

THE INDONESIAN SANCTUARY OF CHANḌI SEWU  
AS A STEREOMORPHIC VAJRADHĀTU MAṆḌALA

The precise nature of the complex of 1+8+240 buildings of the Chandi Sewu, near Chandi Kalasan, in the village of Prambanan near Yogyakarta the cultural capital of Indonesia, has hardly been determined in a definitive manner taking into account the Indonesian Buddhist texts, their texture within the classification of *vajrayāna tantras*, the context of the cultural interflow between India and Indonesia during the epoch when the Chandi Sewu was constructed, the theory of architectonic constellations expressing dimensions of the tantric vision, the abundant Nepalese textual evidence hidden away in unpublished manuscripts, collateral artistic expressions of identical/parallel cosmograms in the Himalayan regions, and the multiplicity of Japanese traditions about the *Vajradhātu maṇḍalas*. The utilisation of original texts in Sanskrit or Tibetan or Sino-Japanese and comparative studies of the same theme in different traditions as preserved in manuscripts over vast regions of Asia has been steadily declining in the emerging order of over-generalisation at the expense of precision. Though F.D.K. Bosch (1929: 111-133) had come to a correct but halting assessment about the appropriate identification of the Chandi Sewu as early as 1929, later scholars have hardly verified or elaborated his hesitant conclusions, and on the contrary they have relegated the Sewu to the undefined. Fritz A. Wagner (1962: 114) is simplistic in terming the central statue to « have been a bronze Buddha » instead of Vairocana. Further he states: « The whole construction, symbolising the cosmos, *maṇḍala*, was intended to assist the hermit in his meditations ». The *maṇḍala* is not named and its primary function was not meditation for which a painted *maṇḍala* is the norm. Louis Frédéric (1965: 163 pl. 182) is again imprecise in stating that « this temple, dedicated to Buddha,... and probably symbolising the Mahāyāna pantheon ». Buddha generally refers to Śākya-muni and not to Vairocana. The pantheon here is vajrayānic and therein too it belongs to a very specific tantric text. A. J. Bernet Kempers (1959:

56 pl. 130) is correct but cautions in saying: « The central shrine of the main temple appears to have contained an image of the Highest Buddha as the central figure of an elaborate pantheon, presumably a Vajradhātu-maṇḍala ». Jan Fontein, R. Soekmono, Satyawati Suleiman (1971: 144 pl. 4) feel that « it is impossible to reconstruct the iconographic plan of Tjandi Sewu. It is likely, however, that the assembled statues formed a huge Diamond Matrix Maṇḍala (Vajradhātu-maṇḍala) ». The Sewu is an architectonic *Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala* whose niches are a sure guide to its iconography though all its stone and bronze statues have disappeared « within the memory of man », including the central statue of Mahāvairocana the fragments of whose head were discovered in 1927.

A few general observations about the precise denomination of Vajrayāna Buddhism that was prevalent in Indonesia would help in clarifying the context. Before doing so we will have to consider the classification of Vajrayāna tantras into four broad division of: (i) *kriyā-tantras*, (ii) *caryā-tantras*, (iii) *yoga-tantras*, and (v) *anuttara-yoga tantras*. Each division is presided over by a different Buddha. They are as follows:

<i>kriyā-tantras</i>	Amitāyus
<i>caryā-tantras</i>	Vairocanābhisambodhi (one face, dhyāna mudrā)
<i>yoga-tantras</i>	Saravid Vairocana (four faces, cakra in hand)
<i>anuttara yogi (father) tantras</i>	Guhyasamāja Akṣobhya
<i>anuttara yoginī (mother) tantras</i>	Cakrasaṁvara

Every division has its fundamental and explanatory *tantra*. In Indonesia the teaching of *yoga-tantras* was prevalent. So also in Japan. That was the vogue in South India whence they were transmitted to both these countries. We shall cite *Rgyud-sde spyiḥi rnam-par-gzhag-pa rgyas-par brjod*, a survey of the entire field of tantra in terms of bibliography and basic ideas, by the great Tibetan master of *tantras*, Mkhas-grub-rje who lived from 1385-1438. He clarifies (Lessing/Wayman 1968: 25) that the teaching of the yoga division of tantras is set forth in « two works, the fundamental tantra *Tattvasaṅgraha* (Toh. 479), and the explanatory tantra *Vajrasāekhara* (Toh. 480). They have primary commentaries by three men who are famed in India as being learned in Yoga, namely, Śākyamitra, Buddhaguhyā, and Anandagarbha ». Buddhaguhyā, who wrote the fundamental commentary *Tantrārthāvatāra* (Toh. 2501) on the *Tattvasaṅgraha* lived in the middle of the eighth century as is attested by his letter (Toh. 4194) to the Tibetan King Khri-sroṅ-ldeḥu-btsan who reigned from A.D. 755. His date is important as it lends weight to the fact that the eighth century was the golden age of yoga-tantras, a fact corroborated by other historic events.

The *yoga-tantras* have five families (*kula: tathāgata, ratna, padma, karma, and vajra*). Their *kuleśa's* are: Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amī-tābha, Amoghasiddhi and Akṣobhya. The deities created by his *mudrā*

are the progeny (*kulika*, Lessing/Wayman 1968: 102-3). Among them the Tathāgata-family of Vairocana is the highest. In the *anuttara yoga-tantras*, Vajradhara is added as the sixth family and he is the highest. This was further elaborated in the « Mother Tantras » of the *anuttara-yoginī-tantras* by the addition of a seventh family (*dākinīs*). In Indonesia we find only five families in the Sañ hyañ Nāgabāyusūtra and Kalpabuddha (Bosch 1929: 131-3), besides the expression *pañca-tathāgata* in Kalpabuddha (p. 133) and elsewhere. No statue which can be specifically attributed to the *anuttara-yoga-tantras* has been found in Indonesia. The *anuttara* division of tantras probably did not reach Indonesia and never came to vogue in China and Japan. It became popular in Tibet where it reached its apogee of development. Whenever a comparison of Indonesian iconography with that of Tibet is resorted to this fundamental fact has to be borne in mind.

Bosch has proved the close affinity of Indonesian Buddhist iconography with the Shingon iconography of Japan. It is but natural that the two traditions should agree as they represent the same *yoga-tantra* school of Buddhism. The basic tantra of this school was carried to China by Vajrabodhi who arrived in Canton in 720 by the sea route on board a Persian ship. He was the son of the Royal Preceptor (*rājaguru*) of Kanchi. En route they encountered a storm just twenty days before they reached Canton. All the thirty odd ships were lost, except that which carried Vajrabodhi, who saved it by his recitation of *Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī*. In the confusion that ensued, Vajrabodhi forgot to save the complete text of the *Vajrasekhara-tantra* of which the abridged version was preserved. This is the text he translated into Chinese and introduced its *Vajradhātu maṇḍala*, which is a collocation of nine *maṇḍalas* namely, the *Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala*, *samaya-maṇḍala*, *sūkṣma-maṇḍala*, *pūjā-maṇḍala*, *caturmudrā-maṇḍala*, *ekamudrā-maṇḍala*, *naya-maṇḍala*, *Trailokyavijaya-karma-maṇḍala*, *Trailokyavijaya-samaya-maṇḍala*. The central *Vajradhātu mahāmaṇḍala* is also known as the *karmamaṇḍala* or under its Japanese name of Jojinne. In the Tendai sect in Japan only the Jojinne *maṇḍala* is used: that is, it does not form a part of another *maṇḍala* but it is independent and primary.

As Vajrabodhi carried the *Vajrasekhara-tantra* of the *yoga-tantra* division, it must have been the most prevalent school at Kanchi. There were close trade and cultural relations between the South and Śrīvijaya. The shipping routes to China from the South went via Śrīvijaya. Vajrabodhi visited Śrīvijaya on his way to Canton. A colony of Buddhists from Śrīvijaya resided at Nāgapaṭṭinam, where they erected two Buddhist temples at the beginning of the eleventh century with the patronage of Coḷa kings. The golden age of Buddhism at Nāgapaṭṭinam was the 8-9th century. The central image of the Buddhist vihāra in this city was made of solid gold. The Vaiṣṇava saint Āḷvār Tirumangai wanted to renovate the Raṅganātha temple of Śrīrangam. « He hit upon the idea of robbing the Buddhist Vihāra at Nāgapaṭṭinam of its Buddha

image of solid gold. In this project, the information given by an old Vaiṣṇava lady residing at Nāgapaṭṭinam was very useful. It was to this effect: « The sthapati who made this golden image and the Vimāna under which it is enshrined lives at present in *dvīpāntara* ». This statement was enough to send Tiru-mangai to *dvīpāntara* where he had no great difficulty in identifying the house of the celebrated artist and architect and getting him, by a ruse, to surrender the secret of the construction of the *vimāna*, which enabled the Ālvār to enter the temple stealthily and remove the golden image according to plan (Ramachandran 1954: 15). The word *paṭṭinam* itself denotes a settlement of sambaras, i.e. those who paid allegiance to Buddhist monks and were rich maritime merchants. The aforesaid event attests flourishing communications between India and Indonesia in the eighth century. During this period *yoga-tantra* Buddhism was well-established in the Pallava domains as is attested by the fact that Vajrabodhi transmitted the *yoga-tantra* Vajrasāekhara to East Asia in the beginning of this century. It is but natural that the division of Buddhist *tantras* that was transmitted to Indonesia must have been the *yoga-tantras*. The Chandi Sewu belongs to this century. An inscription dated 792 was found on the site of Chandi Sewu, which suggests that its construction commenced thereabout. No wonder that the Sewu embodied the great philosophical system of *yoga-tantras* in its architecture. Architectonic *maṇḍalas* are known as *pura-maṇḍala* as distinct from *rajo-maṇḍala* drawn with powdered colours or *paṭa-maṇḍala* painted on textiles.

After these preliminary observations, let us consider the article of Bosch (1929: 111-133) on the identification of the Sewu. He commences by mentioning Buddhist texts like the Sañ Hyañ Nāgabāyu-sūtra and Kalpabuddha besides the well-known Sañ Hyañ Kamahāyānikan. The first two have rightly been recognised by Bosch as deriving their value by « mentioning the names of the five Dhyānibuddhas and some of their principal attributes and characteristics » (p. 113). He has also pointed out their close relationship and that they are complementary to each other. He further surmised that these two texts « had their common origin in the texts of the same sect or school ». With advances in the analysis of the interrelationship of the vast mass of Tantric literature on the basis of Tibetan works of great masters like Bu-ston, Tsoñ-kha-pa and others it has become possible to define the precise division of *tantras* to which the two Indonesian texts belong. As already detailed the *tantras* were classified in four major divisions in ancient India, Nepal, Tibet and elsewhere. The details of this classification have not only been preserved, commented upon at length, but is still a living tradition among Tibetans. It supplies us with all the requisite data to assign the precise school to the Indonesian text and also determine the major manifestation of the division in question as an iconographic representation in the form of a *maṇḍala* either on cloth or in an architectural form. Out of the four divisions of *tantras* there are two whose central



deity is Vairocana, namely, the *caryā-tantras* and *yoga-tantras*. The *caryā-tantras* are represented by the texts of *Mahāvairocan-ābhisambodhi-vikurvītādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulya-sūtreन्द्रa-rāja* (Toh. 494 = Sino-Japanese text T. 848 = Nj. 530) and the *Acala-kalpa* (Toh. 495). The major texts of the *yoga-tantras* are the *Tattva-saṅgraha* and its explanatory tantra entitled the *Vajraśekhara*. Vairocana has separate and distinctive forms in these two divisions of *tantras*: in the *yoga-tantras* he is in the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* while in the *caryā-tantras* he is in *dhyāna-mudrā*. Both these forms are clearly delineated in the Indian, Nepalese, Tibetan and Sino-Japanese traditions. The iconography can be seen, for instance in the *Vajradhātu* and *Garbhadhātu maṇḍalas* of the Shingon tradition: the *Vajradhātu* Vairocana is in the *bodhyagrī mudrā* while the *Garbhadhātu* Vairocana is in the *dhyāna-mudrā*. Both the Indonesian texts define the *mudrā* of Vairocana as *bodhyagrī*, which unequivocally proves that the Tantric school which was prevalent in Indonesia was that of the *yoga-tantras*. In the *Niṣpanna-yogūvalī* (Bhattacharyya 1949: 44-47 of text) the iconography of the *Vajradhātu-maṇḍala* is described in details following the *Vajraśekhara-tantra*. The central deity can be either (i) a four-faced eight-armed Vairocana or (ii) one-faced two-armed Vairocana both in the *bodhyagrī mudrā* which is described as the left fore-finger in the *vajra-fist* (*vajra-muṣṭī*) being enclosed by the right *vajra-fist*: *vāme vajra-muṣṭe tarjaryā utthitāyā dakṣiṇe vajra-muṣṭinā grahaṇe sati bodhyaṅgī mudrā* (p. 44). Bosch had intuitively written: « a point demanding a moment's attention is the name of the *mudrā* of Vairocana which in both manuscripts reads *bodhyagrī mudrā*, the same *mudrā* that is mentioned in the *Ādikarmapradīpa* and in the Oldjavanese *Arjunawijaya* and *Sutasoma* » (p. 115). It demanded not a moment's attention but was crucial to the identification of the specific school of Vairocana in Indonesia and consequently of his *maṇḍala*. The intuition of Bosch is striking indeed.

Bosch (p. 116) raises the question of the paradise's of the Five Tathāgatas. He says: « Although the rigid parallelism prevailing in all matters concerning the Tathāgatas would lead us to expect that to the other Dhyānibuddhas a heaven of their own would have been assigned as well, it is noteworthy that nowhere in buddhist literature mention is made of these heavens. The mahayanist sources thus being silent on this point, it is rather surprising to find the complete set of five paradises in both Balinese manuscripts... ». I have edited the *Dharma-kośa-saṅgraha*, a Sanskrit text from Nepal, which names the five heavens as

follows on p. 21:

Vairocana	Vajradhātu bhuvana
Akṣobhya	Abhirati bhuvana
Ratnasambhava	Ratnāvātī bhuvana
Amitābha	Sukhāvātī bhuvana
Amoghasiddhi	Amoghavātī bhuvana

in slightly different expressions: *Sahavatī naran in kaḍatwanira*, and *Kusumita-lokadhātu* for *Amoghasiddha*. The *Kalpabuddha* repeats them in slightly different expressions: *Sahavatī naran in kaḍatwanira*, and *Kusumita nara in kaswargganira* (Bosch 1929: 131, 132). This variation in the names of two paradises may be sought in the parallel *caryā-tantra* tradition of *Vairocana* where he is surrounded by *Ratnaketu* in the east, *Śaṅkumita-rāja* in the south, *Amitābha* in the west, *Divyadundubhimegha-nirghoṣa* in the north. *Kusumita-lokadhātu* may be connected with *Śaṅkumita-rāja* (Lokesh Chandra 1972: pl. 1-5, Tajima 1959: 77). The whole question merits further investigation.

The Balinese *San Hyañ Nāgabāyu-sūtra* gives the *krodha* counterparts of the Five Tathāgatas or their wrathful aspects. It is not appropriate to term them «demoniac aspects» as done by Bosch. In the Balinese manuscript they are:

Direction	Tathāgata	Krodha	Myō-ō (Jap.) = Vidyārāja
Centre	Vairocana	Navabhava	Acala
East	Akṣobhya	Yamamararāja	Trailokyavijaya
South	Ratnasambhava	Śimhāvāhana	Kuṇḍali
West	Amitābha	Matthana	Yamāntaka
North	Amoghasiddha	Vatsala	Vajrayakṣa

Bosch compares them with the Five *Vidyārāja*, *Godai Myō-ō* in Japanese, who are of furious appearance to destroy all sorts of evil spirits on the orders of *Mahāvairocana* (JEBD. 1965: 208a s.v. *Myō-ō*). They have an angry visage and ferocious forms to combat demoniacal forces of evil, but are not demoniacal themselves as contended by Bosch. The Five *Vidyārājas* have been contraposed here according to the direction corresponding to the Five Tathāgatas. *Navabhava* may mean «the Newly Arisen» *Acala*, *Matthana* can be a corruption of *Ya-mantaka* where *Ya* was misunderstood as the Oldjavanese *ya* «this», and *Vatsala* can be a reflection of *vajra* pronounced as *vadzara*. Bosch refers to the highly evolved and late Tibetan iconography of *Yamāntaka* with 9 heads, 34 arms and 16 legs, who held fear-inspiring lugubrious attributes from the cemetery and he opines that «the appearance of *vatsala* and of the other *vidyārājas* cannot have differed much from that of *Yamāntaka*» (p. 118). *Yamāntaka* did not have only this form. The forms of this deity showed wide divergences according to its Tantric division or subdivision. In the earlier tradition of the *Mahā-Vairocana-tantra* as preserved in Japanese iconography (as well as in the text) *Yamāntaka* has 6 heads, 6 arms and 6 legs (Lokesh Chandra 1972: pl. 23). Here he holds no gruesome implements. He wields a scimitar, mace (*gadā*), trident and *cakra* while both his original hands are in the *dharmamudrā*. The Indonesian icons must have been closer to the Japanese forms which conform to the early Sanskrit texts. Besides, the traditions of both the countries belong to the same period of transmis-

sion from India in the middle of the eighth century. Vatsala need not be interpreted as an euphemism. The precise identification and interpretation of Buddhist Tantric iconography suffers from lack of exact correlation of the various iconic forms back to the relevant texts whence they arose. But, Kuṇḍalī never rides a lion (*simha*), as can be ascertained from Japanese iconographic texts. In the *yoga-tantras* Yamāntaka, Kuṇḍalī, Vajrayakṣa, and Acala are represented in the *Trailokyavijaya-karma-maṇḍala* in peaceful aspects (Lokesh Chandra 1972: pl. 785-788). In their angry appearances they are represented in the *caryā-tantras* which are delineated in the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*. Here in the Quarter of Vidyā-dharas are shown Acala (SW), Vajrahūmkāra or Trailokyavajra, Prajñā-pāramitā (centre), Yamāntaka and Trailokyavijaya (NW). The Balinese text may interpolate the *caryā-tantra* tradition into the *yoga-tantras*, or represents a *yoga-tantra* school which has to be traced in the maze of Tibetan Tantric literature.

Next, Bosch (p. 118-120) takes up the *parivāra-devatās* of the Five Tathāgatas as specified in the Balinese manuscripts of the Sañ Hyañ Nāgabāyusūtra and Kalpabuddha. He refers to the Sañ Hyañ Kamahāyānikan and to variations in its manuscripts A and B. This text needs a critical edition by collating all the manuscripts and by taking into account the new light on Tantric tradition of India, Nepal, Japan and Tibet. Bosch lamented the lacuna of comparable materials: «after having looked in vain in the Nepalese and Tibetan pantheons for anything comparable with the said vajra-deities» (p. 119). All the deities are found in Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, but modern historians of art are reluctant to touch! the source-texts and the stalemate in further identifications or confirmation of previous identifications continues. The *parivāra-devatās* of the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala* are not only mentioned but their attributes specified at length in the Sanskrit texts found from Nepal: *Niṣpannayogāvalī* of Abhayākara Gupta (text pp. 44-47), *Dharma-kośa-saṅgraha* (pp. 79-83), *Kriyāsaṅgraha*, *Kriyāsamuccaya*, etc. All the *parivāra-devatās* are described in full details in Classical Tibetan texts and commentaries of the division of *yoga-tantras* (Kanjur: Toh. 479, 480, Tanjur: Toh. 2501-2531) which are translations of Sanskrit originals. Texts 2504, 2516, and 2529 detail the liturgy and delineation of the *mahāmaṇḍala* (rightly so termed) of Vajradhātu, of the Tathāgata family, with 1037 deities as enunciated in the first chapter of the *mūla-tantra Tattva-saṅgraha*. This is illustrated in the *New Tibeto-Mongol Pantheon*, part 13 no. 22. Prof. Tucci (1935: III/1.39ff) has described the *maṇḍala* of Vairocana according to the *Tattvasaṅgraha* at the Tabo monastery of the 10-11th century, alongwith all the attendant deities.

Bosch compares the pantheon of the Sañ Hyañ Nāgabāyusūtra and Kalpabuddha with the *Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala*, the central *maṇḍala* of the Japanese Vajradhātu (Jap. Kongōkai). The twin *maṇḍalas* (Jap. genzu mandara) of Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu were taken to Japan by Kōbō daishi in A.D. 806. His master Hui-kuo had them drawn for him.

Different transmissions were synthesised on two scrolls. The Japanese *Vajradhātu maṇḍala* is not one *maṇḍala*. It is a collection of nine *maṇḍalas*: comprising 6 types of *Vajradhātu maṇḍalas*, 1 *Naya-maṇḍala* and 2 types of *Trailokyavijaya maṇḍalas*. The three represent different subdivisions of the *yoga-tantras*. Within the *yoga-tantras*, there are two explanatory tantras from the *upāya* and *prajñā* standpoints. The *Vajradhātu maṇḍalas* represent the various steps of the path in the basic *tantra Tattva-saṅgraha*. The *naya-maṇḍala* represents the *Naya-sūtra* which is explanatory from the *prajñā* standpoint. The *Trailokyavijaya* is explanatory from the *upāya* view of the second section (*vajra-kula*) of the *Tattva-saṅgraha* (Wayman 1973: 236). In Tibet they are separate *maṇḍalas*. The most important among them is the central *maṇḍala* which is rightly termed a *daimandara* (= *mahāmaṇḍala*) in the Japanese tradition, and is also known as the *Jōjin-ne* (*kāyamaṇḍala*) and *karma-maṇḍala*. Originally it was not the central part of a composite *maṇḍala*, but it was the primary *maṇḍala* of the *yoga-tantras*, with an independent existence of its own. In the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* and also in the Tibetan tradition it has an entity of its own. Though Bosch had nearly arrived at a correct conclusion regarding the Chandi Sewu being the *Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala*, he was beset with doubts by the fact that the *mahāmaṇḍala* was only « the central square of the *maṇḍala* », a part of the whole, and how could a part be an integrality of a gigantic monument that the Chandi Sewu is and was intended to be. Hence we have pointed out its sovereign existence as a separate entity of its basic *tantra*: the *Tattvasaṅgraha*.

A few terminological corrections have to be effected in Bosch p. 121: the so-called Sacrificing Tārās should be changed to Pūjā-devīs, the Commanding Tārās to Saṅgraha-Tārās.

Bosch is perfectly right in saying that Vajradhātu deities embody themselves in the Sewu complex. Though its niches have been spoiled of their invaluable bronzes, the entire plan is a confirmation. The central temple enshrined Vairocana, while the four surrounding cellas housed the other four Tathāgatas Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddha and their niches the *parivāra-devatās* of each of the five Tathāgatas. The east cella of Akṣobhya was the antechamber whence the devotee entered the constellation of winding structures on his circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇā*). In the central temple there are arrangements for 24 deities instead of 25 as required by the text. Bosch proposes that the *prajñā* (consort) of Vairocana, Sattvavajrī (Vajradevī, Vajrasattvātmikā, or Vajradhātviśvarī) was fused with the consort of Akṣobhya: Vajradhātviśvarī the consort of Vairocana and Locanā the consort of Akṣobhya are one quintessentially (Saṅ Hyañ Kamahāyānikan p. 115).

Thus the 37 deities of the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala* were represented as follows:

- 24 Five Tathāgatas with their attendant deities
- 4 *pūjā-devīs* as the four corners of the buildings
- 8 *pūjā*-and *saṅgraha-devīs* in the medium chapel (remains of five have been laid bare)

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The four rows of 240 subsidiary chapels housed the Thousand Buddhas. Each of these chapels housed 4 of the Thousand Buddhas, thus giving a total of  $240 \times 4 = 960$  Buddhas. It suited the architectural requirements of every chapel that one of the Thousand Buddhas be placed in the centre and three others in the niches in the three walls, while the fourth side being the entrance-portal was empty. Bosch surmises that thousand means « very many » and 240 could suffice for a Thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, « the founder of the complex... erected "merely" 240 sanctuaries for harbouring the Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa ». This surmise is unnecessary. In our scheme, 240 chapels enshrined 960 Buddhas. The total of 1000 was made up as follows:

- 36 deities in the central temple
  - 4 deities of Elements in the corners as in the Japanese *Mahāmaṇḍala*
  - 960 Thousand Buddhas
- 
- 1000

In the Japanese *mahāmaṇḍala* the four deities of the Elements, namely, Teja, Āpaḥ, Vāyu and Pṛthvī are situated in the four corners (Lokesh Chandra 1972: pl. 464-467). These statues must have been placed in the corners of the enceinte under the open sky, or vestiges of lost chapels may be exhumed in future excavations. The expression Chaṇḍi Sewu can thus go back to ancient times, even to the eighth century (Fontein et al 1971: 144 no. 4) when the visualisation and construction of the gigantic ensemble took place. Thus the founder of the Sewu complex was conscious and financially capable of constructing a *maṇḍala* of precisely one thousand deities. The apprehension of Bosch about « remaining within the bounds of his material resources » (p. 130) cannot hold good.

The patron of the Sewu *mahāmaṇḍala* must have been a king of the Śailendra dynasty who dedicated this ensemble to Vairocana as the Cakravartin, that is, « Universal Monarch ». In Japan, Vairocana in his form as Dainichi-kinrin « Vairocana Cakravartī » is depicted mounted on a lion and enclosed within a *cakra*. In the Kalpabuddha (Bosch p. 132) too Vairocana's weapon is *cakra* (*cakra sañjata nira*) and he rides a lion (*siṅgh ātutuṅgaṇanira*). *Cakra* is the prime symbol of the

universal dominion of a *cakravartin*, and the lion the emblem of his unchallenged prowess. In Japan most of the iconographic manuals have the *cakravarti-maṇḍala* of Vairocana where he is surrounded by the *sapta-ratna* or seven constituents of the state: queen, minister, commander-in-chief, horse, elephant, *cintāmaṇi* jewel and *cakra*. For example, in the 12th century Besson-zakki by Shinkaku (A.D. 1117-1180) pl. 29; Shoson-zuzō by Shinkaku (A.D. 1117-1180) pl. 8-9; Kakuzen-shō « collection of *maṇḍalas* described and drawn by Kakuzen » about A.D. 1183-1213, pl. 63-64; Mandara-shū « collection of *maṇḍala* », compiled by Kōnen, pl. 7-8, which exists in a copy of A.D. 1187; Asabashō compiled by Shōchō (A.D. 1205-1282) chapter 264. An investigation of the rituals of Cakravarti-Vairocana in Japanese texts like the Asabashō will help to clarify the function of the *Vairocana-mahāmaṇḍala* and its importance in the history of Classical Indonesia.

We have historic evidence of the eighth century that Vairocana did symbolise empirium. In Japan, emperor Shomu issued a rescript in A.D. 743 ordering the construction of the gigantic statue (*daibutsu*) of Vairocana, 16 metres in height, at the Tōdaiji monastery in his attempt to unify the nation in an awareness of its power, as an « apt symbol of the emperor as the controlling head of the state » (Kobayashi 1975: 22), as « an especially valuable political and religious symbol » (Kobayashi 1975: 25) to consolidate the sovereignty of the nation in a harmony of the emperor and his people on the deeper spiritual levels of a shared awareness: it was a « Grand National Temple ». When the old capital at Nara was abandoned and a new capital was established at Heian-kyō (modern Kyoto) in A.D. 794, the Tōji temple was an integral part of the metropolitan masterplan. It was « intended to invoke the protection of the divinities and thereby to assure the peace and prosperity » (Sawa 1972: 130) of the kingdom. It was placed in charge of Kōbō daishi himself, the great master who introduced Shingon Buddhism with its central deity of Vairocana. The temple was significantly termed Kyōō-gokoku-ji « temple for the protection of the state », which popularly came to be known as the Tōji (tō = east, ji = temple) as it was built on the east side of the city gate. The temples of Vairocana seem to have gained national dimensions as means of preempting threat to the security of the nation and securing protection of the head of the state. The Chandi Sewu demanding enormous resources must have been envisaged by a mighty king of the Sailendras for the peace and security of his person and of his realm, in an ever-continuing process of stabilisation of his dynasty. The continuity of the terrestrial maṇḍala or realm was affirmed in being consecrated by an eternal *mahāmaṇḍala* or cosmogram of Vairocana: *maṇḍalārthe mahāmaṇḍalam* as we may put it in Sanskrit. The inscribed stone of A.D. 792 found in the ruins of Sewu may have to be reconsidered in a new light.

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