Chapter IV

Evolution of Buddhism

Buddhism is one of the most dynamic religions of the world. Rarely at any stage of its career it became moribund. Its progress was never arrested. So long it was alive in its land of birth it received new ideas and new modes of expression according to its need for existence. In course of its evolutionary process it underwent several stages, the last of which coincides with the spacious age of the Pāla rulers. The experiments through which Buddhism passed during this time brought about many a significant conceptual change, and transformed the once-time simple religion into a full-fledged esoteric cult of a complex character. Known as Tantric Buddhism, this reoriented system found in Bengal and Bihar a congenial home. Here countless renowned and anonymous Mādhyamikas in their unending efforts not only changed the contour of Buddhism, but also infused new blood in a somewhat inane body of Buddhism. Hence, the Pāla epoch will be always reckoned as a landmark in the career of Indian Buddhism.

In order to appreciate the evolutionary process of Buddhism it is necessary to briefly sketch its history with an accent on significant conceptual and organisational changes. We are told that during the life time of Buddha
himself several inmates of the monasteries openly violated strict discipline enforced by the Master and he was compelled to expel them from the Sangha. The actual revolt against the original disciplinary rules, appeared, however, long after his Mahāprinirvāṇa. The reformists clashed with the orthodox elders (thera) in the second great council held at Vaisālī for settling the controversies about the correct interpretation of the Vinaya rules (i.e., the code of conduct for the monks and nuns). As the old orthodox elders did not compromise with the young radicals on certain points regarding these rules, the latter withdrew from the said council and called a separate great assembly or Mahasangha to devise their own system. This split among the Buddhists was of consequence, eventually leading to the emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Thus the orthodox group who strictly adhered to the canonical texts came to be known as Hīnayāna or the 'Little Vehicle' Buddhists, while the radicals or Mahāsāṅghikas who reoriented the canonical tenets got the name Mahayana or 'great vehicle' for their system. The Hīnayāna form of Buddhism which is supposedly based on the original teachings of the Master speaks about the nirvāṇa or self-emancipation of the

individual self and hence in course of time it came to be looked upon as a system marked by a narrow outlook and selfishness. It therefore gradually lost its hold on the common laity. On the contrary Mahāyāna Buddhism was becoming increasingly popular for its broad and radical outlook and universal compassion (karunā) for the countless suffering beings. The period ranging between the eighth and the twelfth century witnessed the triumphant march of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In contrast with Hinayāna, the aim of Mahāyāna Buddhism is to uplift all suffering beings for their emancipation from the cycle of birth and death. They are not interested in their self-liberation and are willing to postpone the same till the emancipation of all suffering mortals. This altruistic philosophy constitutes the basis of Mahāyāna Buddhism and it is developed by criticizing and refuting ethico-religious Hinayāna tenets aiming at self-liberation. This is the first significant phase of evolution which resulted in the reorientation of Buddhism, as evident from the appearance of its Mahāyāna form. In other words, the departure from the original form of Buddhism

2. For a characteristic account of Hinayāna by Asaṅga, see Mahāyāna-sūtra-lankāra, Ch. I, verse 10.
became evident. The second phase of evolution of Buddhism synchronizes with the appearance of esoterism or Tantrikism in the fold of Buddhism.

In the second stage of evolution the Mahāyāna form was amplified and elaborated. No vehicle (yana), independent of Mahāyana (as Mahāyana was independent of Hinayana), emerged. Vajrayāna or Tantrayāna or Saḥajayāna, whatever may be the name of a system of this period that we know of, is but an elaboration of some ideas underlying Mahāyana. In other words, all these yanas are not only genetically related with Mahāyana, but interestingly and significantly express the ideas and ideals of Mahāyana Buddhism.

The two main schools of philosophy of Mahāyana Buddhism are known as the Mādhyamika and the Yogāchāra. The Mādhyamika philosophy systematized by Māgārjuna, one of the greatest Indian thinkers, centres round prajñā (wisdom or ultimate knowledge) which stems from an understanding of the nature of things in their proper perspective, viz., śūnyatā. Śūnyatā, according to Māgārjuna, signifies that everything has a dependent origination and is hence non-substantial (nīpātavāpa): in other words, everything is devoid of any substantiability and becomes illusory. The realization of this truth leads to the manifestation of dharmadātu or the monistic
cosmic element. The other fundamental principle of Nāgārjuna's philosophy lies in Ajātivāda, the non-origination theory, which means that things are unoriginated and undestroyed; and this theory is thus a logical corollary of his doctrine of relativity (śūnyāta).

The other branch of the Mahāyāna is the Yogāchāra school. It was founded by Maitreya or Maitreyaṇātha (3rd century A.D.). The name owes its origin in the emphasis laid by the adherents of the school on the practice of yoga as the most effective method for the attainment of the highest truth (bodhi). Asaṅga (4th century A.D.), Vasubandhū (4th century A.D.), Dīnāṅga (5th century A.D.), and Santarakṣita (8th century A.D.) were some of the illustrious teachers of this school. In short, the followers of the Yogāchāra were adherents of mentalism. Though the Yogāchāras conceive of the world as unreal, they do not lay undue emphasis on the non-origination theory. Thus both the Mādhyamika and Yogāchāra schools look at the world as nothing but an illusion (Māya).3

3. Saṅkarāchārya, one of the greatest Hindu philosophers, used this cudgel of the illusion theory against his rival realists, the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas. It has been suggested by some that he was most probably inspired by the Mahāyānist philosophers of the Mādhyamika and Yogāchāra schools who immediately preceded him. See, for instance, N. Aliyawamy Seṣṭri's view in 2500 Years of Buddhism, edited by P.V. Bapati (New Delhi, 1956), p. 308.
It is here that major and significant difference between early Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism lies: the Nikayas of early Buddhism make no mention whatsoever of this Maya doctrine.

What goes by the generic name of Tantrayana or Tantrik Buddhism is generally believed to have taken its rise from the Yogachara school\(^4\). The Yogacharas were responsible for introducing several esoteric elements in Buddhism: mantras, dharmas and diagrams in the form of circles (mandalas) and triangles became increasingly important for a yogin. Mantrayana (the Mantra-vehicle) or the system accenting on the Mantras (mystic syllables) is the initial phase of Tantric Buddhism.

Mantras are garlands of certain words arranged in a string, as it were. It has been believed, from a very early time\(^5\), that sounds of these words possess great spiritual powers. Mantras, as well as their counterparts in the parittas in Pali literature, were supposed to protect their reciters against all evil. The dharmas of Mahayana Buddhism are practically the collections of

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4. According to some, Nagarjuna of the Madhyamika school introduced esoterism, the basis of Tantrikism, in Buddhism. See, IEE, p. 35; ORC, p. 17.

5. The hymns of the Vedic literature, invoking different deities for boon and blessings, partake of the character of mantras of later times.
mantras. Dhāraṇī, which literally means 'by which something is kept up' (dhārṣaty ānaya iti), really signifies the inherent power of these mystic words or syllables for the maintenance or keeping up religious endeavours of a person. Initially the purpose of a dhāraṇī was to condense the original teachings of Buddha in this form, so that ordinary followers could memorise the same for recitation. For instance, the Mahāyāna canonical text Ashtasahasrika-prajñāpāramitā became too voluminous to be managed by any ordinary layman. And as a result, this great text underwent the process of abridgement of its basic tenets for several times with changed names to suit the need of ordinary Buddhists. These mantras or dhāraṇīs were further shortened by the Tantrika Buddhists into what they called as bija-mantras (seed-syllables). As for example, bija-mantra Pāram is nothing but the condensed form Prajñāpāramitā of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This bija-mantra symbolises the transformation of sunya in the form of the deity of Prajñāpāramitā who has been depicted in different forms in the Prajñāpāramitā literature.

The mantric element in Mahāyāna Buddhism as explained by Vasubandhu in Bodhisattva-bhūmi shows that it consists of four parts: dharma-dhāraṇī, i.e., mantras formulated for attainment of smṛiti, brajñā and bala (memory, perfect knowledge and spiritual strength) by hearing them, without the help of sāstras or by a preceptor; artha-dhāraṇī, i.e., mantras imparting the actual meaning or nature of Dharma spontaneously without the help of sāstras or of a preceptor; mantra-dhāraṇī, i.e., mantras enabling a person to attain perfection; and, kshānti-dhāraṇī or the mantras meant for realising the ultimate immutable nature of Dharma which give the performer the generosity of heart and in turn confer the merit of forebearance (kshānti). The philosophical concept underlying the mantra, explained by Vasubandhu as the means of realising the ultimate immutable nature of Dharma by concentrating on the meaningless syllables like 'iti miti kiti', etc. deserves attention. This negation of all meanings to the mantras gives the realisation in the heart of the sadhaka an immutable and transcendental meaning that this immutable nature is the real nature of all things. The bija-mantras or mystic germ-syllables consist of meaningless words and they are

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8. Ibid., p.273.
one of the basic constituents of Tantrayāna ritual and worship. An unlimited varieties of mantras are found in Tantric texts. The Tantrik Buddhists believed in the efficacy of mantras much more than their predecessors. According to them, a mantra if rightly uttered, can even confer Buddhahood or omniscience on the reciter.

The other two Tantrik elements closely associated with Tantrayāna Buddhism, which evolved in our period are mudrā and mandala. Mudrā in Buddhism generally signifies the postures of hands and figures of Buddha and Buddhist divinities. In some Tantra and the Yoga texts mudra or mahamudrā is termed Prajñā or great woman and has been deemed necessary in the yogic or sexo-yogic practice within the fold of Tantric Buddhism. The other element is mandala, i.e., mystic circle, the genesis of which may be traced back to the Bodhi-mandala or the circle around the famous tree under which Buddha attained the perfect knowledge. It was this mystic Bodhimandala of early Buddhism which got transformed into mystic circle in Tantrik Buddhism.

Once the esoteric element in the shape of mantra, mudrā, mandala etc. entered Buddhism, it was found necessary to restrict that element to an inner circle of

9. "The word mudrā has various meanings. It may mean a coin, a token, a stamp, an appetiser (for more drink) or a woman (as in mahāmudrā)."
'initiates'. The relevant adherents also felt the necessity of introducing the institution of Master and Pupil for the purpose of perpetrating the underlying esoterism of their system. Gradually a language of symbolism, intelligible only to the 'initiates', developed. To the common man the words used by them carried an altogether different meaning. In view of the double meaning of its words, this recondite language has aptly been termed Sandhyabhāṣā (literally 'twilight language') in Sanskrit. It is to be noted here that this symbolic language was used not only for protecting the purity of yogic practices from the hands of the ignorant or the uninitiated, but also for expressing the highest experience of the mind and body of the sādhaka concerned.

Belief in a large number of gods and goddesses constitutes another significant feature of Tantrik Buddhism. The favour of these deities was fervently prayed for by the sādhaka for his siddhi and by the common man for his material prosperity by the utterance of various sādhanas devoted to them. A regular hierarchy of...

10. Sādhanamālā (in two volumes) edited by B. Bhattacharyya in the Gaekwad Oriental Series.
Buddhist divinities with Adi Buddha at the apex is, indeed, a notable feature of Tantrayana Buddhism. And this becomes all the more interesting when the said hierarchy is found reinforced by several Hindu deities as attested by a text entitled Nishpajotfeyogavali.

With the increasing pre-eminence of esoterism various cults and superstitions, beliefs and practices prevailing among the plebeian masses were absorbed by Tantrayana Buddhism. Consequently, the original principles forming the brighter aspect of this form of Buddhism was over-shadowed by many crude and corrupt practices. The use of five ma-karas (i.e., the words beginning with the letter ma), such as madya (wine)

11. Adi Buddha and Adi Prajañā (sometimes called Prajnaparamita) are the Universal Father and the Universal Mother. From this pair emanated Five Dhyāni Buddhas (i.e., Buddhas deep in eternal meditation) who take no part in the affairs of the world. From these Dhyāni Buddhas emanate a number of male and female divinities and the respective Dhyāni Buddha usually appears on the tiara of his emanation. Each of these parental Dhyāni Buddhas has precise attitudes and distinctive marks, a knowledge of which enables one to identify the emanating deity. Like Adi Buddha each of the Dhyāni Buddhas has his dakti or spouse. Being passive the Dhyāni Buddhas have each an active counterpart called Bodhisattva who is entrusted with the task of creation. The Bodhisattvas exert their influence over the universe in successive ages through the greatest human beings called Mānushi Buddhas (Buddhas incarnate), who are a sort of human agent to the Bodhisattvas. The present kalpa (age) is presided over by Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and Mānushi Buddha Gautama Buddha. The next Bodhisattva and Mānushi Buddha are Viśvapāṇī and Maitreya respectively.

12. Edited by B. Bhattacharyya in the Gaekwad Oriental Series.
Mamsa (meat), matsya (fish), mudrā (woman) and maitūna (sexual intercourse) came to be regarded as an effective means of final perfection. We are told, perhaps in the defence, by the advocates of such things that the enjoyment of these five ma-elements is not actuated by the worldly desire, but it aims at the attainment of Bodhicitta. However, different schools which developed in the course of time broadly on the lines of above-mentioned Tantric metaphysical speculations and practical Yoga practices, came to be commonly known as Vajrayāna, which is not unoften taken synonymous with Tantrayana. Vajrayāna had again proliferations like Kālschakra-yāna and Sahaja-yāna. All these schools of Tantrik Buddhism flourished in Bengal and Bihar (i.e., Magadha) during the reign-period of the Pāla dynasty.

Vajrayāna: Vajrayana centres round the concept of nature of voidness (vajra, same as sūnyatā) and as such it is called 'adamantine path' or Vajrayāna. It is unchangeable adamantine void nature of self and dharma. Thus the name of sūnyatā is replaced by the name vajra to convey the meaning of void nature. Vajrayāna

is by far the largest major school of Tantrik Buddhism. Of the available Vajrayana texts Šrī-Samāja is the earliest and the one of the most authoritative. It devises five Kulas or families of the Bodhisattvas; each of them is presided over by a distinctive Dhyāni Buddha who takes his Sakti or consort along with him. All these Kulas are contemplated on the basis of the idea of Vajra or Śūnyatā. It is prescribed that Śādhakas must renounce all of their sinful acts (pāpas) and should attain all the merits of Buddha. The path of Vajrayāna is explained as the śādhanā or religious endeavour which is undertaken under the refuge of Buddha and Dharma, including the whole of Mahāyāna and groups of Bodhisattvas for the benefit and well-being of all sentient beings.

In spite of the emphasis on changeless and impenetrable vajra nature of the self and all creatures and on esoteric Yogic practices, various heterogenous elements got mixed up with it. These heterogenous elements included, inter alia, baneful practice, known as abhichāra, meant for causing harms to others (viz.,

killing, enchanting etc.,) prevails side by side with the elaborate system of worshipping, of countless gods and goddesses of extensive pantheon, Mantras, Gāthās or verses, Mandalas or mystic circles, Mādrās, Pāramitās, Śaṭha-yogas, contemplative Yoga systems and lastly sexoyogic practices. While these elements are not helpful in determining the real nature of Vajrayāna system, they are imbued with a Buddhist colour. This is due to the importation of different metaphysical contemplations of Buddhist teachers and philosophers suitable to Vajrayāna ideals.

The most interesting feature of Vajrayāna is that its adherents apply the term 'Vajra' to every thing: gods and goddesses to be worshipped, accessories of worshipping like mandalas, mantras etc., as well as the worshippers. For instance, some of the gods and goddesses of the Vajrayāna pantheon have names like Vajrārūpīṇī, Vajravilāsinī, Vajravarāhī and Vajrācārayī. Even the girl treated as mūdra for esoteric practices is called Vajra-Vanyā. Similarly, every item connected with Vajrayānic rituals and practices is preceded with 'Vajra' in order to convey the meaning of the void nature of the self and dharmas. In view of the inherent idea of voidness in all its acts and practices in this yāna,
such nomenclatures seem to be justified\textsuperscript{16}.

In spite of the predominance of ritualism and esoteric practices, even beliefs in ghost and spirit, the basic tenets of Mahāyāna Buddhism in different Vajrayāna sādhanaś may not be missed altogether. The rules for selection of land for monastery, mode of meditations for worshipping deities and placing them in four corners in a group of ten, the different attributes of deities other than vajra and such other principles and characteristics demonstrate the strain of Mahāyāna contemplations\textsuperscript{17}.

The ideal of Vajrayana has been summed up as follows: 'I am of the adamantine nature, which is Sunyata' and 'all the dharmaś are of the adamantine nature, I am also of the adamantine nature'\textsuperscript{18}. The fundamental principle of Vajrayāna is thus based on the void nature in the name of Vajra which is synonymous with the Sunyata principle.

The conception of Supreme Lord or Bhagavān, who is called Vajrasattva and also sometimes as Vajradhara,

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp. 18, 19, 321, 322.
\textsuperscript{17} Specified in \textit{Kriya-Samgraha-Nāma-Pañjikā} (ms), pp. 6, 7, 21; quoted in \textit{ADV}, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{ADV}, p. 24.
articulates the basic monotheistic strain of the system. The conception of the Supreme Lord is not only a distinctive feature of Vajrayāna, it also seems to mark a notable departure from earlier Buddhism. Vajrasattva represents Ultimate Reality, symbolizing the non-dual state of Śūnyatā and Karuṇā (compassion). Icono-plastically, Vajrasattva is conceived as Ādi-Buddha mentioned above who possesses five attributes or five kinds of knowledge and from the five attributes emerge five types of dhyānas or meditations which are symbolized by five Dhyāni Buddhas, viz., Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghsiddhi, and Akshobhya. These five Dhyāni Buddhas are the deities presiding over five Skandhas or five elements: Rupa (material element), Vedanā (feelings), Saṃjñā (conceptual knowledge), Samskāra (synthetic compound of mental state), and Viṣṇā (consciousness). Each of the Dhyāni Buddhas has his distinctive iconographic characteristics and consort as well as a corresponding Bodhisattva and a Mānushī Buddha; and from each of them emanate a number of male and female deities. In keeping with the spirit of Tantrikism, many a Vajrayāna sadhāna enjoins the sadhaka to meditate on Vajrasattva in that union with his Sakti or Prajñā is closest embrace enjoying the great bliss or mahāsukha. The mode of worship for different deities is more or less the same which follows an elaborate paraphernalia: first to meditate the
Lord Supreme in accompaniment with five Dhyānī Buddhas, then to offer flowers, incense, lamp etc., first to Lord and thereafter to five Dhyānī Buddhas and their Mahtis. This is followed by other rituals, such as making confession of one's sins before the Lord and to take refuge in the Buddhist trinity, i.e., Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha and also taking vow for the production of Bodhicitta for the well-being and salvation of all beings and to take the path followed by the Sugatas and their followers; then the śādaka is to meditate about the world as static and dynamic as all void and to place himself in the void with the Mantra 'Om, I am of the nature of the immutable knowledge of the void'. The next part is the realisation of the pure nature of all the dharmas and the self and to take resolution 'naturally pure are all the dharmas, pure am I by nature - amon'. The last stage of the worship involves the meditation of the self as the Lord himself with his accessory deities with mantras 19.

Kālacakrāyāna: Another school of Tantrik Buddhism came into prominence in or about 10th century within the fold of Vajrayāna. However, the salient feature of this system of Tantricism shows the clear difference with Vajrayāna

in respect of the basic approach of esoteric sadhana and hence, Kalachakra-yāna is recognised as a separate school of Tantrik Buddhism. Waddelj thinks that this system of Tantricism which developed in the 10th century was based on monstrous and poly-demonist doctrine in Northern India, Kashmir and Nepal. The literal meaning of this yana, however, does not indicate any such fearful aspect of this system; it means 'wheel of time' and its Tibetan counterpart is Dus-Kyi-K’or-lo signifies a similar meaning ('circle of time')21. Different interpretations of the meaning of Kalachakra-yāna is met with in Tantric Texts and also in the works of modern scholars22.

The term 'Kālacakra' actually implies the underlying theory of union of Prajñā and Upāya, i.e., Bodhi-chitta. The Primordial Lord of Kālacakra-yāna is

20. Waddelj, Lemaism, pp. 15, 131.
22. 'SrT-Kālacakra-Tantra' (Cambridge, ms., p.1 folio B), reveals that the purpose of the Kālacakra lies in the salvation of all beings. It thus implies Karuna or Universal compassion which is a basic tenet of Tantrik Buddhism in general. MM. H.P. Sastri in his Introduction to 'Modern Buddhism' (p.8) states that 'Kāla' means time, death and destruction'. Kālacakra is the 'wheel of destruction', Yāna is devised for protection against it.
called 'Sri-Kālachakra'; while Kāla represents the ultimate perfect wisdom or Prajñā which also means a state of Śūnyāta or void nature. Chakra signifies the cycle of world-process in the form of the body of the Lord Supreme, where remains the seed of world existence, and as such is identical with the principle of Upāya. The concept of Lord Supreme 'Śrī-Kālachakra' closely resembles with that of Lord Vajrasattva of Vajrayāna. There are little differences between Vajrayāna and Kālachakrāyana in respect of the method of worship, mantras and rites and rituals. Its fundamental difference with Vajrayāna lies in the introduction of some fearful and demonical gods with their saktis (i.e., Female Energies) in the form of fiends (Dakinīs). These dreadful deities are as powerful as celestial Buddhas and hold pre-eminent position in this system of Tantricism. For appeasing them different mantra-charms, magic circles, offerings and sacrifices have found place in the system. Another innovation of this school lies in the speculation that within human body, the veritable epitome of the universe consisting of animate beings and inanimate objects, are posited all the divisions of time (Kāla being Time signifies moment, hour, day, night, week, fortnight, month, year etc.). It is said that the whirl of Time is the root.

behind all worldly miseries, decay and destruction and for the salvation, an elaborate system of Yogic practices is devised. It is conceived that the vital wind which remains diffused all over the nervous system of human body causes or produces Time with all its divisions and by controlling vital winds by Yogic practices one can get out of the reach of whirl of Time.

Sahaja-yāna: This branch (not a school in the strictest sense) of Tantric Buddhism came into existence as a sort of protest by a section of Tantrik Buddhists against ritualism, mantra-charms etc. of Vajrayāna. The system these radicals evolved came to be known as Sahaja-yāna. 'Sahaja' which literally means 'to be born together', signifies that Reality and Appearance are not separated from each other by any gulf, but are identical. To put it otherwise, Reality is one and indivisible and it is split up arbitrarily into several opposites only by the analytical methods and techniques of the intellect. Hence the realisation and comprehension of the identity of Reality and Appearance can be effected by intuitive processes. And from this it follows that Sahaja-yāna's approach to Reality is intuitive, and not intellectual. The distinctive principle of Sahaja-yāna is therefore the substitution of intellect by intuition. In other words, the adherents of Sahaja-yāna look upon Man not
only as an intellectual being, but also as an emotional one and tend to emphasize that the emotive meaning of anything whatsoever is of greater importance for moulding the life of an individual than its mere intellectual connotation. They are not inclined therefore to destroy the sex passions or subdue any human instincts, but they try to sublimate them. To them any sort of suppression of natural propensities in human beings is harmful and hinders the realization of the Truth or the identity of Reality and Appearance. Sahajiyās, therefore, try to realize the secret truth (tattva) by transforming and sublimating the inborn propensities of human character, including the sex-impulses.

The fundamental tenets of Sahajā-yāna are found in the devotional songs and dohas known as 'charyā-nadas'. These literary pieces give a distinct vent to the protest against ritualism and conventionalism in the religious life of Tantrik Buddhists in general. However, while the yoga practices of the Sahajiyās have in general stemmed from the Tantric Buddhist texts, they also innovated some new terminology to suit their particular attitude about their esoteric advice. For instance, they express their idea about Mahāsukha or supreme bliss, the fundamental aim of all schools of Tantrik Buddhism, quintessence of all the dharanas in a slightly different manner. In their words, mahāsukha is that 'the whole
world is of the nature of Sahaja - for Sahaja is the quintessence (svarupa) of all; this quintessence is Nirvana to those who possess the perfectly pure Chitta. The Sahajiyās lay more emphasis on Guruvāda or cult of preceptor than many others for their esoteric practices; the selection of a proper Guru or preceptor for guiding the initiate to the path of sadhana is an imperative in the Sahajiyā school. Then unlike Vajrayānists, the Sahajiyās stress more on human body which they take as the epitome of Universe; the body building is the prime necessity in Sahajiyā Yogic practices, since without the body there was no possibility of the realisation of the great bliss. This innovation clearly shows the importance of perfect physical body in Sahajiyā sadhana. Another innovation of Sahajiyā school lies in the conception about the production of Bodhi-chitta in the Māra-chakra or Manipura-chakra in the naval region by taking Hathayogic practices and to uplift the same by passing through the Dharma-chakra and Sambhoga-chakra to reach cerebra in the region of the human body in order to make it motionless in the Usīnā-kamala. This meeting of Bodhi-chitta with Usīnā-kamala produces:

24. Bevajra-tantra, ASE, ma. No.11317, folio 36 B.
25. Ibid., p. 36A.
26. Ibid.
Sabaja in the nature of mahāsukha or infinite bliss. This theory of upward elevation of Boddhi-chitta bears close resemblance to the concept of Kula-Kundalini Sakti in Hindu Tantras.

The influence of Sabajiya Buddhism was mainly radiated in Bengal and to some extent in western and South-western regions. The exact time of emergence of this branch of Tantric Buddhism is not known, but it may be surmised from the Buddhist songs and dohas, i.e., Charyapadas, that it flourished in the 11th and 12th centuries during the close of the reigns of the Pala kings of Bengal and Bihar. The sexual overtone in Sabajiya practices may convey an impression of gratuitous eroticism among us, but the underlying philosophy of the Charyapadas reveal that Sabajiyaś prided the morality no less than the members of other religious systems.

There is a feeling in certain quarters that Tantrik Buddhism emanated from Hinduism. Some have specifically dubbed it an offshoot of Saivism. Waddell, for instance, describes Buddhist Tantrism as 'nothing but Saivite idolatry, Sakti worship and demonology; according to him, its 'mantras and dhāraṇīs' are 'meaningless gibberish' and 'its mysticism a silly mummer of unmeaning jargon and magic circles'. In his words, 'the Madhyamika

27. Buddhism of Tibet or Lamism, p. 14.
doctrine was essentially a sophistic nihilism* and
'the Kālacakra unworthy of being considered a philoso-
phy". Subsequent discoveries and researches have proved
the view of Waddell and his followers untenable. A com-
parative study of the Buddhist and Hindu Tantras has
revealed notable differences between them in respect of
aims and methods and has consequently shown that the
approach to Buddhist Tantrik literature from the stand-
point of Hindu Tantras (especially from the Saktā view-
point) will be misleading. It deserves to be noted that
the concept of Śakti or the creative female aspect of
the highest god (Śiva) or his emanations which plays
the pivotal role in Hindu Tantrism is absent in Tantra-
yāna Buddhism; in the latter it is Prajñā or wisdom that
is of highest importance. Interestingly enough, it is
Prajñā which can liberate human beings from mâyā or
illusion created by Śakti, conceived as Primordial Female
Energy by the Saktas and Hindu Tantrik philosophers. A
true Buddhist does not aim at joining himself with the
powers of the universe, either to becoming their instru-
ment or becoming their master. On the contrary, he tries
to free himself from those powers so that he can transcend
the limits of cycles of birth and death; in other words,

28. Ibid., p. 11.
29. Ibid., p. 131.
be endeavors to stage a come-back to the 'uncreated, unformed' state of sunyata, from which all creation proceeds, or which is prior to and beyond all creation. It is in view of this basic difference perhaps that an eminent scholar\(^{30}\) has remarked 'that there is very little similarity between them, (i.e., between Buddhist and Hindu Tantras, either in subject-matter or in philosophical doctrines'. He has even gone to the extent of suggesting that 'the Buddhists were the first to introduce the Tantras into their religion, and that the Hindus borrowed them from the Buddhists in later times'.\(^{31}\) While we agree with his view regarding the differences between Buddhist and Hindu Tantras in respect of attitudes and approaches, we find it difficult to accept his remark relating to the borrowing of the Tantras by the Hindus from their Buddhist brethren. Quintessentially, Tantra\(^{32}\) is a system of sādhanā, involving religious and psychophysiological exercises, for the realisation of Ultimate Truth, regardless of Hinduism and Buddhism. Tantra was never a monopoly of either the Hindus or the Buddhists and both these religious sects developed Tantricism in

\(^{30}\) Bhattacharya, IIB, p. 47.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 147.

\(^{32}\) Tantra seems to have a hoary past. In Brahmanical texts 'Tantra' has been defined thus: 'Tanvate vistāryate jñānam anena iti tantra', 'the spread of knowledge is tantra'. In common parlance it means a mode of teaching magical and mystic formularies (Monier-Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary, p. 436).
their own ways and as these developments went side by side appearance of common elements in both the Tantra-oriented system is but a natural phenomenon. Similarly, the view seeking priority of Buddhist Tantras to the Hindu ones is not based on any evidence and is hence untenable. In short, Tantrism as a cult has an independent history regardless of any systematized religious order.

An account of the later modifications of Buddhism, as outlined above, will remain incomplete without a reference to the forms of Buddhism outside India. Thus the Chinese Ch'an and the Japanese Zen Buddhism have much in common with the teachings of the medieval Buddhist saints and mystics (generally called as Siddhas) who flourished between the seventh and the eleventh centuries A.D. For instance, Zen Buddhists like the Sahajiyats aver that Man is not only an intellectual being, but also an emotional one and his life needs moulding primarily in accordance with the emotive meaning of anything whatsoever. Tibetan Buddhism was also profoundly influenced by the branches of Indian Tantrik Buddhism like Mantrayana and Sahajayana. It may be mentioned in this connection

33. Cf. the opinion of Anagarika Govinda in 2500 Years of Buddhism, pp. 316, 327 fn.
34. These later modifications of Buddhism appear to have gone to foreign countries, particularly Tibet, from Eastern India, since we know that they gained very wide currency in this part of our country. For instance, Vikramasila was a centre of Tantrayana-Vajrayana Buddhism from where it gradually spread to Bengal, Assam, and Orissa. Bhattacharya, Sahanamala, Vol. II, pp. xxxvi-xxxix, lv.
that numerous mystic and poetical works of Indian Tantrik Buddhist authors were destroyed by the Muslim vandals in the 12th-13th century, but fortunately a considerable chunk of Tantric literature has survived in faithful Tibetan translations. While Buddhism has a modest existence in the land of its birth, it is a living faith in Tibet, the Himalayan regions, China and Japan. And the living Buddhism in these countries bears the mark of an abiding influence of Mantrayāna, Kālachakrāyāna and Sahaja-yāna, through their tenets and practices.