

Depth Psychological Interpretation of the Concept of Dakini: Jungian Analysis of the Feminine in the Tibetan Culture

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ABSTRACT

The solemn day of *Dakini* is a monthly recollection of Yeshe Tsogyal in the Tibetan calendar. The day is marked with prayers dedicated to Yeshe Tsogyal. Yeshe Tsogyal is the formless Body of Truth, *Dharmakaya*. As *Sambhagakaya*, She blesses the seeker with dreams, visions and inspirations in meditations. Being *Nirmanakaya*, she has manifold faces and manifestations, as our daily context and situations, bestowing meaningfulness, newness and richness in our ordinary days. In summation, Yeshe Tsogyal is the feminine essence of Buddhahood. The paper presents the interpretation of the myth of Yeshe Tsogyal, which narrates the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet and propagation of the teaching of Secret *Mantra* by Padmasambhava in sacred union with Yeshe Tsogyal. The paper also attempts to contemplate on the mythical-mystical image of *Yab-Yum* from the perspective of woman, as she is the wisdom incarnate of the *Dakini*. The paper delves into the Jungian analysis of *Archetypal Amplification* to understand the feminine principle of the *Dakini*.

Keywords: *Dakini, Yeshe Tsogyal, Yab-Yum*

The religious and cultural traditions of Tibet and similarly Buddhism in the neighboring countries of Tibet like Nepal, India and Bhutan have brought about a transformation and a layout in the spiritual landscape of these regions. These spiritual landscapes have made a profound impact on the individual's lived experiences and as well as on the collective experiences of people. The elegant Bodhi tree, under which the Buddha attained enlightenment, stands magnificently on the holy land of Boudh Gaya. The *Axis Mundi*, the sanctum around which all the ancient holy cites and pilgrimage routes spurge around forming a spiritual geographic map. All these religious pilgrimage sites have formed a cosmological structure crossing national boundaries and unifying people of faith and devotion. People from all over the world make their pilgrimage to these sacred places, which form a mandala of realization.

Tibetan culture like most other traditions has a set of festivals that we celebrate each year according to the Tibetan lunar calendar. We also have certain sacred solemn days based on certain sacred dates in the Tibetan lunisolar calendar. Unlike the Hindu tradition where Goddesses are venerated, feminine worship in Tibetan Buddhism is not so extravagant, hence I remained unaware. However, it wasn't until a few years ago I stumbled upon a

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particular day in our Tibetan calendar called the *Dakini* Day. Out of my curiosity, I happened to ask an old monk, a far off relative, who was intensely circumambulating the Boudhanath temple in Katmandu. He looked at me with an expression of disbelief and replied, “This is your day”. He had said something, which made me wonder and seek for more.

Experience of the Sacred

Landscapes and spaces have a unique energy that resonates deep within our soul, if one has the capability to sense it. Our very presence in sacred spaces gives us a sense of oneness with space and time. “There are places in the world where one can communicate with the Gods above and places where one can communicate with the Gods below, a place where there are good spirits and places where there are evil spirits” (Boa, 1994). The cosmic energy of such places opens the individual to a different dimension, a dimension where there are numerous possibilities to discover within. According to the Romans, every space has a spirit, which is sacred to a place. It is called *Genius Loci*. The manifestation of the psyche in such landscapes and geographic locations is called “soul geography” (Boa, 1994). In Bhutan outside every house, there is a phallic symbol, which represents the sacred spirit of their place and it is placed outside for protection from evil spirits. Landscapes are intimate to spirituality, where one makes the journey only to experience a part of themselves. I made my journey and found myself in ways I had never known before.

Throughout my childhood, I have travelled to holy sites and sacred places. I have visited many monasteries, and paid my homage to precious monks and have had the privilege of attending many sermons and teachings from them. However, I never understood the essence of sacred energies and how a particular space in time could move an individual towards transformation. It wasn't until a particular journey to the holy site of Namo Buddha that moved me so deep that I remained in disbelief of what I had actually experienced. This experience was a spiritual awakening, which gave me a sense of peace. It is still very difficult for me to put it across in words, as every attempt to explain would be a shortcoming of my ability to explain such a personal experience. It is my humble attempt, as without this journey my contact with the world of the *Dakini* would have remained dormant.

As Carl Jung writes, “Nobody can know what the ultimate things are. We must, therefore, take them as we experience them. And if such experience helps to make your life healthier, more beautiful, more complete, and more satisfactory to yourself and to those you love, you may safely say, This was the grace of God” (Jacobi, 1953).

As we experience life and its joys there are times when one also experiences certain internal perils. It was a time where I was experiencing the perils of the time. I felt the burden on me when I realized that I had to be strong and voice out my opinions. I had to make certain personal decisions in my life that were to shape not only my life but also the society's perspective of the kind of woman I am or have become. Though we live in reformed times there are certain prejudices concerning what a woman should do and how they should behave. Hence our decisions become restrictive in the context of such a reformed culture. Having been in a social dilemma and having had mentally subdued me to be the submissive girl, the common impression of people about me, I went for a pilgrimage to Namo Buddha on *Dakini* Day.

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Namo Buddha is a pilgrimage site in Kathmandu, Nepal. It is the holy site where once a prince named Mahasattva was passing by the forest and he saw a tigress that had delivered five cubs. The tigress had become very weak and ill and was not able to tend to her children. Mahasattva out of compassion for the mother tigress cut his flesh and fed it to the tigress. Namu Buddha means 'homage to the Buddha', as Mahasattva is considered to be a previous incarnation of Buddha Sakyamuni. The Tibetans call this sacred place Takmo Lujin; Takmo means 'female tiger', Lu means 'body' and Jin means 'to give'. There is a cave in Namu Buddha, the very site where the act of compassion resonates. This place, which stands high on the Gandha Malla hill looking over the Katmandu valley, transmits an eerie vibration. On reaching the cave my aunt who is a very spiritual lady opened her prayer book and started reading out the twenty-one supplications to the Goddess Tara. I started to pray for help, as somehow, I was feeling helpless. The image of the tigress and her cubs staring at me I started to contemplate. The events in my life turned like the pages of a book. As I reflected, I realized how structured I had become and how comfortable I was dwelling in the structured experiences of life. It gave me a realization that I have not been living my life to the best of my capability. I wasn't even compassionate towards myself. I was a woman in the becoming but had no sense of direction. I feel that being a woman one must be compassionate towards oneself to be able to live out all possibilities that one is capable of. In that womb of the sacred cave, I felt a different dimension to myself a different possibility of existence and also understood the harm that I would be inflicting upon myself if I just walked in the dark. When one comes in contact with the sacred dimensions, vision becomes manifold. Such sacred spaces give us an opportunity to look clearly. These are the spaces, which give us pure vision. The feminine in me, which was untapped, and the tigress that came back to life with the act of compassion somehow uplifted my soul. After the visit, I felt stronger and had an even stronger connection with the *Dakini* Day. As it was, this day which made me sensitive to the feminine within me.

Having had this spiritual experience and while working on the present paper a dream dawned upon me. This was the second time I have had the same dream experience:

"I was in my room and suddenly a very wrathful female figure appeared. She started to dance in the space of my room. She was all around me dancing in the sky. She came close to me and I could see her face close to mine. Her third eye opened and stared at me. She was Vajravarahi."

Hypothetical Interpretation

The room in my dream represents my very inner personal space. The dream had first appeared four years ago when I had just recently gotten enrolled in Ph.D. The dream then never made sense to me as I used to remember it as a scary nightmare. However, with its reoccurrence in this present contextual situation, it brings with it an understanding. The wrathful female Vajravarahi is a *Dakini* in Vajrayana Buddhism. She is the wrathful adamantine manifestation of Vajrayogini. She is called "Dorje Phamo", the "Diamond Sow" or the "Indestructible Sow", in Tibetan as she has the head of a pig. She is the Great Mother, the giver of life force and symbolizes fertility. She represents the conscious and the unconscious, the visible and the invisible the ignorant and the rational aspects of oneself. She appeared in my dream initially when I was still struggling and trying to learn from my life experiences and also when I had just started an academic journey. Her reappearance in my dream is symbolic of the journey I had initially taken and the culmination of its effects on my life experiences. In Vajrayana, she appears to transform ignorance into freedom and

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provide spiritual awakening in the individual. According to Allione, “The *dakini* appears at crucial moments. These encounters often have a quality of sharp, incisive challenge to the fixated conceptions of the practitioner. They may occur through a human *dakini* or through a dream or mirage-like appearance which vanishes after the message is communicated” (Allione, 1984). The *Dakini's* third eye was a reminder to be more in tune with my own feminine intuitions. She reminded me to nurture and grow along the path I had chosen to tread. Dream is my, as Carl Jung wisely writes, “the deepest and most intimate sanctum of the soul” (Jacobi, 1953). This dream remains intimate to me and takes me one step closer to Yeshe Tsogyal.

Evolution of the Feminine in Tibetan Buddhism

Tibetan people in the ancient days followed a religious tradition very different from the present prevailing belief of Buddhism. The Bonpos had their presiding rule over Tibet and its people. The emperors used to listen and follow the Bonpo persists suggestions and advices concerning the land and its spiritual domain. Throughout history we have witnessed how states, countries and nations have come into existence. The need to acquire can be considered to be one of the aspects, which lead to the evolution of man himself. In Buddhism man's evolution in the present and in the future, itself begins with the accumulation of either merits or demerits. The ancient human race also began with the accumulation of land and monetary fulfillment of needs.

Tibet had established itself as a powerful empire with Bon as its national religion. It gave the nation the power to assert and to acquire more. It bestowed on the emperors of the land a sense of wealth and power beyond comprehension. Bon was a power establishment in itself. With such a deep-rooted belief system it was difficult for the King Songtsen Gampo to bring in Buddhism. His attempt was a milestone in the history of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. After the great king Songtsen Gampo there were many emperors who tried to maintain the Buddha dharma in the land. However, it was an attempt, which was always under threat and had its own battles to fight, to form a strong ground in Tibet. It was not until the rule of King Trisong Detsen that things began to change and the amalgamation of a foreign religious belief system began to be considered for the very first time not only by the masses but also by the presiding deities of Tibet. This was the beginning and the gradual transformation of Tibet, which began henceforth after Trisong Detsen invited the great siddhi Guru Padmasambhava from India to Tibet.

Padmasambhava, the lotus born is also popularly called Guru Rinpochee, which means precious teacher by the Tibetans. He was invited by Trisong Detsen to overcome the presiding powers of the Bon deities over the land and the people of Tibet. When he set his foot in Tibet he had to experience resistance from the Bon priests and the noble men who wanted to oust him away from the land. However, little were they aware of the powers the great master possessed. Padmasambhava tamed the evil in the land and also the evil that resided within each soul and gave the Tibetans an opportunity to purify their body speech and mind. He made the people understand that evil lied within and it was one's own duty to purify, pacify and transform. It is through his teachings that not only tamed the evil deities of Tibet but also tamed the demonic forces within the people of Tibet. By bringing in Buddhism he not only transformed the land but he brought with him the understanding of Buddhist Tantra and especially the understanding of the importance of the feminine. The motherland was not just some external entity to dwell in but now with his understanding, the

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feminine was something to realize within oneself. The feminine was something to be embodied by the individual.

With the advent of Buddhism Tibet was transformed and it eventually lost its desire for accumulation and the culture of war faded away. Everything began to be focused on the individuals' experiences and personal spiritual journeys taken by the individual.

Buddhism started to gain popularity at a fast pace and by the end of the 8th century, it was considered to be the national religion of Tibet. As creation itself began with a void, so did the concept of women in Tibet, began with the feeling and experience of such void and nothingness. It dates back to the time when Buddha Sakyamuni himself was propagating his teachings and all his followers were male monks. It was the great Mahaprajapati who looked after him who insisted on following him and asked him to make some space for female nuns. Females were looked down upon and women who wanted to become nuns were not given much importance. Even today a nun has to undergo more austerities and have to take a set of extra vows than monks. It was considered that to attain liberation one has to be born in the body of a man and that being born in a female body would bring certain obstructions on the path to enlightenment. The Tibetan word for women is "Kema", which itself means low birth. For a nation, which does not venerate the feminine like in India where Goddesses worship is very popular, Tibet's veneration of the feminine is embodied in every individual. Despite the meaning of the word "kama", feminine spirituality is a practice, which is inculcated as a way of life.

Tibet mainly followed the sutras initially, however the tantric belief system came later from India. The Indian tantric practice and belief are slightly different from that of the Buddhist tantra. When such practices migrate from one region to another it makes certain adaptations and adjustments with the presiding belief systems and requirements of the times. Buddhist tantra went through its own transformations in Tibet. From the beginning of the 8th century, Tibet experienced its own reformation movement in all its aspects. Tantra gave birth to Vajrayana and Dzog Chen teachings began to flourish. The Dzog Chen teachings are also called the Maha Ati teachings, which are considered to be one of the oldest forms of meditation teaching in Tibet. The Dzog Chen is one form of ancient teaching, which placed the feminine in high regard.

The word Dzog means "great" and Chen means "perfection". Dzog Chen also called the Great Perfection teachings, were first transmitted by the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra to his disciple Buddha Vajrasattava who in turn taught it to Garab Dorje in India. Padmasambhava is considered to have brought Dzog Chen into Tibet from Orgyen known as the land of the *Dakinis*. Dzog Chen developed as a separate tantric system in the Nyingma school of thought in Tibetan Buddhism.

The Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra's *yum* is the *Dakini* Shamantabhadri who is considered to be the primordial mother Buddha. She is the *Dharmakāya* manifestation of the divine feminine. Shamantabhadri is the Great Mother, an aspirational aspect of the great Prajnaparamita, which means "perfection of wisdom". The Prajnaparamita is based on the principle of "emptiness" or "shunyata". She represents the nature of the mind, which is ultimately void of existence. Shamantabhadri is always white and is seen in *yab-yum* union with her male consort Shamantabhadra who is always blue. Yeshe Tsoyal is an emanation of Shamantabhadri herself. With the introduction of Buddhist tantra, the *Dakini* wisdom

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came to light. The feminine began to be considered auspicious and women's spirituality was venerated. The *Dakini* lore has gained popularity in recent times as it provided an illuminating path for women practitioners all over the world. This has helped women in their efforts to develop confidence and dedication in their daily lives and spiritual growth. The *Dakini* lore however is not just limited to women alone. It provides direction to men who are on their spiritual journey, showing them the aspects of wisdom.

DAKINI

The term Buddha means one who has attained enlightenment. It refers to the intrinsic capability of the individual who can attain Bodhi or complete wisdom. Prince Siddhartha attained realization under the tree of wisdom; hence he is known as the Sakyamuni Buddha. Buddha is the potential in every human being to strive towards enlightenment. It is the knower who takes a journey to eventually become the known. *Dakini* is a female Buddha. It is that very potential in every individual to realize the wisdom within.

The term *Dakini* in Tibetan is called "Khandro", "Kha", means space and "dro", means to go. Thus, the word *Dakini* means "sky goer", the one who moves in the sky. She is the feminine essence, which travels in the sky without a given destination. This essence of the journey is essentially latent in each of our individual experiences. Life situations manifest and test the knower of their capabilities. It is the *Dakini* within us, which makes us the seeker and bestows us with wisdom. She who travels in the sky without a destination manifests crazy wisdom in Vajrayana. Her essential nature is considered to be crazy because she embodies that aspect of wisdom, which is pure and untouched by any barriers of governing laws. She is free from all forms of conceptualization.

Tsultrim Aillione writes, "Wisdom is an inherent part of the energy, not a separate thing which follows on a linear pattern, the enlightened aspect might escape from the surveillance of the ego at any moment and therefore everyone has the possibility of becoming a Buddha or *Dakini* on the spot. Therefore, even an ordinary "unenlightened", woman or situation could suddenly manifest as the *Dakini*" (Allione, 1984).

In the ultimate sense, *Dakini* is "emptiness", the ultimate truth, beyond any conditional phenomena. The goer is a dynamic activity, which manifests in various forms. She is the naked awareness free from conceptual confabulations. Everything that we experience is empty, hence whatever we see, hear or experience becomes the concept of *Dakini*. She is the overall framework of all our individual experiences, and in Vajrayana Buddhism, this becomes the ultimate refuge. In Vajrayana, they are often represented as consorts in *Yab-Yum* embrace and are a central figure in Tantric Buddhism. She manifests herself in the three roots of Vajrayana, as a human guru or a master who transmits the Vajrayana teachings to her disciples and embraces them in Samaya commitments. She may be a *yidam* called upon during tantric meditational practices or she may be a protector.

The *Dakini* is not limited to the concept of being a woman or being feminine in nature. *Dakas* and *Dakinis*, male and female are both synonymous in Vajrayana and anyone who is willing to cut through deception and the limitless illusory nature of the mind is a *Dakini*. Individuals, man or women who seek wisdom and who are on a spiritual path are *Daknis*' in process of becoming. *Dakinis* are female energetic guides and companions who accompany one through their spiritual journey until realization is attained. She appears in various forms in the *Dharmakāya*, *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya* fields. In Vajrayana Buddhism, Yeshe

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Tsogyal is the archetypal *Dakini* embodied in the physical form in the Nirmakaya world. The name Yeshe Tsogyal means, “Queen of the Ocean of Wisdom”. Keith Dowman writes, “Yeshe Tsoyal is the multitude of forms; she appears as Tara, Saraswati, princess, ordinary girl, business woman, prostitute and so on” (Dowman, 1996).

Dakinis are individuals who possess a very sharp wisdom mind that is innocent, honest, uncompromising, and even wrathful at times. She is intelligence as well as ignorance. It is only when the individual starts to understand what one doesn't understand, that the possibility of understanding the depths open up like a ray of light illuminating a dark space making the darkness known. It is only with the understanding of both; ignorance and intelligence that can make us capable enough to understand the polar dimensions within us.

Dakinis are those individuals whose very secret spiritual life strives for compassion and service of others. She embodies wisdom and seeks for teaching her wisdom to all beings who are in search of her. From my personal experience, I cannot say if I found Yeshe Tsogyal, but I did find a part of myself seeking for her and what she embodies.

DAKINI DAY

There are many solemn days, which Tibetan Buddhists observe religiously every month. The *Dakini* day is one such special day for the Vajrayana Buddhists. The *Dakini* day is celebrated on the 25th day of the Tibetan lunisolar calendar every month. The 10th day of the Tibetan lunisolar calendar is for the *Dakas* and special homage is paid to Guru Padmasambhava.

In the Tibetan lunisolar calendar, the year comprises 12 to 13 months. The 13th month is an addition to the 12th month in an interval of every 2 to 3 years to consolidate the Tibetan year into the solar yearly system. A Tibetan month consists of approximately 30 days starting with a new moon and ending with a new moon. Each day in the Tibetan calendar is called “tse”. According to the ancient Tibetan astrology, the 30 days have been divided into two phases. The first phase consists of 15 days and the second phase consists of the next 15 days. The entire month starting from the new moon to the next new month is divided into the first phase, which represents the method and is celebrated on the 10th as Guru Padmasambhava day and the second phase represents the wisdom and is celebrated on the 25th as the *Dakini* day.

The *Dakini* day starts with special ritual offerings to Yeshe Tsogyal. Buddhists around the world attend Tsog offerings, which are food offerings to the *Dakini* to receive her blessings. Flowers, incense and melodious music are also offered to the *Dakini*. It is considered that if any aspect of wisdom is lying dormant or needs to be awakened, then by observing the *Dakini* day and its proceedings, it will evoke the wisdom in the individual. It is believed that by observing the *Dakini* day one will gain immense merits and one's defilements will be cured.

Tsog is a vital practice, which is essentially practiced on the *Dakini* day and Guru Padmasambhava day. The Tsog offering is essentially a food offering, which can be a grand display of different varieties of food or it can even be a humble offering of what one is capable of. This offering of food to the Guru and the *Dakini* signifies the individual's commitment to the secret teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism. The offering is made along

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with prayers to the *Dakini* to help remove obstacles and hardships on the path to the attainment of realization.

Tsog is essentially offered to symbolically emphasize the essence of the merging of method and wisdom. As the earlier 10th day is celebrated as the Guru Padmasambhava day, the *Dakini* day is the celebration of the culmination of the masculine method and feminine wisdom and the day bestows upon the individual the space for inner wisdom realization. By offering Tsog, individuals strive to attain transcendental wisdom. The Tsog offering is always made during nighttime, as it is considered to be the time when the *Dakas* and the *Dakinis* come together. It is the time, which symbolizes germination and fertility. Night represents the feminine and the unconscious. It is the creation time, which leads to the death and birth of everything anew.

Individuals who observe the *Dakini* day are considered to be on a spiritual path and the Tsog offerings made on that day are symbolic of the nectar or medicine, which transforms them and makes them capable to receive the wisdom bliss from the *Dakini*. This food offering is therefore called the “Feast of the heroines” or “Feast of the *Dakinis*”, and the Tsog offered on the 10th day is called the “Feast of the heroes” or the “Feast of the *Dakas*”.

A short prayer of Yeshe Tsogyal is recited on the *Dakini* Day. By reciting this sacred prayer we invoke the *Dakini* so as to develop her sensitive energy within us. The prayer of Yeshe Tsogyal to the great Guru Padmasambhava beholds the *Dakini's* spiritual intentions, which is considered to be sacred for all those who are on the path of spiritual realization. Thus this solemn day is a festive occasion for each of us who are on the path to inner commitments to attain realization.

Maha Guru Prayer:

The Prayer of Yeshe Tsogyal:

1. I pray to my Guru, to please bless me that in all of my lives in future that I may be able to commit myself to you and always remain as a part as an aspect of your existence!
2. With my never-ending devotion towards you may I with joy be able to follow your teachings and receive your blessings, and become successful in attaining realization!
3. May the blessings that I have attained from you make my Body, Speech and Mind mature. May I be able to receive empowerment and put the teachings into practice!
4. May I be able to conquer the inner and outer demons of the negative forces and negative obstacles and be able to flourish so that all my wishes come true!
5. May I be able to overcome obstacles and harness all the destructive forces to follow the dharma and protect the sacred teachings!
6. May I be able to effortlessly follow all the sublime teachings of the Buddhs and achieve realization!
7. With all the powers bestowed on to me, may be able to gather the essence of the Boddhichitta!
8. May the great teachings of the Buddha flourish across all lands and sanctify all the Budhha fields!
9. May I be able to emanate multitude forms of benefit to all how needs me!
10. The entire cosmos, which is inseparable from the very nature of the guru, may it be a witness to my swift attainment of Buddhahood.

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11. May all beings live in harmony and happiness and indulge in the practice the Dharma every single moment of their life!
12. May all our wishes and aspirations be spontaneously fulfilled!
13. Having attained all the powers and great wisdom, may I be able to become a perfect Buddha!
14. May all sentient beings and all the beings existing in the six realms and loka be liberated from the cyclic existence of samsara, the great wave of suffering, and quickly attain consummate Buddhahood!

Yeshe Tsogyal recited this prayer to Guru Padmasambhava as he was about to leave Tibet for the land of the rakshasas. Is considered to be her supplication to him. With the recitation of this prayer every month on the *Dakini* day we take part in Yeshe Tsogyal's spiritual journey and also contemplate over the power of the feminine wisdom latent in each one of us.

MYTH OF YESHE TSOGYAL: EMANATION

Trisong Detsen, the great King of Tibet wished to follow and spread the wisdom of the Buddha. He wanted the sacred teachings of the dharma to flourish in the land of Tibet. In his effort to propagate the sacred teachings he invited the great Guru Padmasambhava, the immaculate lotus born to build the Samye monastery and lay down the foundations of the dharma. Padmasambhava established many monasteries after the completion of the Samye monastery and took the sacred teachings of the dharma to great heights. However, he was in search for more to be able to cultivate and grow the seeds of his teachings. He travelled far and wide and remained in the Nirmanakaya field for seven years in search of Sarasvati, the very aspect of Vajrayogini.

Yeshe Tsogyal, the enlightened Buddha, was a daughter of a tradesman when the world had the blessings of the Bodhisattva, Sadaparadita. She attained enlightenment from the teachings of Buddha Dharmadatta and pledged never to be born again. However, during the prosperous time of Buddha Sakyamuni, after roaming around in the Sambhogakaya field for a number of years she decided to take birth as Gangadevi. After her life as Gangadevi she took the form of the Goddess Sarasvati and brought immense relief and betterment to all.

Padmasambhava called the great Vajrayogini his aspiration and the Goddess Sarasvati appeared and answered to the great Lord.

PADMASAMBHAVA:

1. *Hri!*
2. In the sequestered sky of great desire, desireless,
3. And through the rays and beams of deep passion, passionless,
4. Of the blissful vajra of desire beyond desire,
5. The time is now at hand to play the Great Bliss, deep and secret.

Then Sarasvati replied:

SARASVATI:

Ho!

1. Heruka, Hero, Lord of bliss,
2. Great dancer that you are!
3. Dance here if you can!
4. This sacred lotus holds

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5. The greatest of Great Bliss.
6. For in this secret space,
7. There is no grief or pain.
8. And time is now at hand
9. To go down to a wild and savage land.

PADMASAMBHAVA AND SARASVATI:

1. 'Samaya Ho'! cried the Lord;
2. 'Samayastvam!' cried the Lady;
3. 'Samaya Hri!' he said; and she, 'Samaya Tishta'.
4. 'Raho Ham!' he said; and she, 'Ragayami'.

As they addressed the verses the Lord and the Lady united their sacred vajra and the lotus in deep meditation. At this auspicious account the Tathagata Lochana and the four female Buddhas showered them with blessings and praises. The Lord of the Herukas and the sentinels put aside all forms of negativities and obstacles. All the Bodhisattvas prayed for the betterment and good opulence. The vajra Goddesses, the four female gatekeepers, the mamos and the dharmapalas, all took an oath to protect the great teachings of the dharma. In the midst of such a reckoning, from the blissful union of the Lord and the Lady, a wreath of white vowels encircling the letter *E*, and a wreath of red consonants encircling the letter *Wam*, descended on the valley of Dak Seu. The words *SAMAYA GYA GYA GYA*, echoed and vibrated in space.

Archetypal Amplification of the Myth of Yeshe Tsogyal: Emanation (Hypothetical interpretation)

The myth of Emanation is a sacred document of the birth of the divine feminine. The Mother Goddess tradition, which never existed in the land of Tibet, came into recognition. The myth narrates the sacred events, which gave birth to the sacred spirituality of the divine feminine, the lotus born *Dakini*, Yeshe Tsogyal. The myth commences with a note of procreation and continuity. Yeshe Tsogyal is the mother of all Buddhas. The Buddhas of the past, present and future are a reference to all the enlightened beings of the past and of the present. The future also holds the possibility of enlightenment to dawn and new bodies of Buddha to emerge. Hence Yeshe Tsogyal is that feminine aspect of wisdom that benefits individuals to attain realization and liberation. She has been able to take many rebirths because of her good karmic generation as she keeps appearing in various forms in all the three kayas.

According to the Buddhist doctrine, the three kayas symbolize the three levels of Buddha-nature or the nature of existence. This represents the nature of reality and the three manifestations of an enlightened body. In the myth of Emanation, Yeshe Tsogyal manifests herself as Gangadevi and as Sarasvati in the Sambhogakaya Buddha field. Her ability to manifest herself shows her all-encompassing nature. Sambhogakaya is a metaphysical fit in between *Dharmakāya* and Nirmanakaya. *Dharmakāya* is the very essence of reality, the highest form of Buddha-nature. It is the unstained infinite space of sublime awareness. Sambhogakaya can be attained by pure beings that are not dualistic in their form and perception. They comprise of the deities who are in the pure land and are called upon when we commit ourselves to tantric meditation practices.

Yeshe Tsogyal was Gangadevi and Sarasvati in her earlier incarnations. Gangadevi was a princess of the Vijayanagara Empire in the 14th century. She was a learned lady and wrote

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poems in the Sanskrit language. Sarasvati is the embodiment of wisdom itself. She is also called *Vak*, the goddess of speech who gave birth to the Sanskrit language. She is one of the many Indian goddesses who are venerated by the Tibetans. The name Sarasvati means “the one that has the ability to flow”. Any aspect, which has fluidity like speech, thought, music, creativity, and water all come under her realm. In Tibetan Buddhism, she is considered to be the consort of the great Manjushiri and mainly a yidam worshiped as a meditational deity. As a tantric practitioner, individuals are asked to visualize and pray to Sarasvati before one starts with their practice. She is the great mother goddess, a manifestation of Durga and Shakti. K.C Aryan writes, “She is conceived as the Shakti of Shiva, without whom He was deemed to be *Shava*, which means soulless body” (Aryan, 1980, Pg. 15). The Myth explains how Vajrayana Buddhism was introduced in Tibet. With the introduction of Vajrayana, the worship of the pure Shakti, the female sacred energy was placed in prominence. Shakti plays a dynamic function in the Vajrayana Buddhist system and the goddesses who embody the Vajrayana concept of the cosmic mother symbolizes *Prajna* or complete wisdom.

Mother is the life-giver she is the archetypal feminine. She beholds the gate to birth and death. She embodies creation and delivers cosmic life. In Hindu philosophy, this very power of the mother is Shakti, which is essential to be embodied by all women. The power of Shakti comes from the Matrika cult, a cult of the feminine principle, which originated during the Vedic period. Shakti is considered to be the primal feminine energy, which leads to creation. The Matrikas are female goddesses, which radiate their feminine powers to personify their masculine counterpart or the Devas. Varahi is considered to have resonated and emerged out from Varaha. Varahi, with the head of a sow, is one of the Matrika goddesses and she is the Shakti of Varaha. In Vajrayana Buddhism, the great Vajravaraahi finds its origin from Varahi. Guru Padmasambhava was never separated from Vajravaraahi and her emanations. Yeshe Tsogyal is considered to be the wisdom emanation of Vajravaraahi herself. Padmasambhava considered it the right time for an incarnation of Sarasvati to appear in order to propagate the sacred secret teachings to the people of Tibet. The myth of Emanation is a narration of the great Padmasambhava’s quest in search of Sarasvati to unite with her and to beget her incarnation, the wisdom goddess into the land of Tibet.

It is a narration of the process of the deliverance of the feminine wisdom in the Nirmanakaya form.

Padmasambhava travels far and wide. He travels through hundreds of Nirmanakaya Buddha fields for seven years in human form summoning all the *Dakinis* of the four classes, Vajrayogini, wrathful manifestation of Tara and Sarasvati. The four classes of *Dakini* comprise of; the outer *Dakini* who are the *Dakinis* in physical form. They are the one’s who have attained a certain form of realization from tantric practices and have made their physical body ready for their practice. The outer-outer *Dakini* are *Dakinis* in human form. She is a yogini and can also be a consort of a yogi. The inner class of *Dakini* is a mandala *Dakini*. She is a *yidam* and a meditational deity who is an enlightened being. She is summoned by practitioners while meditating to help them attain liberation. The fourth class of *Dakini* is the secret class of *Dakinis*. She is the very nature of reality, which is empty of existence. She is the great *Prajnaparamita*. The word “Prajna” means wisdom and “paramita” means perfection. Hence *Prajnaparamita* is called the teachings of Great Perfection. *Prajnaparamita* is also called the “womb of the Buddhas”. Wisdom comes with the quality of a realized mind and Prajna comes with the realization of “emptiness”. Vajrayogini symbolizes passion and manifests herself to transform all mundane human

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activity into higher spiritual knowledge and growth. The wrathful form of Tara appears in red form and this particular teaching on the Red Tara was considered, to have been transmitted by Padmasambhava to Yeshe Tsogyal and had asked her to hide this teaching as a *terma*.

The myth proceeds with the great king of Tibet, Trisong Detsen wanting to bring into Tibet the sacred doctrine of Buddhism. His desire was to not just to propagate the secret teachings of the great saint Padmasambhava but also to learn the secret teachings himself. As Trisong Detsen is considered to be the physical incarnation of Manjushri, the people of Tibet looked up to him as a God figure. The Tibetan empire under him prospered with a number of reformations. His personal individual journey was also very spiritually oriented, and he is considered to be one of the three Dharma Kings of Tibet.

Manjushri is a bodhisattva, who is an emanation of Vairochana. Vairochana is the great primordial white Buddha who represents the rising Sun in Tibetan Buddhism. The rule of Trisong Detsen brought numerous reformations but the most groundbreaking one was the transformation of the religious belief system of the entire empire. He tried to bring in a new way of thought and a new worldview – “and thereby caused the teachings of the sacred doctrine to rise and shine like the sun” (Dowman, 1996). Trisong Detsen as a manifestation of Manjushri his nature is all-pervasive just like the sun. The king invites the great Padmasambhava and establishes the first Buddhist monastery of Tibet, the Samye Gonpa. Samye formed a landmark in Tibet, the establishment of which grounded the monastic institution and made its faith stronger. The act of the God King’s invitation to Padmasambhava itself is a symbolic form of seeking initiation to the secret teachings.

Initiation is the individual’s transition from one state to another. Its fruition comes when one is able to tread the darkness and be born again. Herein Trisong Detsen seeks for spiritual initiation from the great master. Tibetans enact this initiation ritual when the Gurus provide the Tantric teachings to the people. In teaching ceremonies Tibetan initiations are performed by placing a red band of cloth, which is placed over one’s eyes before the teachings being. One is made to understand that to transform oneself to understand the secret teachings one has to travel into the deep and dark aspects of oneself to come out into the light of realization. As Padmasambhava and Sarasvati unite in sacred union Trisong Detsen is initiated into the secret teachings of Vajrayana.

The myth narrates the verse spoken by Guru Padmasambhava, which was addressed to Sarasvati.

PADMASAMBHAVA:

1. *Hri!*

2. In the secret sky of great desire, desireless,

3. And through the rays and beams of deep passion, passionless,

4. Of the blissful vajra of desire beyond desire,

5. The time is now at hand to play the Great Bliss, deep and secret.

Herein is the Anuttarayoga Tantra, which is considered to be the highest form of yoga tantra in the Vajrayana tradition, “Hri”, means “enlightened heart”. Padmasambhava calls out to Sarasvati as the enlightened being that she already is. Sky symbolizes the feminine. It is the infinite, transcendent space where one experiences the realm of bliss. The secret sky is thus the feminine space the womb of great desire where desire should be conceived as desire-

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less. The sky is that feminine space where creation manifests into forms, where the rays of deep passion should remain passionless. The blissful vajra is adamant in its nature and symbolizes the Vajrayana path, which cannot be destroyed. The Vajra which means the “hard and the mighty one” is a symbol of the phallus. In Indian mythology, vajra was the primary “thunderbolt”, of the sky God Indra. In Vajrayana, the vajra symbolizes a particular deities “method” and “skillful means”. Herein the vajra is symbolic of the perfection of the method of Padmasambhava. In Anuttarayoga Tantra enlightenment is referred to as not just a peaceful or perfect state of existence but also as an experience and a state of great bliss. The Guru herein is reaching out to Sarasvati to appear as the right time had now come to experience the state of blissful existence, which remained unknown.

Sarasvati emerges and answers the Guru:

SARASVATI:

Ho!

1. Heruka, Hero, Lord of bliss,
2. Great dancer that you are!
3. Dance here if you can!
4. This sacred lotus holds
5. The greatest of Great Bliss.
6. For in this secret space,
7. There is no grief or pain.
8. And time is now at hand
9. To go down to a wild and savage land.

Ho! She cries out, an expression, which means “please listen”. Heruka means “emptiness of all phenomenon”, which she is referring to the nature of the mind the great Hero, Padmasambhava possesses. She refers to him as the great dancer. The great dancer in Vajrayana is one who enjoys freedom and is an exemplar of free spiritual expression. One who has the ability to demonstrate through his rhythmic movement, spiritual freedom, and the bliss that one seeks to receive. She calls upon Padmasambhava to dance in tantric union with her. The sacred lotus herein symbolizes the female vagina. It is that feminine symbol that represents the space of Buddha-dharma transmission. The lotus represents love, purity and compassion. In its essence, the lotus, which is also called “kamala”, symbolizes the tantric feminine aspects of beauty, passion, sexual desire and intercourse. The vajra is in polarity to the lotus. The lotus is like the vulva, which is delicate and feminine, the vajra is hard, composite and penetrative. The union of the vajra and the lotus symbolize the concretization of the concepts of the method from the masculine and wisdom from the feminine lotus. In this sacred space of the lotus, one can find great bliss where the phenomenal experiences of pain and grief cease to exist. With such profound sacred union time had come to go down to the savage land. Herein the savage land is being referred to Tibet, as it was considered to be a barbaric land with the absence of the secret teachings of Buddhism.

PADMASAMBHAVA AND SARASVATI:

1. ‘Samaya Ho!’ cried the Lord;
2. ‘Samayastvam!’ cried the Lady;
3. ‘Samaya Hri!’ he said; and she, ‘Samaya Tishta’.
4. ‘Raho Ham!’ he said; and she, ‘Ragayami’.

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“Samaya”, in Sanskrit means bond or commitment. Herein with the phrase “Samaya Ho”, Padmasambhava makes his commitment to Sarasvati. “Samayastvam”, means the being that made the commitment. “Samaya Hri”, means the essence of the commitment, which is strong “Samaya Tishta”, means may this commitment be established. The terms “Raho Ham” and “Ragayami”, is an expression, which means may this passion remain on firm grounds.

The Guru and the Lady unite in tantric union and as they unite the celestial Buddhas and deities gather to witness the sacred union. The five Buddha *Dakinis*, Lord Heruka, the Bodhisattvas of good fortune, the great sentinels, the four female keepers of the gate, the mamos and the dharmapals from a cosmic assemblage. The nexus of the sacred sexual tantric practice is the Ganachakra. It is when all the yogis’ yoginis and celestials come together that the attainment of the essence of the masculine method and the feminine wisdom in union consolidate to essentially manifest itself. This sacred sexual union, in the presence of the Ganachakra, symbolizes the stage of creation. The subsequent manifestation of the letters *E* and *Wam* symbolically represents the final culmination of the stage of perfection in Tantric union. The red letter *E* means to support or to embrace. It symbolically represents the vagina or the “bhaga”. The white letter *Wam* represents the masculine phallus. *E* is the “realm of space”, where everything abides, arises and ceases. It is the triangle the feminine lotus. *Wam* is the Guru, the Vajrasattava, the great vajra or *dorje*. The colors red and white also has symbolic significance. White represents the life force and the color red represents consciousness. “The red blood suggests the burning interior power of women, primal *matrix*, which can become babies, milk, passion and fierceness, primal lava of life”. (Allione, 1984)

The *E* is the mother and the *Wam* the father, which is dependent on each other for the consequential flow of the drop. *Wam* forms the ground of the great bliss for the manifestation of the sacred drop. The sacred drop herein begets emanation. The sacred sexual union represents the cosmic mandala for the transmission of the feminine and masculine essence of method and wisdom into a single drop of sacred essence, which beholds the birth of wisdom emanations. The *E* herein is the sacred void and *Wam*, the vajra of compassion. Thus the drop which falls on the land of Tibet is the adamantine culmination of void-ness and compassion. This very essence gives birth to new life and creation unfolds in Drak Seu, the place where Yeshe Tsogyal was born. The myth narrates a sacred history of how enlightenment was manifested in the form of wisdom embodied by Yeshe Tsogyal.

The Myth provides us with a glimpse of the esoteric Buddhist Tantric practice, where sexual transformation is the essential synthesis of sexual union. The sexual energy of Man represents the interplay of the inner cosmic energy. The energy of the great Guru and the Lady bestows cosmic transformational dimensions to the disciples practicing tantra. The individuals on the path of practicing tantra are on the path to transformation by visualizing the union of the Guru and the *Yidam* deity. Sexual intercourse in Vajrayana is the bliss, which one needs to harness in order to attain spiritual growth. This divine ecstasy is the ground for transformation to take place within the individual and give birth to a new form of consciousness and awareness in the sense of their being. The polar opposite energies of the feminine and the masculine give birth to a new order of realization. The feminine energy is considered to be like the nature of the sky and thus heavenly, the masculine energy is considered to be grounded and thus, earthy. The interplay of such opposite energies has resulted in the manifestation of the micro and macrocosmic structure of the world.

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In the Seven Sermons to the Dead, Carl Jung writes in *Sermo V*, “The world of the gods is made manifest in spirituality and in sexuality. The celestial ones appear in spirituality, the earthly in sexuality. Spirituality conceives and embraces. It is womanlike and therefore we call it *MATER COELESTIS*, the celestial mother. Sexuality engenders and creates. It is manlike, and therefore we call it *PHALLOS* the earthly father” (Shamdasani, 2009).

The Sexual interplay of the Gods engenders spiritual dimensions. In Vajrayana, this interplay is a primordial structure provided to man to realize one’s spiritual locus. Sexuality is sacred in its essence and beholds the semblance and the power to open channels for spiritual renewal. *E* of the feminine has the power to embrace, hence spirituality, which is feminine in its nature embraces and encompasses. *Wam*, the phallus engenders creation. The union of these two cosmic polar opposite energy manages to create a completely new spiritual field, which was introduced as a new form of spiritual, thought in the land of Tibet.

Spirituality and sexuality form the two opposing forces of energy, a form of duality, which represents the very structure of our *psyche*. Stephan Hoeller (1982), in “The Gnostic Jung”, explains the opposing forces of “matter” and “spirit”, as the representation of sexuality and spirituality in man. He exemplifies Carl Jung’s concept of the dual aspects of man’s *psyche*. Matter and Spirit are two essential compositions, which bring wholeness to one’s existence. Similarly, spirituality and sexuality form the two quintessential aspects, which cannot exist in seclusion from the other. The Physical body forms the mass and the matter, which is drawn towards sexuality. The spirit has the qualities of spirituality, which is latent in it. It is the interaction of these two opposite forces, which eventually gives birth to civilization and culture. The masculine matter, which is methodic and structural, requires the contra-sexual intuitive, wisdom of the feminine to deliver the creation aspects of consciousness.

The phrase, “SAMAYA GYA GYA GYA”, means the commitment has been sealed. This phrase symbolizes the “Great Seal” in Vajrayana. This “Great Seal”, represents the seal of wisdom, a proclamation that wisdom has been attained and complete realization has been achieved. The Great seal establishes the very commitment of Padmasambhava towards the land and the birth of the wisdom *Dakini*. “The primordial feminine moves through the dimension of light and finally into a female form. This human form might be called yogini or *Dakini*” (Allione, 1984).

As the emanation of the embodiment of the enlightened feminine, Yeshe Tsogyal is the manifestation of supreme wisdom, the *Yum* and Guru Padmasambhava her *Yab*. The *Yab* and *Yum* form the two crucial key axis of an enlightened mind. The *Dakini* day is a monthly reminder for the cultivation of the wisdom axis with us for realization and life experiences to blossom in one’s spiritual journey to liberation.

CONCLUSION

The solemn day of *Dakini* is a monthly recollection of Yeshe Tsogyal in the Tibetan calendar. The day is marked with prayers dedicated to Yeshe Tsogyal. Yeshe Tsogyal is the formless Body of Truth, *Dharmakāya*. As *Sambhagakaya*, She blesses the seeker with dreams, visions, and inspirations in meditations. Being *Nirmanakaya*, she has manifold faces and manifestations, as our daily context and situations, bestowing meaningfulness, newness, and richness in our ordinary days. In summation, Yeshe Tsogyal is the feminine essence of Buddhahood. The chapter presents the interpretation of the myth of Yeshe Tsogyal, which narrates the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet and propagation of the teaching of Secret

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Mantra by Padmasambhava in sacred union with Yeshe Tsogyal. The chapter contemplates on the mythical-mystical image of *Yab* and *Yum* from the perspective of women, as she is the wisdom incarnate of the *Dakini*.

Spiritual experience is an aspect, which remains difficult to express, as an individual's spiritual journey is an inner extremely personal path. Such experiences are to be experienced and embraced by the individual taking the journey. In Tibetan Buddhism, such spiritual experiences are empowered by not just the masculine but also the feminine essence of wisdom. This luminous spiritual essence of Buddhahood is the *Dakini*, which captivates all in their journey towards realization and liberation. The myth of Yeshe Tsogyal is an account of how a *Dakini*, in *Nirmanakaya* form, was born to embody the very nature of Buddhahood and transform the notion of spirituality in Tibetan Buddhism. The myth is also an expression and an understanding of the underlying meaning and nature of the *Dakini* and its significance to all, women and men alike who are on a personal spiritual path. According to Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, "our experience of the phenomenal world revolves around the experience of dualities of either good or bad, suffering or pleasure, darkness or light, which essentially dwells on a fundamental basic ground. This ground in Tibetan Buddhism is called the mother principle. This cosmic structure is neither male nor female, but because of its quality of fertility, it is regarded as feminine" (Allione, 1984). Thus, the *Dakini* forms an essential aspect of spirituality in Tibetan Buddhism, the very fertile grounds of transformation. It encapsulates our capability both known and the unknown, towards the understanding of various dimensions of the self. The myth is one such account of the *Dakini*, Yeshe Tsogyal, which gives us an overview of the feminine understanding of Buddhahood and the notion of *Yab-Yum* in Tibetan Buddhism. There are many such recorded accounts of *Dakinis*' whose life experience open up deeper dimensions of the *Dakini* lore. The myth of Yeshe Tsogyal and her life experience is an account, which narrates her arduous journey in her path towards realization and her manifestation as a *Dakini*. As she manifests in various forms, the *Dakini* energy resides within us, waiting to be acknowledged and explored. The experience of spiritual awakening lies latent in the manifestation of the *Dakini* within.

Dakini is not just an external emanation or an external being that one should be in search for. *Dakini* is the feminine principle alive in each of us. It the culmination of the bio-psycho-socio principle in us that keeps humanity balanced and wholesome. It is that energy within that once realized and understood, makes us a fully functioning individual who has the capacity to individuate.

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