AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY ON THE ADOPTION OF SYMBOLIC DHARMA IN TANTRIC BUDDHISM

Karapikkada Sobitha*, Dapane Chandaratana and Rideegama Wanarathana
Bhikṣu University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
karapikkadasobitha@gmail.com

Tantric Buddhism recognized as one of the major philosophical schools in Buddhism which was later period developed as Vajrayāna and Mantrayāna. The etymologically term tantra derived from the prefix त्रा which means the immeasurable strength of knowledge. However, in later period with the development of its doctrinal factors above meaning of the term tantra turned into the meaning as “mystic doctrine”. Tantric Buddhism greatly influenced by Mahayana Buddhist Philosophy. One of specific characteristics of Tantric Buddhism is that it explained philosophical factors by using symbols. Some basic symbolic doctrines introduced by tantric Buddhist teachers are charms (mantra), signets (mudra), circuits (mandala), spell (dārani) etc. In this context, Mantra was made by them summarizing traditional doctrinal factors and long sutras. For example AsāsahasrikāPrajñaparamitaSūtra summarized as Prajñaparamitamantra by using world praṇī. Beside above Sūtra, many other Sūtra have summarized by using their theory of mantra. The words om,āḥ,hūṃ,svā and hāṃe such logarithmic terms of Sutras were used when they chant mantra. They employed mudra to symbolize some tangible mysterious object. Especially mantra used to show the power of the sound and mudra employed to show the power of tangible mysterious things. These mudras have shown up by using fingers and toes. Some well known such symbols which have mysterious meaning are Karmamudra, Dharma mudra, Samaya mudra and Mahamudra. Here mandala means circuitous, quadrilateral and different shape of forms. In the mudras there are mystic drawings and arts that interpret the doctrinal facts of Tantric Buddhism. According to the Tantric Buddhism, to develop and cultivate the concentration it is much essential to use that mandala. Yogic practices, also known as Sādhy Dharma is fundamental teaching of tantric Buddhism. There are four basic Yogic practices as hata, laya, mantra and raja. Besides above symbols and stamps, there are some other specific signs in tantric Buddhism which represent the different kinds of philosophical teachings of tantric Buddhism. Thus, tantric Buddhism is very distinctive philosophical school that introduces novel philosophical trends to world. Even today some doctrines of Tantric Buddhism are used by Buddhist people in the worldwide. In this research Data was collected referring library and E-library. The data from the primary and secondary sources related to the field collected through the libraries and discussed with scholars in the field. The data analysis method of the research is descriptive method

Keywords: Symbolic Dharma, Tantric Buddhism, Mantra, Mudra, Dharani.