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THE MIRROR-LIKE KNOWLEDGE IN MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHIST LITERATURE

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The five knowledges of which the mirror-like one is the first constitute one of the most important topics of Mahāyāna Buddhism, because four of them are considered to be the content of Enlightenment, namely the mirror-like knowledge (*ādarśa-jñāna*); and the three knowledges called equality (*samatā-jñ.*), discriminative (*pratyavekṣaṇā-jñ.*), and procedure-of-duty (*krtyānuṣṭhāna-jñ.*).¹ The fifth knowledge is the pure Dharmadhātu knowledge, which is the location of the other four.² Of the two main philosophical schools of the Mahāyāna, it is the Yogācāra rather than the Mādhyamika that is mainly responsible for this terminology, because the mirror usually symbolizes the mind and this fact especially suits the idealistic Yogācāra school. Therefore, most of the commentarial information about the five knowledges stems from authors who are more or less following the Yogācāra. However, in the syncretic Buddhist Tantra works, which make use of both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika passages, the five knowledges are frequently mentioned. Also, in the late Indian period of Buddhism, nominally Mādhyamika authors, such as Abhayākaragupta,³ wrote works that incorporate such topics as the five knowledges.

1. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, tr., *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, Tome II (Paris, 1929), p. 681.

2. For the word *dharmadhātu*, see *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, II, p. 751-4; and also in terms of 'Thusness' (*tathatā*), *ibid*, p. 658-660. Avoiding the heavy terminology, Ratnākaraśānti writes in his *Śrīguhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi-ṭīkā* (Tohoku Catalog No. 1871; Derge Tanjur, Rgyud, Vol. Ni. f. 68a-4): 'Dharmadhātu is the place where there is no diversity, because it is explained as the single taste (*ekarasa*) in voidness (*śūnyatā*)' (/ chos kyi dbyiṅs ni gaṅ du yaṅ dbye ba yod pa ma yin te / stoṅ pa ṅid du ro gcig pa ṅid do zhes bśad pa yin pas /). For the Dharmadhātu knowledge, cf. *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, tr. by F.D. Lessing and Alex Wayman (The Hague, 1968), p. 222: it is where the other four knowledges are and what they know.

3. I have in mind especially his *Munimatālamkāra*, which is preserved in Tibetan translation in the Mādhyamika (Dbu-ma) section of the Tanjur.

As the Indian Yogācāra school developed, the five knowledges were doctrinally combined with the theory of ‘revolution’ (*parāvṛtti*) of the set of eight *vijñānas*. The mirror-like knowledge was said to be the ‘revolution’ of the ‘store-consciousness basis’ (*ālayavijñānāśraya*), which is the eighth *vijñāna* in the system.⁴ In the Tantra schools, the Yogatantra followers adopted this Yogācāra method of deriving the four knowledges.⁵ In the *Guhyasamājatantra* system of the Anuttarayogatantra the five knowledges correspond to the purified five personality aggregates (*skandha*);⁶ here the mirror-like knowledge corresponds to the personality aggregate of form (*rūpa-skandha*), and in one tantric passage is said to come from the ‘revolution’ of the aggregate of form.⁷

That the first one, the mirror-like, enables one to avoid the ‘Hīnayāna’ Nirvāṇa is the suggestion of the Mahāyāna version of the *Parinirvāṇa-sūtra* in this passage, which does not, however, use the word *jñāna*:⁸ ‘With the attainment of the mirror-like *samādhi*, one overcomes the non-returnee existence of the “Pure Abodes”.’ In early Buddhism, the ‘non-returnee existence’ (*anāgamin*) was tantamount to Nirvāṇa.⁹ The ‘Pure Abodes’ are located in Abhidharma

4. *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, p. 684–5 (based on the *Buddhabhūmiśāstra*).

5. So we find in Padmavajra’s *Tantrārthāvatāravākhyāna*, a work much cited in the notes to the Yogatantra section of *Mkhas grub rje’s Fundamentals* ... In the Derge Tanjur edition of Padmavajra’s work, the derivation of the four knowledges according to Yogācāra is found f. 208a–7, ff.

6. This type of correspondence is shown from primary sources in my manuscript *Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra; the Arcane Lore of Forty Verses*, in press of Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta.

7. Tsoñ-kha-pa’s *Dbañ gi don gyi de ñid rab tu gsal ba*, Peking Tibetan Tripitaka (in Japanese photographic edition, hereafter abbreviated as PTT), Vol. 160, p. 111–5.

8. In the edition of the Narthang Kanjur, Vol. Ka, f. 361a–5,6, among the twenty-five *samādhis* that respectively overcome the twenty-five kinds of existence (*bhava*, T. *srid pa*): / me loñ lta buñi tiñ ñe ñdzin thob pas ni gtsañ mañi ris lan gcig phyir mi ldog pañi srid pa bcom /.

9. The *Ākañkheyyasutta* of the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. I, including: ‘By the total destruction of the five fetters (*samyojana*) that bind one to the lower world, may I be of spontaneous uprising, one who has attained complete Nirvāṇa there (*tattha-parinibbāyī*), not liable to return from that world ...’

Buddhism at the top of the Realm of Form among the three realms;¹⁰ and it is of interest to note this version of the *Parinirvāṇa-sūtra* suggesting that the early type of Nirvāṇa occurred in those abodes, because the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* locates the Complete Enlightenment of the Buddha in the body called Saṃbhogakāya in the Akaniṣṭha heaven at the very summit of the Pure Abodes.¹¹

The explanation by Buddhaguhya of the term 'mirror-like' relates this knowledge to the Dharmadhātu knowledge:¹²

'That is called Tathāgata Arhat Samyaksambuddha. That is the utterly pure Dharmadhātu knowledge, the errorless, faultless self-existent true nature (*dharmatā*) as it really is. The meaning of that, is the mirror-like knowledge. For example, just as the image in a mirror arises free from discursive thought, so also, when one understands the true nature of the mirror-like knowledge and proceeds to the realm of wisdom (*vidyā-dhātu*), he is the *tantra* (= *saṃtāna*, stream of consciousness) as the disk (*maṇḍala*) of illustrious mind, and so there is the Dharmakāya.'

The intention of that passage is to treat the pure mind (*citta*) as a mirror disk reflecting the wisdom of the Dharmadhātu knowledge. This is more clearly stated by Buddhaśrījñāna in his *Ātma-sādhana-avatāranāma*:¹³

'Since (when the mind) is free from adventitious defilements, it is radiant (*prabhāsvara*); and because it is the cause of generating the other (three) knowledges, it is (called) the mirror-like knowledge.'

According to the summary in the Yogācāra work *Mahāyāna-Sūtrā-*

10. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, tr., *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, Troisième Chapitre (Paris, 1926), p. 2.

11. See *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals ...*, p. 22-3, for the *Laṅkāvatāra* verse as well as for the position that there is still another Akaniṣṭha heaven constituting a Buddha field beyond the Akaniṣṭha of the Pure Abodes.

12. Buddhaguhya's *Durgati-pariśodhanārtha-vyañjana-vṛtti* (PTT, Vol. 76, p. 15-4). The implication of Buddhaguhya's passage is to posit two stages: a. attainment of the mirror-like knowledge, and b. living in a new exalted status. The two stages are referred to in the native Tibetan work *Rab tu gnas paḥi cho ga lag len du dril ba dge legs rgya mtshoḥi char ḥbebs zhes bya ba*, by Skal-bzan-thub-bstan, f. 19a-7: 'Having utterly purified the ocean of knowledge with the great ocean of mirror-like knowledge, may the good fortune of enjoying unimpeded the pure dharmas, bring about purity of (the subtlest) obscuration.' The same verse occurs in the work *Tshe chog ḥchi med ḥdod ḥjo dbaṅ gi rgyal po*, f. 15a-b.

13. PTT, Vol. 65, p. 29-5.

laṃkāra (IX, 67–69)¹⁴ the non-moving (*acala*) mirror-like knowledge is the basis for the moving (*cala*) triad of knowledges. It is a great mine of knowledge both by being the motive or occasion (*nimitta*) for the knowledge triad, and by being the reflected image (*pratibimba*) of the Saṃbhogabuddhahood's knowledge (which other texts call the pure Dharmadhātu knowledge). Also, it is free from the idea of 'mine' and of any configuration (*ākāra*, here = *ākṛti*); it is uninterrupted, and being free from obscuration is not deluded regarding any knowable.

Another Yogācāra work, the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* of Hsüan-tsang, has also collected considerable data. The mirror-like knowledge is foreign to all discursive thought (*vikalpa*) when its object is Thusness and is the support and receptacle of the absolute Buddha natures or seeds and has the activity of manifesting the Svasaṃbhogakāya with its field. It is also the 'afterwards obtained' knowledge described in the *Buddhabhūmisūtra* when in it, like a grand mirror, are revealed the images of all forms, in particular the images of all the eighteen sense bases. The mirror-like knowledge comes from the revolution (*parāvṛtti*) of the 'store consciousness' (*ālayavijñāna*) and begins at the moment of the diamond-like *samādhi* (*vajropama-samādhi*) or else it begins in the liberating path (*vimukti-mārga*) that follows the diamond-like *samādhi*.¹⁵

The tantric work by Smṛtijñānakīrti, a commentary on the *Caturdevatāparipṛcchā*, has consistent remarks:¹⁶

'Among them, the mirror-like knowledge is the revolution of the *ālaya* (*vijñāna*), Thusness, the nature of the ten powers, the self-existence of the adamant Mind of Enlightenment (*bodhicitta*). What dispels the obscuration of the knowable is the mirror-like knowledge, because, for example, in the same way as the offering material appears in a mirror, so one understands all dharmas to appear in *dharmatā* (= *dharma-dhātu*).'

14. Sylvain Lévi, ed., *Asaṅga. Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra* (Paris, 1907).

15. *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, p. 685–6.

16. *Caturdevatā-paripṛcchā-vyākhyāna-upadeśa-pauṣṭika-nāma*, PTT, Vol. 66, p. 159–1.

That point about the reflection of offering materials seems to be explained in Buddhaśrījñāna's *Samantabhadra-nāma-sādhana* when he says that the mirror-like knowledge is associated with the 'ancillaries of enlightenment' (*bodhyaṅga*)¹⁷ symbolized by the offerings.¹⁸ This suggests that the offerings are regularly reflected in a mirror to symbolize the reflection of the pure natures in a mind that is clear like a mirror.

Since the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* assigns the 'revolution of the store-consciousness basis' to the Eighth,¹⁹ such a tradition intends the mirror-like knowledge at the Eighth Stage. Along the same lines is Abhayākaragupta's definition:²⁰ 'The *yoga* in that phase has the nature of knowledge which unites the natures of insight (*prajñā*) and the means (*upāya*), and because it is the freedom from the defilement and dirt of lust and so on as well as the cause in particular of the other (*three*) knowledges, it has the nature of mirror-like knowledge.' In the theory of the Bodhisattva stages according to the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*,²¹ the Seventh Stage inaugurates the 'skillful means' (*upāyakaūśalya*) which unites the five 'means' perfections (*pāramitā*) prevalent on the first five Stages with the 'insight' perfection prevalent on the Sixth

17. For the seven ancillaries or branches of enlightenment according to Asaṅga, cf. Alex Wayman, *Analysis of the Śrāvakabhūmi Manuscript*, University of California Publications in Classical Philology, Berkeley, 1961, p. 101.

18. Buddhaśrījñāna's work, PTT, Vol. 65, p. 19-5.

19. This theory is associated with the belief in 'bodies made of mind' (*manomaya-kāya*), as summarized, Alex Wayman, 'Studies in Yama and Māra,' *Indo-Iranian Journal*, III, 1959, Nrs. 1-2, p. 119: 'The Sanskrit text (136.7, f.) sets forth three *manomaya-kāya*: (1) the mental body with stabilization in the pleasure of *samādhi* (*samādhisukhasamāpatti-manomaya*); (2) the mental body which completely comprehends the intrinsic nature of the *dharma*s (*dharmasvabhāvāva-bodha-manomaya*); (3) the mental body which performs the instigations natural to its class (*nikāya-sahajasamskāra-kriyāmanomaya*). The commentary by Jñānavajra shows that the first of these, prevalent up through the Seventh Bodhisattva Stage, does not involve transmutation of the basis (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*) of the eightfold set of perceptions (*viññāna*). The second is prevalent on the Eighth or Superior Stage of the Bodhisattva, and here, with a body comparable to that (of the Buddhas) one proceeds to all the Buddha Realms. The third is natural to the class of Buddhas.'

20. *Munimatālaṅkāra*, PTT, Vol. 101, p. 202-1.

21. Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (London, 1932), p. 283-291.

Stage. Thus, the conclusion of the Seventh Stage is the culmination of purging defilements (*kleśa*) from consciousness, which in mirror symbolism is referred to as the complete cleaning of the mirror.

In the Eighth Stage regularly called 'Motionless' (*acala*), according to the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* the Bodhisattva lives in a 'body made of mind' (*manomaya-kāya*) which is like a current of dreams. Abhayākaragupta²² mentions that here the Bodhisattva obtains the early state of the Buddha Eye and of the six supernormal faculties, all of which are brought to fulfillment on the later, usually Eleventh, Buddha Stage. This must be the reason that Ratnākaraśānti²³ calls the mirror-like knowledge the 'wish-granting jewel' (*cintāmaṇi*), while Celupā²⁴ states that it involves non-moving or suspended *karma* (= *āniñjya-saṃskāra*)²⁵ and grants occult success (*siddhi*) to all the rites.²⁶ The non-moving *karma* seems also intended by the early Tibetan author Dpal-brtsegs²⁷

22. *Munimatālaṅkāra*, PTT, Vol. 101, p. 239-5. Abhayākaragupta's meaning is further shown in his later passage (*Ibid.*, p. 235-1): 'The mirror-like knowledge is where consciousness of the infinite three realms and the "other one" – all the finest atoms of substance – come together individually. The objective domain (*viśaya*) which is distant and (called) the "other one", and temporal states of past, present, and future (there) come together individually, just as a reflected image appears vividly in a mirror.' (/me loñ lta buḥi ye śes ni gañ la mthaḥ yas paḥi khams gsum paḥi sems dañ cig śos kyi dños po thams cad rdul phra rab so so ba / ji ltar thag riñ ba dañ cig śos kyi yul dañ ḥdas pa dañ ma ḥoñs pa dañ da ltar byuñ baḥi dus bzhin gnas skabs so so ba me loñ la gzugs brñan bzhin du gsal bar so sor snañ ba /).

23. Ratnākaraśānti's *Kusumāñjali-guhyasamāja-nibandha-nāma*, PTT, Vol. 64, p. 153-4.

24. Celupā (Celuka)'s *Ratnavṛkṣa-nāma-rahasya-samāja-vṛtti*, PTT, Vol. 63, p. 210-5.

25. Non-moving or unperturbable *saṃskāras* is equivalent to one-pointedness of mind in Yoga attainment according to the 'calming' (*śamatha*) section of Tsoñ-kha-pa's *Lam rim chen mo*; also that is one of the three varieties of *saṃskāra* as second member of Dependent Origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*), according to my manuscript translation of this sub-section of Tsoñ-kha-pa's work: 'Motivation (*saṃskāra*) is *karma*, and besides is the demeritorious *karma* that casts one in evil destiny as well as the *karma* that casts one in good destiny. The latter is also of two kinds: the meritorious *karma* that casts one in the good destiny of the realm of desire, and the motionless (*āniñjya*) *karma* that casts one in the good destiny of the higher realms.'

26. In this literature the rites intended to have *siddhis* are four in number and are associated with the burnt offering (*homa*), as in F. D. Lessing, *Yung-Ho-Kung* (Stockholm, 1942), p. 150-1.

27. Dpal-brtsegs' *Chos kyi rnam graṅs kyi brjed byañ*, PTT, Vol. 145, p. 128-3. This author (early ninth century, A.D.) was a celebrated translator in the early diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet, when the translators were the chief Tibetan authorities on Buddhism.

when he mentions that the voidness of the Dharmadhātu with meaning of non-duality of all dharmas is the *karma* of the mirror-like knowledge. Also Akṣobhya, whose name means 'unperturbable' is frequently the Buddha corresponding to the mirror-like knowledge. The non-moving character of the mirror-like knowledge along with non-dual natures may be the implication of Śrī Lakṣmī's comment that the mirror-like knowledge is unchanging (i.e. it is a faithful reflection) in a clear mirror.²⁸

Vajravārman²⁹ states that the mirror-like knowledge occasioned at the culmination of insight (*prajñā*) eliminates all evil destiny. This is consistent with the theory of the Bodhisattva path that starting with the Eighth Stage the Bodhisattva is 'irreversible' (*avaivartika*).³⁰ The function of the mirror-like knowledge attributed to it by Vajravārman is equivalent to the terminology in ancient Buddhism, 'mirror of the law' (in Pāli, *dhammādāsa*):³¹

'Therefore, Ānanda, in this world I will reveal the representation of the law called "mirror of the law", possessed of which a noble disciple planning would predict for self or selves: "With no more sojourns in hell, no more animal birth, no more realm of the hungry ghosts, no more disaster, evil destiny, ruin – I have entered the stream, not liable to purgatory, assured, proceeding towards enlightenment."'

The question is raised as to what is this 'mirror of the dharma', and the answer given in terms of the four kinds of 'faith with understanding' (Pāli, *avecca-pasāda*, Skt., *avetya-prasāda*), toward the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and toward the moral rules dear to the nobles.³²

28. Śrī-Lakṣmī's *Pañcakrama-ṭikā-kramārtha-prakāśikā*, PTT, Vol. 63, p. 29-1.

29. Vajravārman's *Bhagavat-sarvadurgati-pariśodhana ... vyākhyā-sundarālaṃkāra-nāma*, PTT, Vol. 76, p. 133-5.

30. Har Dayal (*op. cit.*), p. 275.

31. *Parinibbāna-sutta*, D. ii. 95; cf. M. iii. 67; = S.v. 357-60. / tasmāt ihānanda, dhammādāsaṃ nāma dhammapariyāyaṃ desessāmi yena samannāgato ariyasāvako ākaṅkhamāno attano va attānaṃ vyākareyya – 'khīṇanirayomhi khīṇatiracchānayoṇi khīṇapettvīsayo khīṇāpāyaduggativinipāto sotāpannohamasmi avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo' ti /.

32. The expression 'dharma-mirror' occurs in Śamathadeva's commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa* (Samāpatti chapter), PTT, Vol. 118, p. 275-2. The expression 'dharma-darpaṇa' (mirror of righteousness) occurs in Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* (Story of Sutasoma, XXXI), text, p. 220, verse 68.

There is an important Buddhist tantric text called the *Ārya-mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgīti*, which has commentaries in the Yoga-tantra manner and in the Anuttarayoga-tantra manner,³³ and which includes individual chapters for each of the five knowledges. Since a rich commentarial literature on this Tantra was translated into the Tibetan language and is extant in the collection called the Tanjur, it is easy to pick out comments on the mirror-like knowledge section of that Tantra.³⁴ Among the Yoga-tantra type commentaries, I wish to signal Candrabhadrakīrti's *Ārya-mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgīti-nāma-vṛtti*³⁵ which assigns explanations for the four knowledges (omitting Dharmadhātu knowledge) to each one of sixteen Bodhisattvas in the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala of the Yoga-tantra.³⁶ These sixteen Bodhisattvas are of celestial type, and certainly to be assigned to the last three of the ten Bodhisattva Stages in order to mean those four knowledges. The names of the sixteen with their corresponding explanation of the mirror-like knowledge follow :

1. Vajrasattva – revolution of the store-consciousness basis.
2. Vajrarāja – doing exactly as one says he will.
3. Vajrarāga – freedom from perceiver (*grāhaka*) and thing perceived (*grāhya*).
4. Vajrasādhu – having the lion's roar of non-self.
5. Vajraratna – going everywhere, because non-self is unimpeded.
6. Vajratejas – victorious, because it is the fruit of separation.
7. Vajraketu – guru of the host and lord of the host, because it is the basis of all knowledge.
8. Vajrahāsa – of great power.
9. Vajradharma – nobility of word.
10. Vajratikṣṇa – telling the truth.
11. Vajrahetu³⁷ – because it is *anāgāmin* and bound.³⁸

33. See *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals ...* for further information.

34. Namely, the tenth section, entitled *Ādarśajñānastutigāthā*.

35. PTT, Vol. 75, p. 6–5 to p. 7–3.

36. See Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *Niṣpannayogāvalī of Mahāpaṇḍita Abhayākara Gupta*, (Baroda, 1949, p. 54–55) for the list of 16 names as part of this *maṇḍala*.

37. But the Tibetan text, p. 7–2, lines 4, 5, has *rdo rje ḥkhor lo* = Vajracakra, instead of an equivalent to Vajrahetu.

38. The Tibetan is *phyir mi ldog pa ste btags pas na me loñ lta buḥo*. We might expect the 'non-returnee' here to be of the old Buddhist variety, associated with the early notion of

12. Vajrabhāṣa – ...³⁹
 13. Vajrakarma – the Arhat's destruction of fluxes, because it destroys the hindrances of defilement and of the knowable (*kleśajñeyāvaraṇa*).
 14. Vajrarakṣa – the perfection of elimination, by acquirement of the confidences.
 15. Vajrayakṣa – omniscience, called 'equipped with wisdom and good motion' (*vidyā-caraṇa-sampanna*).
 16. Vajrasandhi – non-adhering to a 'mine' (*ātmiya*).

Some of those identifications are undoubtedly forced, but that author probably tried to get all the data at his command about the mirror-like knowledge into the list.

Smṛtijñānakīrti's commentary on the same work, the *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgīti-lakṣa-bhāṣya* has a different way of talking about the mirror-like knowledge:⁴⁰ 'When there is the mirror-like knowledge of *dharma* (the object), the knowledge intuiting the void arises. When there is the mirror-like (knowledge) of *dharmin* (the subject), there is a turning away, the turning away of the knowledge which intuits that (void). Then (again) depending on the mirror-like knowledge of voidness, one depends on the adamant (offering) goddess (namely,

Nirvāṇa. However, there is also a Mahāyāna type of 'non-returnee' (*anāgāmin*), as described by Nalinaksha Dutt, *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (London, 1934), Introduction, p. xvi: 'There are bodhisattvas possessed of six abhijñās, who are not reborn in Kāma, Rūpa and Ārūpya dhātus. They pass from one Buddhakṣetra to another, honouring and worshipping Buddhas. They may pass to a Buddhakṣetra, where there are no Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, or where the length of life is immeasurable or where no such words as Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha have ever been heard. There they preach the greatness of the three Ratnas. Vanishing from these places they appear again in the places where Buddhas exist. These are called Anāgāmis.' That this Mahāyāna kind is intended here is apparently borne out by the explanations of the other knowledges for this same celestial Bodhisattva: 'Equality (knowledge) because the *anāgāmin* is unimpeded; Discriminative (knowledge) because not shared by the Pratyekabuddha; Procedure-of-Duty (knowledge) because they guide diverse retinues' (*phyir mi ḥoñ ba ni thogs pa med pas na mñam pa ñid do / bse ru tshul gyi thun moñ ma yin paḥi phyir so sor kun tu rtog paḥo / so sor ḥkhor rñams ḥdren pas na bya ba nan tan te ...*).

39. The text lacks explanation in this case for both the Mirror-like and the Equality knowledges. The Discriminative one is 'arising from diverse ways of deliverance'; and the Procedure-of-Duty one is 'single cause of the great elements'.

40. PTT, Vol. 75, p. 38-5: / chos me loñ lta buḥi ye śes de yod pas de stoñ par śes paḥi śes pa ḥbyuñ / chos can me loñ lta bu de / log na de śes paḥi śes pa ldog / de nas stoñ pa ñid de me loñ lta bu la rag las pas sems ma rdo rje ma rag las pas mi bskyod pa rag las paḥo /.

She the Diamond Incense, Vajradhūpā), and accordingly depends on the Buddha Akṣobhya.’ The text stipulates that one does similarly for the other three.⁴¹

In the present essay it would be a digression to dilate upon the other knowledges. However, it may serve to further explain the mirror-like knowledge to present briefly some classifications with the other knowledges. Smṛtijñānakīrti, in the same work, has these correspondences: ⁴²

Knowledge (jñāna)	Body (kāya)	Eye (cakṣus)	Family (kula)	Buddha
Discriminative	Sambhoga-	Insight (prajñā)	Padma	Amitābha
Procedure-of-Duty	Nirmāṇa-	Fleshly (maṃsa)	Karma	Amoghasiddhi
Equality	Vipāka-	Divine (divya)	Ratna	Ratnasambhava
Mirror-like Dharmadhātu	Svābhāvika-Dharma-	Buddha Dharma	Vajra Tathāgata	Akṣobhya Vairocana

41. What is meant is that one goes through the three steps for the other three knowledges to arrive at the offering goddess of a particular Buddha, to wit: Equality Knowledge – She the Diamond Flower, Vajrapuṣpā – the Buddha Ratnasambhava; Discriminative Knowledge – She the Diamond Lamp, Vajrālokā – Amitābha; Procedure-of-Duty Knowledge – She the Diamond Perfume, Vajragandhā – Amoghasiddhi.

42. PTT, Vol. 75, p. 46–1, 2. One may find more information about these tantric families in *Mkhas grub rje’s Fundamentals ...* The correspondence of the Buddha Akṣobhya to the mirror-like knowledge is often mentioned in the Anuttarayoga-tantra. In the Yoga-tantra it is usual to identify Vairocana with the mirror-like knowledge, for which see *Mkhas grub rje’s Fundamentals ...*, first chapter. However, in a ritual text of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (in the Anuttara class) entitled *Dpal gsañ ba ḥdus paḥi bum pa dañ mdun bskyed* (paper, published by the Tibetans in north India), there is the verse (f. 9a–5, 6): ‘I bow to the Victor (= Buddha) Vairocana, who is essentially the mirror-like knowledge as the purity of the aggregate of form (*rūpa-skandha*) and whose body like the mass of young moon is embraced by clothing of variegated rainbow (= the ornaments).’ (/ gzugs phuñ rnam dag me loñ ye śes dños / / rnam bkra hjaḥ tshon gos kyis ḥkhyud pa yi / / zla baḥi phuñ po lta buḥi sku mñañ ba / / rgyal ba rnam snañ mdzad la phyag ḥtshal lo //). The identification with Vairocana is also made in the work *Dpal rdo rye ḥjigs byed kyi bdag ḥjug ñag ḥdon gyi rim pa* by Blo-bzañ-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, f. 7b–5, 6: ‘Having thus attained Vairocana’s “initiation of the name”, one cleanses the dirt of delusion, transmutes the personality aggregate of form, and realizes the mirror-like knowledge; thus gaining control over accomplishing the occult powers (*siddhi*) of Vairocana and his family.’

Buddhaguhya has a rather interesting treatment about investigating the fire of the burnt offering (*homa*). He states:⁴³ ‘The offering fire has the face of knowledge; the hearth is the palace. Why is that? (Because) it eats up and empties the defilements to knowledge.’ That author shows how to investigate the signs of the offering fire:⁴⁴

Sign (rtags)	Knowledge	Good Auspice ⁴⁵
tongue of fire twisting around (me lce zlum la ḥkhyil ba)	Dharmadhātu	turning away from <i>samsāra</i>
of shining white appearance (dkar la ḥtsher ba lta bu)	Mirror-like	ending of habit- energy (<i>vāsana</i>)
tongue of fire blazing straight (up) (me lce draṅ por ḥbar ba)	Discriminative	reaching heaven
fire which continually does not spread (me rtag mi ḥphro ba)	Equality	good luck to the sponsor (ñe gzhi)
tongue of fire which blazes without scattering upward (me lce gyen du mi ḥthor bar ḥbar ba)	Procedure-of-Duty	averting sins from the sponsor

In particular, the correspondences to the mirror-like knowledge agree with previous information. The ‘ending of habit-energy’ means of course the elimination of the traces (*anuśaya*) which dirty up the mirror of the mind. The fire with the face of that knowledge is of shining white appearance, that is, unmixed with other colors.

Also, Tsoñ-kha-pa’s brief note on initiation method of the *Kālacakra-tantra* (PTT, Vol. 161, p. 48–3) comments on, and defends this passage: ‘The moon, or semen, possessed of the vowels, is the mirror-like knowledge, and is the Vairocana who generates the “aggregate of form”’ (zla ba khu ba dbyaṅs daṅ ldan pa ni me loṅ lta buḥi ye śes te / gzugs phuṅ skyed par byed pa rnam par snaṅ mdzad do zhes pa ni). Finally, Geshe Rabten, Tutor to H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, has told me that he favors the identification of Vairocana with the mirror-like knowledge, and that the meaning of the identification is that when the mirror-like knowledge manifests visually, it does so with the form of Vairocana.

43. Buddhaguhya (*op. cit.*), p. 32–1.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 32–2.

45. The text adds a sixth good auspice: ‘A tongue of flame that is firm and blazes clear and bright like lightning is a sign of increasing wealth.’ Besides, the text gives five faults of the fire, portending bad auspice.