

9. The place and function of the mundane clan (*laukikakula*) in Kriyātantra

What has been said in the last two sections relates particularly to Yogatantras and Yogānuttara/Yoganiruttara-tantras (Tib. [*rnal 'byor*] *bla med kyi rgyud*) – themselves subdivided into Father Tantras (*pha rgyud*, also known as *rnal 'byor bla ma* i.e. Yogottara-tantras) and Mother Tantras (*ma rgyud*, or Yoginī-tantras, also known as Yogānuttara/Yoganiruttara-tantras in the narrower sense of this term) –, that is, to the two highest divisions in a classical Tibetan fourfold classification of Vajrayāna literature.

In the Kriyātantra section of Vajrayāna literature – the first and lowest in this fourfold classification of Tantras which is concerned with ritual actions – the *laukika* category of divinities constitutes a designated subdivision, the *Laukikakula* (*'jig rten pa'i rigs*). Following a number of authorities, this subdivision is comprised of *devas*, *asuras*, the *yakṣas* Pūrṇabhadra and Mañibhadra, the four *lokapālas*, and other gods, godlings, and *numina*. To be noted is the fact that to the Padmakula, the second *kula* of Kriyātantra, is assigned the Praise in twenty-one verses of Ārya-Tārā (P, no. 77), where (in verse 6) the *laukikas* Indra, Agni, Brahmā *et al.* are mentioned as being subjugated by her in the peaceful form of her *nirmāṇakāya*.⁹⁵

The Kriyātantras appear to suggest diverse classifications of these gods, divinities and *numina*, which they distribute in ‘clans’ (*kula* = *rigs*) whose number and exact composition vary in the sources. Tibetan commentators have noticed the classificatory and taxonomic problems that may thus arise, and it was this that caused the Tibetan master Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364) to undertake a systematic classification of the Tantras and their *kulas*, this being necessary both for the analysis of

⁹⁵ Elsewhere it is her wrathful form that has this function. Cf. P. Arènes, *La déesse sGrol-ma (Tārā)* (Leuven, 1996), who has also studied the commentaries by dGe 'dun grub pa and Tāranātha. This praise of Tārā when included as Chapter iii of P no. 390 is, however, counted as a *bla med kyi rgyud*; cf. mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzai, *rGyud sde spyi nam* (ed. Lessing and Wayman), p. 126.

the texts constituting the Tantra-corpus (*rgyud 'bum*) and for their ritual employment.⁹⁶

Bu ston's classification of the Kriyātantras – one of the better known – recognizes the existence in them of six *kulas* 'clans', namely those of the Tathāgata (De bžin gšegs pa), Padma, Vajra (rDo rje), Maṇi (Nor can or Nor bu), *Pauṣṭika (? rGyas pa, viz. lNa[s] rtsen [Pañcika/Pāñcika], Glañ po che, Ba lañ), and the Laukika ('jig rten pa).⁹⁷ In his *rGyud 'bum*

⁹⁶ See Bu ston's *rGyud 'bum gyi dkar chag* and his three *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par bžag pa* referred to below. Attention was drawn to this topic by the present writer in 'Sur les rapports entre le bouddhisme et le "substrat religieux" indien et tibétain', *JA* 1964, pp. 79–83, and in *Life of Bu ston Rin po che* (Rome, 1966), pp. 25–27, 36, 118.

For Bu ston's *dKar chag*, see H. Eimer, *Der Tantra-Katalog des Bu ston im Vergleich mit der Abteilung Tantra des tibetischen Kanjur* (Bonn, 1989), pp. 28, 34 (with the further discussion in D. Seyfort Ruegg, 'The Tantric Corpus (*rGyud 'bum*) of the Tibetan bKa' 'gyur according to a recent publication', *Buddhist Studies Review* 11 [1994], pp. 180–1). Bu ston's classification is available also in the short (*bsdus pa*), middling ('*briñ po*) and extended (*rgyas pa*) versions of his *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par bžag pa* (contained in volumes pha and ba of his bKa' 'bum). For an outline of the extended version, subtitled *rGyud sde rin po che'i mdzes rgyan*, of Bu ston's classification of the four classes of Tantra with their respective texts, see G. Tucci, *Tibetan painted scrolls*, pp. 261–3. Cf. A. Macdonald, *Le maṇḍala du Mañjuśrīmūla-kalpa* (Paris, 1962), p. 55 f.

Concerning the terminology used for sacred formulae, among variant explanations cited by him Bu ston has stated that a *gsaṅ śnags* (*mantra*) relates chiefly to *upāya* and a god (*thabs pho*) and a *rig śnags* (*vidyā*) to *prajñā* and a goddess (*šes rab lha mo*), whilst a *gzuñs* (*dhāraṇī*), i.e. a mnemonic making it possible to memorate and retain what has been comprehended through *prajñā*, relates to a *gzuñs śnags* that is linked to both of the preceding. See his *rGyud sde spyi rnam rgyas pa*, f. 260a–b.

Surveys of the Tantras were composed earlier by the Sa skya hierarchs bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and his brother Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216), their *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gžag* treatises being of a somewhat different kind from Bu ston's. For some '*jig rten pa'i rgyud* in Grags pa rgyal mtshan's *Kye'i rdo rje'i rgyud 'bum gyi dkar chag* (contained in the text entitled *He ru ka'i chas drug*) and in 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan's *rGyud sde'i dkar chag*, see H. Eimer, 'A source for the first Narthang Kanjur: Two early Sa skya pa catalogues of the Tantras', in: H. Eimer (ed.), *Transmission of the Tibetan canon* (PIATS 1995, Vienna, 1997), pp. 50–51.

⁹⁷ According to the analysis offered by mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzañ (1385–1438) of the Kriyātantras and Caryātantras, however, the last three *kulas* are all *laukika*; see his *rGyud sde spyi rnam* (ed. Lessing and Wayman), pp. 102, 132. To the '*jig rten pa'i rigs* of the Kriyātantras and Caryātantras the same source accordingly opposes

gyi dkar chag, Bu ston has explained that the Laukika divinities offer up their formulae (*vidyā*) and, being sustained by the force (*adhiṣṭhita*) of the Teacher, they are all then declared to be of the clan relying on the Teacher (i.e. the Tathāgata).⁹⁸

Let us consider more closely the identity and nature of these Laukikas. Bu ston has stated that they are the *devas*, *asuras*, *yakṣas* and the like who do not belong to the first five *kulas* of Kriyātantra. He explains that the Buddha has ‘trained’ (*’dul ba = vi-nī-* ‘subdue/tame/discipline’), and caused to enter into a ‘convention’ (*dam tshig = samaya*), the mundane divinities – Rudra, Brahmā, Sūrya, Garuḍa, etc. – who then offer up to him their *mantras*, and that it is in this manner that these ‘pledgers’ come to be the beneficiaries of *adhiṣṭhāna* and submit themselves to his command (*bka’*). Still, it is also stated by Bu ston that Laukikas may be found even at times when no Buddha appears in the world.⁹⁹ According to Bu ston’s further explanation, since certain *mantras* offered up by the Laukikas are not settled (*gnas pa*) in the four *kulas* (apparently nos. 2–5), they wander (*’khyams pa*) and make up a separate (sixth) Kula. Regarding the question whether they are not included in the first *kula*,

the *’jig rten las ’das pa’i rigs = lokottarakula*, namely the *Kulas* of the Tathāgata, Padma and Vajra; see *op. cit.*, p. 102.

In the *Mahāvīyutpatti* (nos. 3365, 3375, 3377), Iṅa(s) rtsen = Pañcika/Pāñcika is listed as a *yakṣa* together with Vaiśravaṇa/Vaiśramaṇa, Āṭavaka, *et al.*; his consort is Hārītī (’Phrog ma), who is accompanied by her many children, or Mekhalā (’og pag can). He is connected with the border of Kāśmīra in the *Mahāmāyūrī* (ed. Bagchi, line 78; S. Takubo’s ed., p. 22, reads *cīnabhūmi* instead). (In Pāli there are attested the forms Pañcaka/Pañḍaka and Hārītā. These *yakkhas* are both said to have become *śotāpannas* at the time when the missionary Majjhantika Thera preached to the *nāga* Aravāḷa in the Kāśmīra-Gandhāra region; see *Mahāvāṃsa* xxi.21.) As a god of prosperity and wealth, Pañcika corresponds to Vaiśravaṇa/Kubera/Jambhala. – As for the *gandharva* Pañcaśikha (cf. Pañcacīra) in the Maṇḍala of Dharmadhātu-Vāgīśvara, he is yellow (the colour of prosperity) and plays the *vīṇā*. This name is not listed in the *Mahāvīyutpatti*.

⁹⁸ Bu ston, *rGyud ’bum gyi dkar chag*, f. 17 b: *’jig rten pa’i lha la sogs pas rig pa phul žiñ/ ston pas byin gyis brlabs pa rnam thams cad kyañ ston pa la brten pa’i rigs su gsuñs so.*

⁹⁹ See Bu ston’s *rGyud sde spyi rnam rgyas pa*, f. 259a; *bsDus pa*, ff. 59b–60a. – When no Buddha has appeared in the world, the divinities in question would of course have no opportunity of offering up to him their *mantras* and of being adopted into the Kula of the Tathāgata.

that of the Tathāgata, the reply is that one belonging to the Laukikakula proceeds from the Gnosis (*ye šes = jñāna*) of Uṣṇīṣa, etc. And being born from karmic maturation (*rnam par smin pa = vipāka*), they are not members of the Tathāgatakula proper. But since their *mantras* and *vidhis* are offered up with faith (*dad pa = śraddhā*) to the Buddha, they are nonetheless stated to settle (*gnas pa*) in the Tathāgatakula, even though they wander without being really included in this first *kula*. This is, then, the so-called wandering clan (*yoñs su 'khyams pa'i rigs*). This situation is stated by Bu ston to correspond to the doctrine of the *Subāhupariṣcchāntānta* – one of the 'General Tantras' (*spyi'i rgyud*) of the Kriyāntānta class – and to its *Piṇḍārthavṛtti*.¹⁰⁰

To the first *kulas* referred to as the five *āryakulas* (*'phags pa'i rigs lña*),¹⁰¹ then, the *laukikakula* is opposed. The *mantras* of this last *kula* are said to be undetermined (*mtha' gcig tu ma nes pa*) because in it each member pays homage to his respective lord (*bdag po*).¹⁰² In this *kula* the textual matter (*gžun*) is endless (*mtha' yas pa*).¹⁰³

Regarding the fourth and fifth *kulas* of Kriyāntānta – the Nor can gyi rigs and the rGyas pa'i rigs – Bu ston quotes the *Subāhupariṣcchā*, where these two clans (to which is added the sixth or Laukikakula) are included respectively in the Padma-Kula and the Vajra-Kula. Bu ston adds that they both appear intergrated in the Vajra-kula in consideration of their characteristics (*mtshan ñid*) and *mantras*.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Bu ston, *rGyud sde spyi rnam rgyas pa*, f. 259b–260a; *'Briñ po*, f. 105b; *bsDus pa*, f. 60b. Cf. *rGyas pa*, f. 249b: 'jig rten pa'i rigs ni/ sañs rgyas la dad pa'i lha dan lha ma yin la sogs pa rnams kyis rañ rañ so sos bšad ciñ/ ston pas gnañ žiñ rjes su yi rañ bar mdzad do. – In Kriyāntānta, the Uṣṇīṣa-deities belong to the Tathāgatakula.

¹⁰¹ *rGyud sde spyi rnam rgyas pa*, f. 260a1; *bsDus pa*, f. 61a1.

¹⁰² Bu ston, *rGyud sde spyi rnam rgyas pa*, f. 254a4; *'Briñ po*, f. 100a3; *bsDus pa*, f. 59b6.

¹⁰³ Bu ston, *rGyud sde spyi rnam rgyas pa* f. 253b4; *'Briñ po*, ff. 95a–b, 99b3; *bsDus pa*, ff. 55a3, 59a6.

¹⁰⁴ Bu ston, *rGyas pa*, f. 259b; *'Briñ po*, f. 105a–b; *bsDus pa*, f. 60a–b. – The assignment of the Kula headed by Pañcika to the Vajra-, Padma- or Ratna-kula is found in the *Subāhupariṣcchāntānta*; see M. Lalou, 'A la recherche du Vidyādharaṇṇīka: Le cycle du *Subāhupariṣcchā-tānta*', in: *Studies in Indology and Buddhology* (S. Yamaguchi Felicitation Volume, Kyōto, 1955), p. 71.

In short, properly speaking the Laukika divinities do not take birth in the *kula* of the Tathāgata. And their *mantras* ‘wander’ and merely ‘settle’ in his clan. Their link with the Tathāgata, which is therefore contingent, is not due to an inherent connexion with his *kula*, but results from the ‘faith’ they place in him; for it is through this *śraddhā* that they offer up (i.e. surrender) to him their respective formulae (*mantra*) and rites (*vidhi*). In the relevant texts, the Buddha is regularly represented as having converted – or, more precisely, ‘trained’ (*’dul ba*) – these entities and thus made them submit to what is termed a *samaya* ‘convention’.

Hence, according to this analysis, the members of the last ‘clan’, the sixth or ‘mundane’ (*laukika*) one with which we are concerned here, are entities of a particular kind who, evidently, found a place from early times in the Buddhists’ world-view. Indeed, as a universal and totalizing cosmos, the Buddhist world-order would, very naturally, include the entirety of forces and *numina* recognized in its time in India (and in Tibet and other countries that were later to adopt Buddhism), in other words the Indian (or Tibetan) pantheon inclusive of the ‘religious substratum’ of gods and godlings. Tantras assigned to the Laukika division of Kriyā-tantra are concerned with all sorts of ‘worldly’ concerns including the relief of illness, the pacification of hostile forces and the acquiring of favourable conditions.

Now, as observed above (pp. 22 and 43), there appears to exist no reason to suppose that, in India, gods such as Brahmā and Śakra (Indra) who figure in the Buddhist canon, as well as other *numina* known to Buddhists, were alien, exogenous intrusions or foreign imports from Hinduism that had to be incorporated, somehow or other, into Buddhism in the course of its Indian history. The religions in question have their roots in a common ground of religious representations, a fact that would appear adequately to account for the presence of these divine entities within the Buddhist world-order.

It appears, nonetheless, that the division in Kriyātantra constituted by the Laukikakula and its gods is somewhat narrower, and more specific, than the wider and more universal category of the ‘worldly’ or ‘mundane’ (*laukika*) discussed in this study.

