

GIUSEPPE TUCCI

The Theory and Practice
of the Maṇḍala

*With special reference to the modern psychology
of the subconscious*

Translated from the Italian by

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CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	vii
1 The Doctrinal Basis of the Maṇḍala	i
2 The Maṇḍala as a Means of Reintegration	21
3 The Symbolism of the Maṇḍala and of its Various Parts	49
4 The Liturgy of the Maṇḍala	85
5 The Maṇḍala in the Human Body	108
<i>Appendix of illustrations with explanations</i>	135
<i>Index</i>	143

responds to an essential archetype existing *ab aeterno*), descends into this regenerated being who has offered to the God all kinds of honour and worship. The 'projection' of the God there takes up its abode. The *samayasattva* merges with the *jñānasattva* and so is brought about a substitution of nature, a replacement of the *samsāra* appearance by the archetypal essence.

Such a manifestation in the heart of the officiant might seem, at first sight, a discordant phase in the harmonious system we have described and which appears to us as a process of ascent from the multiple to the One, of reconstitution of the original Unity, beyond the world of appearances in which we find ourselves fallen and immersed. In the case of the *samayasattva* and of the *jñānasattva* we seem to witness a descent as though a ray of light came down from on high, although only provisionally, and filled us and transformed us. But this is, so to speak, an error of perspective, since we have that light within us, it does not descend upon, but reveals itself to, us. The *jñānasattva* which lights up within our hearts, indicates the awakening of cognition which is introduced, with suitable symbols, into the psyche and can only thus take up its abode there. It then substitutes its own luminous image for those which previously rioted therein, and by gathering around itself, as in a central fire, the attention of the subject, it prevents the distractions and appeals of the outside world.

In any case, the descent of the *jñānasattva* is a decisive moment in the process of revulsion, inasmuch as, in an individual still subject to *samsāra*, a new state is determined at that instant. By this he finds himself on another plane, on that of consciousness, upon which are projected the symbols of the Gods expressed in the *maṅḍala*. This is not yet the supercosmic state, but one in which merely illuminated cognition takes possession, with its symbols, of the psyche and substitutes itself for them. At this moment, the initiate, by

the concentration of his mind, takes part, as actor, in the supreme consecration which will impose a definitive seal on his rebirth. The baptism given him by the Master will then be replaced by an ideal one in which the Buddhas, coming from all parts of space, will consecrate his palingenesis, the revulsion which has taken place and by which consciousness that was refracted, lost and dissipated in time and space, has become, once again, one and luminous. And the Buddhas not only baptize him but, miraculously, are reabsorbed into him then to emanate from him in their luminous forms. Thus is repeated the in-and-out breath of things which takes place eternally and in which, by our regained cognition, instead of being spectators we act. The mystic identifies himself with Vajrasattva, finding himself in the centre of the supercosmic *maṅḍala* which is the *raison d'être* of the whole cosmos, its source and the place to which it returns. Because of this correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm—which we have mentioned several times—the paradigm of this transposition of the *maṅḍala* into the initiate reproduces the autogenous primordial creation which drew from the Undefined, filled full of infinite possibilities, all that is apparent. At that moment the world was born from that archetypal structure which the Supreme One contained within himself and which, after the cycles of the ages, he will one day take back again into himself. It is a stupendous process that develops through successive emanations from the *maṅḍala* which, from the most subtle and impenetrable, progressively pass into the visible and concrete.

It is enough to recall the first chapter of the *Guhyasamāja* (interpreted by the aid of Candrakīrti) in which this *maṅḍala* procession is evoked in its entirety starting from the initial moment when in the immensity of the void Vajradhara the Blessed absorbs into his diamond essence the infinite number of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who with him peopled the void and filled it like sesame seeds, only to project them

out again into the *maṇḍala*—(Vajradhara who bears the *vajra* dwells in the wombs of the diamond women together with the essence of the three planes of spirit, word and body which compose the All). The archetypal forms then multiply gradually, in a continuous process of absorption and of luminous emanations, provoked, from time to time, by various states of concentration (*samādhi*) in a dichotomy of males and females and then by essenced modes which govern the mechanism of the universe. And all the powers thus emanated into the huge *maṇḍala* which fills the infinity of space constitute the eternal form and the indefectible structure of the universe.

(I) (A) 'At one time the Blessed One was in the womb of the adamantine women (that is of the powers) which constitute the essence of the physical, verbal and spiritual plane of all the Tathāgatas (realizing, that is to say, the synthesis of the void of the beatitude) together with countless Bodhisattvas and Mahāsattvas of ineffable numbers, as many as the specks of dust in all the Sumeru mountains (axes of the innumerable worlds each one of which is protected by a Buddha), that is, The Bodhisattva Mahāsattva, Diamond Rule (Sarvāvaranaviskāmbin, emanation of Akṣobhya), Diamond Body (Kṣitigarbha, emanation of Vairocana), Diamond Word (Lokēśvara, emanation of Amitābha), Diamond Thought (Vajrapāṇi, emanation of Akṣobhya), Diamond Concentration (Akāśagarbha, emanation of Ratnasambhava), Diamond Victory (*jaya* instead of *jāpa* of the text, and Maitreya, emanation of Amoghasiddhi). Then,

(B) 'The female Bodhisattvas, Earth Diamond (Locana, counterpart of Vairocana), Diamond Water (Māmakī, counterpart of Ratnasambhava), Diamond Fire (Pāṇḍaravasini, counterpart of Amitābha), Diamond Wind (Samayatārā, counterpart of Amoghasiddhi) and Diamond Ether (Mañjuśrī). Then,

(c) 'The Diamonds of Materiality, Sound, Perfume, Taste and Touch. Then,

(D) 'The Diamond of the plane of the Law (Samantabhadra) and with the following five Diamond Tathāgatas: Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Ratneketu, Amitābha and Amogha. And all space appeared as a sesame seed, full of Tathāgatas, beginning with those which throng all space.

(II) 'Then the Blessed Mahāvairocana (that is Vajradhara) plunged into the concentration called "Of the Diamond of the Great Passion of the Tathāgatas" and made all the Tathāgatas enter the three diamonds of his body, word and spirit. Then these Tathāgatas in order to please the Blessed Lord of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas, made by artifice, their own bodies to assume the appearance of women and thus they issued from the body of the blessed Vairocana.

'Some of them took on the form of Buddhalocanī, others that of Samayatārā, or Pāṇḍaravasini; some took on the form of the Diamond of materiality, others the forms of the Diamonds of sound, perfume, or touch (that is to say four counterparts corresponding to the four Tathāgatas situated in the four points of space, excluding the central deity of the *maṇḍala*, the immobile centre operating through the activity of his emanation projected towards descent in time and space).

(III) 'Then the Tathāgata Akṣobhya (in other words Vajradhara who a little earlier was called Mahāvairocana) in the wombs of the diamond women constituting the essence of the physical, verbal and spiritual plane of the Buddha, sustained with his grace the *maṇḍala* of the great rule (*samaya*) splendid (that is solar), pure, given essence by him (that is, his reflection) of a different appearance in each part, strewn with clouds of Buddhas, flaming with fiery particles (the ten wrathful deities who surround the *maṇḍala*), the city of all the Tathāgatas united with the pure *maṇḍala*, etc.

'Then the Blessed One (Vajradhara), Lord of the Diamond of body, word and spirit of the Tathāgatas, took up his place¹ at the centre of the *maṇḍala* of all the Tathāgatas and then the Tathāgatas Akṣobhya, Ratnaketu, Amitāyuh, Amoghasiddi and Vairocana, found themselves in the heart of the Tathāgata Bodhicittavajra (Diamond of the Thought of Illumination, Absolute Essence, Vajradhara, the Centre and First Principle in which through the commotion which occurred and which is described in the preceding phase, the pentad is brought about).

(IV) 'Then the Blessed Bodhicittavajra plunged into the concentration called that of the "Diamond of the Lordship of all the Tathāgatas" and at once the sphere of space became full of the Diamond of all the Tathāgatas. And then the creatures which were in all spheres of space, by virtue of the grace of Vajrasattva, became participants in the beatitude and serenity peculiar to all the Tathāgatas.

(V) 'Then the Tathāgata Bodhicittavajra plunged into the concentration called the "Diamond of the Germination of the Rule of the Diamond of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas" and conferred the sustaining grace, the essence of all Tathāgatas, on the form of the man (that is Tathāgata) of the great wisdom² (*Mantra: om ā hūṃ*). As soon as this grace had been bestowed the Blessed Bodhicittavajra was seen with threefold face (that is the three letters *Om ā hūṃ*) by all the Tathāgatas.

'(Then all the Tathāgatas, beginning with Akṣobhya who had been emanated from the heart of Bodhicittavajra, requested, with different invocations, Bodhicittavajra to reveal what truth may be and how it may be attained.)

(VI) 'Then the Blessed One, the Tathāgata Sarvatathāgatakāyavagcittavajra, taking notice of this prayer of all the

¹ *pratiṣṭhāpāyāmāsa*, i.e. *ātmānam*.

² *mahāvīdyā*; here *vidyā*, should be intended as a secret formula, or mantra, impregnated with unimpeded magic efficacy: the *vidyāpuruṣa* is the man who possesses that *vidyā*.

Tathāgatas, plunged into the concentration called "Diamond of the Torch of Knowledge" (of non-duality) and as soon as he was plunged in this, from the three Diamonds of his own body, word and spirit, he emitted the heart¹ of the supreme essence of the family of hatred—*vajradhṛk*.

'As soon as this (heart) was pronounced, this Blessed One, man of wisdom, made up of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas (Mahāvajradhara) sat down² in the Diamond of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas in black, white and red form, by means of the supreme syllables of the conjunction with the seal of Akṣobhya (that is, participating in the essential nature of the One, there projects from himself, in virtue of this formula, a three-fold plane corresponding to the symbol of Akṣobhya—hatred—and this places itself in the *maṇḍala*).

(VIII) 'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration called "Diamond of Germination of the Convention" (*samaya*) and emitted from the Diamond of his own body, word and spirit, the heart of the supreme essence of the family of mental perturbation *jīnājik*. As soon as this (heart) was pronounced, this Blessed One, man of wisdom of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas, sat down before the "Diamond of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas" in the white, black and red form by means of the supreme syllable of the conjunction with the seal of Vairocana.

'Then, the Blessed One, having plunged into the concentration called the "Glory of the Diamond of the Generation of the Jewel of all the Tathāgatas", emitted from the Diamond of the body, word and spirit the heart of the supreme essence of the family of the jewel, *ratnadhṛk*. As soon as this (heart) had been pronounced, this Blessed One, man

¹ *hṛdaya* is heart: that is the quintessence of a thing, a formula, which condenses a truth, or expresses the essential meaning of a doctrine.

² Here also the causative has for object *ātmānam*: made himself sit down, sat down.

of wisdom of the Diamond of body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas, sat down at the right of the "Diamond of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas" in the yellow, white and black form, by means of the supreme syllables of the conjunction with the seal of Ratnaketu.

'Then, the Blessed One having plunged into the concentration called the "Diamond of the Germination of the Great Passion of all the Tathāgatas" emitted from the Diamond of the body, word and spirit the heart of the supreme essence of the family of the adamantine passion: *ārolik*. As soon as this (heart) had been pronounced, this Blessed One, man of the wisdom of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas sat down at the left of the "Diamond of the body word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas" in the red, white and black form, by means of the supreme syllables of the conjunction with the great seal of Lokeśvara, Lord of Great Wisdom.

'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration called the "Diamond of the Germination of the Infallible Convention" (*samaya*) of all the Tathāgatas and emitted from the threefold diamond of his own body, word and spirit, the heart of the supreme essence of the family that attracts the secret (*samaya*: the light, *odgsal*, *prajñadhṛk*. As soon as this (heart) had been pronounced, the Blessed One, man of the wisdom of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas, seated himself at the north of the "Diamond of the body, word and spirit" in the yellow, white and black form by means of the supreme syllable of the conjunction with the great seal of Amoghavajra.

'Of hatred (Akṣobhya), of mental perturbation (Vairocana), of passion (Amitābha), of the gem (Ratnaketu), of the convention (*samaya*) (Amoghasiddhi), of these are the five families which carry on to the fulfilment of love and salvation.

(VIII) 'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration called "The Convention (*samaya*) that gratifies

(*anurāgaṇa*) the Keeper of the Diamond of all the Tathāgatas" (that is Akṣobhya) and emitted from the threefold diamond of the body, the word and the spirit, the Supreme Consort of the Keeper of all the Diamonds: *dveṣarati* (hatred-pleasure).

'As soon as this was emitted, the Blessed One, man of wisdom of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas, assumed the appearance of a woman and seated himself in the "Diamond of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas".

'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration called "The Diamond that Gratifies (*anurāgaṇa*) all the Tathāgatas" (Amitābha) and from the threefold Diamond of his own body, word and spirit emitted the supreme Consort of all the Tathāgatas (Vairocana); *moharati* (mental perturbation-pleasure).

'As soon as this was emitted, the Blessed One etc. . . . assumed the appearance of a woman and seated himself in the eastern corner.

'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration called the "Diamond that Gratifies (*anurāgaṇa*) the Keepers of Passion of all the Tathāgatas" (Amitābha) and from the threefold Diamond etc. emitted the Supreme Consort of the Keeper of Passions: *rāgarati* (passion-pleasure).

'As soon as the Blessed One etc. . . . assumed the aspect of a woman and seated himself in the western corner.

'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration called "The Diamond of the non-contradiction of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas" (Amoghasiddhi) and from the threefold Diamond etc. he emitted the Supreme Consort of the Keeper of the gnosis of the Tathāgatas, *vajrarati* (diamond-pleasure).

'As soon as the Blessed One etc. . . . assumed the aspect of a woman and seated himself in the northern corner.

'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration

called "The Diamond of Mahāvairocana" and from the threefold Diamond etc. emitted the Mahākrodha, sustaining power of the *maṅḍala* of all the Tathāgatas: *Yamantakṛt* ("he who destroys Yama"—Yama is *avidyā*, ignorance).

'As soon as the Blessed One etc. . . . in the form that terrifies all the Tathāgatas seated himself in the eastern gate.

'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration called "the Diamond of the Illumination of all the Tathāgatas" and emitted etc. the Mahākrodha, sustaining power of the *maṅḍala* of the Keeper of the Passion of all the Tathāgatas; *prajñāntakṛt*.

'As soon as the Blessed One etc. . . . in a form that terrifies all the adamantine convention, seated himself in the southern gate.

'Then the Blessed One plunged into the concentration called "The Diamond that Dominates the Law of all the Tathāgatas" and emitted etc. the Mahākrodha, sustaining power of the *maṅḍala* of the Keeper of the Passion of all the Tathāgatas; *padmāntakṛt*.

'As soon as etc. . . . in the form of the voice of all the Tathāgatas he seated himself on the western gate.

'Then the Blessed One plunged into the meditation called "The Diamond of the body, of the word and of the spirit of all the Tathāgatas" and emitted the Mahākrodha, sustaining power of the *maṅḍala* of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas: *Vighnāntakṛt*.

'As soon as etc. . . . in the form of the body, word and spirit of all the Tathāgatas, he seated himself on the northern gate.'

From this model, as has been said above, the meditator starts, by identifying himself with the Supreme Essence, represented by the symbol he selects and thus becomes re-integrated into the One—All. If his concentration is not

interrupted, in the centre of his own heart, the matrix of all things that can be created, he will see the syllable HŪM light up and from its incandescence he will see emanating the infinite number of divine forms which place themselves round about him, according to the plan of the *maṅḍala*. They then reabsorb themselves in him, thus renewing the primordial drama. The mystic, consubstantiated with the One Being, is transported outside time at that moment. He can then substitute for these visualized forms the more subtle structure of the *maṅḍala*, which, instead of such images, presents the *mantras* or geminal formulae of the Universal Essence.

As I have said above, this baptism, a description of which is given in the first pages of a celebrated book on Indian gnosis, does not take place just once as at the beginning of the cosmic creation. It is rather an epiphany, a manifestation which appears to the initiate when at the end of his spiritual preparation he comes to be identified with the centre of the *maṅḍala*, the point from which all goes forth and to which all returns and from where the archetypal essences stream forth in luminous rays which pervade the whole world, arousing it from nothing and reabsorbing it. From the spirit of the mystic who is absorbed in the contemplation which transports him on to the plane of eternal existence, there blaze forth, shining round about, the divine matrices of things. He sees them issue from him and re-enter him in that symbol which religious experience has fixed in definite forms. Only thus can he imagine himself as the actor in the cosmic drama and from the experience of life rise up once more to the Origin. The images that the mystic sees come forth from the centre of his own heart pervade space and then reabsorb themselves in him. They deify him and almost burn him with their lightning flashes. They are not inert and insignificant images. They calm the stormy sea of the subconscious and they illuminate his darkness. The soul's