearing the crown of the Five Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings are closely integrated with each other. Visualizing his body as that of Vairocana, the practitioner is in fact visualizing the *maṇḍala*.

In presenting the mantras of their respective principal deities the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* and the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya* both refer to what appears to be the same complex ritual of recitation. The two manuals both refer to the mantra syllables flowing and covering the moon disc (or circle) of the practitioner as well as the principal deity.⁶⁷

The Painting of the Image

Except for the identity of certain deities, the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya*

Vairocana and the crowns worn by Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings are matched with a set of mantras and the familiar teaching of the Three Bodies of the Buddha does not appear in the corresponding part of the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya*. Instead, a rite in which the practitioner touches the five points of the principal deity and his own body with the Maitreya bodhisattva's Dharma Realm *mudrā* and attains the realization/identification with Maitreya's true body is described immediately preceding the presentation of Maitreya bodhisattva's mantra, *T* no. 1141, 20: 593b12–c2.

⁶⁷ *T* no. 973, 19: 372a21–25; *T* no. 1141, 20: 549a18–b7. *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* speaks of the *maṇḍala* constructed by the wheel of syllables (*zìlun* 字輪), *T* no. 848, 18: 22b4–24a20. For syllable wheel visualization, *T* no. 921, 19: 19c22–14; *T* no. 1796, 39: 708a9–714a19.

Yoga Practice Manual and the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya* offer essentially identical instructions for painting the image of the deity and, following that, constructing the *maṇḍala*. In both these manuals the instructions for the painting of a physical image and for its visualization are clearly separated and placed in distinct sections.⁶⁸

The instruction for painting an image first specifies the auspicious times for doing so, and the preparatory rituals that the painter should undergo. The kind of cloth used for painting is named; the painting must follow the proper form as illustrated by the inserted diagram.⁶⁹ Following the designation of the particular iconography of the image to be painted (discussed below), a distinct visualization practice is described under the heading ‘cultivation of yoga’: the practitioner is to contemplate his own body as the Dharma Body of Vairocana,

⁶⁸ *T* no. 973, 19: 375c5–376b9, b9–12; *T* no. 1141, 20: 595b26–596a12, a11–c9. Another set of simpler instructions for painting the image and for constructing the *maṇḍala* appears immediately following the instruction on painting the image in the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* (*T* no. 973, 19: 376b13–25; b25–c10). This set of instructions does not mention the distinctive outline of nine circles, and the central deity of the painting is here Śākyamuni. At the center of the *maṇḍala* Buddhoṣṇīṣa is painted in dark blue, wearing the conch-shaped head knot. This passage on simpler instructions, along with the extended passage on thirty-four numbered practices that appears shortly before it in the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* (*T* no. 973, 19: 373b21–375c4), agrees with large sections of *A Separate Teaching for Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī* translated by Ruona (*Foding zunsheng tuoluoni biefa* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼別法, *T* no. 974F: 19.396b11–c10; c12–398b10; see also *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Mantra*, *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni zhenyan* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼真言, *T*. 974E: 19.389c3–22; 393c1–395b22). Nothing similar to these two passages appears in the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya*. These passages may have been incorporated into the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* some time after the broad outline of the manual highlighting the design of one large circle containing nine smaller circles within it had taken shape.

⁶⁹ *T* no. 973, 19: 375c15. No diagram appears at this point in the version of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* reproduced in the *Taiśhō* collection.

which pervades and is identical in substance and manifestation with the *dharmadhātu*; there is no difference between one's own body and this body of Vairocana.⁷⁰

We may recall that in the earlier description of the visualized *maṇḍala* the text explicitly referred to a later section, the *maṇḍala* section. In fact, the description of the visualized *maṇḍala* that I summarized earlier agrees remarkably closely with the account that is now given in the section on the painting of the image. The painting depicts an arrangement of eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities around Vairocana, each sitting in a circle, just like the visualized *maṇḍala* described earlier. At one point in the listing of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities to be painted, the instruction refers to a 'yoga diagram' (*Yuqietu* 瑜伽圖) as its source.⁷¹ The distinction between visualized *maṇḍala* and painting has been elided.

The instruction for painting an image in Śubhākarasiṃha's manual describes the overall design and identifies the deities that sit in each of the nine circles.⁷² The painting is described as a large luminous circle, and within it are nine circles. Jewel jars are placed at each of the eight directions, and flowers are inserted into the mouth of each jar. Three-pronged *vajras* are placed above [each jar]. Around the central circle, on the outside, are placed four jewel wheels, each supported by *vajras*. Strips of ribbons are affixed to the jewel jars and *vajras*. Tathāgata Vairocana is depicted inside the central circle. Images of eight different Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings are drawn inside the remaining eight circles.⁷³ The iconography of each deity is

⁷⁰ T no. 973, 19: 376b9–11.

⁷¹ T no. 973, 19: 376a15.

⁷² T no. 973, 19: 375c16–376a14. Many paintings designated *Sonshōdarani* 尊勝陀羅尼 or *Sobōmandara* 尊勝曼荼羅 survive, including those preserved in Nara National Museum and Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

⁷³ Sitātapatra (Baisangai Foding Lunwang 白傘蓋佛頂輪王) in the circle to the proper left; Vijayoṣṇīṣa (Zuisheng Foding Lunwang 最勝佛頂輪王) to the proper right; Uṣṇīṣavijaya (Zunsheng Foding Lunwang 尊勝佛頂輪王), or Vikīraṇoṣṇīṣa (Chuzhang Foding Lunwang 除障佛頂輪王) at the center in front; Tejorāśyusṇīṣa 光聚佛頂輪王 behind Vairocana (at the center); Jayoṣṇīṣa

described in some detail (Table 2). Below, outside the large circle and to the proper left Trailokyavijaya (Jiangsanshi Zun 降三世尊) is drawn inside the wheel of a half moon. Below and to the proper right a triangle, in red light, contains Acala (Wudong Zun) 無動尊.⁷⁴ Between these two Vidyārājas, the yoga practitioner sits in front of an incense burner. Above is a jewel umbrella, and there are six Śuddhāvāsa gods (Shoutuohui tian 首陀會天), as young boys, riding clouds.

TABLE 2 ‘Yoga diagram’ in Śubhākarasiṃha’s manual.

Above: Jewel umbrella and six Śuddhāvāsa gods

Proper Right	Center	Proper Left
Anantasvaraghoṣa	Tejorāśyuṣṇīṣa	Abhyudgatoṣṇīṣa
Vijayoṣṇīṣa	Tathāgata Vairocana	Sitātapatra
Mahoṣṇīṣa	Uṣṇīṣavijaya	Jayoṣṇīṣa

Below:

Acala	Yoga practitioner*	Trailokyavijaya
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* With incense burner in front.

(Zuisheng Foding 最勝佛頂) to the proper left of Uṣṇīṣavijaya (in front); Mahoṣṇīṣa (Guangsheng Foding Wang 廣生佛頂王) to the proper right of Uṣṇīṣavijaya (in front); Anantasvaraghoṣa (Wubiansheng Foding Wang 無邊聲佛頂王) to the proper right of Tejorāśyuṣṇīṣa (in the back); Abhyudgatoṣṇīṣa (Fasheng Foding Wang 發生佛頂王) to the proper left of Tejorāśyuṣṇīṣa (in the back).

⁷⁴ In the visualization of the Five Wheels in section 2 the five syllables each appear within a distinctive shape. The syllable *raṃ* that plays an important role in purification appears as a triangular-shaped fire. Acala in this painting appears to represent this syllable (*T* no. 973, 19: 368c20; 369a14–18; 376b3). The half moon contains the syllable *haṃ* (*T* no. 973, 19: 369b8; *T* no. 1796, 39: 727c17–

As noted above, in Amoghavajra's manual the practitioner constructs a physical *maṇḍala* in which the principal deity Vairocana is surrounded by the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, and then visualizes a *maṇḍala* in which the principal deity is again Vairocana. This deity plays a central role in visualization, but its relationship to the principal deity of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa vijaya cult remained unexplained in Amoghavajra's text. In Śubhākarasiṃha's manual, the Eight Great Bodhisattvas that surround the principal deity Vairocana in Amoghavajra's *maṇḍala* are replaced by the Eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings. Vairocana remains the principal deity, but the presence of Eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings around Vairocana makes clear Vairocana's central place in the larger Buddhōṣṇīṣa vijaya cult.

We noted above that at the beginning of the ceremony Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings, along with the Buddhas and other deities, are 'awakened' and invited to the *maṇḍala*. In the visualization that follows the 'principal deities' are said to sit in the nine circles on the *maṇḍala*.⁷⁵ The deity in the central circle in this visualization is explicitly identified as Vairocana, wearing the crown of Five Wisdoms. Although not explicitly named in this account of the visualized *maṇḍala* the other eight deities in the surrounding circles must be the eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings, identified later in the description of the painting.

The term Eight Buddhōṣṇīṣas appears in Yixing's *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*.⁷⁶ Describing the arrangement of deities on the *maṇḍala* in detail, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, chapter two, speaks of two groups of Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities, first the group of Five Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities and then, following a short description of Śuddhāvāsa gods (*Jingjuzhong* 淨居衆), another group of Three Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities.⁷⁷ In the commentary, Yixing first discusses these groups separately, but then he speaks of them together as Eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities. In a preceding passage both the *Sūtra* and Yixing's

18). The Vajra Samaya mantra and the Trailokyavijaya mantra are used to mark the boundary in the Five Wheel visualization (*T* no. 973, 19: 369b25–c16).

⁷⁵ *T* no. 973, 19: 370a16.

⁷⁶ *T* no. 1796, 39: 634a20.

⁷⁷ *T* no. 848, 18: 7c10–13, 18–24.

Commentary also speak of the placement of Acala and Trilokyavijaya, the two wrathful deities depicted at the bottom of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* painting.⁷⁸ The instruction on painting the Eight Buddhoṣṇīṣa images in Śubhākarasiṃha's manual appears to have followed the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and Yixing's *Commentary*.⁷⁹

But the relationship between the instruction on painting the Eight Buddhoṣṇīṣa images in Śubhākarasiṃha's manual, on the one hand, and the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and Yixing's *Commentary*, on the other hand, is somewhat complex. Śubhākarasiṃha's *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* carefully notes the distinguishing iconographical features of these deities. By contrast, neither the passage in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, chapter 2, nor Yixing's account of the Eight Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities discussing this scriptural passage mentions these features.⁸⁰ In the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* a list of the distinguishing iconographic features of Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities appears in another passage, discussing the secret *maṇḍala*.⁸¹

In the instruction for image painting the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* describes the iconography of these deities as follows:

⁷⁸ T no. 848, 18: 7b17–26; T no. 1796, 39: 633b3–c1. Tanaka Kimiaki notes that Acala and Trilokyavijaya are the representative *vidyārājas*, Tanaka, *Indo niokeru*, 69.

⁷⁹ The list of the Five Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities differs slightly from that of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, chapter 2, where Abhyudgatoṣṇīṣa from the list of Three Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities takes the place of Vikīraṇoṣṇīṣa in the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual*.

⁸⁰ Yixing describes the Five Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities as having the form of Wheel Kings, or Cakravartins. The flesh at the top of the head rises in the form of a hair knot, with hair growing above it. Otherwise they share the form of bodhisattvas. Their bodies are surrounded by bright haloes, and they wear necklaces. The passage does not mention any iconographic features that distinguish each of the eight deities, except to mention five and three different colors for the Five and Three Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities respectively. No specific color is assigned to each of the eight deities (T no. 1796: 39.634a2–5; 16–20; ref., T no. 848: 18.7c21–22).

⁸¹ I thank Jacob Dalton for calling attention to this passage.

Sitātapatra:⁸²

Five Wisdom Crown; Lotus flower in the left hand on which a white parasol is placed; raised palm of the right hand; sitting in the half lotus position; the aureole around the body and the halo around the head shaped as five colored wheels.

Vijayoṣṇīṣa:⁸³

Five Wisdom Crown; the round halo behind the head and aureole around the body shaped as wheels of many colors; lotus flower in the right hand on which an eight-spoke jewel wheel is placed; surrounded by many colored flames and sitting on a lotus flower.

Uṣṇīṣavijaya (also called Vikiraṇoṣṇīṣa):⁸⁴

Sitting on a lotus flower platform; White flesh (skin color?); both hands placed under the navel, as in meditation; in a palm holding a lotus flower on which is a *vajra* hook; the deity accompanied by many colored lights and wearing the Five Wisdom Crown like other Buddhoṣṇīṣa wheel kings.

Tejorāśyuoṣṇīṣa:⁸⁵

Holding a lotus flower in the left hand; the Buddhoṣṇīṣa *mudrā* above the platform [of this] lotus flower; light is emitted from the uṣṇīṣa of the Buddha (Buddhoṣṇīṣa); Five Wisdom Crown and light as described for other deities.

Jayoṣṇīṣa:⁸⁶

Holding a sword in the left hand; raised palm of the right hand; Five Wisdom Crown variously decorated; the deity illumined by halos.

⁸² T no. 973, 19: 376a4–6.

⁸³ T no. 973, 19: 376a6–10.

⁸⁴ T no. 973, 19: 376a10–14.

⁸⁵ T no. 973, 19: 376a15–18.

⁸⁶ T no. 973, 19: 376a19–20.

Mahoṣṇīṣa:⁸⁷

Holding a *vajra* in the right hand; raised palm of the left hand; Five Wisdom Crown, the circle of light and flame, and necklaces like other deities.

Anantasvaraghoṣa:⁸⁸

Holding a lotus flower in the right hand; above the platform of [this] lotus flower a *śaṅkha* (conch shell); raised palm of the left hand, placed above the breast; the Five Wisdom Crown, the circle of light and other decorations.

Abhyudgatoṣṇīṣa:⁸⁹

Holding an open lotus flower in the left hand; right hand placed above the right knee; sitting in the half lotus position; the circle of light, necklaces like other deities.

The passage on the secret *maṇḍala* in chapter 11 of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* mentions a parasol for Sitātapatra, swords for Jayoṣṇīṣa, a wheel for Vijayoṣṇīṣa, a top knot (marking *uṣṇīṣa*?) for Tejoraśyuoṣṇīṣa, and a hook for Vikīraṇoṣṇīṣa. This passage speaks of five kinds of Buddhoṣṇīṣa and does not use the terminology of Eight Buddhoṣṇīṣas.⁹⁰ Yet, as noted by Giebel,⁹¹ the list continues with the names of three more Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities: Mahodgata (or Mahoṣṇīṣa) with a *vajra*, Abhyudgata with a lotus flower, and Anantasvaraghoṣa with *śaṅkha*.

⁸⁷ T no. 973, 19: 376a20–23.

⁸⁸ T no. 973, 19: 376a24–26.

⁸⁹ T no. 973, 19: 376a27–28.

⁹⁰ T no. 848, 18: 35a4–14; Giebel, *The Vairocanāabisambodhi Sūtra*, 162 (139, PDF); T no. 1796, 39: 743c10–28. The reference to Vikīraṇoṣṇīṣa suggests a close relationship between this passage and the instruction for image painting in the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual*. The passage on Eight Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities in *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, chapter 2 names Abhyudgatoṣṇīṣa in place of Vikīraṇoṣṇīṣa, as noted above.

⁹¹ Giebel, *The Vairocanāabisambodhi Sutra*, 286, note 98 (257, PDF).

The description of these deities in Śubhākarasiṃha's manual carefully notes that each deity wears a crown of Five Wisdoms. The passage in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* secret *maṇḍala* chapter does not mention these crowns.⁹² This motif may have its root in Yixing's *Commentary*, which describes the Five Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities as the *uṣṇīṣa* of Five Wisdoms.⁹³

In the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* the chapter on the secret *maṇḍala* reconstitutes the *maṇḍala* ritual for a higher level of practice.⁹⁴ The *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* based its instruction for Buddhōṣṇīṣa painting in part on the account of Eight Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities in the *maṇḍala* chapter (chapter two) of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. But the compiler of this yoga visualization manual then spelled out the iconography of these deities incorporating the instruction from the secret *maṇḍala* chapter of the *sūtra*.

The iconographical description of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, chapter 11, and the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* appears to have been drawn from an existing iconographical tradition of Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities attested elsewhere. It shares some telling features, for example, with the *Sūtra of the One Syllable Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel King's* instruction for painting the Five Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities that Bodhiruci (572?–727) had translated in 709, some years before Śubhākarasiṃha's arrival in Chang'an in 716 (*Yizi foding lunwang jing* 一字佛頂輪王經).⁹⁵ This *sūtra* lists the Five Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities slightly differently as One Syllable Buddhōṣṇīṣa, Sitātapatra, High Buddhōṣṇīṣa, Tejorāśyusṇīṣa, and Jayoṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings. In this instruction, as in the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual*,

⁹² Nor does the related passage in the *Sūtra of the One Syllable Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel King* discussed below mention Five Wisdom Crowns.

⁹³ *T* no. 1796, 39: 634a3. Yogic visualization plays a prominent role in Yixing's discussion of *maṇḍala* deities, and the deities are to be drawn after visualizing their features (*T* no. 1796: 39.631b24–27). The distinction between the *maṇḍala* as the ritual space, the painted image of the deity, and visualization appears to be blurred here as well.

⁹⁴ Shinohara, *Spells*, 157–165.

⁹⁵ *T* no. 951, 19: 230b7–24.

Sitātapatra Wheel King holds in the left hand a lotus flower on which a white parasol is placed.⁹⁶ One Syllable Buddhōṣṇīṣa, also known as Vijayoṣṇīṣa, holds a lotus flower on which a wheel is placed.⁹⁷ A sword is drawn around Jayoṣṇīṣa.⁹⁸ Some details of these shared features, such as the white parasol and the wheel placed on lotus flowers, are not mentioned in the passage from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, chapter 11.

The Construction of the Maṇḍala

The *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* and the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya* both devote a separate section to describing their central ('great' or 'great *abhiṣeka*') *maṇḍala*.⁹⁹ The two sections describe the same *maṇḍala*, although the sets of deities differ and there are minor differences in detail as well.

These instructions describe *maṇḍalas* described as the ritual space constructed physically on the ground, on which the deities are 'painted.' But the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* notes explicitly that the drawing of the *maṇḍala* immediately follows the Five Wheel visualization described earlier. As noted above, the earlier summary of the basic scenario of the ritual instructs to visualize the *maṇḍala* and carefully describes its outline at this point. The status of *maṇḍala*, either as a physical construction or visualization, appears to have become somewhat ambiguous in this manual.

Maṇḍalas may be of different sizes, but are proportionally consis-

⁹⁶ T no. 951, 19: 230b11–12.

⁹⁷ T no. 951, 19: 230b9–10.

⁹⁸ T no. 951, 19: 230b20–21. Tejorāśyūṣṇīṣa holds an open lotus flower above which is Buddha's heart *mudrā*, not the Buddhōṣṇīṣa *mudrā* as in the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* (T no. 951, 19: 230b16–17). In appearance these five Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities are said to be just like bodhisattvas, wearing a crown, a necklace, bracelets and [worldly?] clothing, sitting in the half lotus position on a white lotus (T no. 951, 19: 230b22–24). Yixing's description of the bodhisattva-like appearance of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa deities, noted above, may derive from this passage.

⁹⁹ T no. 973, 19: 377c11; T no. 1141, 20: 596c10.

tent. For example, in an eight *basta maṇḍala* the central circle is four *basta* in diameter, which is further divided into five full circles (one at the center and in each direction) and four ‘half-moon’ circles in the four corners,¹⁰⁰ or nine full circles.¹⁰¹ Each full circle contains a secondary set of nine circles with different groups of deities painted in each. Around the great circle are painted eight water pots and sixteen *vajras*, serving as pillars, with colorful pieces of silk attached to them as ribbons.¹⁰²

The square space outside the great circle, two *basta* wide on all four sides, is divided into two courtyards (*yuan* 院). The second courtyard (the set of circles at the center is considered the first) is one *basta* wide on all four sides, and the third courtyard that surrounds the second courtyard on all four sides is again one *basta* wide.¹⁰³

The second and third courtyards are each further subdivided into three nested areas (*dao* 道, passages or courses). Each area surrounds the central circle. Counting from the outside, in the first area are placed the seats of holy beings (or deities) and in the second area food, drink and other offerings. Assistants use the third area as the pathway for bringing food.¹⁰⁴ At the outer edges of the second courtyard are three courses (*dao*) painted in white, yellow, and red; at the outer edges of the third courtyard are five painted in white, yellow, red, blue green and black (Figure 2).¹⁰⁵

The two manuals carefully list the large number of deities depicted in the central circles and in the second and third courtyards.¹⁰⁶ The

¹⁰⁰ *T* no. 973, 19: 378b18–20.

¹⁰¹ *T* no. 1141, 20: 596c22. This design also appears in the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya's* instruction for painting (*T* no. 1141, 20: 595c6–7). In the tradition represented in *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* and the *Yoga Practice Recitation Manual for Bodhisattva Maitreya* this combination of full and half circles might have circulated as an alternative to the design of nine circles.

¹⁰² *T* no. 973, 19: 378b19–21; *T* no. 1141, 20: 596c29–597a2.

¹⁰³ *T* no. 973, 19: 378b21–22; *T* no. 1141, 20: 596c20–21.

¹⁰⁴ *T* no. 973, 19: 378b25–29; *T* no. 1141, 20: 597a2–5.

¹⁰⁵ *T* no. 973, 19: 378b22–25; *T* no. 1141, 20: 597a5–8.

¹⁰⁶ The diagram is found in *T* no. 973, 19: 378a.

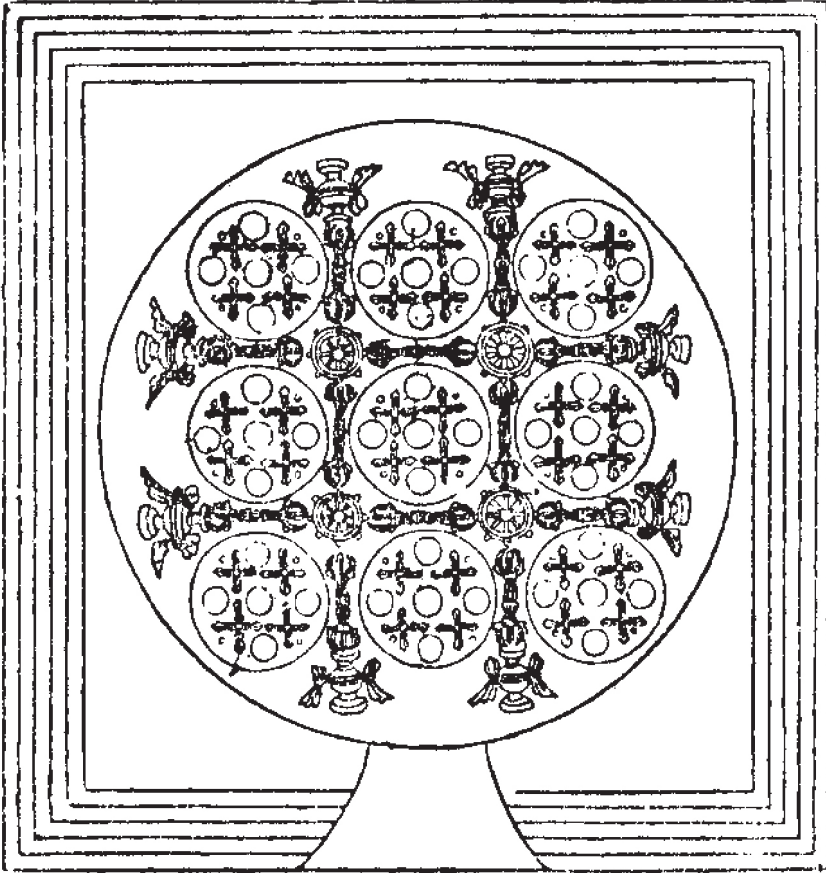


FIG. 2 Visualized *maṇḍala* described in the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual*.

deities in the second and third courtyards are listed according to the four directions.

The *maṇḍala* in this section of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* lists a larger number of deities over a larger platform than the Buddhoṣṇīṣa vijaya painting summarized above. Nevertheless, the design of the latter loosely matches the description of the central core of this *maṇḍala*. Inside the large circle in the painting, which is subdivided into nine circles, is placed in each of the eight directions a jewel water pot, with flowers inserted in its mouth and

three pronged-*vajras* standing above. Around the central circle are four jewel wheels, which are each supported by *vajras* (serving as pillars). The middle sections of the *vajras* and water pots are adorned with colorful strips of silk.¹⁰⁷ A similar comment appears in the *maṇḍala* instruction.¹⁰⁸

Listing the nine deities to be painted, the instruction first names Vairocana at the center and then four Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings. This again loosely matches the iconography of the painting presented earlier in the manual, although this account places Four Pāramitā Bodhisattvas (Si Boluomi Pusa 四波羅蜜菩薩) instead of four other Buddhōṣṇīṣa Wheel Kings in the four corners.¹⁰⁹

In Amoghavajra's manual an image of the principal deity is painted and placed on the wall at the outset of the ceremony. A *maṇḍala* is then constructed in front of it. The instruction for constructing the *maṇḍala* in the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* does not speak of placing an image outside of the *maṇḍala*. Here the image and the *maṇḍala* appear to have been fully integrated. The core of the *maṇḍala* is itself the image. The two are inseparable from each other.

The instruction for diagramming the *maṇḍala* in the *maṇḍala* section in the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* first introduces the Five Wheel visualization discussed earlier. After carrying out this visualization, the construction of the *maṇḍala* begins. In the earlier presentation of the basic scenario of the entire ceremony, this visualization is followed by the visualization of the *maṇḍala*, which sketches the basic design of eight circles inside one large circle. As noted above, this basic design is followed in the description of the painting of the deity. The content of this *maṇḍala* visualization that was elaborated further in the account of painting is now still more greatly elaborated in the section on the *maṇḍala*.

In the *maṇḍala* section the practitioner is instructed to 'paint' or 'draw' (*bua* 畫) the outlines and deities of the *maṇḍala*. We noted earlier that the instruction for painting the image named a 'yoga

¹⁰⁷ T no. 973, 19: 375c17–376a1.

¹⁰⁸ T no. 973, 19: 378b20–21; T no. 1141, 20: 596c29–597a2.

¹⁰⁹ T no. 973, 19: 378c2–3.

diagram' as its source. There the image painting is based on yogic visualization. The instruction for painting the *maṇḍala* here in the *maṇḍala* section also refers to the rules of yoga.¹¹⁰ Boundaries between yogic visualization, painting, and *maṇḍala* construction have become blurred. The initial visualization of the *maṇḍala* that opens the text refers to the painting section; the painting section refers to the yogic visualization, and in appearance what is visualized and what is to be painted are nearly identical.

After the *maṇḍala* section the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* spells out the different forms that the success of the yoga takes in an elaborate scheme of *siddhis*.¹¹¹ *Siddhis* of Form and *siddhis* of No Form are each classified into three levels—lower, middle and higher—and the higher level of the *siddhis* of No Form is described as identifying with the body of the principal deity¹¹² or attaining the body of Vairocana.¹¹³ But this body of Vairocana is no longer the ordinary form of the image.

This attainment is described further in formulaic doctrinal terms. It involves the realization of the wisdom of Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, identified as the Three Bodies [of the Buddha], which in turn is no other than the Three Mysteries, or the Three Actions (of bodily action, speech, and thought). Embodying the *dharmadhātu*, one appears everywhere in physical body (or the Form Body). There is only one *dharmadhātu*, which is the One Essence, the One Mind, the Formless Empty Space of the Buddhas. The practitioner of this yoga becomes one with this One Essence, and in one instance transcends all attachments and masters innumerable practices. At the moment of the Beginning of the Quest of Enlightenment, the Perfect Enlightenment is realized. Here the visualization and identification with the image, now the *maṇḍala*, has become the visualization and identification with the *dharmadhātu*.

¹¹⁰ T no. 973, 19: 378c5.

¹¹¹ T no. 973, 19: 379c12–380b3.

¹¹² T no. 973, 19: 379c17–18.

¹¹³ T no. 973, 19: 380a26.

Concluding Comments

The *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya* describes the ritual of reciting this *dhāraṇī* in the ritual space of a *maṇḍala* without mentioning either an image or a visualization practice. In the *Recitation Manual for Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī*¹¹⁴ attributed to Amoghavajra the visualization of the *maṇḍala* and the visualization in which the practitioner becomes one with the principal deity are treated separately. The two ritual scenarios of visualizing the *maṇḍala* and becoming one with the main deity are more closely integrated into one in the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual* attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha,¹¹⁵ where the *maṇḍala* and the painting of the central image have become essentially indistinguishable.

As the emphasis in Esoteric Buddhist rituals shifts to visualization, material images become redundant. The focus also shifts from the construction of the physical *maṇḍala* to its visualization. Yet, in the paintings of the Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Maṇḍala the visualized *maṇḍala* also acquires a physical embodiment, which is virtually indistinguishable from the painting of the image of the deity.

Yet, the status of images, in the realm of Form, is ambiguous in the *Buddhōṣṇīṣa Vijaya Yoga Practice Manual*. In the end the principal deity Vairocana is identified with the *dharmadhātu*, which has No Form and transcends the iconography of any specific deity. The visualization of the deity is reduced to the visualization of the *dharmadhātu*.

In Śubhākarasiṃha's manual, the basic ritual scenario of a *maṇḍala* ceremony is carefully recast and integrated into the Five Wheel visualization practice. The practitioner first visualizes and locates the universe, or *dharmadhātu*, within his own body through a complex visualization involving the cosmic Five Wheels. This purification rite is immediately followed by the rite of marking the ground of the *maṇḍala* as the ritual space, which again involves visualization of the Five Wheels. The ritual of inviting deities and making offering

¹¹⁴ T no. 972.

¹¹⁵ T no. 973.

to them is carried out in the ritual space of this *maṇḍala*. At the climax of the ceremony the practitioner's body is identified with that of Vairocana, which is also identified as the *dharmadhātu*. Here the simpler paradigm drawing on image worship and in which the practitioner becomes one with a principal deity depicted in a material image is integrated with the key elements of a *maṇḍala* initiation ceremony known from earlier sources. In this *maṇḍala* initiation ceremony first the *ācārya* and then the candidate for initiation becomes identified with the cosmic Five Wheels.

As the emphasis of rituals shifted to visualization, the efficacious ritual enactment is defined as visualizing the unity of the practitioner and the principal deity, and eventually as the identity of the practitioner's body with the purified *dharmadhātu*, or the cosmic Five Wheels. In visualization practice the *maṇḍala*, the site of the enactment of the ritual and the altar to which the deities are invited, is now identified with the entire *dharmadhātu* of the Five Wheels. The visualization of the principal deity has morphed into *maṇḍala* visualization.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Tachikawa Musashi 立川武蔵 discusses the popularity of the *dharmadhātu maṇḍala*, or, *dharmadhātu vāgīśvara maṇḍala*, in Nepal, listing several examples of three-dimensional *maṇḍalas* from the Kathmandu valley. Tachikawa, *Mandara kansō*, 216–234. Mañjuśrī, the principal deity of this *maṇḍala*, is surrounded by Eight Buddhoṣṇīṣa deities (211–212).