INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THESIS ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

(To be placed in Original Copy)

The undersigned, appointed by the

Division

Department

Committee on the Study of Religion

have examined a thesis entitled

Kalacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives

presented by Jensine Andresen

candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

Signature .....

Typed name Leonard van der Kuijp, Chair

Signature .....

Typed name James Engler

Signature .....

Typed name Masatoshi Nagatomi

Signature .....

Typed name Nur Yalman

Date May 12, 1997

KĀLACAKRA

TEXTUAL AND RITUAL PERSPECTIVES

A thesis presented

by

Jensine Andresen

to

The Committee on the Study of Religion

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

The Study of Religion,

Option II: Buddhism

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

May 1997

UMI Number: 9733170

Copyright 1997 by
Andresen, Jensine

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 9733170
Copyright 1997, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

© 1997 by Jensine Andresen

All rights reserved.

ABSTRACT

Kālacakra, "The Wheel of Time" -- my dissertation investigates this tantric system of multivalent text and elaborate ritual. Utilizing an interdisciplinary methodology, I describe Kālacakra's manifestations in India, Tibet and the West, focusing on social, psychological, economic and political factors that have propelled this tradition forward. Fundamentally interested in patterns of cultural and religious transmission, I examine the manner in which potent themes inherent to both textual and ritual Kālacakra -- threats of apocalypse; projections of utopia; pronouncements of curse; promises of fulfillment; and the aesthetic resonance of melothesia -- have made this tradition adaptable to changing historical and cultural contexts.

Chapter I discusses role of the Dalai Lama in using the Kālacakra Empowerment as a vehicle for the globalization of Tibetan Buddhism and as a catalyst for world peace. Focused on method, Chapter II reviews recent work in the field of Translation Studies; theoretically, I combine Lawrence Venuti's discussion of "foreignizing" and "domesticating" translation strategies with Buddhist Studies' reconstructive scholarship. Chapter III surveys Kālacakra's textual history. Here I argue that the *Śrī Kālacakra* was authored in Bengal and that Khotan served as the prototype for the "Sambhala" mentioned in Kālacakra texts. Chapter IV, based upon my preliminary translation of the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra*, highlights the manner in which the Tibetans reinterpreted the *Śrī Kālacakra* in order to fit their own ritual and cultural parameters; this local point dovetails with my central thesis, that Kālacakra's elasticity and resilience reflects its syncretism and inclusiveness.

Chapter V provides preliminary notes on Kālacakra's history in Tibet, whereas Chapter VI describes contemporary Kālacakra enactment. As the Kālacakra tradition accommodates to One World, the role of women in the tradition is changing significantly, an issue discussed in Chapter VII. In the Postscript, Kālacakra's Cyber presence is considered, e.g., a video rendition of the empowerment served as one of ethnographic medium used in this project. Kālacakra's postmodern manifestations are harbingers of a media-intensive slippage much more fundamental than that between "text" and "ritual;" now its Fifth Element promises to replace community-based and live "sacred" encounters with videotaped initiations and Cyber gurus. Who knows.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I: **GLOBAL KĀLACAKRA**

Pluralistic Rituals

Archetypal Motivators

CHAPTER II: **METHOD IN THE STUDY OF TANTRA**

Textual Ritual and Ritual Text

Notes on Previous Scholarship

Demystification and Dialogue

Thoughts on Translation and Interpretation

Reconstructing Tantric History

CHAPTER III: **TEXTUAL KĀLACAKRA**

Kālacakra's Textual Divisions

Kālacakra's History in Sambhala

Kālacakra's History in India

Kālacakra in Bengal

Syncretic Kālacakra

CHAPTER IV: **NOTES ON KĀLACAKRA IN INDIA**

The Role of the Guru

Ritual Actions and Burnt Offerings

Maṇḍala Construction

Kālacakra's Network of Empowerments

Thirty-Six *Yoginīs* Occupational Castes

Postural Attitudes

Stylized Dialogue between a *Yoginī* and a *Yogī*

CHAPTER V: NOTES ON KĀLACAKRA IN TIBET

Tibetan Classification of Tantras

Tibetan Textual Scholarship on Kālacakra

The Political Backdrop

Role of Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290-1364)

Kālacakra's Six-Limbed Yoga

Role of the Jo nang pas and the Dge lugs pas

Kālacakra in Contemporary Tibet

CHAPTER VI: CONTEMPORARY KĀLACAKRA RITUALS

Ritual Theater East and West

Tibetan Empowerment Ceremonies

Requirements for Empowerment

Teachings Preceding Empowerment

Empowerment Preparations and Structure

Tantric Practice

CHAPTER VII: BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Convergence of Textual and Ritual Perspectives

Changing Patterns of Gender Participation

POSTSCRIPT **COFFEE-SHOP MAṆḌALAS**

Some Informational Comments

The Commodification of Ritual

Demystifying Recontextualized Sites

The Commodification of Injustice

Electronic Analysis

APPENDICES A: Preliminary Translation of the Third Chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra*

B: Castes and *Yoginīs*

C: Tibetan Kālacakra Practitioners

D: Video Coverage of the 1985/86 Empowerment

NONWESTERN SOURCES

WESTERN SOURCES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my appreciation to the members of my Dissertation Committee, Professor Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, Tibetan and Himalayan Studies, Harvard University; Professor Jack Engler, Instructor of Psychology, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Harvard University; Professor Nur Yalman, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University; and Professor Masatoshi Nagatomi, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University (*Emeritus*). For their valuable suggestions concerning primary source materials, I would like to thank Professor P. Oktor Skjaervo, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University; and Professor Michael Witzel, Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University. For inspiring my initial research on the Kālacakra tradition, I wish to acknowledge Robert A.F. Thurman, Jey Tsong Khapa Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies, Columbia University.

For sanctioning my translation of materials relating to the Kālacakra tradition, I extend my appreciation to the Private Office of the Venerable Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet. I also thank Lobsang Samten, the Venerable Tsering Namgyal, Tsewang Tenzin, Lobsang Lhalungpa and Dr. Bruce Perry for their translation assistance. I also extend my appreciation to Mr. Kurtis Schaeffer for his assistance with bibliographic citations. For a grant supporting my ethnographic research on Tibetan Buddhism in the United States, I wish to thank the "Pluralism Project" directed by Professor Diana Eck, the Committee on The Study of Religion, Harvard University; and I extend my appreciation to the Mellon Foundation for their Dissertation Completion Fellowship. I wish to extend special thanks to my friends and family, especially my mother, Dr. Glenora Andresen.

CHAPTER I: A GLOBAL, ARCHETYPAL KĀLACAKRA

Pluralistic Rituals

In the last fifty years, the Kālacakra Empowerment[1] has distinguished itself as the most high-profile ritual enactment in the Buddhist world. Indeed, as enactment of the Kālacakra Empowerment is becoming increasingly theatricalized during this time, the very signifier "ritual" is becoming increasingly obsolete.[2] The event is comprised of three days of Buddhist teachings and three additional days of initiation rites, during which time participants chant, socialize, view the officiant lama, and visualize the Kālacakra *maṇḍala* with its central deities, Kālacakra and Viśvamātā.

In this dissertation, I propose that Kālacakra's synthetic character accounts for this tradition's historical and cultural resiliency. Particular elements of the Kālacakra tradition have been emphasized in different places at different times in accordance with the needs and agendas of local populations. According to Tibetan historiography, the Buddha taught Kālacakra in India;[3] here, I present evidence supporting the hypothesis that the earliest Kālacakra texts were authored in Bengal during the early eleventh century and that Khotan was the model for Sambhala, the supposed repository for Kālacakra texts during the years after Buddha's redaction to Sucandra. Nevertheless, the moxie and elasticity of the Kālacakra amalgam has resulted in its exceptional textual

---

[1] The word "Kālacakra" is a Sanskrit term that is translated into Tibetan as "dus kyi 'khor lo" and into English as "the Wheel of Time." According to Carelli (1941: 21-23), in a text called the *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*, the Indian scholar Naḍapāda (Nāropā) comments extensively on the meaning of the Sanskrit syllables that comprise the term "Kālacakra." According to Newman (1987a: 1-2), in the eleventh-century *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā*, the term "Kālacakra" refers to a cycle or revolution of time. It is also said to designate a non-dual state of mind characterized by unchanging bliss and the realization that all phenomena are "empty" -- phenomena lack intrisic existence and are said to be ontologically present only inasmuch as they are connected together in a network of "dependent origination."

[2] Schechner (1985; 1988a; 1988b; 1990); Tambiah (1985); Turner (1982a; 1981b; 1982c; 1984)

[3] For more on the general history of Buddhism, see Bechert (1984); Hirakawa (1990); L. Joshi (1977); Lamotte (1974; 1988); Lopez (1977); Nakamura (1987); and Ray (1994).

and ritual adaptability.

When applied to Kālacakra, textual-translation and ritual-observation techniques highlight the blurred boundaries between text and ritual, primarily the slippage of both categories in the twentieth-century, postmodern and electronified milieu. Kālacakra also presents blurred boundaries with respect to patterns of gender-participation. For the first thousand years of this tradition's history, textual and ritual participation were the exclusive domain of men. In the past twenty years, however, women have increased their participation in various aspects of this tradition.

Common patterns characterize the contemporary globalization of Tibetan Buddhism and the last millennium's Tibetanization of Indian Buddhism. Monasteries are being founded in the West, disciples congregate around roving tantric Buddhist teachers, large-scale empowerments are being conferred, and Buddhist art is being exhibited for the aesthetic enjoyment of the general population.[4] In the ritual arena, the Kālacakra Empowerment has served as a vehicle for the dissemination of Buddhism throughout the world. In Asia, this empowerment has been performed in both India and Mongolia, while conferrals of the Kālacakra Empowerment have become regular occurrences in major cities in the United States, Europe and Australia. Although his empowerments draw the largest crowds, the Dalai Lama is not the only contemporary

[4] In the United States, Namgyal Tibetan Buddhist monastery was founded in Ithaca, New York in May of 1992. Tibetan tantric Buddhist teachers have also attracted large bands of Western followers. Chögyam Trungpa founded the Shambhala "Tail of the Tiger" center in Barnet, Vermont in 1970. This center was renamed Karme Choeling in 1974 by the His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa. With Alan Ginsberg in 1974, Chögyam Trungpa founded the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, which now enrolls approximately eight hundred students, about thirty percent graduate and seventy percent undergraduate. The Institute is accredited and grants B.A. in Religious Studies and M.A in Buddhist Studies degrees. In addition, Sögyal Rinpoche founded the Rigpa Foundation, which is now headquartered in Watsonville, California. In addition, major exhibits of Tibetan Buddhist art now grace the Newark Museum in New Jersey, the Jacques Marchais Museum on Long Island, and the San Francisco Art Museum.

Tibetan Buddhist teacher to confer the Kālacakra Empowerment in the West. Another Tibetan teacher, Kalu Rin po che of the Bka' brgyud lineage, also conferred the Kālacakra Empowerment. In addition, Penor Rin po che, a Rnying ma lama, conferred the Kālacakra Empowerment in Nova Scotia during the summer of 1995.

Although today the Kālacakra Empowerment is catalyzing the spread of Tibetan Buddhism through the world, the present Dalai Lama's frequent conferrals of the Kālacakra Empowerment is a somewhat unique policy among Dalai Lamas. According to biographical sources, Bskal bzang rgya mtsho (1708-1757), the Seventh Dalai Lama, was the first Dalai Lama to confer the Kālacakra Empowerment. 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho (1758-1804), the Eighth Dalai Lama, also conferred the Kālacakra Empowerment, but there then exists a lacuna until the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thub bstan rgya mtsho (1876-1933), bestowed the Kālacakra Empowerment in the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho, the current, Fourteenth Dalai Lama, has chosen to emphasize Kālacakra's role in the globalization of Tibetan Buddhism.

The present Dalai Lama requested Kālacakra oral lineage instructions from Kir ti Mtshan zhabs rin po che, the Kālacakra lineage holder within the Dge lugs pa tradition. Being too humble to accept the role of teacher *vis-à-vis* the Dalai Lama, the latter conferred the Kālacakra oral lineage instructions on the Dge lugs pa scholar Gser khong Rin po che, who then conferred them on the Dalai Lama. Gser khong Rin po che was considered an appropriate conduit because he "sees His Holiness directly as the four-armed Avalokiteśvara" without having to visualize this image-transfer. In the United States, Gser khong Rin po che led a Kālacakra retreat at Deer Park, near Madison, Wisconsin, and he also helped the Dalai Lama comment upon the significance and meaning of the Kālacakra tradition during the latter's conferral of the Kālacakra Empowerment at Deer Park in 1981. Because Gser khong Rin po che had a vision of

the Dalai Lama at Da bu (Tabo) Monastery in Spiti, Northern India, His Holiness conferred the Kālacakra Empowerment there in 1981.[5]

Large-scale conferrals of the Kālacakra Empowerment appear to contradict traditional tantric norms. Beginning with the earliest dissemination of Highest Yoga Tantras from India into Tibet in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, empowerment has been granted selectively based on the qualifications of potential students. In addition, empowerments were traditionally restricted due to the believed power of tantric teachings. Although the Kālacakra Empowerment does function to prepare a small number of individuals for tantric practice, it also is conferred upon large groups of people, the vast majority of whom are not prepared to perform actual tantric practices. Paradoxically, then, although Kālacakra is considered by many Tibetans to be the pinnacle of Highest Yoga Tantra, this is the only Highest Yoga Tantra empowerment that is bestowed upon the general public.

Although injunctions have existed historically in the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist tradition against making the details of tantra widely known, the present Dalai Lama justifies his own twenty-three conferrals[6] of the Kālacakra Empowerment by citing

---

[5] Samten (1996)

[6] Despite the extensive meditative preparations required, the present Dalai Lama has conferred of the Kālacakra Empowerment in: 1) Norbulingka, Lhasa, Tibet (May, 1954); 2) Norbulingka, Lhasa, Tibet (April, 1956); 3) Thakchen Choeling, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India (March, 1970); 4) Bylakuppe, Karnataka, India (May, 1971); 5) Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India (December, 1974); 6) Leh, Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir India (September, 1976); 7) Madison, Wisconsin (July, 1981); 8) Dhirang, Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh, India (April, 1983); 9) Tabo Monastery, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh India (August, 1983); 10) Rikon, Switzerland (July, 1985); 11) Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India (December, 1985); 12) Pipethang, Zanskar, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh (July, 1988); 13) Santa Monica, California (July, 1989); 14) Sarnath, Varanaski, Uttar Pradesh, India (December, 1990); 15) New York City (October, 1991); 16) Peo, Kinnaur District, Himachal Pradesh (August, 1992); 17) Gangtok, Sikkim (April, 1993); 18) Barcelona, Spain (December, 1994); 19) Mundgod, Southern India (January, 1995); 20) Ulan Bator, Mongolia (August, 1995); 21) Tabo Monastery, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India (June, 1996); 22) Syndey, Australia (September, 1996); and 23) Saliguri, West Bengal, India (December, 1996). Namgyal (1995) notes that His Holiness often chooses December 25 as a date for the empowerment because it marks the anniversary of the passing (December 25, 1984) of His Holiness' Senior Tutor, Thubten Lungtok Namgyal Thinly. The Venerable Tubten Lungtok composed a six-limbed yoga manual for Kālacakra.

Kālacakra's unique role *vis-à-vis* Sambhala.[7] Because the kings of Sambhala taught Kālacakra to their subjects, Tibetans believe that this system was widely disseminated, and thus the social significance of this tradition is used as historical justification for the mass conferral of its empowerment.

In 1953, at the age of eighteen, the Dalai Lama received the Kālacakra Empowerment himself; only one year later, he conferred his first Kālacakra Empowerment in Lhasa, Tibet.[8] The present Dalai Lama has given the Kālacakra Empowerment only twice in Tibet, in Lhasa in May of 1954 and in April of 1956. After his exile, he began conferring the ritual in India, and in January of 1974, numerous exiled Tibetans, Sikkimese, Ladakhis, Indians, Bhutanese, Nepalese, Burmese, Sri Lankins, Japanese, and Westerners gathered in Bodh Gayā, India to participate in the Dalai Lama's conferral of the Kālacakra Empowerment there. A decade later, in December of 1985, a reported three hundred thousand people congregated in Bodh Gayā, India as the Dalai Lama again bestowed the Kālacakra Empowerment. Approximately ten thousand Tibetan pilgrims undertook great personal and financial sacrifice to make the difficult and dangerous journey from Tibet to Bodh Gayā. In 1995, thousands again gathered in Mungdod, Southern India as the Dalai Lama again imparted the Kālacakra Empowerment, and more recently, to mark the one ythousand-year anniversary of the oldest monastery in India's Spiti Valley, the Dalai Lama bestowed the Kālacakra Empowerment to a gathering of some one hundred thousand people at the Tabo Monastery in

---

For more on the Kālacakra Empowerment, see "Barcelona" (1994); Berzin (unpublished manuscript); Chakaravarthi (1993); Cabezón (1988); Dorjee (1985); T. Gyatso (1991b); "His Holiness" (1994); "Kalachakra (1993; 1994; 1994; 1995); Kalu Rinpoche (1991); and Riviere (1985).

[7] As Grönbold (1991: 390-391) notes, in the Sanskrit texts of the Kālacakra tradition, and in the Hindu *Sambhala-māhātmya* (New Delhi, 1985), this kingdom is usually referred to as "Sambhala." In contrast, Tibetan texts refer to the kingdom as "Śambhala," replacing the "S" with an "Ś" because it agreed with their own etymological explanation. Further, the Tibetans interpret the first syllable as the indeclinable "śam" and thus translate "samvara" as "bde mchog" and "Sambhala" as "bde 'byung."

[8] T. Gyatso (1990: 80)

Himachal Pradesh in June of 1996.

Like India, Mongolia has also been an important venue for the Kālacakra Empowerment. After lengthy political negotiations with the Mongolian government, the Dalai Lama was finally permitted to bestow the Kālacakra Empowerment in front of the Kālacakra temple at Ganden Hliid Monastery in Ulan Batar in August of 1995, one year after the Mongolian government had canceled the event. Kālacakra's connection with Mongolia began with the interest of the Sa skya lamas in tantra, especially Kālacakra, during the late medieval period. Historically, the Sa skyas maintained a close connection with various Mongolian rulers, and in the thirteenth century, certain Sa skya monks residing at the Mongol court performed rites and initiations associated with Kālacakra. In addition, U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1307) requested a manuscript of the *Śrī Kālacakra*, and blocks of this text were carved *circa* 1300.[9] The Fourth Dalai Lama himself was Mongolian, and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama spent considerable time in Mongolia, possibly conferring the Kālacakra Empowerment there. Today, Kālacakra's popularity in Mongolia is arguably as strong as it was in Tibet before 1959, and approximately twenty thousand Mongols gathered at Ganden Hliid monastery to celebrate the first public enactment of a Buddhist ritual in their country since Communism. The last conferral of the Kālacakra Empowerment in Mongolia occurred in 1936, just before the purges, so the recent Empowerment there in 1995 was cathartic for Mongolian Buddhists long-restricted in the public display of their religious rituals.[10]

An easy and relaxed atmosphere permeates conferrals of the Kālacakra Empowerment in Asia, and the audience eases into the four-day ritual marathon quite

[9] van der Kuijp (in preparation)
[10] Cherniack (1996; 1997)

gracefully. Families sit together on the ground, children run about, and picnics are common, with people talking, laughing and stretching back on their elbows. In India they eat *tsampa*, while in Mongolia mutton is the staple -- mutton with noodles, mutton with pickled vegetables, boiled mutton, tea with mutton, and araq to wash down the mutton.[11] By way of contrast, a pious, puritanical atmosphere often hangs over North American renditions of the Kālacakra Empowerment. Though fidgety, most Westerners are resigned to the lengthy ritual performance that contrasts dramatically with a one-, two- or three-hour Catholic Mass, Protestant Communion service, or visit to the synagogue. No, this Tibetan chanting and ceremonial text-moving goes from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on three consecutive days, followed by a "short," fourth day from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. After the scenery wears off, those very same Westerners who now forego traditional Western worship services, often because they are perceived to include too much "empty ritual," sit glued to their seats, immaculately quiet, not daring to leave. During an especially long series of chants, one woman seated next to me at the Madison Square Garden empowerment confided that she had "donated" five thousand dollars for her seat; at that price, I would have thought twice before getting a cup of coffee, too!

Central to the Asianization of Tibetan Buddhism, the Kālacakra Empowerment also has promoted the Westernization of Tibetan Buddhism. In 1981, the Dalai Lama bestowed the first Western rendition of the Kālacakra Empowerment in Madison, Wisconsin. Eight year later in 1989, a pluralistic group[12] of approximately two thousand Americans, Canadians, Europeans, and Tibetans attended the Dalai Lama's conferral of the Kālacakra Empowerment in Santa Monica, California.[13] And in 1991, a special

---

[11] Cherniack (1996)

[12] As Tambiah (1985: 125) notes, any single performance of a ritual is contextualized by the social characteristics and circumstances of its actors.

[13] Of the myriad rituals that color the Tibetan Buddhist world, the Kālacakra Empowerment catalyzes the largest response. In contrast to the enormous popularity of Kālacakra, less than five hundred people con-

New York City version of the Kālacakra Empowerment was held at Madison Square Garden in conjunction with the festivities that surrounded "The Year of Tibet." Approximately four thousand people attended this gathering, which was characterized by the surreal juxtaposition of colorful Tibetan scenery balanced above the unpredictable vibrations of the New York City subway system. Just three years later in 1994, the Dalai Lama bestowed a "continental" Kālacakra to a gathering in Barcelona, Spain, and more recently in September of 1996, the Dalai Lama conferred the Kālacakra Empowerment to approximately two thousand people in Sydney, Australia.

Sometimes catalyzed by the "natives,"[14] sometimes catalyzed by "foreign missionaries,"[15] and sometimes associated with permanent Tibetan transplants to the United States,[16] the Kālacakra Empowerment in the United States belies Nattier's[17] typological distinctions between categories of "Elite Buddhism: Transmission via Import," "Evangelical Buddhism: Transmission via Export," and "Ethnic Buddhism: Transmission via Baggage." Its pluralistic composition of participants also belies categorical demarcations between "white Buddhism" and "Asian Buddhism" in North America. For example Lobsang Samten, the ex-Namgyal monk who supervised the construction of some fifty sand *maṇḍalas* in the United States and now the director of a thriving Tibetan Buddhist center in Philadelphia, represents both of these categories.

Cosmopolitan audience composition illustrates the Kālacakra Empowerment's

---

gregated in 1989 for the Dalai Lama's conferral "Great Completion" (Tib. *rdzogs chen*) teachings in Santa Monica.

[14] For example, Richard Gere requested that the Dalai Lama to confer the Kālacakra Empowerment at Madison Square Gardens in 1991.

[15] Snow Lion Publications (1997) includes many advertisements for lamas conferring Kālacakra Empowerments in the United States.

[16] Many of the Tibetan participants in American renditions of the Kālacakra Empowerment have moved to the United States and attained citizenship through the Congressional Tibetan Resetttlement Project.

[17] Nattier (1995: 42-49)

role as the often wealthy Westerner's alternative to the Grateful Dead. Observing the 1995 Kālacakra Empowerment in Mongolia, David Cherniack, a documentary film-maker and a practicing Buddhist, contrasted the mood of "serious practitioners (mostly monks and Westerners) and the general public, "for whom the event took on the characteristics of a faith healing":[18]

> The serious Western students probably numbered around 50, and most of them were Kālacakra practitioners. Khyongla's students made up almost the entire North American contingent -- 8 or 9 of us. There were a few from England, two French women, a large group of Italians, and a few scattered from elsewhere. Then there were about another 50 who seemed mostly tourists attracted by the spectacle.

The pluralistic and cosmopolitan transformation of ritual participants in the Kālacakra Empowerment both is motivated by and reflects a grim concatenation of political, economic and social realities. Politically, the Kālacakra Empowerment has become a venue for education on human rights abuses in Tibet; economically, Western patronage of Kālacakra provides an important source of financial support for exiled Tibetans; and socially, global enactments of the Kālacakra Empowerment are vehicles of Buddhist outreach -- mounts upon which the "winds" of Tibetan religio-culture are riding into the twenty-first century.

The present Dalai Lama cites Kālacakra's perceived role in promoting world peace as a justification for his reinterpretation of injunctions pertaining to tantra's secrecy. Many Tibetans believe that the Buddha prophesied that Kālacakra would have special significance for this particular generation. The Dalai Lama believes that his conferrals of the Kālacakra Empowerment assists in the spread of world peace during these "degenerate" times,[19] and this conviction has caused him to bestow this initiation

---

[18] Cherniack (1996)

[19] According to Buddhist cosmology as articulated in the third chapter of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, during the first age of gold, a thousand Buddhas appeared, Śākyamuni Buddha being the fourth in this succession. Following the age of gold, however, there began a period of decline through the silver, copper, and now, the iron ages. During the age of gold, people were meritorious, and disease and sickness were rare, but through a process of degeneration, people began to commit non-

more frequently during the last decade.[20] Kālacakra's eschatology, especially its discussion of Sambhala's role in a future Armageddon and revival of Buddhism, is widely accepted and considered important during the present age.[21]

On the connection between Kālacakra and world peace, the Dalai Lama provides the following comments:[22]

> This is one of the most important initiations in the Tantric tradition, with special significance for world peace. And, unlike other Tantric rites, it is given before large public audiences. ... Nevertheless, even in those places where Buddhism is quite new, I have, for the benefit of those wishing to participate, performed ceremonies on a few occasions. For example, I have given the *Kālacakra* initiation in more than one country outside India -- my motive for doing so being not only to give some insight into the Tibetan way of life and thinking, but also to make an effort, on an inner level, in favor of world peace.

The theme of Kālacakra's connection to world peace is echoed in a brochure describing the Kālacakra empowerment held in Barcelona in December of 1994:[23]

> Although the *Kālacakra Tantra* is meant for practitioners of the highest faculty, it also has a special connection with all the people of this planet. For that reason, the initiation is traditionally given openly, giving ordinary people the opportunity to establish a karmic link with Kālacakra. His Holiness has explained that the initiation is a powerful force for the realization of world peace.

In addition to its perceived role in promoting world peace, the Kālacakra Empowerment is conferred by the present Dalai Lama to provide a forum in which Westerners may learn about Buddhism. Empowerments conferred in the West generally are preceded by three days of basic Buddhist teachings, while more extensive

---

virtuous deeds. This process was attenuated by the coming of a Buddha who brought renewal through religious teachings. See de La Vallée Poussin (1988).

[20] As seen in Bell (1988: 370-374), this form of justification is also apparent in the example of the fifth-century Taoist rituals performed by Master Lu during a period of political and social struggle between northern Taoism and southern mediumistic cults. Master Lu appealed to traditional frameworks for defining a socioreligious crisis, the first of which invoked a sweeping succession of cosmological eras and provided the context for his interpretation of public events.

[21] Jackson (1985b: 40)

[22] T. Gyatso (1990: 80,204)

[23] "Kalachakra for World Peace" (1994)

teachings by lamas representing the four orders of Tibetan Buddhism were given before the Kālacakra Empowerment in New York City in 1991.

According to Namgyal Monastery gossip, the current Dalai Lama combed the journals and other writings of previous Dalai Lamas to accumulate evidence to support his conviction that a strong connection has existed historically between the Dalai Lamas and Kālacakra. According to monastic heresy, this information helped the Dalai Lama prevail in a dispute with his junior tutor over the direction of his studies and featured in the Dalai Lama's decision to highlight Kālacakra's role in the globalization of Buddhism. The Dalai Lama recounts that he was inspired by a dream in which the goddess Tārā encouraged him to spread the teachings of Kālacakra widely, and this dream caused His Holiness to emphasize the Kālacakra Empowerment's role in the globalization of Tibetan Buddhism.

Archetypal Motivators

Diverse reasons motivate people to participate in the Kālacakra Empowerment. Some participants in the Kālacakra Empowerment hope to receive blessings and spiritual instruction from the Dalai Lama, while others use the ceremony to prepare for tantric practice. Many Tibetans believe that favorable circumstances such as a future auspicious rebirth in Sambhala will accrue to those who attend the Kālacakra Empowerment. Furthermore, it is commonly believed that those who attend the same Kālacakra Empowerment ceremony are spiritually connected to one another after the ceremony is over, either as common recipients of a tantric empowerment from the same spiritual guru or *via* the *sādhana* practice of a tantric deity they share in common. Others believe that they accumulate merit by listening to the description of the Kālacakra *maṇḍala* and its deities and by gazing upon this *maṇḍala*.[24]

What makes Kālacakra so compelling, and why do many Tibetan Buddhists consider the Kālacakra Empowerment to be the most auspicious ritual they can attend during the course of their entire lives? Beginning with its early incarnations in eleventh-century India and late-medieval Tibet, and stretching to present electronic incarnations in the West, dramatically-different sociocultural manifestations of the Kālacakra tradition arise like a ceaseless, unbroken continuity of consciousness threading its way endlessly through one incarnation after another.[25] Although the Kālacakra tradition is neither unified nor static, its manifestations are flagged with archetypal markers that have rendered its dissemination unusually successful.

Kālacakra's ability to activate archetypal themes in human consciousness -- particularly potent archetypal "memes"[26] of utopia, apocalypse, curse, melothesia and fulfillment -- contributes to its transnational popularity and significance, both historically and today. Furthermore, Kālacakra employs an historically-successful transport system for these themes -- influential and dominant men. Memetically speaking, Kālacakra's archetypal motifs have become affixed to economically- and socially-powerful "carriers," resulting in Kālacakra's global popularity today.

Regarding the archetypal theme of "utopia," the origin story for Kālacakra invokes the Kingdom of Sambhala, a renowned dominion with a vivid history in

---

[24] Blofeld (1987a: 46)

[25] Writing on the Western reception of Tibetan Buddhism, Bishop (1993: 54-55) describes *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, a saga in which the liberative potential of the "clear light" (Tib. *'od gsal*) is pitted against human fears, the individual's journey through rebirth, the "in-between" (Tib. *bar do*), and yet another rebirth. For more on the Westernization of Tibetan Buddhism, see Batchelor (1994); Bernstein (1997); Bishop (1989; 1993); Carrington (1997); Feigon (1996); and Klieger (1989).

[26] Dawkins (1989) uses the term "meme" to designate a unit of socio-cultural transmission that functions analogously to the "gene" in the realm of biological transmission. Brodie (1996) employs the concept of "memetic transmission" to discuss the propagation and dissemination of ideas in general.

Indian, Tibetan and Western consciousness. The utopian kingdom of Sambhala has been mythologized as an earthly paradise, a sanctuary hidden from the view of all but the most spiritually adept. Magic characterizes the Kālacakra-Sambhala connection, with parallel universes, sacred time, and prophetic vision dancing like sugar plum faeries before one's eyes:[27]

> One of the reasons His Holiness the Dalai Lama gives the Kalachakra initiation many times is that in the future the twenty-fifth Propagators will rule throughout the Universe and spread once more its teachings. At that time all those who have received this initiation will be reborn fully prepared to attain Enlightenment through this meditational practice. We are now in the reign of the twenty-first Propagator of Kalachakra. Very soon the era of the twenty-second will begin.

Different Central Asian kingdoms may have stood in for Sambhala at different periods of Indian and Tibetan history. In India, Sambhala was a Buddhist shrine in the north;[28] in Tibet, it became the privileged destination of spiritual travelers; and in the West, it became the prototype for the Shangri-la made famous by John Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon*.[29] Attaining political prominence, "Shangri-la" became the name for Franklin Roosevelt's hideaway in the hills of Maryland.[30] In contrast, the earlier Viṣṇuite tradition of the *Mahābhārata* and various *Purāṇas* describes a modest Sambhala, a village of indeterminate location in which the last incarnation of Viṣṇu will reincarnate as the son of Viṣṇu-Yaśaḥ using the name Kalkin and destroying the

---

[27] Dhargyey (1985b: 13)

[28] According to Bernbaum (1980: 2-5), in the earliest texts, Sambhala lies north of Bodhgayā, a Buddhist shrine in northern India -- "Hindu mythology looks north of the Himalayas for Meru, the mystical mountain at the center of the world, where Indra, King of the Gods, is supposed to have his jeweled palace." See also Fux (1969).

[29] According to Lopez (1994a; 1994b: 39-41), in a type of projective fantasy, Shangri-la becomes in *Lost Horizon* the repository for highly-valued products of European culture such as first editions of great books, priceless works of art, musical scores, etc. -- all herded together by a Catholic missionary in order to protect them from an impending world conflagration. And in Frank Capra's film *Lost Horizon*, the bodies of those who dare leave Shangri-la wither and turn to dust. In the West, Sambhala became the prototype for the Shangri-la made famous by John Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon*. Written in 1933, Hilton's novel was based upon the accounts of the 19th-century Catholic missionary Abbé Huc. It portrays Sambhala as a Tibetan monastery hidden behind snow peaks in an idyllic valley where people live for hundreds of years without growing old.

[30] Bernbaum (1980: 3); Lopez (forthcoming)

barbarians at the end of the current degenerate age. Like the earlier Viṣṇuite legend, however, Kālacakra's Sambhala is a fantastic kingdom at the center of a vast empire of ninety-six great lands and nine hundred and sixty million villages in which reign the Kalkī kings. The *Śrī Kālacakra* predicts that Raudracakrin, the last Buddhist king and son of Mañjuśri-Yaśaḥ, will lead the mighty army of Sambhala against the forces of Islam and reestablish Buddhism at the end of the Kaliyuga.[31] Nevertheless, according to Tibetan histories, many sages in Sambhala found Kālacakra teachings too lengthy and complex, so they left Sambhala to follow another tradition. Drawing them back through the power of meditation, Mañjuśrīkīrti, the eighth king of Sambhala, taught them a condensed and simplified version of Kālacakra, which they adopted.[32]

Especially fond of Kālacakra, the inhabitants of Sambhala are said to spend much of their time practicing Buddhism, and though they are credited with advanced scientific developments, it is believed the inhabitants of Sambhala only use their scientific technology for spiritual purposes:[33]

> Tibetan medical texts believed to have come from the kingdom describe human anatomy and physiology, sophisticated theories and methods of diagnosis, and ways to cure and prevent serious diseases such as smallpox. Other Kalacakra texts from Shambhala have provided Tibetans with their systems of astronomy and astrology, as well as one of the calendars they use today. According to descriptions of the King's palace at Kalapa, special skylights made of lenses act like high-powered telescopes to reveal life on other planets and solar systems. The King also possesses a glass mirror in which he can see scenes of whatever is happening for miles around. Descriptions of "stone horses with the power of wind" suggest Shambhala has the technology to make aircraft of metal. Other texts describe techniques for transmuting one chemical substance into another and ways of harnessing the energy of natural forces such as the wind. Each region of the kingdom is supposed to specialize in a particular field of knowledge, such as psychology or philosophy.

---

31 According to Orofino (1994b: 11), KT II. 48-50 suggests a metaphoric, microcosmic reading of this prophecy in which Kalkin represents right knowledge, his fourfould army the four "immeasurable Virtues," Muhammad the tempting demon, and the murder of the heterodox their conversion.

32 According to Bernbaum (1980: 14), Hoffmann believes this story evidences a significant conflict between a foreign religion and Buddhism in Central Asia.

33 Bernbaum (1980: 11)

Kālacakra and Sambhala have influenced significantly Tibetan politics, religion and culture. Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419), founder of the Dge lugs pa sect, had a particular interest in Kālacakra and supposedly went to Sambhala in a vision to receive instruction from one of the kings there. The largest and most powerful monastery in Tibet, 'Bras spungs (henceforth Drepung), was named after Dhānyakaṭaka, where Buddha first preached the Kālacakra. The myth of Sambhala was also used for political purposes -- Dorjieff, the Siberian tutor of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, persuaded him and other high Tibetan officials that Russia and Sambhala were the same country. Great Britain and Russian were vying for control over the mountain ranges that separate their empires in a struggle of espionage and intrigue that became known as "The Great Game," and when the Dalai Lama began exchanging gifts with the Czar, the British dispatched the Younghusband Expedition to Lhasa in 1903 to force a trade treaty on Tibet. The Communists also used the myth of Sambhala for political purposes -- belief in Sambhala was strong in Mongolia, and during the struggle for independence from Chinese and White Russian control, Sukhe Bator, the modern national hero credited with founding the Mongolian People's Republic in 1921, composed a marching song for his troops that said "Let us die in this war and be reborn as warriors in of the King of Sambhala."[34]

Sambhala came to the attention of a larger audience during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many followers of the Russian Madame Blavatsky believed that "the Lord of the World" resided in Sambhala, an invisible oasis in the Gobi Desert that served as the source of Theosophical doctrines. An interesting connection also existed between Sambhala and the Roerich Pact -- the Russian émigré Nicholas Roerich, inspired by his study of Tibetan mythology and his subsequent belief that Sambhala was the symbol binding the prophecies of all religious traditions, created

[34] Bernbaum (1980: 17-18)

and promoted the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, a treaty endorsed by the representatives of twenty-one nations. This treaty was signed at the White House in the presence of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and it was endorsed by notable personalities such as Albert Einstein. Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace became enthralled with Sambhala, sending Roerich on a government-sponsored expedition to Central Asia. According to *Newsweek*, while officially members of this expedition were searching for drought-resistant grasses, "around the Department of Agriculture the Secretary's assistants freely admitted that he also wanted Roerich to look for the signs of the Second Coming." This implies that Wallace associated prophecies concerning the future King of Sambhala with those heralding the second coming of Christ.[35]

In addition to providing a utopian vision, Kālacakra literature promises an idealized future to follow a grand apocalypse. This archetypal, apocalyptic theme captivated eleventh-century Indian and Central Asian populations that had experienced a Muslim siege. Armageddon sells tickets, and though sublimated, messianism still flavors current renditions of the Kālacakra Empowerment. Many members of Kālacakra's global audience currently are experiencing disenfranchisement, and participating in the Kālacakra Empowerment ritual is a traditional salve for the wound of dislocation -- simply put, the ceremony "just feels good."[36]

The Kālacakra tradition itself has strangely apocalyptic karma. Significant efforts to preserve tantric knowledge during the eleventh century inspired the authorship and translation of monumental treatises such as the *Śrī Kālacakra* and the *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā* (henceforth *Vimalaprabhā*), and although our media has evolved

35 Bernbaum (1980: 20-21); Pitocco (1977)

36 Hopkins (1996) has made an analogous point regarding the building of ornate monasteries in the midst of squalor in a reconstructed Tibet. Despite the inequities clearly present, contribution to the construction of these facilities evidently makes members of the local population "feel good."

technologically, modern efforts to translate, publish, tape-record and videotape aspects of the Kālacakra tradition have been impelled by an historical echo of medieval political strife, the Communist occupation of Tibet.

In tandem with Kālacakra's promise for an idealized future, a curious "curse" mentality surrounds scholarship on Kālacakra. According to Reigle:[37]

> In his book *Shambhala*, the Russian scholar Nicholas Roerich states, "Csoma de Koros reaped misfortune. And Grünwedel ... became insane; because they touched the great name of Shambhala out of curiosity, without realizing its stupendous significance. It is dangerous to toy with fire" (p. 17). He continues, "How shall we know what knowledge can be revealed without harm, and what -- perhaps the most exalted -- may be divulged but to a few. This is the knowledge of Kalachakra" (p. 26). In these passages, Roerich is referring to Albert Grünwedel, who went insane before completing his translation of the Third Paṇchen Lama's *'Śambhala'i Lam-yig*. In addition, a Russian scholar, Andrei Ivanovich Vostrikov (1904-1937), was killed by a firing squad after he began work on a Sanskrit edition of the *Śrī Kālacakra*. The German scholar Helmuth von Glasenapp (1891-1963) also died in an accident while planning a Sanskrit edition of the *Śrī Kālacakra*. Although the Indian scholar Raghu Vira (1902-1963) managed to complete his Sanskrit edition of the *Śrī Kālacakra*, he was killed in a car accident in Delhi while it was being printed. In 1986, the Indian scholar Jagannātha Upādhyāya (?? - 1986) also died suddenly after a brief and unexpected illness while his edition of the first two *paṭalas* of the *Vimalaprabhā* was being published.

Were one to survey the fates of scholars in any particular segment of Indo-Tibetan studies, it is possible that a similar list of tragedies would be forthcoming. What is interesting here is the significance imputed to the previous string of events by people associated with Kālacakra Studies. Reigle continues:

> People at Univ. Wisc. were so spooked that they did not even want to check this volume [the *Śrī Kālacakra*] out from the library. Thus it was stressed to me that one must receive the Kālacakra initiation before undertaking work on these texts, and that I may not be safe to publish them.

Despite this reported perception of danger, however, John Newman,[38] who studied at the University of Wisconsin, has done considerable research on the Kālacakra tradition.

---

[37] Reigle (1995)

[38] Newman (1985; 1987a; 1987b; 1988; 1992; 1995; 1996a; 1996b; 1997; forthcoming; in preparation)

"Curse" mentality associated with Kālacakra is evident in the connection between secrecy and danger described by Dhargyey:[39]

> Sale and distribution of this book is restricted. We urgently request that only initiates into Highest Yoga Tantra and preferably into the Kālacakra system itself should read it. This caution is customary to the tradition, but to disregard it can only be detrimental. That said, we hope that the work will be of benefit to those serious students interested in practising this impeccable path to Buddhahood for the welfare of living being.

Eliciting this mixture of pious devotion, scholarly enterprise, psychological hope, and profound fear, and carrying projections of reverence, deep-seated yearnings, consternation and terror, Kālacakra illustrates how something supremely-desired may simultaneously be supremely-feared.

Kālacakra's archetypal melothesia -- the conflation of macrocosm and microcosm in an "ordering grid ... of sufficiently tight mesh"[40] -- has drawn the attention of many academics in the field of Kālacakra Studies.[41] Macrocosmic-microcosmic homologies have long been popular in the history of the world's religions,[42] but in Kālacakra, macrocosm *is* microcosm, and microcosm *is* macrocosm, a proposition highlighted by the symmetrical textual arrangement of the *Śrī Kālacakra* itself. While echoing a macro-micro homology of cosmos and family found in other contexts,[43] Kālacakra's homology of conventional and ultimate levels of reality expands in two directions -- outward to encompass all planetary bodies, and inward to encompass the most minute levels of subtle-body physiology.[44] Tantra's valuation of the physical is

---

39 Dhargyey (1985a: iii)
40 Smith (1978: 293)
41 Newman (1987a; 1996b); Brauen (1992)
42 Couliano (1987)
43 Smith (1978: 293)
44 In Kālacakra intersect a phenomenological ritual theater and a cognitive theater of mind. Macrocosm and microcosm mutually reflect and mirror one another such that our outer theaters of ritual action originate, play out, and dissolve interdependently with our inner theaters of mind. Empowerment and subsequent practice of Kālacakra's six-limbed yoga (Skt. *ṣaḍaṅga-yoga*; Tib. *sbyor ba yan lag drug pa*, abb. *sbyor drug*) empower disciples to actualize the union of macrocosm and microcosm, and techniques such as *maṇḍala* visualization and deity yoga assist practitioners in merging outer and inner worlds. Using Western neurocognitive terms, Laughlin, Jr. et al. (1992) suggest that these techniques may

apparent here -- as the repository of male and female principles, the body is seen both as the source of spiritual experience and as a microcosm of the entire universe, which likely contributed to tantric-alchemical efforts to render deathless the human body.[45]

In the contemporary Tibetan Buddhist context, the present Dalai Lama describes Kālacakra's melothesia in the terminology of "outer," "inner" and "alternative" aspects of Kālacakra:[46]

> Outer *Kalachakra* is comprised of the elements of the universe in which we live. Inner *Kalachakra* is the psychophysical aggregates, the sensory and psychic capacities of the living being, and so forth. Thirdly, alternative *Kalachakra* is the path of the generation and completion stage yogas, the yogic methods that have the power to purify the above two *Kalachakras*. Outer *Kalachakra* is generally explained in the context of this universe. Then when one meditates on the *maṇḍala*, inner *Kalachakra* is seen as the body, faces, hands, feet, and so forth (of *Kalachakra* and Consort), as well as all the surrounding deities of the *maṇḍala*, conceived as symbols of the stars, planets, constellations and so forth. From this we can know that *Kalachakra* has a special connection with all the living beings of this world system.

Outer, inner and alternative Kālacakras are linked to the bases and methods of yogic purification:[47]

> Outer and inner *Kalachakras* are the bases to be purified, whereas alternative *Kalachakra* refers to the yogic practices that effect this purification and produce the three purified results. External *Kalachakra* is comprised of the outer world which is the vessel supporting the living beings. Thus it includes the planets of this solar system, as well as the sun, moon, stars, and so on. Inner *Kalachakra* refers to the living beings of the world, such as human beings, who are born from a womb, and who possess the six elements. Here the basis to be purified includes the aggregates, spheres of perception, channels, mystic drops, and so forth of these beings. These are all incorporated into the symbolism of the path. One meditates upon these two *Kalachakras* in order to free them from obscurations.... Alternative *Kalachakra* has three aspects: the methods of purifying the internal bases; those for purifying the external bases; and the methods of proceeding in the generation stage *yogas* as a means to prepare the mind for the completion stage.

---

faciliate "portalling" and "symbolic penetration," both of which would assist the practitioner in experiencing a non-dual melothesiastic integration.

[45] N. Bhattacharyya (1982: 25); White (1996)

[46] T. Gyatso (1981a: 168)

[47] Druppa (1991: 222-223)

In both "outer" and "inner" Kālacakra, numerological symbolism relating to human and astronomical periodicity revolves around the number sixty and its multiples.[48]

The realization of melothesia apparently brings fulfillment to tantric practitioners, and a quote from Eliade[49] highlights the "fulfillment" promise of the tantras generally, even as it applies to tantric scholars:

> Le corps humain ne perd jamais sa corporéite, mais par la discipline tantrique, le corps physique se lidate, se cosmise, se transsubstantialise. La condition physique et psychologique de l'homme profane est dépassée, sinon abolie; les activitiés sensorielles sont étendues dans une proportion alluciante, à la suite d'innombrables identifications d'organes et de fonctions physiologiques, aus régions cosmiques, aux astres, aux dieu, etc. ... Le tantrisme non seulement retrouve le corps, mail il en amplified les possibilités mystiques et le tient pour une condition *sine qua non* de la déliverance

Enlightenment is sought in Tibetan tantric practice through the union of "method" (Skt. *upāya*; Tib. *thabs*) and "wisdom" (Skt. *prajñā*; Tib. *shes rab*). Method is often translated as "skillful means," the manner by which one attempts to assist sentient beings. In Buddhism, method is demonstrated *via* "compassion" (Skt. *karuṇā*; Tib. *snyig rje/thugs rje*). Conjoined with method, wisdom is described as the cognitive and experiential realization of "emptiness." During tantric empowerment and practice, the union of method and wisdom is symbolized by the union of the central deity of the tantra with his or her consort; practitioners are instructed to utilize subtle levels of consciousness arising from this union in order to realize emptiness.[50]

Fulfillment is conceptualized in the Buddhist tantric tradition as the realization of non-dual perception in which conventional distinctions between phenomena are perceived at the same time as is their interdependence.[51] The Indian philosopher

---

[48] Newman (1987a)

[49] Masui (1949: 139); Torella (1989: 50-51)

[50] T. Gyatso (1981a: 5-8); T. Gyatso et al. (1981: 48-51); Jackson (1985b: 19, 30); Sopa (1985a: 98)

[51] According to T. Gyatso (1991: 15), ultimately, phenomena are said to exist in the sense of "dependent origination" (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*; Tib. *rten 'brel*), which is another way of describing "emptiness." According to this doctrine, "all phenomena, both subjective experiences and external objects, come into

Nāgārjuna succinctly captures the union of conventional and ultimate in his statement, "There is no distinction at all of *saṃsāra* from *nirvāṇa*. There is no distinction at all of *nirvāṇa* from *saṃsāra*."[52] In order to cultivate non-dual perception of conventional and ultimate, tantric practitioners attempt to generate within themselves the qualities of enlightened Buddhahood. These qualities are differentiated into the Buddha's qualities of "body" (Skt. *kāya*; Tib. *sku*), "speech" (Skt. *vāc*; Tib. *gsung*), and "mind" (Skt. *citta*; Tib. *thugs*). The Buddha's qualities of body are divided into those of the "truth body" (Skt. *dharmakāya*; Tib. *chos sku*) and those of the "form body" (Skt. *rūpakāya*; Tib. *gzugs sku*).[53] In the Tibetan tradition, the realization of emptiness is the underlying cause of the realization of the Buddha's truth body. In comparison, Tibetans believe there are two underlying causes for the realization of the Buddha's form body -- the primary cause is *bodhicitta*, and the secondary cause is the practice of "deity yoga."[54]

Kālacakra's archetypal memes of utopia, apocalypse, curse, melothesia and fulfillment historically have ridden comfortably on the backs of economically and socially powerful carriers, which has insured this tradition's status and successful propagation. From its earliest reception in Tibet to its current manifestation in the West, Kālacakra has enjoyed the patronage of powerful men with institutional positions of authority,

---

existence in dependence upon causes and conditions; nothing comes into existence uncaused." According to Newland (1992: 189), if everything arises from causes and conditions, phenomena themselves lack inherent existence. Therefore, something is said to exist as a "mere conventionality" insofar as it arises in dependence upon causes and conditions. See also Kapstein (1992).

[52] Thurman (1984: 159)

[53] According to Williams (1989: 167-179), early differentiation of the Buddha's bodies into the "truth body" and the "form body" occurs in the eight thousand-verse *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*. Later, Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* mentions three bodies, the "truth body" (Skt. dharmakāya; Tib. chos sku), the "enjoyment body" (Skt. saṃbhogakāya; Tib. longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku), and the "emanation body" (Skt. nirmāṇakāya; Tib. sprul pa'i sku). The non-tantric portion of the Dge lugs tradition divides the "truth body" into two aspects, the "essence body" (Skt. svābhāvikakāya; Tib. ngo bo nyid kyi sku) and the "wisdom body" (Skt. jñānānakāya; Tib. ye shes kyi sku).

[54] Samten (1989)

often monastic personalities who held positions of both secular and religious power. Significant enthusiasm was forthcoming when Kālacakra entered Tibet from India, and Sgra tshad pa Rin chen rnam rgyal, one of the chief disciples and biographer of Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290-1364), provides us with the following quote attributed to Bu ston on the subject of Kālacakra:[55]

> He exhorted his listeners saying: 'Such a broad and deep doctrine has been preached by the Buddhas, collected by the collectors of the Teaching (Tib. *sdud byed*), explained by paṇḍits and adepts, translated by lo tsā bas and paṇḍits, and arranged by scholars; the practice of the exposition (Tib. *bshad pa'i srol*) is continuous, the stream of consecration is uninterrupted and there is no adulteration or mixing and no deterioration; the bridge of adepts handing down the tradition (Tib. *bka' brgyud grub thob*) is unbroken and the cloud of sustaining-benediction (Skt. *adhiṣṭhāna*) has not dispersed ... Attend to the great benefit of yourselves and of others.'

In the fourteenth century, this kind of a sound bit from a renowned master such as Bu ston likely created a stir, exactly what would have assisted Kālacakra's integration into Tibetan culture.

The present Dalai Lama's interest in Kālacakra exists within the context of a broader historical pattern of Kālacakra-patronage by the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas of Tibet.[56] Because state religion and secular political leadership are united in the institution of the Dalai Lamas, Kālacakra's patronage by various Dalai Lamas gave it a memetic edge. According to Jackson:[57]

> The *Kalachakra* is universally conceded to be the most complex and recondite of all Buddhist teachings, and it is studied in detail by very few. Each tradition has a few masters who are expert in it. The Panchen and Dalai Lamas traditionally have studied and transmitted it, and its practices are the specialty of the small monastic college most closely associated with the Dalai Lamas, *rNam rgyal* (Namgyal).

Rnam rgyal (henceforth Namgyal) Monastery has been the Dalai Lamas' personal monastery since it was founded by the Second Dalai Lama, Dge 'dun rgya mtsho

---

55 Ruegg (1966: 88-89); Wylie (1959)

56 Bskal bzang rgya mtsho (1985); Bsod nams rgya mtsho (1985); Dge dun grub (1985); Dge dun rgya mtsho (1985); "The Eleventh" (1995); Goodman (1986); Klieger (1989); Tucci (1949)

57 Jackson (1985b: 40)

(1476-1542).[58] Although Namgyal Monastery incorporates practices and teachings from all of the orders of Tibetan Buddhism, the monastery is a Dge lugs pa institution. As one Namgyal monk described it to me, the monastery is "seventy-five percent Dge lugs and twenty-five percent the other systems." Therefore, the Namgyal interpretation of Kālacakra is textually and ritually a Dge lugs one. In contrast, monks from Rgyud stod (Gyuto) and Rgyud med (Gyume) Monasteries, two important Dge lugs colleges that specialize in the tantras, develop expertise in the Guhyasamāja, Cakrasamvara and Yamantaka/Vajrabhairva systems, but they do not study Kālacakra.[59]

Powerful men have spurred the dissemination of Kālacakra teachings through the vehicle of the "oral lineage" (Skt. *upadeśa*; Tib. *man ngag*). The authentic essence of tantric teachings is believed only to be transferred from master to master, and an unbroken lineage is believed to make practice more effective. In the Tibetan tradition, one must have the "oral lineage" pertaining to a particular tradition to insure successful spiritual practice -- just as a river must return to the snow mountain as its source, so too must the practitioner trace his or her oral instructions on a certain tantric practice back to Śākyamuni Buddha, or, more commonly, to Vajrapaṇi or a manifestation of Buddhahood.[60] Two levels of oral lineage instruction may be conferred -- minimally a blessing (Tib. *byin rlabs*), but more comprehensively, the "true meaning" of the teachings, including instructions on how to practice deity yoga, meditations on the channels, winds, drops and seed syllables. Further, conferrals of oral lineage instructions often are tailored to account for disciples' specific backgrounds, dispositions, and capacities.[61]

---

[58] Lodro and Russell (1988)
[59] Jackson (1985b: 40); Namgyal (1995)
[60] Samten (1996) According to Haas and Minke (1976: 31), many Tibetan scholars believe that Kālacakra came to the present Dalai Lama through an unbroken lineage of teachers.
[61] Samten (1996)

In the Kālacakra tradition, Bu ston's disciple, Chos kyid pal wa, passed the oral lineage to Tsong kha pa, the latter of whom is said to have performed a full meditation retreat on the six-limbed yoga of Kālacakra's completion stage. At the conclusion of this retreat, Tsong kha pa is reported to have received a true vision of Kālacakra, who prophesied that Tsong kha pa would be like another Sucandra in terms of propagating Kālacakra teachings widely.[62] In the past century, Gser khong Rin po che, now deceased, had the oral-lineage instructions on Kālacakra. Currently, Kir ti Mtshan zhabs rin po che, who lives in Dharamsala, India, is the Dge lugs oral lineage holder for Kālacakra. Concerned that the "inner instructions" (Tib. *lung*) on Kālacakra would be lost if the oral lineage on the *Śrī Kālacakra*, *Vimalaprabhā* and Bu ston's commentarial tradition were not passed on to the current generation, the Dalai Lama requested Kir ti Mtshan zhabs rin po che to pass this tradition of oral instruction along to others. This he did, giving the *lung* to Rgyal Lam rim pa, Kir ti Rin po che, and two others in 1986 or 1987. Later in 1988, Rgyal Lam rim pa, the Abbot of Namgyal Monastery, spent approximately eight months passing the *lung* to B. Alan Wallace, the first Westerner to have received this transmission.[63]

The archetypal appeal of Kālacakra's memes has helped insure this tradition's successful dissemination across cultures and times. By evoking the earthly paradise of Sambhala, heralding a successful apocalypse, igniting adrenal juices with threat of a curse, proffering the wisdom of a macrocosmic-microcosmic homology, and promising eternal fulfillment, Kālacakra responds to human desires for meaning and order. Like other "maps of the world,"[64] Kālacakra guarantees meaning and value through struc-

---

[62] Dhargyey (1985b: 12-13)
[63] B. Wallace (1997) notes that the Dutch monk Hermes Brandt, a desciple of Lama Yeshe, also may have received some oral transmission on Kālacakra.
[64] Smith (1978: 292-293)

tures of congruity and conformity. An ideal space is created in which anomalies are forced to the periphery, and the uncomfortable realities of disenfranchisement and dislocation are sublimated beneath the hypnotic rubric of future times. Our locative maps of the world, our cosmologies and homologies, all structure our experience, whether we be eleventh-century tantric authors or contemporary academic harbingers of knowledge. Although historical contexts are fluid and diverse, the human pattern of imposing order to insure meaning through coherence and congruity remains predictably the same.

In the late twentieth century, entertainment, theatricality, advertising, and information betray a postmodern orientation towards the Kālacakra Empowerment. Many Tibetan monks today rely on ritual handbooks without consulting the root tantra or learning the intricacies of Kālacakra's six-limbed yoga. The economic realities of life in exile have attenuated traditional patron-priest relationships,[65] and now Tibetan monks may be found seated behind makeshift display counters at coffee houses in Vermont while the snow just keeps on coming down.

---

[65] Steinkellner (1991); Waldron (1996)

CHAPTER II: METHOD IN THE STUDY OF TANTRA

Textual Ritual and Ritual Text

> The historical study of Tantrism has been handicapped, complicated and conditioned by the preoccupations of the writers in this field. It is perhaps inevitable, because the vision of the historian is always circumscribed by the dominant outlook of his own age.[66]

This dissertation employs both philological and anthropological methods to examine Kālacakra's "textual" and "ritual" aspects.[67] Ethnographically, I conducted many interviews with Tibetan monks who specialize in Kālacakra ritual arts, and during the Spring of 1989, Lobsang Samten and I co-authored an English companion text to Samaya Foundation's thirty-six hours of video coverage of the Dalai Lama's 1985/86 conferral of the Kālacakra empowerment in Bodh Gayā, India.[68] In the tradition of blurred genres, then, my fieldwork itself was based upon an increasingly-ubiquitous, plastic and postmodern tradition -- video text; digital initiation; and Cyber Gurus, the newest form of Sambhogakāya deities.

My interest in Kālacakra increased, and I spent a portion of the Summer of 1989 at Namgyal Monastery in Dharamsala, India where I worked with the Venerable Lobsang Dhargyay and the Venerable Wangchen. More recently in 1995, the Venerable Tsering Namgyal and I worked together on the translation of textual materials relating to Kālacakra while he was stationed at the American branch of Namgyal Monastery in Ithaca, New York. Having attended the Kālacakra Empowerment many times himself, Tsering was one of the handful of monks who constructed the Kālacakra sand *maṇḍala* in preparation for these ceremonies. I have participated in the

---

66 N. Bhattacharyya (1982: v)

67 Turner (1977); Turner and Bruner (1986)

68 Samaya Foundation (1985/86). Samaya Foundation is a non-profit organization in New York dedicated to preserving the Tibetan arts. For other videos on Kālacakra, see Cherniack (1991) and Meridian Trust (1985).

Dalai Lama's conferral of the Kālacakra Empowerment twice, during the summer of 1989 at the Santa Monica Civic Center in California, and during the fall of 1991 at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

The third chapter of the eleventh-century *Śrī Kālacakra* is the *locus classicus* for the textual description of the practices comprising empowerment into the practice of Kālacakra is the third chapter of the eleventh-century *Śrī Kālacakra*. My primary source for the Sanskrit text of the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra* and its foremost commentary, the *Vimalaprabhā*, is the Sarnath edition, the *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā of Kalkin Srīpuṇḍarīka on Śrīlaghukālacakratantrarāja by Śrīmañjuśrīyaśas.*[69] This edition of the text was printed in 1994 by the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, Varanasi as part of the Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series and the Rare Buddhist Texts Research Project.[70] The Sarnath edition was compiled from six manuscripts,[71] the oldest of which is written in eleventh-century Bengali script and apparently dates to the late-eleventh or early-twelfth century.[72]

---

[69] The Sarnath edition of the *Śrī Kālacakra* and the *Vimalaprabhā* consists of three volumes. Volume I contains the first and second chapters of these texts, Volume II contains the third and fourth chapters, and Volume III contains the fifth chapter.

[70] In addition to the Sarnath edition described here, Banerjee (1985) also claims to have produced a "critical edition," i.e., one that lists all variant readings from the collated manuscripts. According to Reigle (1995), this edition is collated from five Sanskrit manuscripts and was checked against the Tibetan. Though errors in Tibetan block prints are fairly common, a reading in a specific Tibetan edition may confirm a reading from one of the Sanskrit manuscripts. Also, because in recent centuries the manual labor of copying manuscripts was often left to scribes, errors in late Nepalese paper manuscripts of Sanskrit texts are rampant. For a description of partially-edited yet extant editions of the Sanskrit redactions of the *Śrī Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā*, see Newman (1987a: 660-661). Because Banerjee (1985) does not list all variant readings, and because the Sarnath edition often adopts readings not listed by Banerjee without providing their sources, Reigle (1996) is producing a new critical edition of the *Śrī Kālacakra* based upon all available palm-leaf, paper, printed and microfilm versions of both Sanskrit and Tibetan redactions of the text. Therefore, Reigle's protocol includes checking the Sanskrit against the Tibetan versions of the text. VC (1966) utilizes two Sanskrit manuscripts to produce the Sanskrit text contained therein, though it was not checked against the Peking edition of the Tibetan redaction printed in the same volume.

[71] Upadhyaya (1986: xxix-xxxi); V. Wallace (1995: 1-3)

[72] Upadhyaya (1986: xx)

My primary source for the Tibetan redaction of the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā* is the Peking edition of the Tibetan text.[73] The Tibetan translation of the *Śri Kālacakra* by Somanātha and 'Bro Shes rab grags is preserved in various editions of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur (henceforth Kanjur) and in the Sde dge edition of the Bstan 'gyur (henceforth Tanjur).[74] An annotated revision by Bu ston[75] is entitled "the great commentary on the empowerment chapter" (Tib. *dbang gi le'u'i 'grel chen*). The Tibetan translation of the *Vimalaprabhā* by Shong ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan is preserved in the Sde dge Kanjur and in various editions of the Tanjur.[76]

In the Tibetan Kanjur and Tanjur collections, the two pairs of Kālacakra translators Somanātha/'Bro Shes rab grags and Samantaśri/Rwa Chos rab sometimes produced two different Tibetan translations of the same Sanskrit text. For example, Samantaśrī and Rwa Chos rab produced translations of the *Sekaprakriyā* and the *Sekoddeśa*, while Somanātha and 'Bro Shes rab produced different translations.[77] Because the texts offer different interpretations of the material being translated, it is likely that the authors belonged respectively to the two recognized traditions of the Kālacakra school -- Rwa and 'Bro -- and that differences in translation therefore reflect two different lines of doctrinal transmission.[78]

My translation of the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra* has been supplemented by material from the Tibetan redaction of the *Vimalaprabhā* (Tib. *Bsdus pa'i rgyud kyi*

---

[73] VC (1966)

[74] The Kanjur contains the Buddha's instructions and precepts, while the Tanjur contains commentarial and instructive materials mostly translated from Sanskrit and Chinese into Tibetan. For more on the history of the Tibetan Kanjur and Tanjur, see Harrison (1996); van der Kuijp (1996); and Orofino (1994: 25-29).

[75] BTA (1965)

[76] Orofino (1994b: 12); Eimer (1989: 60)

[77] The former is found in the "tantra" (Tib. *rgyud*) section of all known editions of the Kanjur, and the latter is preserved in the Peking Tanjur and in the "tantra" section of the Phu brag Kanjur. See also Nihom (1984).

[78] Orofino (1994b: 37)

rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su 'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i 'od). Based on his reading of the Tibetan redaction of the third section of this text, the Venerable Tsering Namgyal from Namgyal Monastery provided verbal commentary for this translation.[79]

To complement my translation of the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra*, I consider historical sources on the transmission of Kālacakra teachings from India to Tibet and the dissemination of these teachings within Tibet itself. I focus particularly on those factors that contributed to Kālacakra's significance within Tibetan culture, and I discuss religious leaders' attribution of cosmological and yogic authority to this tradition's Sanskrit texts. As a segue into the contemporary dimensions of Kālacakra's ritual enactment, I describe Tibetan reinterpretations of Kālacakra ritual prescriptions based on later Tibetan authorship of Kālacakra ritual handbooks. These texts eventually replaced the original *Śrī Kālacakra* as the descriptions of Tibetan ritual form relating to this tradition. In addition, drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork, I provide a detailed description of the Kālacakra Empowerment ceremony.

The blurring of the distinction between "text" and "ritual" in the Kālacakra tradition begins in the eleventh century, and by tracing the historical development of Kālacakra from its early Indian setting through medieval Tibet to contemporary North America, it is possible to see how these fundamental categories dissolve into a more fluid field of lived experience in the Kālacakra tradition. Although "Kālacakra" refers to a Sanskrit Indian tantric treatise of great import in the history and development of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, almost everything about this text and its numerous Tibetan translations and commentaries bespeak ritual -- the staged apocalyptic warfare of the

[79] BTG (1965)

first chapter, the intricate tantric yoga of the second chapter, the burnt offerings, *maṇḍala* arts and postural attitudes of the third chapter, and the advanced meditative practices of the fourth and fifth chapters -- all serve to eclipse the line between word and practice, text and ritual. Similarly, during the contemporary performance of the Kālacakra Empowerment, textual materials are integral ritual contrivances to be conveyed reverentially, recited from, and otherwise gracefully handled, and this deferential deportment signals to assembled participants and spectators the authority and gravity attributed to these texts by high-ranking ritual officiants.

Bell[80] has problematized the term "ritual" by showing that it not easily defined, even in English, and she argues that it is important to dissolve such categories because they contain within them the process of analysis and of derived history. Although a previous, textual preoccupation has driven scholars towards "ritual" as the current corrective in the study of religion, Bell[81] discusses the manner in which "ritual," too, is a constructed category juxtaposed against "text," a category with its own history in Greek and Western thought.

A complex network of so-called tantric "rituals" exists in the Tibetan community.[82] Although it is impossible to create direct equivalences between English, Tibetan, and Sanskrit terms that roughly denote the same thing, namely a form of enactment, the general Tibetan conception of "ritual" falls under the designation *cho ga*, often abbreviated as *chog*. This term combines the nuances of two Sanskrit terms, *upacāra* and *vidhi*. Following the meaning of *upacāra*, a Tibetan *chog* is a method of doing something, a mode of practice, behavior, and conduct used to proceed towards a

---

80 Bell (1992)

81 Bell (1995) See also Smith (1987).

82 According to Holt (1978: 42-53), while the ordination ceremony for Tibetan monastics proceeds according to the Mūlasarvastivāda tradition, most Tibetan Buddhist ritual is tantric in nature.

goal. Following the meaning of *vidhi*, a Tibetan *chog* includes the instructions used to perform the event itself. *Chog* also refers to the methods of accomplishing something outside the ritual context, as for example in giving birth. Distinguished from ritual in general, tantric ritual is further designated in Tibetan by the phrase *gsang sngags kyi cho ga*. Although tantric ritual may be performed by any qualified person, the "teacher" (Skt. *guru*; Tib. *bla ma*) is the primary tantric ritual specialist in Tibetan society.[83]

Over the past decade or so, there has been a trend among historians of religion to consider the religious texts with which they traditionally have been bedeviled, not as abstract manuscripts containing the written "truths" of various traditions, but as elements in a much broader practical, societal, political, and economic field. This movement within the history of religions reflects the attempt to break free from the perceive 'theological' agenda underlying phenomenological, morphological, and perennial philosophical approaches to religious texts. In describing the potential pitfalls of approaching a text through a study of its historical milieu, Bell claims that relying upon certain assumptions concerning the relationship of the text to its context, namely the idea that text is cast as a particular human *representation* of its context, can cause us to disregard other important features of, and relating to, the text itself. According to Bell:[84]

> We can lose the whole dimension of the textual medium itself. That is, the use of a textual medium and a specific textual format to communicate are taken for granted, even though these aspects have a profound effect on the message being formulated, communicated, and understood.

Though a "text-in-context" approach may direct our attention away from the textual medium, it need not do so. To the contrary, by broadening our very conception of "context" to include aesthetic culture (music, drama, dance, poetry, visual art, etc.)

---

[83] Jorden (1991)
[84] Bell (1988: 367-368)

and the historical development thereof,[85] we can actually use a "text-in-context" approach to *illuminate* features of the textual medium rather than eclipse them. By extending the net of "context" beyond the perimeters of political and socioeconomic processes, then, we can use Bell's "text-in-context imperative" to our advantage.

Bell also argues that relying upon certain assumptions concerning the relationship of the text to context can cause scholars to disregard other salient processes relating to a text and its agency. According to Bell:[86]

> We also tend to lose sight of the significance of the broad economic issues involved in the production and distribution of texts, in other words, how texts as objects of determined cultural and economic value function within social arrangements that both depend upon and promote this value. By viewing the text as an entity that merely expresses a particular perspective on its time, we may miss how the text is an actor in those times.

Significant texts such as the *Śrī Kālacakra* and the *Vimalaprabhā* were commanding actors in medieval Asia, especially the Tibeto-Mongolian world. No small amount of effort was expended in translating these difficult texts numerous times, and members of aristocratic political families -- those powerful members of society who determined how Kālacakra's texts function as objects of cultural and economic value within a matrix of complex social arrangements -- commissioned block carvings that facilitated Kālacakra's cultural propagation.[87]

Bell makes the further point that texts sustaining some relationship to ritual, either describing it or employed during it, introduce their own unique methodological

---

[85] Examining the metrical elements of the *Śrī Kālacakra* in the context of the historical development of Indian aesthetic culture provides a case in point. In medieval India as in medieval Europe, and in stark contrast to the environment announced by modernity, specialization was probably more the exception than the rule. In classical Indian culture, a poet could be a philosopher could be an astronomer -- could be a Buddhist, especially a tantric one. A renaissance approach to Kālacakra therefore must consider the important elements of aesthetic culture that define and embellish Kālacakra's textual medium, thereby helping to intone both its meaning and function.

[86] Bell (1988: 368)

[87] van der Kuijp (in preparation)

challenges. Because Kālacakra presents a Romeo-and-Juliet setting in which text envelopes ritual and ritual embraces text, both perspectives on this relationship apply. Bell lays out the case for texts describing ritual:[88]

> We read both primary and secondary texts for their adequate or inadequate depictions and explanation of ritual activity. Then we go on to generate further textual accounts of these activities. We frequently analyze ritual as expressing or acting out a text. ... Recognition of a gap between their text and their rite, their rite and our text, or even their rite and our rite, still fails to ask a more underlying set of questions. What is the significance or functional effect of writing ritual down, both vis-à-vis ritual and as a written text? How does writing a text or depicting ritual in a text act upon the social relations involved in textual and ritual activities? Ultimately, how are the media of communication *creating* a situation rather than simply reflecting it; how are they restructuring social interactions rather than merely expressing them?

Certainly in the Kālacakra tradition, many layers of textual composition provide instructions for the intricate ritual network that surrounds the empowerment process. But a vast disjunction exists between the textual depiction of empowerment rituals as they are described in the *Śrī Kālacakra* and the procedures described in later Tibetan ritual manuals. This disjunction is correlated with the ebb and flow of power relations relating to who was, and who was not, invested with the authority to interpret and validate the correct performance of ritual activity on behalf of the broader community.

In the dyslexic version of this situation, when texts are used during rituals, the roles of texts in carrying ideological tenets and ritual prescriptions are subsumed under the symbolic function of text-*cum*-sacred object. Here, texts function as wholes, as ritual implements, a function heavily dependent upon perceived content. Whether or not the texts actually say what people *think* they say is irrelevant -- the perception is the message, a perception that provides a template upon which all manner of efficacy and/or danger relating to content may be projected. In the case of Kālacakra, the sacred-object role of text is quite pronounced. Not one of the monastic informants with

---

[88] Bell (1988: 368-369)

whom I worked had ever seen the Tibetan redactions of the *Śrī Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā* before I brought the texts to them. Nevertheless, each of these monks had strong preconceptions concerning what they would find inside, preconceptions that inevitably turned out to be incorrect.

But just as the boundaries between the tantric Romeo-and-Juliet pair are ultimately dissolved into the *zung 'jug* union of "two-in-one," so, too, do text and ritual dissolve in the lived reality of the Kālacakra tradition. For the most part, the monks did not really care what was in the texts of the *Śrī Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā*. Generally, the monks preferred their projected preconceptions to a difficult afternoon's exegesis, because, as one monk decisively explained to me, they were fundamentally much more concerned with meditative practice than with Western-style scholarship. That their meditative practice depended upon an oral-lineage tradition only tangentially connected to the texts in question was a disconcerting possibility they preferred not to discuss.

Access to texts and their oral tradition, and the ability to read and write text, are all means of validating authority.[89] Therefore, competition often exists between ritual specialists for such access. Control over the production and distribution of text can also be used as a method of validating authority and consolidating socioeconomic power. In the case of Kālacakra, authority over the production and distribution of liturgical materials occurred within the context of monastic-royal liaisons that spanned at least three countries -- India, Tibet and Mongolia -- and that endured for over a thousand years. Furthermore, the ritual manipulation and recitation of text is often used to signal that those *not* so manipulating or reciting are players in the tradition. In contrast, text also breaks doesn prerogatives of expertise because now lay channels of reli-

[89] Bell (1995); Graham (1987)

giosity are opened and individuals gain the ability to know sacred material on their own.

Notes on Previous Scholarship

Despite the dearth of systematic analysis on tantra, scholars have not been shy about publishing their own impressions of the topic, impressions often replete with vague observations and supposed analogies.[90] Like much Buddhalogical and Indological scholarship of the past century, tantric scholarship may be typologized according to various heuristic stages: 1) a "heathen" phase,[91] in which tantra was perceived as morally inferior to other forms of Buddhism and/or as a form of black magic; 2) an "historical" phase, in which a murky pan-Indian substratum is identified as the ubiquitous stew from which members of tantric cults select tasty morsels for their own particular pots; 3) a "sectarian" phase, in which scholars define the locus of tantric ideas by pointing to identifiable groups comprised of members aware of their own sectarian identity; and 4) a so-called "feminist" phase,[92] in which women's perceived agency in tantric life is highlighted.

Cross-cutting these five trends, both particularist and generalist methodologies have permeated tantric scholarship. On the particularist side, scholars have selected a tantric text and have edited it and/or translated it;[93] or they have observed tantric rituals and written about them.[94] On the generalist side, scholars have drawn on local

---

[90] Dasgupta (1974); Eliade (1969); N. Bhattacharyya (1982)

[91] Snellgrove (1959a: 42) claims, "To dislike the *tantras*, is but to dislike the worst tendencies in man, and of the terrible existence of these tendencies we have ample experience in every generation."

[92] Shaw (1994a; 1994b)

[93] B. Bhattacharyya (1931); George (1974); de La Vallée Poussin (1896); Shāstrī (1933); Skorupski (1983); Snellgrove (1959a)

[94] Beyer (1978)

textual and ritual data in an attempt to sketch out the contours of a quintessential, tantric form.[95] Not surprisingly, particularist and generalist strategies produce translations of tantric texts with little or no context and general accounts sporting chapter titles such as 'The Primitive Substratum.'[96]

Twentieth-century scholarly disagreement over the correct approach to tantra is typified by an interchange between Eliade and Torella.[97] The absent Eliade is portrayed as the typical pattern-seeking generalist, while Torella himself advocates a more local, philologically-grounded method. Eliade writes that "one is a historian of religions not by virtue of mastering a certain number of philologies, but because one is able to integrate religious data into a general perspective." In contrast, Torella criticizes Eliade for relying too heavily on secondary sources, resulting in "too coherent" a view of tantra:

> [His writings on tantra] appear to be the fruit of an outstanding mastery of an extensive secondary literature from which he obtained almost all the sources cited. This procedure, which is not in itself blameworthy, becomes so, in my opinion, when applied to a field such as this, which is still only partially explored and has a huge literature, in editions that are not always reliable or more often only to be found in manuscript form. Resigning himself to working on what is already known little befits a scholar who went to India with the express purpose of learning Sanskrit in order to be able to read the Tantric texts.

Torella argues further that a historian of religion need not master an indefinite number of philologies, "but, I should say, at least one, any one, so that [s]he is instilled once and for ever with a sense of the density of the document [s]he is working on, and the delicacy required in handling it, if, in using it, [s]he wants to avoid the risk of reducing it to its bare bones."

---

[95] According to Snellgrove (1959a: ix), "the cause for this is always the same, that we are attempting to generalize on a vast subject, in which there is no lack of material, by short-cutting the longer task of examining these texts in detail and in their own context."
[96] N. Bhattacharyya (1982: 108)
[97] Torella (1989: 52-54); Eliade and Kitagawa (1959: 90-91)

Still, in both particularist and generalist approaches, text is emphasized to the exclusion of other types of data such as archaeological, epigraphic and art historical evidence. Although the historical divide between anthropological scholarship focusing on ritual and religious studies/philological scholarship focusing on texts is gradually narrowing, much previous tantric scholarship betrays a methodological divide that has limited both our understanding of the use of texts in the practice of tantric cults and the effects of practice on shaping texts.[98]

While early Western scholars describe in great detail the complex network of tantric rituals that existed in the Tibetan community, they provide little analysis concerning their social significance and meaning.[99] More recently, while anthropologists have begun to formulate social analyses of Tibetan tantric rituals in their Nepalese context,[100] most of this research focuses on ceremonies used to appease and control the local Buddhist pantheon of deities and spirits.[101] In contrast, with the exception of a few works,[102] there is an almost total dearth of anthropological scholarship on tantric empowerment ceremonies despite their visibility and significance within Tibetan culture. The descriptions of these events that we do possess are devoid of analytical commentary and are often replete with vague and incorrect suppositions concerning the

---

98 T. Lewis and Riccardi (1995)

99 Waddell (1967; 1972). Snellgrove (1957: 245-261) describes in detail a tantric offering ceremony at Jiwong Monastery in Nepal, and Tucci (1980) describes the calendrical ritual sequences that affect the monastic community, but neither provides much commentary on these events.

100 For example, Ortner (1978) provides symbolic and social analyses of Tibetan Buddhist Sherpa rituals dealing with marriage, exorcism, and offering; Ekvall (1964) discusses offering, salutation and circumambulation rituals; Mumford (1989) examines the interrelationship between the rituals performed by Tibetan lamas and Gurung shamans, focusing on rituals of exorcism, death, and offering; and R. Paul (1982) offers a psychoanalytic interpretation of funerary rites and the transition to senior status during the Mani Rimdu ceremony among Nepalese Sherpas. See also Cantwell (1985); T. Lewis (1994), Gellner (1992), and Ortner (1989). For the proceeds of the 1990 Zürich international seminar on anthropology and ethnography in the field of Tibetology and Himalayan studies, a seminar organized to address the imbalance caused by the focus on textual and philological research, see Ramble and Brauen (1993).

101 Beyer (1978: xi)

102 Ström (1995); Hoetzlein (1991)

symbolism of the events.[103] In the case of the Kālacakra Empowerment, another genre of "insider" exposition has been written by both Tibetan[104] and non-Tibetan practitioners.[105]

In contrast to the lack of anthropological scholarship on tantric empowerment ceremonies, most academic work on Buddhist Tantra has been textual. Contemporary Tibetan scholars have contributed to the general Western understanding of Kālacakra through a variety of summary articles available in English. The present Dalai Lama has written on Kālacakra,[106] and he has collaborated with the American scholar Jeffrey Hopkins on the production of a text describing the Kālacakra *maṇḍala* and empowerment ceremony.[107] Geshe Lhundub Sopa[108] discusses Kālacakra, focusing predominately on the yogic practices outlined therein. Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey has also written texts on Kālacakra, including one intended exclusively for those who have received the Kālacakra Empowerment.[109] In addition, K'am-trül Rinpoche's[110] account of his mystical journey to Sambhala has been transcribed by the American

---

[103] See for example Gold (1994: 215):

> Like the Night Way, which harnesses the powers of darkness to bring in the dawn of Beauty, the Kalachakra, or Wheel of Time tantric initiation, and its path of practice use the raw energies of bodymind to transform the individual. For this reason, the deity who is the emblem of this pathway to enlightenment is dark and fierce in character. The Lord of the Wheel of Time has bared fangs, glowering eyes, a dark blue body, and potent implements in his many moving hands. His dark powers of bodymind (dark signifies conquering power) are harnessed to perfect the individual and to dispel ignorance in the world. Perhaps it is for these reasons that the Wheel of Time initiation is being given so freely around the world these days by its lama masters, who consider it to be an agent of world peace.

[104] Yeshi (1991: 118-129), Ötrul (1988: 56-73) and Dhargyey (1975: 72-77; 1985b: 12-14)

[105] Haas and Minke (1976: 29-31)

[106] T. Gyatso (1981a; 1981b; 1985a; 1985b; 1986; 1991b)

[107] T. Gyatso (1985b)

[108] Sopa (1983; 1985a; 1985b); Sopa et al. (1985)

[109] Dhargyey (1975; 1985a; 1985b) Interestingly, the aforementioned texts by T. Gyatso and Hopkins, Dhargyey and Sopa et al. were all published in 1985, a few years after the Dalai Lama conferred the Kālacakra Empowerment in Madison, Wisconsin.

[110] K'am-trül (1978)

scholar Edwin Berbaum,[111] and Todd Fenner[112] has written on alchemy in the Kālacakra tradition.

Western scholarship on Kālacakra includes works written by the German scholar Helmut Hoffmann,[113] the Russian scholar Georges de Roerich,[114] and the British scholar L. Austine Waddell.[115] More recently, American scholars John Newman,[116] Vesna Wallace[117] and James Hartzell[118] have translated the first, second and fifth chapters of the *Śrī Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā*, respectively, and Roger Jackson[119] has written on the history and practice of this tradition. The Dutch-Canadian scholar Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp[120] has written on the history of the dissemination of Kālacakra in Mongolia, and the American Cyrus Stearns[121] has written on Kālacakra and its connection to the Jo nang pas. In Europe, the German scholar Martin Brauen has completed studies on the Kālacakra *maṇḍala*,[122] the German scholar Günter Grönbold[123] has written on the calendrical reckoning, six-limbed yoga, and other aspects of the Kālacakra tradition. and Italian scholars Mario Carelli,[124] Raniero Gnoli, and Giacomella Orofino[125] have edited, translated, and commented upon Kālacakra texts. In addition, Michael Broido's[126] work on tantric hermeneutics and Daniel

---

111 Bernbaum (1980)
112 Fenner (1979)
113 Hoffmann (1951; 1958; 1960; 1961; 1964; 1969; 1973). It is rumored that Hoffmann translated the *Śrī Kālacakra* in its entirety, though he did not allow other scholars to see his work.
114 Roerich (1932)
115 Waddell (1967); N. Bhattacharyya (1982: 243)
116 Newman (1987a) does not translate KT I. 28-127.
117 V. Wallace (1995)
118 Hartzell (1997)
119 Jackson (1985a; 1985b)
120 van der Kuijp (in preparation)
121 Stearns (1996a; 1996b; in preparation)
122 Brauen (1992; 1994)
123 Grönbold (1969; 1983; 1991; 1992; 1996)
124 Carelli (1941)
125 Orofino (1994a; 1994b; 1996)
126 Broido (1982; 1988)

Cozort's[127] research on tantric yoga draw on data from the Kālacakra tradition. In addition to this scholarship by Westerners, the Indian scholars S. Dasgupta[128] and N. Bhattacharyya[129] also mention Kālacakra in their work.

Drawing on the aforementioned foundation of textual scholarship on Kālacakra, an interdisciplinary methodology will enable tantric scholars to unravel relationships relating to the use of texts in tantric practice together with the effects of practice on shaping texts. Lewis[130] describes a utopian methodology that, in a universe free of time constraints, would incorporate language study, social science history, ethnography, intellectual history, popular narratives, archaeology, art history, and economic relations. This interdisciplinary methodology, Lewis argues, would enable scholars to probe the way in which institutional forms developed cross-culturally and how both monasteries and monks mediated texts *via* interlocking ritual, medical and meditative activities. Arguing that a privileging of certain types of textual sources has skewed our view of social history, Lewis advocates incorporating popular narratives and ritual texts in order to form an accurate view of social history. In the case of Kālacakra, superimposing the Western notion of intellectuals divorced from ritual upon medieval Tibetan society simply does not hold. Like the placement of ritual at the pinnacle of the Confucian education system, ritual was central for scholar-elites such as Bu ston and Bo dong Paṇ chen Phyogs las rnams gyal (1375-1451), both of whom authored Kālacakra texts and commentaries.

An interdisciplinary approach to tantra that considers both text and ritual will enable Western scholars to undo the projectional enterprise that superimposes Western

---

[127] Cozort (1986)
[128] Dasgupta (1974: 64-69)
[129] N. Bhattacharyya (1982: 243)
[130] T. Lewis (1996)

categorical distinctions upon realities long past. By considering how text and ritual interpenetrate one another, Western categorical distinctions between "text" and "ritual" themselves may be problematized. How does textual doctrine shape the performance and experience of ritual action, and how does experienced ritual catalyze a reinterpretation of text? What are the doctrinal implications of meditative practices such as *maṇḍala* construction, tantric empowerment, and deity visualization? To what extent are the participants and officiants in tantric rituals actively engaged in transforming doctrine? In answering these and similar questions, categorical boundaries become blurred, thus revealing more nuanced interpretations of tantric experience.

Demystification and Dialogue

Romantic and projectional scholarship robs people and cultures of their history. As Said and others[131] observe, the "orient" has been prone to this type of romanticization by Western scholars who create the realities they purport to describe, and as Lopez[132] notes, Tibetan Buddhism has been a particularly popular screen upon which Western notions of the "holy" and the "demonic" are projected. Lopez suggests that the conceptual dualism dividing the "Western Occident" from the "Eastern Orient," a dualism glaringly present in pre-postmodern Indological and Tibetological scholarship, may have its source in the "Western" perception of a lack within itself and a resultant projectional fantasy concerning an "Eastern" answer. Tibet becomes "a constituent of a Romantic Orientalism in which the Orient is not debased but exalted as a surrogate self endowed with all the West lacks." According to Lopez:

> With the Tibetan diaspora that began in 1959, Tibetan Buddhist culture has been represented as if it were itself another artifact of Shangri-la, as an entity existing outside of time and history, set in its own eternal classical age in a lofty Himalayan keep. ... The Tibetan diaspora made widely available to the

131 Said (1978); Rushdie (1994)
132 Lopez (1994: 38-43; forthcoming)

> universities of Europe and North American (largely through the efforts of the Library of Congress office in New Delhi) a great flood of autochthonous Tibetan Buddhism literature, heretofore unstudied. This literature, scorned by L. Austine Waddell at the end of the last century as 'contemptible mummery,' was now hailed by Orientalists of a new age, both professional and amateur, as a repository of ancient wisdom whose lineage, as the lamas claimed, could be traced back to the Buddha himself. In the Victorian period, the authentic texts of 'original Buddhism' had been exalted above the superstitious practices of Buddhists. Now, the opposition remains but the places are reversed. It is Tibetan Buddhism that is hailed as original and pristine, a living tradition rather than a dead text. And once again the agency of the Tibetans is denied, as a new generation of Westerners take upon themselves the role of conservators of this living fossil.

Such scholarly projection cheats Tibetans out of their own history and also cheats Western scholars out of any real connection to themselves.

Indeed, a recent article in the "New York Times Magazine"[133] sensationalizes the academic battle for and against projectional scholarship by pitting Robert A.F. Thurman, Jey Tsong Khapa Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Columbia University, against Donald S. Lopez, Jr., Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies, Department of Asian Languages at the University of Michigan. In this article, Thurman is depicted as the great Western savior of Tibetan Buddhism, while Lopez, Jr., to whom much less coverage is given, is depicted as the "demystifier" -- the voice of caution against the whole-hog incorporation of a romanticized, Tibetan Buddhist "wisdom." Even within Buddhist Studies, the players (*sic* professors) are blown up to heroic proportions, harbingers of a call to enlightenment. Battle lines are drawn within the academy, sometimes by the scholars themselves, but also by those with their noses pressed up against the windowpane.

Like it or not, Western scholars of Tibetan Buddhism comprise an elite segment of society afforded access to the esoteric realities of Tibetan texts and traditions by virtue of source-language competence. Charged by the media, society and students

---

[133] Kamenetz (1996)

with interpreting the meaning of Tibetan Buddhist texts and practices, this priestly, academic class falls right back into an hierarchical, elite/subaltern pattern of the type described by Lopez:[134]

> But traditional Tibet, like any complex society, had great inequalities, with power monopolized by an elite composed of a small aristocracy, the hierarchs of various sects (including incarnate lamas), and the great Gelugpa (dGe lugs pa) monasteries. The subaltern members of the society included non-aristocratic laymen, non-Buddhists, and women.

When we consider Tibetan Buddhist life from privileged positions within the Western academy, how many subaltern voices are actually heard in and of themselves?

Dialogic scholarship may help avoid the pitfalls of projection. According to Eck,[135] religious traditions are "marbled," both historically and today. The rites and practices of one tradition often flow together with those of another, and the texts of one tradition often comment upon, or respond to, the doctrines of another. Religious marbling also applies to scholars' inner landscapes, as beliefs and attitudes are reassessed as information is exchanged with the outside world. Addressing religious traditions diachronically and dynamically as opposed to synchronically and statically requires a methodology that problematizes the very idea of a "religious tradition" *per se* and instead accommodates the ebb and flow of actual, lived experience. Eck suggests a "dialogic" method, one that combines critical self-awareness with sustained interaction with the "other" in order to articulate the other's point of view in one's own voice. Eliciting the "voices" of a religious tradition -- the conscious, articulated ones, but also those that are, or have been, submerged -- is the lynch pin of the dialogic method. Adopting a critical stance towards voice means we must also learn to recognize, and allow for, plurality -- sometimes contradictory plurality -- in our own internal voices and in the voices of the "other." Inasmuch as one must always approach a religious

---

134 Lopez (1994b: 43)
135 Eck (1996)

tradition from a particular standpoint, Eck's dialogic method applied even to a single religious tradition is, by necessity, comparative, and the scholar's self-reflexive location in a particular tradition, outside of it, or somewhere on the liminal boundary between the two becomes critical to both textual and contextual study.

In the case of Kālacakra Studies, application of a dialogic method obviates the need to crystallize what Kālacakra means or what it is. Instead, one is left with the gentler undertaking of enjoying the scenery along the river running from medieval India to modern New York. Kālacakra cannot be defined, nor are its doctrines, beliefs and practices unified in place or time. Indeed, Kālacakra can be considered a thematic tradition only inasmuch as the concept of "tradition" itself is softened to allow for diversity and change, both practically and in terms of meaning. Even the signifier "Buddhist" may be inappropriate to Kālacakra writ large. Neither historically nor today was the study and practice of Kālacakra restricted to those who eschewed all other religious and spiritual affiliations. Indeed, Kālacakra's early context suggests a remarkably syncretic stance, one that included elements loosely characterized as Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic.[136] Wallace[137] has suggested that proselytism may account for this syncretism, and it is also possible that Kālacakra's amalgam may reflect an adaptable orientation to fluid ritual and practical contexts.

The breadth of the Kālacakra tradition necessitates an interdisciplinary methodology, and reaching into an O'Flaherty-style Toolbox,[138] I use whatever seems to work -- ethnographic fieldwork, "ancient texts," interpretive strategies focusing on religion's linkages to greater social forces,[139] theories of memetic and cultural transmis-

[136] Hoffmann (1960; 1969); Newman (forthcoming)
[137] Wallace (1995)
[138] O'Flaherty (1980: 5-7)
[139] Bell (1988; 1992; 1995)

sion,[140] commentaries on contemporary culture,[141] discussions of women and religion,[142] and postmodern visions.[143] The postscript to this dissertation is written as a critique, one in which I flag commodification, gender insensitivity, and the electronic canning of the sacred. Objectivity is a mirage, and as scholars negotiate their relationships to the material they study, they never are able to sort themselves out of the whole business, an agenda that, even if it were possible, would probably lead to sterile and narcoleptic writing. Perhaps our own transformation, wrought through the mutually-nuanced reflections of one culture in another and oneself in one's subject, is one of the most valuable outcomes of the scholarly process in general. Apparent here is Kālacakra's melothesia -- microcosm and macrocosm reflect one another in the correlation between our physico-psycho-social beings and the ever-expanding cosmological spheres in which we are contextualized.[144] In this sense, it is quite possible that a personal experience of interpretive encounter may constitute at least some small measure of what Tambiah refers to as "interpretive success."

Thoughts on Translation and Interpretation

In the parade of various translation theories that colorfully lines the opening chapter of his recent book, Lawrence Venuti draws our eyes to the political agendas above which float seemingly innocent reworkings of "foreign" texts into our own English target language. Despite an anarchical agenda of his own -- accented by his own editors' comment that "rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power,"[145] Venuti's militant metaphor does succeed in invoking the violence that often

[140] Brodie (1996); Dawkins (1989)
[141] Heim (1993)
[142] Butler (1990); Gross (1977; 1996); Haddad (1985); Holm (1994); Kristeva (1982; 1984)
[143] Haraway (1989; 1996); Lyotard (1984); Milner (1988); Schrag (1997)
[144] Obeyseker (1990); R. Paul (1989)
[145] Venuti (1995: vii)

underlies the process of translation. The attraction of his words is almost demonic -- something lurks beneath the surface of all translations, something powerful, but something, perhaps, that is not quite right.

Venuti[146] attacks translation strategies that he calls "domesticating" -- those that measure accuracy according to the generation of an equivalent effect in the target-language culture. Domestication concealed beneath the rubric of fluency answers finally to target-language cultural values. Assaulting further the embedded perils of a fluent translation strategy, guilt by association, Venuti provides us with this quote from the 1969 *Times Literary Supplement* --"The translation is a pleasantly fluent one: two chapters of it have already appeared in *Playboy* magazine."

Venuti's discussion of domesticated translation shares concerns of power and politics with Hallisey's[147] discussion of "the rhetorical strategy of authorial transparency," the tendency of nineteenth-century European translators to legitimate their research by emphasizing its close connection to the originals they were translating. Perhaps not coincidentally, authorial transparency often existed in the very texts translated by European scholars, and each text portrayed itself as a translation of yet another. Texts' original authors frequently associated with decentered authority in a way later echoed by European translators, as for example in the case of the *Śrī Kālacakra*. Not wishing to cloud Buddha's authorship, or perhaps legitimating their own texts by invoking this connection, the author(s) of the *Śrī Kālacakra* is so transparent that we do not even know who he was.

By denying the political, economic and social realities of authorship, realities permeated by relations of power, translation strategies that are "domesticating" and

146 Venuti (1995: 3-22)

"transparent" amplify the intractable Orientalism of a textualized Buddhist Studies in the West. As Foucault[148] argues, this movement coincided with the creation of "Buddhism" within the broader context of the eighteenth-century colonial formation of Western fields of study in general, Buddhist Studies in particular emerging from the traditional fields of philology and Sanskrit.[149] As Almond and Hallisey have remarked,[150] control of Buddhism's textual past enabled the essence of Buddhism to be transferred from an Orient 'out there' to the West. Hence by the beginning of the 1850s, Buddhist Studies discourse was created in which textual analysis was the major scholarly task and in which the myriad aspects of Oriental culture were described and classified. Texts were objectified and possessed by the West, and this ownership implied ideological control.

The nineteenth-century "textualization of Buddhism" meant that by the middle of the century, "Buddhism" had become an edited and translated textual object based in Western institutions. Its ancient texts were compared to newer ones from the Orient, which, inevitably, did not measure up to "ideal textual exemplifications contained in the libraries, universities, colonial offices, and missionary societies of the West." A Western-textual Buddhism was positively evaluated against the then-contemporary Eastern tradition, and according to Almond, textual analysis by various scholars -- Klaproth, Schmidt, Rémusat, and Landresse on Chinese and Mongolian texts; Hodgson on Sanskrit and Tibetan texts; Alexander Csoma of Körös on the Tibetan Kanjur -- cemented the idea of a textualized North Asian Buddhism, thus progressively transforming Buddhism from a living religion in contemporary China, Tibet, Nepal and

147 Hallisey (1995: 41-42)
148 Foucault (1972)
149 Lopez (1995)
150 Almond (1988); Hallisey (1995)

Mongolia to a textually-bound religion of the past.

Though certainly a living tradition, the Buddhist Studies of today continues to perpetuate a "Buddhism as artifact" mentality, one that somewhat predictably leads to the "salvage mentality" (to borrow Marcus' phrase) that often characterizes the approach to texts within Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies.[151] Spurred by the desire to preserve texts from perceived obliteration at the hands of the Communist Chinese and perceived extinction in the heat of an Indian exile, scholars often approach translation and exegesis as redeemer figures determined to bring precious textual relics into the fluorescent light of a Western day. In collecting textual knowledge, an essential element of the academic enterprise, we also exercise power -- post-collection, we are awarded the privileged positions of recreating knowledge through our translations and ultimately disseminating this recreation, if we are lucky, through our publications. A post-Orientalist Buddhology? I really don't think so.

What to do? Though Ricoeur's hermeneutics-of-suspicion injunction to consider the underlying rules of our construction and dissemination of knowledge is valid, Hallisey's suggestion that we reconstruct scholarship on Buddhist thought and practice in order to heal the divide between "the West" and "the Orient" is well taken. To reconstruct scholarship in this way, Hallisey advocates exploring connections between cultures, not just their differences, in order to demonstrate the heterogeneity of interests within communities as they encounter one another. He also suggests looking for relations between "the West" and "the Orient" that are not characterized by negation or inversion but instead represent a form of "intercultural mimesis" in which the "aspects of a culture of a subjectified people influenced the investigator to represent that culture

---

151 Indeed, many Tibetans internalize such a "salvage mentality" themselves, leading to the theatricalization and not insignificant commercialization of Tibetan sacred arts in the West. "Buddhism as artifact" leads, quite predictably, to postmodern "Buddhism as spectacle."

in a certain manner."[152] Also useful to a reevaluation of Orientalist knowledge construction and dissemination and subsequent scholarly reconstruction is an emphasis on historical subjects' agency and the self-reflexive application of this inquiry to the roles played by scholars themselves.

"Foreignizing" translation strategies, which resist dominant target-language cultural values in order to highlight the linguistic and cultural differences of foreign texts also may help counter "colonialism" in the translation of Buddhist textual materials. "Foreignizing" translation acts as an antidote to the dominant Anglo-American tradition of domestication and faulted fluency. Venuti[153] uses Philip Lewis' concept of "abusive fidelity" to demonstrate features of a resistant, foreignizing translation technique:

> [Abusive fidelity] acknowledges the abusive, equivocal relationship between the translation and the foreign text and eschews a fluent strategy in order to reproduce in the translation whatever features of the foreign text abuse or resist dominant cultural values in the source language. Abusive fidelity directs the translator's attention away from the conceptual signified to the play of signifiers on which it depends, to phonological, syntactical, and discursive structures, resulting in a "translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own" (Lewis 1985: 41). Such a translation strategy can best be called resistancy not merely because it avoids fluency, but because it challenges the target-language culture even as it enacts its own ethnocentric violence on the foreign text.

Venuti also rejects determining a translation's station according to its use of fluent terminological equivalences; this, he believes, amounts to appropriating the foreign text for domestic purposes. Rather, by employing resistant tactics, Venuti strives to make his own translations strange -- "the resistant strategy of my translations gives them a different, and perhaps more intense, strangeness in the target-language culture."

---

[152] Hallisey (1995: 32-33); Burghart (1990: 266)
[153] Venuti (1995: 23-24, 300); P. Lewis (1985: 41)

Resistant translation strategies draw readers further into the target-language translation and compel them to engage the very fact of translation itself as they attempt to glean meaning from texts. How is meaning constructed, and is it nothing more that a tool with which we appropriate? Text and reader are both prodded, poked and provoked by a conversion process not content to redd source-language ambiguity and difference under the rubric of a comfortable target-language translation.

Though not thoroughly ensnared by the strange and opaque in and of itself, I do attempt to bring the translation process into *bas-relief* throughout this dissertation. Although postmodern scholarship emphasizes the negative element of appropriation in translation and suggests the effective strategy of "foreignizing" translation as an antidote, reconstructive theory emphasizes the positive elements of translation.[154] When approached sensitively, translation may serve as a form of hospitality in which texts are welcomed into new cultural contexts. Here may be added to healthy resistance a translation's status as qualified and incomplete, both adjectives underscoring the fact that the texts we are translating are not dead -- their ancestors continue to live today, and encounter with them need not remain the exclusive domain of an academic elite.

In translating the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra*, numerous visual markers and conscious textual layout reinforce my text's self-identification as a translation. The myriad visual markers punctuating my translation break up the translated line and hence draw readers' attention to the fact, and workings, of the translation process. I use braces {to designate inclusion from the *Vimalaprabhā*}, double braces {{to designate Bu ston's commentary, BTG}}, and brackets [to designate my own inclusions]. Staccato footnotes draw the reader back to the original Sanskrit and Tibetan terms and help

[154] Bassnett-McGuire (1991); P. Lewis (1985); Lefevere (1992)

negotiate voice and authorship issues by highlighting contemporary Tibetan monastic interpretations of the Sanskrit text. These footnotes, in which I provide in their declined form the original Sanskrit and Tibetan terms for a chosen English word, also highlight grammatical transpositions between the three languages. All of these visual markers qualify my English renderings. Here, I wish to emphasize the provisional nature of the process of translation itself; the jagged and unrelenting manner in which I have broken up the translated line serves to underscore the fact that translation is never finished; indeed, translation itself is a conventional activity, one thoroughly contextualized by constraints inherent to both target and source, languages and cultures. In Indo-Tibetan tantra, translation contingency is further mediated by tradition-acknowledged hermeneutical complexity involving polysemous, textual layering.

The use of specific textual media and formats has a significant effect on the message being formulated, communicated and understood. My translation is laid out like a musical score, with each "movement" (verse) of "music" (translation) showing a Sanskrit treble clef, Tibetan bass clef, and English double bass clef. As with a musical score, the format of the text communicates visual information that impacts how a text actually functions.[155] This "parallel format" textual layout[156] is used symbolically to underscore what is missing from my English translation -- namely, the metrical arrangement of signifiers in both the Sanskrit and Tibetan renditions of the text. Simultaneously, by employing the symbolic visual imagery of a musical score, this textual layout implies the musical character of the text itself. The metrical precision of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts is glaringly absent in my English translation,[157] and much is

[155] Lutgendorf (1991: 13-18) explores these issues in his recent study of the *Rāmcaritmānas*, a sixteenth-century North Indian epic. Because he is concerned the actual performance of the *Rāmcaritmānas*, Lutgendorf pays close attention to the metrical and narrative structure of this text.

[156] Swanson (1995) provides a translation of the Greek Gospels utilizing "parallel format," a structure that provides access to all variants and their significance, orthographical variants, scribal errors, erasures and other discrepancies between manuscripts.

[157] How we translate a text, not simply the words we choose but also the aesthetic concerns of the enter-

lost in a translation that privileges grammatical exactness over aesthetic criteria such as metre -- the music of the text is left behind, not an insignificant determinant of meaning in the text's original context judging by the attention accorded it by Tibetan translators.[158] In addition to grammatical and syntactical discernment, successful translation must be sensitive to the sensual and aesthetic dimensions of the languages involved. Especially in the tantric context, certain words and phrases often simultaneously carry sensual, visceral and philosophical connotations.[159]

Though there do exist works within the genre of Indian aesthetic theory that comment upon the function and practice of metre,[160] I am unaware of any Sanskrit or Tibetan sources that comment upon the meaning and function of metre in the context of the *Śrī Kālacakra* itself. Nevertheless, speculating on the value of metre at the practice

---

prise, influences significantly our derivation of meaning. As Barnstone (1993) notes, many challenges are posed by the attempt to convey in one's target-language translation the aesthetic form and flavor of a poetic original. Although a metrical translation of the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra* theoretically would preserve the aesthetic dimensions of the text's meaning, my ability to manipulate both target- and source-languages is not sufficiently developed. As translators of poetry attest, preserving metre in translation requires a great deal of linguistic finesse. Structurally, the embeddedness of case within Sanskrit nouns and the syntactical designation of case in Tibetan mesh well in at least one respect -- in many cases, save for example the locative in Tibetan, neither Sanskrit nor Tibetan require extra syllables to designate case. But English does, and hence, when attempting a metrical translation, one is left with the tricky business of choosing more compact English nouns in order to leave room for prepositions such as "to," "for," etc. Hence, in contrast to Sanskrit's efficient case structure, because extra syllables are required for prepositions in English, grammatical precision often must be sacrificed to preserve metre.

[158] Unlike Western philological privileging of grammar and syntax, the Tibetan translators of the *Śrī Kālacakra* were not obsessive about preserving the grammatical and syntactical structure of the Sanskrit original in their Tibetan translation. Rather, aesthetic elements such as metre were accorded a higher priority. Though due to differences in the linguistic structure of the two languages, metre as a category is more loosely construed in Tibetan than in Sanskrit, the Tibetans adhered absolutely to the syllabic aspects of metre throughout their translations. Witnessing this attention line after line and verse after verse, one must conclude that the Tibetans perceived an important level of "meaning" encoded in the rhythm of the text. See Kane (1971) and Watkins (1996).

[159] According to Reigle (1995), "Verse works such as the *Kālacakra Tantra* are more metrical lists of code words than actual sentences." Certainly, this issue of prose *versus* verse is not insignificant in the Buddhist tradition in general. For example, the *Saṃyutta-Nikāya* states that Buddha instructed gods and humans differently, using verse with the former and prose with the latter.

[160] Abhinavagupta (1968); Barlingay (1991); S. Bhattacharyya (1963); Dange (1987); Daumal (1982); De (1963); Hahn (1971); Haney II (1993); Kapoor (1988); Krishnamoorthy (1986); Shastri (1986); Vidyakara (1965)

level, it is plausible, if not likely, that the *Śrī Kālacakra* was chanted in its original ritual context, and that the process of chanting the text was probably believed to be efficacious in various respects.[161] Due to its intricate and long line, the twenty-one-syllable per *pāda sragdharā* metre[162] adds a high degree of musical complexity to the *Śrī Kālacakra*. Possibly, the prolonged rhythmic chanting of the text may have induced certain shifts in consciousness,[163] perhaps intentionally so.

The term "tantra" designates a genre of literature, one that never admits to being local.[164] A tantra consists of a basic root text (Skt. *mūlatantra*; Tib. *rtsa rgyud*) often complemented by commentaries and liturgical texts. Other texts associated with a tantric school include ritual manuals (Skt. *sādhana*), texts on initiation (Skt. *dīkṣa*), and explanatory tantras (Skt. *vyākhyātantras*).[165] Each tantra focuses on a particular tantric deity believed to be a manifestation of the Buddha, e.g., Kālacakra, Guhyasamāja or Hevajra. Tantric Buddhist texts were composed in at least four languages -- Sanskrit, Apabhraṃśa, East Indian "Old Bengali," and Khotanese. The majority of tantric literature, however, was written in Sanskrit.[166] Some Tibetan practitioners may have read

---

161 Wayman (1985)

162 According to Acharya (1996), *sragdharā* means "garland-wearing girl," and this metre was especially popular for the exposition of royal subject matter during the Licchavi period of Newar Buddhism. Repetition of certain syllables was common, e.g., "tra" and "ja" in verses pertaining to the king, and the same sound was repeated at the beginning and end of the same *pāda*. Meaning was contained in rhythm and in the sounds themselves. The "poetic figure" (Skt. *alaṃkāra*) in these verses can be analyzed either phonologically, grammatically, or syntactically, and euphonic alliteration is featured, e.g., the instrumental plural may be used due to the phonological and morphological ornamentation of the sound "aiḥ." Patterns across *pādas* also exist, such as an alteration of "s," "ś," and "ṣ" sounds in verses about *nāgas*, and these patterns may be represented visually. In the *sragdharā* metre, each verse is comprised of four lines, and each line is written in a metre comprised of twenty-one syllables arranged into three groups of seven syllables, as follows:
long, long, long, long, short, long, long
short, short, short, short, short, short, long
long, short, long, long, short, long, long.

163 See Laughlin et al. (1992) for a discussion of the function of repetitive, rhymic stimulation. See also Laughlin et al. (1985) and Engler (1983; 1986).

164 Wallis (1996)

165 George (1974: 1)

166 Newman (1988: 123)

Sanskrit root tantras such as the *Śrī Kālacakra* solely for the blessing of reading these texts aloud. This accords with Jan's observation that "From an insider's viewpoint, the power of recitation is extremely powerful, and in certain cases, it is claimed to be even more powerful and preferable than either a philosophical understanding or the excellence in moral disciplines."[167]

Attention to the aesthetic nuances of a text may be eclipsed by commentarial traditions. In tantra, oral transmission supplements commentaries, which in turn serve as the basis for sub-commentaries, sub-sub-commentaries, and, eventually, Western academic studies. As Reigle[168] notes, "Commentaries are even more necessary with the Tibetan translations because of the fact that they follow Sanskrit syntax rather than Tibetan. This is why such texts are studied in Tibetan monasteries *via* native Tibetan commentaries and *yig-chas* which put the ideas into Tibetan syntax." Nevertheless, the tantric commentarial tradition elides the importance of rhythmic meaning by privileging "melody," i.e., the "explicit level of meaning" in tantric hermeneutical parlance. Just one short step away from the *Śrī Kālacakra* in the *Vimalaprabhā*, metre has completely vanished. While commentaries "gloss" ambiguous or obscure references in root tantras, a valid and important function, they often direct attention away from the meaningful aspects of aesthetic form. Rhythmic features of the root verses and "harmonic" nominal ambiguities contained therein carry multivocal leitmotifs of the texts themselves, ones often subsumed by the melody line.

In Poetry Studies, translation seeks to convert the entire structure of an original, not just its grammatical content. For example, Robert Mandelstain's translation of the poem "Stone" attempts to preserve both rhyme and metre. And despite the meth-

---

167 T. Lewis (1996); Jan (1977: 299)
168 Reigle (1995)

odological shortfalls of using Biblical comparison to legitimate source texts, John Muir,[169] a late nineteenth-century Western author, takes up the difficult task of fashioning metrical translations of various Sanskrit verses selected from the *Ṛgveda*, *Atharvaveda*, *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, and *Mahābhārata*. Poetry scholars' attempt to translate elements of form such as rhyme and metre has led to discussions of "translation" *versus* "creation," but the obvious middle term is "interpretation." Just as a pianist interprets the nuances of a Mozart sonata, interpretation is present in every act of translation. In many cases, precise equivalents do not exist between Sanskrit and English words, or between Tibetan and English words. Instead, as Cabezón and Jackson[170] note, an "ethnocentric fallacy," whereby words must conform precisely to the narrowest Western definitions of that term, "betrays an essentialist notion of definition that, at least since Wittgenstein, has been found increasingly wanting." These authors suggest that we look to Wittgenstein's ideas on "family resemblances," so that if a certain concept taken from the native context does not meet Western essentialist standards, it still may have enough "family resemblances" to be intelligible. Additionally, by its similarities to and differences from the Western concept, the native concept can help inform the Western counterpart. Ideally, the outcome is "a conceptual cross-fertilization" in which non-Western concepts enrich Western understanding and Western terms are applied to non-Western contexts without violating their integrity.

---

[169] According to Muir (1879: xiii-1), "It will be noticed that not a few of the religious and moral maxims which are metrically rendered in this volume bear a striking resemblance to some of the most admired texts of the New Testament." Muir translates a passage from the *Atharvaveda* x. 8, 44:

> The happy man who once has learned to know
> The self-existent Soul, from passion pure,
> Serene, undying, ever young, secure
> From all the change that other natures show,
> Whose full perfection no defect abates,
> Whom pure essential good for ever sates, --
> That man alone, no longer dreading death,
> With tranquil joy resigns his vital breath.

[170] Cabezón and Jackson (1996: 19-29)

In his discussion of "cultural translation," translating the traditions of one culture into the language of another, and reminiscing Wittgenstein's ideas on "family resemblances," Putnam[171] uses the distinction between "concept" and "conception" to argue that it may be possible to trace the contours of similar conceptions between two traditions even though it may not be possible to determine one-to-one equivalences between their concepts. By including a partial glossary at the end of the translation, I attempt to sketch the contours of key terms throughout the text, thereby incorporating Putnam's broader idea of conception as opposed to concept. This glossary also speaks to the unfinished business of translation by encouraging additional reflection on the original Sanskrit conceptions that embellish the text and by encouraging readers to consider other plausible translations of the verses.

The *Śrī Kālacakra* is replete with grammatical irregularities, including long for short vowels and short for long; locative (Skt. *saptamī*) for ablative (Skt. *pañcamī*); genetive (Skt. *ṣaṣṭhī*) for dative (Skt. *caturthī*); verbs in the *ātmanepada* form instead of the *parasmaipada* form; neuter used for masculine and masculine used for neuter; and the interchange of singulars and plurals.[172] Noting such frequent grammatical irregularities in Sanskrit renditions of Buddhist tantric literature, some scholars have concluded that the tantras contain "barbarous" or substandard Sanskrit usage. In the case of the *Śrī Kālacakra*, however, Newman argues that this conclusion is false, for although Buddhist tantric Sanskrit is certainly not Pāṇinian Sanskrit, the language of early Kālacakra literature is neither substandard Sanskrit nor a form of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (Skt. *ārṣa*). As certain passages within the *Vimalaprabhā* indicate, grammatical irregularities were intentionally introduced into the *Śrī Kālacakra* to counteract arrogance in the form of strict adherence to grammatical rules. According to the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on I.3:

---

171 Putnam (1981)

> A *yogi* should understand ungrammatical words like these, and others too, by reading the sacred texts. Likewise, I (*Kalkī Puṇḍarīka*) must write the (*Vimalaprabhā*) commentary relying on the meaning, in order to destroy conceit in correct language.

Here, grammatical irregularities insure that those who study Kālacakra attend to its meaning rather than merely to its words.

Despite the grammatical irregularities of the root text, the Tibetan translators of the *Śrī Kālacakra* were exceedingly systematic in their translation of various Sanskrit words and phrases. In the third chapter, for example, Sanskrit prefixes and longer, recurrent phrases are translated systematically into Tibetan.[173] Systematic translation intimates Tibetan respect for the precision of the Sanskrit original as Tibetan translators attempted to preserve the perceived inherent power and efficacy of Sanskrit texts.[174]

Despite their systematic approach to translating Sanskrit, however, Tibetan translators often made different grammatical choices than those indicated in the Sanskrit root text. Granting that Sanskrit author(s) themselves intentionally may have been creative with respect to case endings, at least three possibilities present themselves to account for the Tibetan choices: 1) the Tibetan translators were "correcting" the grammatical creativeness of the Sanskrit author(s); 2) the Tibetan translators wished to produce a smooth, flowing translation in their native Tibetan, hence heightening their own "authorial transparency;" and/or 3) the Tibetan translators made certain grammatical choices in order to preserve metre, e.g., the Tibetan particle *dag*, often an indicator of the dual number, is frequently employed throughout the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra* to complete lines that otherwise would be short one syllable.

---

172 Upadhyaya (1986: xxiv); Vacek (1986)

173 For example, the Sanskrit *kṣititalanilaye* is translated consistently as *sa yi mthil gyi gnas*.

174 As Prusek (1938: 384) observes, "Apparently in the eyes of the social classes for which these narratives were intended, as well as in the minds of their authors, the essential value of the religion was tested only by the magical powers which it gave to believers." See also Kawamura (1978).

Despite the systematic efforts of Tibetan translators, nominal reduction from Sanskrit to Tibetan counteracts systematic word- and phrase-equivalents, resulting in an apparent loss of translation precision.[175] Making metre in Sanskrit is a much more complicated endeavor than it is in Tibetan, and it is quite possible that this aesthetic criteria necessitated that Sanskrit authors perform synonymic gymnastics while such feats were not exacted from their Tibetan neighbors. Ironically, then, it is likely that in using English synonyms to translate apparent Sanskrit synonyms, I am introducing connotative nuances into the English translation of the text not intended by Indian authors and Tibetan translators.

The Tibetans were well aware that the successful translation of Buddhist texts from India required a clear understanding of the grammatical and syntactical relationship between Sanskrit and Tibetan. Common scholarly interchange between Indians and Tibetans led eventually to the production of the four thousand five hundred and sixty-nine texts that comprise the Sde dge Kanjur and Tanjur. A supplement to the Tanjur reports that one hundred and seven Indian and two hundred and twenty-two Tibetan translators were involved in this work, though only the names of the leading translators are mentioned. Since many translations in the Tanjur are anonymous, it is likely that thousands of Indian and Tibetan translators and assistants were employed. Tibetan scholars studied the collections of homonyms and synonyms preserved in Sanskrit lexicons, and elaborate rules were devised to insure that accurate Tibetan equivalents for Sanskrit terms were employed, that sentences were constructed with proper verbal juxtapositions, and that metrical rules pertinent to the Tibetan rendering of Sanskrit poetical texts were followed. Regarding word choice, translators were advised

[175] For example, the Sanskrit nouns *kṣiti*, *mahī*, and *bhūmi* all translated by the same Tibetan noun *sa*.

to confine themselves to the bilingual vocabularies compiled by Tibetan scholars, and the translation of prefixes was relatively inflexible. Particular Sanskrit religious or philosophical expressions were often translated methodically according to extensive vocabularies of homonyms and synonyms compiled along the same lines as those adopted by ancient Indian lexicographers. Lexicons addressing metre were also compiled, and extant remain the Tibetan translations of Amarasiṃha's metrical *Amarakoṣa* and its commentary, the *Kāmadhenu*.[176]

Following the lead of the Tibetan translators, my translation is systematic -- when the Tibetan translator(s) render a specific Sanskrit term with a single Tibetan term, I attempt to follow suit by using a single English term. When I make a different word choice, I explicitly note this fact, together with my rationale, in a footnote. In cases in which the Tibetan translation renders multiple Sanskrit terms with a single Tibetan term, I have selected those English terms I believe best fit the nuances of the Sanskrit terms. A systematic, philological approach to both Sanskrit and Tibetan renditions of the Sanskrit highlights a number of findings that pertain to grammar, aesthetic valuation, and the cultural translation of the text into ritual form. For example, in some verses, Tibetan translators substituted their own ritual objects for Indian ones when they translated the *Śrī Kālacakra* into Tibetan, while in other verses, such cultural substitution does not occur and the name of the Sanskrit ritual object is simply transliterated into Tibetan.[177]

Because the boundary between translation and interpretation is often unclear, I have applied certain aspects of Varela's[178] neurophenomenological method throughout

[176] Namgyal Institute (1961); Bira (1986)
[177] See Chapter IV of this dissertation.
[178] Varela (1996)

my research. Varela describes phenomenology as a style of thinking that insists on the irreducible nature of conscious experience, which means that experience itself becomes the guiding thread throughout any inquiry. The benefit of phenomenology is that it does not oppose the subjective to the objective. Instead, by recognizing that an individual's consciousness is inseparably linked to that with which it interacts, consciousness itself is used to shed light onto how notions such as subjective and objective arise in the first place. In order to achieve a disciplined examination of experience, Varela proposes that we adopt an attitude of reduction, which is constituted by a suspension of beliefs about what is being examined. By systematically bracketing our habitual tendencies to elaborate current interpretations based on pre-set structuring, the ubiquitous background of our approach to anything, we are lead to intimacy with the phenomenon itself. Varela believes this direct, experiential intimacy constitutes an aspect of "intuition," which he believes may be cultivated in a systematic manner. About intuition, Varela writes:

> Intuitive capacity does not refer here to some elusive, mystical state. It is, on the contrary a basic human ability which has been widely discussed in many analyses of creativity or art. ... We take this capacity for granted but do little to cultivate it in a systematic manner. ... Clearly there is no contradiction here with reasoning and inference, but a complementary mode present in ordinary human activity.

Training oneself in stability of mind relative to the cultivation of the reductive attitude and intuition Varela believes imperative due to the fragile nature of the attitudes of reduction. He writes, "If one does not cultivate the skill to stabilize and deepen one's capacity for attentive bracketing and intuition, examination remains prey to our habitual pre-assumptions, which Phenomenology calls the Natural attitude."

In addition to the tendency to fall prey to habitual preconceptions, interpretation of tantric texts is challenging due to their liberal use of *sandhyābhāṣa*, sometimes referred to as "twilight language" or "intentional language."[179] Throughout tantric

texts, word choice and syntactical arrangement are highly ambiguous, and the ambiguity of tantric discourse enables a single verse simultaneously to carry multiple levels of meaning. Most scholars agree that linguistic ambiguity in tantra is intended to protect the esoteric content of the texts from those not properly initiated,[180] and the multivocal Sanskrit verses of the *Śrī Kālacakra* incorporate various levels of meaning pertaining to astronomy and astrology, alchemy, yogic practice, and ritual arts. In the case of the third chapter of the *Śrī Kālacakra*, however, the *Vimalaprabhā* tends to focus on the ritual meaning of the verses.

A rich, conscious and articulated Tibetan commentarial and hermeneutical tradition exists to assist in sorting out the ambiguous, multivocal and grammatically-irregular nature of tantric language.[181] Broido[182] notes that there are two ways in which a Western work interpreting Buddhist texts may be concerned with hermeneutics. First, the Western scholar acts as an interpreter and applies his or her own hermeneutical techniques to the materials; and second, because it was expected that they would be subject to and/or would require interpretation, tantric texts were written with a certain degree of hermeneutical self-consciousness. This, Broido claims, makes it imperative that Western scholars follow the Buddhist hermeneutical tradition when interpreting tantras. Furthermore, surveying the "explanatory methods" (Tib. *bshad thabs*) used in Tibet, Broido argues that some make similar distinctions to those found in Western theories of meaning and speech-acts, e.g., explanation by "intention" (Tib. *dgongs bshad*).[183]

---

179 Bharati (1961); Bucknell and Stuart-Fox (1986); Elder (1976)
180 T. Gyatso (1995); Jackson (1992: 89)
181 Cabezón (1981; 1992); Harman (1971); Jackson (1988); Kapstein (1988); Reugg (1981; 1989a); Steinkellner (1978)
182 Broido (1982: 5-13; 1983; 1984; 1988); Thurman (1978; 1988)
183 Broido (1982) employs terms such as "Hevajra code" and "Guhyasamāja code" to sidestep the problem of translating the Sanskrit term "*sandhyābhāṣa*." Using Padma dkar po's (1527-1592) commentary on the *Hevajratantra*, Broido distinguishes: 1) the notion of a sign (Tib. brda) in general; 2) the notion and purposes of signs; and 3) particular types of signs, e.g., bodily signs (Tib. lus kyi brda) and speech

An example from Broido's provocatively entitled article, "Killing, Lying, Stealing, and Adultery: A Problem of Interpretation in the Tantras" illustrates the multi-dimensional nature of passages within a particular tantra. Using Kālacakra literature as an example, Broido selects verses that presumably advocate activities such as killing, lying, stealing, adultery, drinking wine, and loving women of low caste. However, using commentarial material and the hermeneutical dialectic of "interpretable" and "definitive," Broido provides two interpretations for each of these passages. For example:[184]

> Interpretable (Skt. *neyārtha*; Tib. *drang don*): A Buddha may kill those who are really committing the five immediacies, who break their vows, and who damage the teaching. But a mantrin who has not attained the five special knowledges (Skt. *abhijñā*; Tib. *mngon shes*) should not perform such fearful actions.
>
> Definitive (Skt. *nītārtha*; Tib. *nges don*): Holding the semen (Skt. *retas*; Tib. *khu ba*) at the top of the head.

The extent to which later Tibetan interpretations are based upon earlier Indian commentarial literature is an important area of future research, one that may consider the manner in which both Indian and Tibetan commentaries relate to verse-meaning in the context of the *Śrī Kālacakra*.

Reconstructing Tantric History

Judging from the probable dates for much tantric literature, the late medieval period of India history was the heyday of textual and ritual aspects of Indian tantra. Scholars still debate the precise dates of the tantric movement's inception and diffusion,

---

signs (Tib. ngag gi brda). According to Padma dkar po, a sign communicates by speech or gestures that do not follow normal conventions. Furthermore, signs are often related to secrecy such that "the yogins recognize each other but cannot be recognized by outsiders."

[184] Broido (1988: 73)

though it appears that tantra may have achieved a self-identifiable form during the third or fourth centuries.[185] As a corpus of esoteric thought and practice, tantra continued to develop in fifth- to seventh-century India, and later, from the late seventh to the early thirteenth centuries, tantra's textual genre was greatly expanded. "Tantra" itself is more an amalgam than an entity, combining as it does Vedic ritual,[186] *mantra* recitation, Upaṇṣadic theory, *haṭha-yoga*,[187] *kuṇḍalinī-yoga*,[188] Śaivite iconography, and Śākta beliefs.[189]

Tantric cults were common to Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and Kaśmirī Śivaism.[190] From about the third to the ninth centuries, it appears that "mainstream" Mahāyāna Buddhists in India recognized as authentic and embraced a corpus of tantric texts. Since the Tibetan reception of Indian Buddhism occurred when much of this incorporation had already taken place, it is not surprising that the tantric section of the Tibetan canon contains almost five hundred tantric texts and more than two thousand commentaries and explanatory works translated from Sanskrit.[191]

---

185 Sanderson (1990: 1) uses the term "tantric" "to denote a form of religious practice which is distinguishable from the rest of Buddhism principally by its ritual character, only secondarily by soteriological doctrine, and hardly at all by specific theories of ultimate reality." Eliade (1969: 399-403; 1974: 200-201) identifies tantra as a philosophical and religious movement that arose during the fourth century C.E. and achieved what he "pan-Indian popularity" by the sixth century." A partial list of sources on tantra include: Asvaghosa (1975); Banerji (1988); Bernard (1992); Bernbaum (1974); Bharati (1975); Bharati (1975); B. Bhattacharya (1988); Blofeld (1970); D. Bose (1956); Bottéro (1991); Brooks (1990); Chang (1963); Chandra (1965); Daniélou (1991); Dargyay (1979); Davidson (1981); Goswami (1986); Goudriaan and Schoterman (1988); Guenther (1972b); J. Gyatso (1986); K. Gyatso (1982); T. Gyatso (1975; 1988; 1991a); T. Gyatso et al. (1991); Hopkins (1984; 1985; 1990); Isayeva (1995); de Jong (1984); Kiyota (1982); Kvœrne (1975); de La Vallée Poussin (1922); Lessing (1942); Lorenzen (1972); Matsunaga (1964; 1965); Muses (1982); Nihom (1994); Pandey (1986); Pandit (1957; 1964); Rastogi (1979; 1992); Riviere (1989); Ruegg (1984); Samuel (1989); Schopen (1983); Shinici (1974); Sanderson (1992); Srinivasan (1987); Stalbein (1980); Takasaki (1966); Tāranātha (1983); Tharchin (1988); Thrangu (1994); Tsong kha pa (1982; 1987a; 1987b); Tsuda (1982); Tucci (1931); van Tuyl (1979); Walker (1982); Wayman (1980; 1993); and Yeshe (1987; 1995).

186 Oguibenine (1983)

187 Sinh (1915); Svatmarama (1975)

188 Sastri (1968)

189 Sinh (1915); Shaw (1994b: 31)

190 The tantras of the Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas and Śāktas are called "Samhitā," "Āgama," and "Tantra," respectively.

191 Eliade (1969: 399-403; 1974: 200-201); Sanderson (1990: 1). According to Snellgrove (1959a: 3-

Confusion exists concerning the origin of tantric ideas and practices in India. Some authors have chosen to locate the source of tantric ideas in an "Indian religious substratum" from which the tantric tradition took its impetus. According to this view, similarities between tantric Buddhism and tantric Hinduism are explained as independent derivations from a common source.[192] The Oxford scholar Alexis Sanderson[193] takes another approach, and he argues that Hindu tantra and Kaśmirī Śaivism are the source of Buddhist tantric ideas. While not claiming that a Buddhist tantric system stripped of its doctrinal and soteriological content is identifiable with a Śaivite system *per se*, Sanderson claims that the authors who composed the Buddhist tantras, especially the Highest Yoga Tantras, drew heavily on Śaiva textual materials from a specific section of the Śaiva canon. Sanderson argues that Buddhist tantric authors then

---

4), from the seventh to the twelfth centuries, major creative activity was focused on the tantras, a point evidenced by the composition of texts in the Tibetan canon. Approximately one-quarter of the Kanjur's one hundred volumes is comprised of tantric texts. In the Tanjur, sūtric commentaries (Tib. *mdo 'grel*), mostly produced during the period of Mahāyāna development from the second to the eighth centuries, comprise about half of the approximately two hundred and twenty-five volumes, while tantric commentaries (Tib. *rgyud 'grel*) produced from the seventh to the twelfth centuries, especially during the middle of this period, comprise approximately one-quarter of these volumes. For more on the Tibetan canon, see Eimer (1980; 1983; 1992).

192 Eliade (1969); Snellgrove (1987)

193 Sanderson (1990) does not favor this idea, and he writes, "The problem with this concept of a 'religious substratum' or 'common cultic stock' is that it is by its very nature an entity inferred by never perceived. Whatever we perceive is always Śaiva or Buddhist, or Vaiṣṇava, or something else specific. Derivation from this hidden source cannot therefore be the preferred explanation for similarities between the specific traditions unless those similarities cannot be explained in any other way." Sanderson also claims that the Hindu tantric tradition is "positive and identifiable" while the Buddhist tantric tradition is not. He attempts to substantiate his conclusion concerning Śaiva influence on Buddhist Tantra from a reading of early Śaiva tantric literature authoritative at the time of the emergence of the Heruka cults. He states, "That the redactors of the Buddhist Yogānuttaratantras depended on these Śaiva works was always obvious enough to those Śaivas who knew the literature." Sanderson uses the following argument to support his overall argument: "Belief in the existence of this substratum is perhaps encouraged by the not uncommon notion that what differentiates Hindu Tantrism from orthodox Hinduism and Buddhist Tantrism from orthodox Buddhism is that both have their roots deep under the "śāstric" ground in the autochtonous religious traditions of the lower castes and tribals. I am sure that one aspect of Hindu Tantrism is that it imposes itself on and colonizes such religion. However, I am equally sure that, even if these traditions were a source of raw materials for some Hindu tantric traditions, [and by extension, I would suppose some Buddhist traditions], they reached the "Vajrayāna" directly from highly esoteric forms of "Śaivite Tantrism" cultivated in circles fully conscious of their sectarian identity.

reassembled this material into texts identical to no one particular Śaiva system but resembling all Śaiva systems from a particular section of the canon in their general structure and method. Although a full-scale comparison of Kaśmirī Śaivite and Highest Yoga Buddhist tantras is necessary to test Sanderson's claim, similarities do exist between the *Śrī Kālacakra* and an early Kaśmirī Śaivite text from north India, the *Viṇāśikha Tantra*.[194]

Though denounced by Victorian Western and revisionist Indian scholars during the Indian colonial period, tantra has emerged within the last thirty years as a viable and increasingly-popular area of study within the broader study of Asian religions. Critical translations and studies of Hindu and Buddhist tantric texts from India, Tibet, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia have been published, and the bibliography of secondary sources pertinent to Tantric Studies is expanding rapidly. The partial tantric history recently being constructed suggests that tantra may have been mainstream within both elite and popular forms of medieval Hindu and Buddhist religious life, and in scholarly vogue are studies on Hindu and Buddhist subtle-body "mapping" and South-Asian tantric hagiography.[195]

Understanding of the function of texts such as the *Śrī Kālacakra* as important pieces of literature within a complex, historical and literary milieu is an important methodological first step before attempting far-reaching sociological interpretations of how these texts functioned in tantric communities.[196] The *Śrī Kālacakra* was composed within a rich literary context, and many of its ideas and terminology had currency in other aspects of Indian culture. Having first considered the *Śrī Kālacakra* self-

194 Andresen (1996)
195 "April" (1996)
196 Kapstein (1997)

referentially, we can later complement this understanding with a layered method that considers its connections: 1) to other tantric material dating from the same period, including Buddhist, Hindu, Śaivite, Kāpālikas, and Kālāmukhas works; 2) to other Buddhist "Highest Yoga" tantras; 3) to Buddhist tantras in general; 4) to Hindu tantras, especially Kaśmirī Śaivite works; 5) to pan-Indian cultic elements that may have informed various forms of tantra, e.g., references to Indian alchemy,[197] astronomy,[198] astrology,[199] omenology,[200] and to the classical Indian healing system of Āyurveda;[201] and 6) to historical documents on other forces, e.g., social, political, economic,[202] that may have influenced ideas in tantric text and ritual practice. Such a layered methodology may dissolve the Western distinction between didactic philosophy and doctrine on the one hand, and narrative structure and practice on the other. Only after considering these multifaceted aspects of tantra's literary context is it appropriate to attempt to interpret textual data sociologically, e.g., by considering cross-culturally the function of similar genres of ritual action.

---

[197] Banerji (1992); Faivre (1993); Jung (1944); Lahiri (1968); Lindsay (1970); Mahdihassan (1979); Pereira (1989); White (1984; 1996); Zabala (1991)

[198] In order to understand texts such as the *Śrī Kālacakra*, we must consider other texts with which its authors may have been in contact, e.g., Varāha-mihara's *Bṛihat Saṃhitā*. See Bhat (1982); Burgess (1860); Clark (1930); Neugebauer (1983); Sarma (1977; 1979; 1986); Iyengar (1980); Iyer (1884); Petri (1968); Pingree (1978); Shukla (1969); Subbarayappa and Sarma (1985); Thurston (1994); Wilkinson (1861).

[199] Dreyer (1990); Pingree (1976); Santhanam (1984)

[200] Reiner (1975; 1981)

[201] Chandra (1971a; 1971b); Chattopadhyaya (1986); Dash (1975); Joshi (1984); Nandi (1973); Nityanatha (1991); Rosu (1986); Sde srid Sang rgya mtsho (1970); Staal (1993); Tripāthī (1939); Vagbhata (1939); V. Wallace (1995; 1995/6); Zimmerman (1979); Zysk (1991; 1995/6)

[202] Chapela (1992)

CHAPTER III: TEXTUAL KĀLACAKRA

Kālacakra's Textual Divisions

The *Śrī Kālacakra* and the corresponding 12,000-verse *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā* commentary are divided into five main sections in both Sanskrit and Tibetan redactions: 1) cosmology, i.e., the realm-space section (Skt. *lokadhātupaṭala*; Tib. *'jig rten gyi khams rnam*); 2) physiology, i.e., the inner-self section (Skt. *adhyātmapaṭala*; Tib. *nang nges pa*); 3) initiation, i.e., the empowerment section (Skt. *abhiṣekapaṭala*; Tib. *mngon par dbang bskur ba*);[203] 4) generation stage, i.e., the practice section (Skt. *sādhanāpaṭala*; Tib. *sgrub thabs*); and 5) completion stage, i.e., the gnosis section (Skt. *jñānapaṭala*; Tib. *ye shes*).[204]

Focusing on astrology, geomancy, geography, history and eschatology,[205] the first section of the *Śrī Kālacakra*, which is sometimes referred to as "Outer Kālacakra" (Tib. *phyi'i dus 'khor*), presents a cosmological alternative to traditional Buddhist cosmology as it is presented in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakoṣabhāṣya*. The second section of the tantra is sometimes referred to as "Inner Kālacakra" (Tib. *nang gi dus 'khor*), and it outlines the physiology of the "subtle body" (Skt. *śukṣmadeha*), including its structure and function. This section of the tantra also addresses the time-cycle of breaths taken by a person during a day; here, the temporal divisions of the universe are said to be situated in the body *via* the vital-wind processes, which tantric practitioners seek to control. Perhaps related, the sixth chapter of Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* discusses how to keep oneself above the whirl of time (Skt. *kāla*) by using yoga to control

---

[203] The title of this section is "The third chapter, known as the Empowerment" (Skt. *abhiṣekonāmatṛtīyahpaṭala*).
[204] Sopa (1985a: 92); Dwivedi and Bahulkar (1994: 20)
[205] Jackson (1985b: 31)

vital wind in the channels.[206]

The third to fifth sections of the *Śrī Kālacakra* are sometimes referred to as "Alternative Kālacakra" (Tib. *gzhan gyi dus 'khor*). Beginning with an explanation of the qualifications necessary for both guru and disciple, the third section of the tantra addresses "empowerment" into the practice of Kālacakra. It then describes the activities that precede the empowerment, which include examining the site, accumulating ritual materials, taking control of the site, creating a protective circle, and constructing the Kālacakra *maṇḍala*. It continues to describe disciples' progress through the *maṇḍala*, the guru's conferral of the empowerment, and the concluding rituals that follow the empowerment ceremony.

The fourth and fifth sections of the *Śrī Kālacakra* focus on the practice of Kālacakra's six-limbed yoga (Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*; Tib. *rnal 'byor yan lag drug pa*). These practices are divided into "generation stage" (Skt. *utpattikrama*; Tib. *bskyed rim*) and "completion stage" (Skt. *niṣpannakrama*; Tib. *rdzogs rim*) yogas. In contemporary settings, when then Kālacakra empowerment is conferred to large groups, only those empowerments that enable practitioners to engage in "generation stage" practices are conferred. The "higher empowerments" (Tib. *dbang gong ma*) necessary for "completion stage" yogas are bestowed infrequently in large public gatherings. These "higher empowerments" are divided into two categories -- the four "conventional worldly" empowerments (Tib. *kun rdzob 'jig rten pa*) and the "transmundane" empowerment (Tib. *nges don 'jig rten las 'das pa*), sometimes referred to as the "fourth" empowerment.[207]

---

[206] Abhinavagupta (1968); Dasgupta (1969); Pandey (1935)
[207] Sopa (1985a: 94-95, 116)

The *Śrī Kālacakra* is a relatively late tantra that references earlier Indian traditions, e.g., the Sāṃkhya tradition.[208] Kālacakra's discussion of the "four drops" implies familiarity with the four states described in the *Māṇḍūkhya Upaniṣad* and Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*.[209] Nevertheless, though it draws on well-known works from the Indian tradition, the *Śrī Kālacakra* itself is an exceptionally self-referential work. In contrast to many examples from Indian literature in which later chapters imply separate authorship, e.g., the *Kauśika Sūtra*, the *Śrī Kālacakra's* stylistic consistency implies authorial continuity. Clear authorial intention regarding content is also present, and as Puṇḍarīka notes in the *Vimalaprabhā*, there is a progressive sense of building towards the fifth chapter.

Kālacakra's History in Sambhala

According to Bu ston's *Dus 'khor chos 'byung*, Nāropā's *Paramārthasaṃgraha*, and the *Śrī Kālacakra* itself,[210] Śākyamuni Buddha taught the *Paramādibuddha* (the *Kālacakramūlatantra*)[211] in the Dharmadhātu *maṇḍala* at Śridhānyakaṭaka in southern India. Dhānyakaṭaka, which is regarded in the Kālacakra tradition as the source of all

---

208 Frauwallner (1957; 1982; 1984); Garbe (1894); Larson (1969); Radhakrishnan (1957); *Sāṃkhya* (1987)

209 Reigle (1995)

210 Orofino (1994b: 11)

211 The full title of this text, which is no longer extant in either Sanskrit or Tibetan, is *The Kālacakra Root Tantra: The Primordial Buddha* (Skt. Kālacakramūlatantrarājaparamādibuddhanāma; Tib. Dpal dus 'khor rtsa rgyud dang po'i sangs rgyas). Scholars are uncertain about the original length of the "Paramādibuddha," or that a complete text ever existed. According to Orofino (1994b: 13-14), in addition to verses of the "Paramādibuddha" found in the "Sekoddeśa," many fragments of it exist in Kālacakra's exegetical literature, thus demonstrating that other sections of the text were circulating in India during the early spread of the tradition. The first chapter of the "Vimalaprabhā" quotes seventy-two verses from the "Paramādibuddha" that do not belong to the "Sekoddeśa," and other verses from the "Paramādibuddha" are found in other chapters of the "Vimalaprabhā." Additional verses from the "Paramādibuddha" are found in Vajrapāṇi's "Lakṣābhidhānoddhṛtalaghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa," in Vajragarbha's "Hevajrapiṇḍārthaṭīkā," and in Sādhuputra Śrīdharānanda's "Sekoddeśaṭippaṇī." Nāropā also quotes verses from the "Paramādibuddha" in both his "Paramārthasaṃgraha" commentary on the "Sekoddeśa" and in his "Vajrapādaṣārasaṃgrahapañjikā" commentary on the "Hevajratantra," the latter of which is extant only in Tibetan.

tantric teachings, has been located in the proximity of the Indian village of Amarāvatī in the Guntur District of Āndhra Pradesh. This area was the site of a marble *stūpa* of considerable dimension that probably dates to the second century or earlier.[212] According to the Tibetan tradition, Buddha's emanation as Kālacakra is believed to have been his highest emanation during which he taught his most profound and comprehensive doctrines and practices.[213]

In the *Śrī Kālacakra*, the central deity Kālacakra is one form taken by the "Primordial Buddha."[214] From the *Sekoddeśaṭīkā* of Naḍapāda,[215] alias Nāropā, the Primordial Buddha (Skt. *ādibuddha*) is defined as follows:

> The word *ādi* means without beginning or end, and *buddha* means being enlightened with regard to the *dharmas*, free of all false conceptions. So being *ādi* and being *buddha*, he is *Ādi Buddha*, with no origin and no decrease, omniscient.

Buddha is said to have taught the *Paramādibuddha* at the request of Sucandra, the king of Sambhala. In the Tibetan tradition, Sucandra is believed to be an emanation of Vajrapāṇi. Sucandra is then said to have redacted the 12,000 verse (Skt. *śloka*) text in a volume and returned with it to Sambhala where he taught and transmitted it. When Sucandra returned to Sambhala, he is said to have written the *Stainless Light*

---

212 Macdonald (1970); Orofino (1994b: 11-12); VC (1966: 6); Newman (1985: 53; 1987a: 71-75). Upadhyaya (1986: xxi) claims that the *Śrī Kālacakra* itself indicates that it may have been preached at Kalāpagrama or Aḍakavatī in Sambhala. See Mus (1978) and Tucci (1957; 1988) for a discussion of the cosmological and psychological significance of the *stūpa* and *maṇḍala*, both of which link macrocosm and microcosm.

213 Jackson (1985b: 2). While T. Gyatso (1995: 93-97) claims that Buddha taught certain higher tantras such as the *Śrī Kālacakra* after having assumed the form of the tantra's central deity in union with consort, he proposes a revisionist approach to the traditional Tibetan view:

> We need not presume that all of the teachings were propounded by the Buddha during his historical lifetime. Rather, I think that the teachings of *tantra* could have also emerged through the extraordinary insights of highly realized individuals who were able to explore to the fullest extent the physical elements and the potential within the human body and mind. ... When we reflect on tantric teachings, we should not limit our perspective by rigid notions of time and space.

214 de Körös (1883); Wayman (1973: 53)

215 Carelli (1941); Snellgrove (1987: 205)

(Skt. *Vimalaprabhā*), a 60,000-verse commentary on the *Paramādibuddha*.[216]

Neither the *Paramādibuddha* nor Sucandra's *Vimalaprabhā* remain extant in Sanskrit, and we have no evidence that these texts were ever translated into Tibetan. Indeed, even Bu ston remarked that the *Paramādibuddha* no longer existed in the early eleventh century.[217] The *Paramādibuddha* was a late text, one which reflected earlier Buddhist Tantric literature of the seventh and eighth centuries, texts such as the *Guhyasamājatantra*, the *Hevajratantra*,[218] and the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṇgīti*. In addition, Nāropā's *Paramārthasaṃgraha* includes a quotation from the *Paramādibuddha* that corresponds to the initial stanza of the *Ḍākinīvajrapañjaratantra*, a tantra that, according to Bu ston's tantric catalogue, belongs to the cycle of the *Hevajratantra*.[219]

According to the Tibetan literary tradition, two groups of kings existed in Sambhala, the seven religious kings (Skt. *dharmarāja*; Tib. *chos rgyal*), and the twenty-five "kalkī" (Tib. *rigs ldan*), and the names of both sets of kings appear in the *Vimalaprabhā* as a citation from the *Paramādibuddha*.[220] These kings are called "kalkī" by Mañjuśrīyaśas, who is an incarnation of Mañjughoṣa. They also are called "kalkī" because, as it is stated in the *Paramādibuddha*, the four castes were unified into a "kalka," literally a paste, called "vajrakula."[221] Followers of Kālacakra, each of the

---

216 Newman (1987b); Orofino (1994b: 11)

217 Grönbold (1991: 389-390)

218 Snellgrove (1959a); de Jong (1960); Farrow (1992). According to Orofino (1994b: 13-17), the *Hevajratantra* and *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* are interpreted in light of the doctrines of the Kālacakra tradition.

219 Orofino (1994b: 14)

220 Grönbold (1991: 392-393); Newman (1988: 134-137) The numbers seven and twenty-five may be symbolic, and as Grönbold suggests, "seven" may refer to the seven planets, while there are twenty-seven or twenty-eight lunar mansions in the Kālacakra tradition.

221 According to Orofino (1994b: 12) and Newman (1987b: 94; 1988: 132), the term "kalkī" designates Yaśaḥ's activity in binding the four castes in unity by conferring tantric empowerment upon them. According to Grönbold (1991), although the term "kalkī" was retranslated into Sanskrit as "kulika," the *Paramādibhuddha* uses the term "kalkī." The tenth avatar of Viṣṇu is also called "kalkī," bu the connections are not clear.

Kalkī kings reigned for one hundred years. In Tibetan literature, the kings' names are mentioned in commentarial texts, chronological works, and religious histories.[222]

After the seven religious kings, the eighth king, Yaśaḥ, who was believed to be the first Kalkin of Sambhala and an emanation of Mañjuśrī, is credited with writing the *Śrī Kālacakra* (the *Laghukālacakratantra*, a.k.a. the *Kālacakra Tantra*), an abridged version of the *Paramādibuddha*.[223] The *Śri Kālacakra*, which is extant in both Sanskrit and Tibetan, is traditionally believed to have consisted of 1030 stanzas. King Yaśaḥ is also said to have written a prophetic addendum to the *Śrī Kālacakra* called the *Śrī Kālacakra Tantrottara Tantrahṛdayam*.[224] The original *Kālacakra Tantra* is no longer extant. According to the Indian and Tibetan traditions, however, *Śrīmañjuśrīyasas*, the eighth Kalkī of Sambhala, composed a summary of the Kālacakra system called *The Abbreviated Kālacakra Tantra* (Skt. *śrīlaghukālacakratantrarāja*; Tib. *Dpal dus 'khor bsdus rgyud*). This text is now commonly referred to as the *Kālacakra Tantra*.

Yaśaḥ's son, Kalkin Puṇḍarīka, authored the *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā*, which like the *Śrī Kālacakra* upon which it comments, is also extant in Sanskrit and Tibetan.[225] The *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā*, which was named after the original *Vimalaprabhā* written by Sucandra, appears to follow the *Paramādibuddha* while directly commenting upon the *Śrī Kālacakra*.[226] This text alternates between prose and variable metrical feet (7-, 11-

---

[222] The list of kings does not start immediately with Sucandra -- his parents Sūryaprabha and Vijayā are mentioned, as are eleven descendants of Raudracakrī. Comparing the list of Sanskrit names from the *Paramādibuddha* with the list found in Tibetan works, Grönbold (1991: 392) shows that with one king certainly, and partially with two, the Tibetans separate the composite, and one name they did not even recognize as such. Thus, from the beginning, the Tibetans handed down an incorrect line of kings, although Indian scholars pointed this fact out to them in the thirteenth century. See also Reigle (1986).
[223] Newman (1987b: 93-94)
[224] Newman (1985: 63)
[225] Orofino (1994b: 12)
[226] Newman (1987b)

and 19-syllables) and contains many interspersed quotations. Unlike the Sanskrit redaction, the Tibetans translation includes a topical outline (Tib. *sa bcad*) with the text. By the fourteenth century, the *Śrī Kālacakra* had been translated into Tibetan approximately fifteen or sixteen times and the *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā* had been translated into Tibetan more than ten times.[227]

Fragments of the *Paramādibuddha* are scattered throughout the *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā* and throughout portions of other commentarial literature on Kālacakra. In addition, although we no longer have extant Sanskrit or Tibetan redactions of the *Paramādibuddha*, one section of this text, the *Sekoddeśa*, exists in both Sanskrit and Tibetan. The *Sekoddeśa* itself consists of 174 stanzas in the *anuṣṭubh* metre and is rendered in classical Tibetan, seven-syllable quatrains in both its Tibetan translations. Though no longer extant in its entirety, the Sanskrit text of the *Sekoddeśa* has been reconstructed by Raniero Gnoli through the intermediary of Tibetan exegetical literature. Colophons to the various Kanjur versions of the *Sekoddeśa* indicate that the text was revised by Rin chen rgyal mtshan on the basis of the commentary by Nāropā.[228]

The *Sekoddeśa* was translated into Tibetan twice during the second half of the eleventh century. The first translation was undertaken by the Kaśmirī Paṇḍit Somanātha together with the Tibetan Lo tsā ba 'Bro Dge slong Shes rab grags (a.k.a. 'Bro Shes rab); the second revised translation, completed by the Nepalese Paṇḍit Samantaśrī and the Tibetan Lo tsā ba Rwa Chos rab near the end of the eleventh century, is preserved in the independent tradition of the Phug brag Kanjur recovered recently from Western Tibet.[229] As Newman and Orofino have noted,[230] it is not easy

[227] Newman (1985a: 65-76); Stearns (in preparation)
[228] Orofino (1994b: 25); Carrelli (1941)
[229] Orofino (1994b: 9)

to determine where the *Sekoddeśa* may have appeared within the text of the *Paramādibuddha*, though they speculate that it was a section from the fifth chapter. The original Sanskrit redaction of the *Sekoddeśa* is the earliest known text representing the Kālacakra tradition, and extrapolating from the commentaries written on it by important religious figures of the period, this text circulated independently in India during the first half of the eleventh century.

It generally is agreed that the *Śrī Kālacakra* and the *Vimalaprabhā* were probably composed during the sixty-year cycle from 967 to 1026.[231] The issue of *where* these texts were written, however, is a debated point. Western scholars tend to favor the idea of an Indian origin for early Kālacakra literature, hypothesizing that the Muslim onslaught mentioned in both texts refers to Maḥmūd of Ghazna's numerous invasions of northwest India during the first few decades of the eleventh century.

Western Kālacakra scholars also have speculated about possible geographical locations for Sambhala, and many possibilities have been raised, including the Kushan Empire. Two popular suggestions are the Uighur kingdom of Khocho and the Buddhist kingdom of Khotan. Bernbaum[232] hypothesizes that of all the regions of Central Asia,

---

230 Newman (1987b: 94-97); Orofino (1994b: 15)

231 Newman (1987a: 102; 1988) and Orofino (1994b: 15-24) both refer to I.27 of the *Śrī Kālacakra* and the corresponding commentary in the *Vimalaprabhā*. This verse asserts that the *dhruvaka* corresponds to the nineteenth year of the Jupiter cycle, which falls forty-one years before the end of the sexagenary cycle, and Orofino therefore concludes that the astronomical era of the Kālacakra *laghukaraṇam* corresponds to 805 of the Gregorian calendar. Newman suggests an East Indian origin for the early Kālacakra literature, and he bases this claim on the fact that Mahīpāla is listed in the *Vimalaprabhāṭīkā* as the sixteenth Kalkin of Sambhala. Newman argues here that this could serve as a tribute to the monarch Mahīpāla who reigned in eastern India during the period when Kālacakra was introduced. Orofino suggests that the abundant references to military conflict and Muslims in the *Śri Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā* suggest a northwestern Indian origin for the early Kālacakra literature.

232 Because guidebooks point north, Bernbaum (1980: 45) hypothesizes that the Kushan Empire, which was responsible for the creation of Buddhist art and the spread of Buddhism through Central Asia, may be a possible location for Sambhala. Because nomads dominated this territory, however, we know little about its history. Nevertheless, Uighur ruins found north of the Tien Shan Mountains suggest that a developed kingdom may have existed there.

the Uighur kingdom of Khocho in the Turfan Depression, located beneath the Tien Shan Mountains, is one of the most likely locations for Sambhala. Bernbaum bases this statement on directions to Sambhala described in Tibetan guidebooks, which report that Turfan lies north of the Śītā River. Bernbaum believes that the Tarim Basin southwest of Turfan comes closest in size and shape to Tibetan descriptions of Sambhala. Because this basin is oval in shape and enclosed by the Kunlun, Pamir, and Tien Shan ranges, it easily could have been symbolized by a large lotus blossom surrounded by a ring of snow mountains. Furthermore, small kingdoms that likely existed in the numerous oases sprinkled around the fringes of the basin may have provided the model for the ninety-six principalities in the outer region of Sambhala. While Buddhism was flourishing in the Tarim Basin, Manicheism and Nestorian Christianity influenced the development of Buddhist art and thought in the area *via* Silk-Road caravans following the route to China.[233] Though it was an active center of Manicheism and Nestorian Christianity, the Uighur kingdom of Khocho was predominantly Buddhist, and many Buddhist monasteries existed there. At the time the Kālacakra appeared in India, the arts were well-developed in this kingdom and its inhabitants enjoyed a high standard of living. Bernbaum[234] suggests that Sambhala may be composite of many different countries and cultures, including the sophisticated Uighur kingdom of Khocho, the size and shape of the Tarim Basin, the various religions of Central Asia, and the Hindu influences of Kashmir.

Newman[235] suggests that precise geographical descriptions of Sambhala present in Kālacakra literature suggest that this kingdom existed historically. Though he does not provide a precise citation to support this point, he claims that the Kālacakra litera-

---

233 Geng (1985); Uray (1983; 1987)
234 Bernbaum (1980: 44-46)
235 Newman (1985: 83-84; 1987a: 75, 362; 1996a: 487-494)

ture locates Sambhala north of India and the Śītā River. Following descriptions of the Śītā by Hsüan-tsang and others, Newman identifies the Śītā with the Tarim River in eastern Turkestan. Further, he interprets a passage on astronomy (*Vimalaprabhā*: 40a1-2) -- *boṭa lī ca cīnādideśesu ... sambhalaviṣayāntam* -- to mean that Sambhala is north of Tibet, Khotan, and China. Newman also concludes that "the appearance of the Tibetan word *li* ("Khotan") in the Sanskrit text of the *Vimalaprabhā* ... indicates its author was familiar with, and perhaps had contact with, Tibetans." He adds that other sections from the *Vimalaprabhā* support this hypothesis. Combining these statements, that Sambhala lies north of both China and the Tarim River, Newman concludes, as does Orofino,[236] that Sambhala was located in Central Asia north of the Tien Shan. He also proposes that Sambhala may actually have been a special name for the Uighur kingdom centered at Khocho that flourished *circa* 850-1250.

According to Grönbold,[237] the Buddha proclaimed the text of the *Mūlatantra*, which is supposed to have consisted of 12,000 verses (Skt. *śloka*), to Sucandra, one of the kings of Sambhala. Sucandra later redacted it in his kingdom, and he is also said to have written a commentary of 60,000 verses in the language of Sambhala. Sambhala, Grönbold claims, was north of the Sītā river, or just in the north (Tib. *byang*). As mentioned, since they identified the Sītā with the Tarim, scholars have focused on Central Asia as a location for Sambhala, though Indian locations also have been proposed. Grönbold claims that one should not neglect the possibility that Sambhala may have been in India, because the *Padminīnāmapañjikā* by Kālacakrapāda, a short commentary on the *Śrī Kālacakra*, claims that Sambhala is "north of Sītā and south of Himavat." Grönbold concurs with Newman that the existence of Sambhala probably is not mythical. For example, the colophon of the *Vajrapāṇiguhyābhideśatantra* states that

236 Orofino (1994b: 11-12)
237 Grönbold (1991: 395-397)

Balacandra, a great guru from India, and the translator Glan chung Dar ma tshul khrims translated this text according to a book from Sambhala in the north. Later, it was compared to a text from Magadha (Tib. *yul dbus*) and one from Kashmir. Nevertheless, Grönbold claims that, even if it did originate outside of India, the *Śrī Kālacakra* is Indian in character.

Although it may be tempting to look far to the north to find Sambhala, I believe that Khotan represents a more likely locale for the "Sambhala" that inspired the authors of the *Śrī Kālacakra*. This possibility has been noted by Bernbaum and others:

> Shambhala may have corresponded historically to the Tarim Basis as a whole or to one of the major oases such as Yarkand, Kashgar, or Khotan. Some scholars have singled out Khotan, the largest and most fertile oasis on the southern rim of the basin. Watered by melting snows of the Kunlun Mountains, it supported a thriving center of Buddhist learning, a people who loved music and culture... According to archaeological evidence, Khotan was colonized by Indians around the 3rd century B.C.E. According to a Tibetan legend, a member of the Buddha's clan named Shakya Shambha fled north from Indian, crossed many mountains, and came to a land he conquered that later became known as "Sambhala." Because of the similarity, the Tibetan legend may have come from the Khotanese tradition, suggesting a possible link between the hidden kingdom and Khotan.

Bernbaum's major objection to the Sambhala-*cum*-Khotan theory centers on tallying Khotan's geographical location with directions to Sambhala given in Tibetan guidebooks. If "Śītā" is an old name for the Tarim River, then the location of Khotan and the Tarim Basin south of this river contradicts the guidebooks to Sambhala, one of which Bernbaum claims mentions Khotan and tells the traveler to go through it on the way north to the Śītā. Furthermore, commentarial literature on the *Śrī Kālacakra* divide Asia into six zones and place Sambhala north of "li," the third zone, which Bernbaum and Newman claim corresponds to the region around Khotan. Bernbaum concludes, "the teaching may still have come from Khotan but disguised its place of origin as a mysterious kingdom farther to the north."

While Bernbaum's objections to identifying Sambhala with Khotan revolve

around Tibetan guidebooks, to specify the Sambhala that inspired the *Śrī Kālacakra*, we need only look for consistency with material found in the *Śrī Kālacakra* itself; we have no assurance that the *locus classicus* for Sambhala did not shift during the years between the composition of the root text and the composition of commentaries upon it. My hypothesis that Khotan inspired the "Sambhala" mentioned by the authors of the *Śrī Kālacakra* is based on two main points. First, Khotan was the most influential Buddhist kingdom that existed around the year 1000;[238] and second, drawing on Khotanese regnal records, I correlate the "reign dates" for the most influential Khotanese king, Viśa Saṃbhava, (r. 912-966), to the eve of Kālacakra's first sexagenary cycle, 967, the date given for the *Śrī Kālacakra's* entrance into India from Sambhala.

Scholars[239] have shown that Khotan was a flourishing Buddhist kingdom at the time the *Śrī Kālacakra* was authored. In the Tarim Basin of the Śītā River, the name of Khotan is recorded in the early fourth century in a Kharoṣṭhī document (no. 661). Because the title for the Khotanese ruler was highly Indianized, Bailey concludes that Buddhism reached the Śītā early. According to the legend of Mingdi, Chinese scholars were sent to Khotan for Buddhist learning in the first century, and Tibetan sources indicate that sixty-eight Buddhist colleges (Skt. *vihāra*; Tib. *gtsug lag khang*) existed in Khotan. A list of these institutions together with the names of their founders is preserved in a Tibetan text from the Tanjur, and this text records the many beneficent

---

238 For more on Buddhism in Khotan, see Skjaervo (1991; forthcoming). For more on Central Asian tantra, see Bailey (1965); Stein (1987). For more on Buddhism in Central Asia, see Andrews (1981); Bailey (1971; 1979; 1982); Barfield (1989); Beckwith (1980, 1987); Blum (1994); Brownell (1994); Cadonna (1992); diCosmo (1994); Forte (1993); Gabain (1973); Gaulier (1976); Giles (1944); Grousset (1970); Hage (1987); Hamilton (1988); Klimkeit (1980; 1982; 1987a; 1987b; 1993); Lin (1992); Maillard (1973, 1983, 1987); Merzbacher (1905); Nāẓim (1931); Okladnikov (1990); Piotrovsky (1993); Roth (1993); Schmidt-Glintzer (1987); Sinor (1990); Stein (1948; 1981); Vandier-Nicolas (1983); Vohra (1993); Waley (1931); Weller (1928); Whitfield (1996); Wushu (1992); Ying-Hui (1976); and Zieme (1983; 1992).

239 Bailey (1982); Emmerick (1967)

acts of the kings, queens, and ministers of Khotan.

In the Buddhist center of Khotan, Sanskrit was written and spoken during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Many Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts were compiled in Khotan, and the Fourth Buddhist Council was held there. Tantric texts written in native Khotanese also date to the same period as the *Śrī Kālacakra*.[240] Skjaervo[241] has begun translating Khotanese fragments recovered in 1907 from the caves of Dunhuang in Chinese Turkestan, a huge bowl of sand surrounded on three sides by high mountains but open towards the east to the Kansu corridor. Geographical conditions have resulted in two caravan routes, to the north and to the south of the desert, branching out at Kashgar and meeting again at Dunhuang. In addition to the traders who frequented this route came missionaries and "zealous proselytizers." Indians and West Iranians brought Buddhism, which quickly gained general diffusion in Central Asia and from there penetrated into northern China. The Sogdian merchants introduced Zoroastrianism, which never gained great popularity, and Nestorian Christianity. Dunhuang itself was a Chinese frontier town at the end of the Silk Road, a commercial and military center of great importance. The Tibetans occupied most of the Dunhuang district in 781, and the conditions of the local people and of the influential Buddhist community are fairly well known given the documents and texts found in the famous "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas."[242]

Skjaervo currently is translating various Khotanese fragments from Dunhuang. One fragment, a letter written by Nāgai'drravarrda, a Buddhist monk, to the monastery in Gūśa'ṃdā, dates to the tenth century and reflects the amalgam of Buddhist life in Khotan during this period. Recounting anecdotes about the lives of members of the

240 Skjaervo (1996); Andresen (1997)
241 Skjaervo (in preparation)
242 Petech (1992: 1-13)

Gūśa'ṃdā monastic cohort, Nāgai'drravarrda's letter provides useful information on the lives of Khotanese Buddhist monks during this time. Reflecting the syncretic nature of Buddhism in Silk-Road-fed Central Asia, various monks emphasized different aspects of Buddhist practice depending upon their abilities and dispositions. From Nāgai'drravarrda, we learn that the Daishis Vimalaśīla and Dai-vai-sū followed a more typical Nikāya and Mahāyana lifestyle -- instructed in the three *piṭakas*, they focused on charity and right action, and they are said to have performed correct contemplation. In contrast, other monks reportedly were well-versed in Tantra. For example, singling out two of his monastic comrades, Nāgai'drravarrda tells us that Daide Bvaidaśīla was a "follower of the Vajrayāna" and that Daide Dairāhasū was "learned in the Vajrayāna."

What exactly does this mean, to be a "follower of the Vajrayāna" or "learned in the Vajrayāna" according to the protocols and rituals of Khotanese monastic Buddhist life? To answer this question, we may turn to another fragment from the same textual corpus, one written in the tenth century and entitled "Homage of Hūyī Kīma-Tcūna." Who Hūyī Kīma-Tcūna is, we no longer know, but his "Homage" invokes multifarious Buddhas arranged in the directions of a tantric *maṇḍala*. Hūyī continues his homage by giving reverence to another long list of Buddhas, many of whom appear in other texts, and both Hūyī's "Homage" and other tantric fragments imply that reciting the names of the Buddhas, a practice was prevalent in Khotanese Buddhist culture, was believed efficacious in Khotanese tantra. Skjaervo's preliminary translation of Hūyī's text follows:[243]

> In the eastern direction, I revere Akṣobhya and the many trillions of Buddhas beginning with Mañjuśrī. // In the southern direction, I revere the exalted Ratnaketu together with his entire assembly, the first of whom is Ākāśagarbha. // In the Western direction, I revere Amitāyu and a so-numerous

[243] Skjaervo (in preparation)

> assembly that there, one cannot determine its number. Those great bodhisattvas of the ten stages (Skt. bhūmi) beginning with Lokiteśvara are sitting in the ... — all of them I revere. Reverence! // .... In the northern direction, I revere the exalted Dundubhisvara together with his entire assembly, the first of whom is Samantabhadra. // In the first subdirection (i.e., the northeast), reverence! I revere the all-knowing Buddha Dharaṇiṃdhara, the exalted one together with his entire assembly. // In the second subdirection (i.e., the southeast), I revere the all-knowing Buddha Nārāyaṇa, great in powers, together with his entire assembly. // In the western subdirection (i.e., the southwest), I revere the all-knowing Buddha Candraprabha, the exalted one together with his entire assembly. In the fourth subdirection (i.e., the northwest), I revere the all-knowing Buddha Śāntendriya, the exalted one together with his entire assembly. // In the upward subdirection, I revere -- reverence! -- the all-knowing Buddha Bhadraśrī. In the downward direction, I revere the Buddha Vairocana together with his entire assembly.

From where these Buddhas come, why are they arranged in this particular configuration, and what do these textual antecedents tell us about the nature of the tantric tradition as it was practiced in medieval Khotan? More specifically, one can ask whether or not the directional orientation of the Buddhas corresponds to other tantric material from India. A proto-tantric *maṇḍala* is described in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, which probably dates to sometime before the fifth century and which reflects the early transition from Mahāyāna to Vajrayāna Buddhism in India. In this text, the Buddhas are arranged in the four major directions, and by substituting "Amitābha" for "Amitāyu," an identical configuration to that which is found in Khotan is produced.

A survey of various Indian tantras, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, the *Guhyasamājatantra*, the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, the *Hevajratantra*, and the *Śrī Kālacakra*, reveals a shifting configuration of the arrangement of the Buddhas in the four major directions. By the eighth century, Dundubhisvara appears to have been replaced by Amoghasiddi in the north, and Ratnaketu appears to have been replaced by Ratnasambhava in the south. These changes suggest that the primary configuration of Buddhas in the four major directions in Khotan reflects an early India transmission, probably sometime between the fifth and seventh centuries. Concerning the Buddhas inhabiting the subdirections in the Khotanese configuration, Dharaṇiṃdhara in the

northeast is one of the names of Viṣṇu or Kṛisṇa. In the southeast, Nārāyaṇa is identified with Brahma, Viṣṇu or Kṛisṇa. In the southwest, Candraprabha, who appears in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana*, and the text of the *Thousand Buddha Names*, refers to an *arhat* in the Jain tradition, to a semi-divine spirit (Skt. *yakśa*), and to a king. Śāntendriya in the northwest and Bhadraśrī in the upward subdirection are mentioned by Chandra.[244] Vairocana, in the downward subdirection, appears in both the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra.*

In addition to *maṇḍala*-like configurations of Buddhas, other tantric elements appearing in the Khotanese fragments include omens and portents, seed syllables, and the concept of the ten *bhūmis*. The section on omens concerns the interpretation of bodily signs and probably reflects the incorporation of *Atharva Veda* material from India into both Indian and Khotanese tantric practice.[245] According to an eighth-century Khotanese fragment, "He whose right side of the head twitches, the signs should be known as good. When the left side of the head twitches .... Those whose right ear twitches shall know, 'I shall obtain a good dwelling,' etc."[246]

The eight *akṣaras*, or sacred seed syllables, are also described in a Khotanese text commonly referred to as *The Book of Vimalakīrti*,[247] not to be confused with the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*. This text quotes from the *Anantamukhanirhārasūtra* and explicitly correlates seed syllables with cognitive states along the path. The interpretation given to the *akṣaras* here appears dissimilar to the invocation of seed syllables in tantras such

---

244 Chandra (1988)

245 Bolling (1909); Van Den Bosch (1978); S. Dange (1979); Goudriaan (1986); J. Joshi (1978); Klop-penborg (1983); Magoun (1889); Saravati (1905); Schoterman (1992); Whitney (1962)

246 Skjaervo (in preparation)

247 The eight "akṣaras" from *The Book of Vimalakīrti* include: 1) "pa," unobstructed, selfless, empty, extinguished; 2) "la," marks/characteristics (Skt. lakṣaṇa); 3) "ba," pure equality; 4) "ka," recognition of the fruits of actions; 5) "ja," birth, aging, death; 6) "dha," spells/chants (Skt. dhāraṇī); 7) "śa," calm-abiding (Skt. śamatha); and 8) "kṣa," extinguished, empty, without essence; pure nirvāṇa.

as the *Guhyasamja*, *Hevajra*, and *Kālacakra*, in which seed syllables are placed at various cakras along the subtle body and their vocalic resonance is correlated with the shifting distribution of winds, drops and minds that results from the practice of meditative visualization. In the Khotanese text, no explicit mention is made of placing the *akṣaras* along the subtle body.

Other tantric fragments from Khotan invoke the ten *bhūmis*, and here, the context appears to be both Mahāyānic and tantric. This is seen in the following quote from Skjaervo's preliminary translation:[248]

> I go in reverence with my forehead to the exalted buddha body of the Law, pure may he deign the body in the ten *bhūmis*. May they succeed by these merits and roots of goodness. When he writes to you, for him are fulfilled the six *pāramitās*, the ten *bhūmis*, the ten powers -- his wishes are fulfilled, all living beings will become buddhas in the world. O great prince, deign thereafter to realize the all-supreme *bodhi* of the buddhas.

It is difficult to determine to what, precisely, the term "bhūmi" refers in this context. It may refer either to the ten stages in the career of the *bodhisattva*, one who has taken a vow to seek enlightenment for the sake of others; or possibly to the ten divisions of the central channel in which the subtle drops are stacked during tantric meditation. Further contextual research on the roles played by tantric texts in the daily ritual life of Khotanese Buddhists is necessary before a clear determination may be made one way or the other.

While tantra certainly was an aspect of Khotanese Buddhism, determining Kālacakra's connection to Khotan necessitates revisiting tenth-century Khotanese political history, which, we have seen, involved Chinese and Turks.[249] During the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, Muslim forces from the western city of Kashgar waged a forty years' war against the primarily-Buddhist inhabitants of Khotan.[250] In

---

[248] Skjaervo (in preparation)
[249] Bailey (1982: 3-4).

958, the Khotanese king Li Ṣang-t'ien sent an embassy to China, and in 966, his own son became king of Khotan. From 971 to the end of the century, the Turks of Kāshgar were involved in a violent struggle with Khotan. By the year 1006, around the time that the *Śrī Kālacakra* was authored, Khotan had fallen to the Muslims from Kashgar, Yūsuf Qadir Khān was in possession of Khotan, and a Muslim embassy came to China from Khotan in 1009. This accords well with the *Śrī Kālacakra's* mention of Muslim invaders. The Turks, who are documented frequently in the extant Khotan diplomatic dispatches, eventually extinguished the Buddhist kingdom of Hvatanza.

The Muslim onslaught against Khotan occurred during the reign of a monarch by the name of "Viśa Saṃbhava." Viśa Saṃbhava was an extremely influential Buddhist ruler, and portraits depicting him have been found in the Dunhuang Buddhist caves. He reigned in Khotan for fifty-four years, in contrast to his successors' shorter reigns of ten, four and twenty-three years, respectively. "Viśa...," a term repeated many times in the *Śrī Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā*, is the surname of the Khotanese royal family that ruled Khotan for some one thousand years, perhaps the longest family dynasty in Asian history. In Prakrit, this term is "vijita," in Sanskrit, it is "viśta," and in Latin and English it is "victor." Following Viśa Saṃbhava, we have the reigns of Viśa Śura (r. 967-977), Viśa Dharma (r. 978-982), and Viśa Saṃgrāma (983-1006).[251]

Perhaps not coincidentally, Viśa Saṃbhava reigned from 912 to 966, which corresponds exactly to the eve of Kālacakra's first sixty-year cycle. According to Pulleybank and Hamilton,[252] the Chinese name of Viśa Saṃbhava is Li Shengtian, and his regnal year is Tong Qing (Khot. *thūkhi*). According to Zhang and Rong,[253] this king

---

250 Emmerick (1967)
251 Zhang and Rong (1982: 202)
252 Pulleyblank's (1954) chronology for the Khotanese kings was revised by Hamilton (1979), and, more recently, by Zhang and Rong (1982).
253 Zhang and Rong (1982: 202)

used three different names for his regnal year, deriving from Chinese originals -- the first is Tong Qing/thū-khī, from 912-949; then Tian Xing/thyina-hīna from 950-963; and finally Tian Zun/thyaina-śiva from 963-966. This corresponds perfectly to the purported return of the *Śrī Kālacakra* to India from Sambhala in 967.

It is likely that we are witnessing some slippage between geographical names and personal names. After all, it takes only two short linguistic steps to move from the name of the Khotanese king "Saṃbhava" to the name of the kingdom, "Sambhala;" one need only replace the *anusvāra* with an "m" and the "v" with an "l," and both of these transpositions are common between Khotanese and Sanskrit.[254] This type of geographical/surname slippage exists elsewhere in the Kālacakra tradition. According to Bu ston's account, the Kālacakra teachings and a trilogy of texts the Tibetans refer to as the "Bodhisattva Corpus" (Tib. *byang chub sem dpa'i 'khor*)[255] appeared in India during the simultaneous reigns of three kings -- Dehapāla in the East, Jaugaṅgapa in the South, and Kanauj in the West. Dehapāla may correspond to Devapāla, the Pāla king who reigned in the first half of the ninth century. The remainder of this quote suggests geographical referents. "Kanauj" obviously refers to the imperial capital of Bengal during the Pāla period, while "Jaugaṅgapa" could be construed as a stand-in for Jambudvīpa.[256] Given this nominal and geographical correlation, Khotan provides a likely candidate for the "Sambhala" mentioned in the *Śrī Kālacakra*.

---

254 Skjaervo (1996)

255 The three texts that comprise the "Bodhisattva Corpus" are Vajrapāṇi's *Lakṣābhidhānoddhṛtalaghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa*, Vajragarbha's *Hevajrapiṇḍārthaṭīka*, and Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*, texts that comment on the abridged (Skt. *laghu*) versions of the Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, and Kālacakra cycles, respectively.

256 Newman (1987a: 77); Orofino (1994b: 17)

Kālacakra's History in India

Early scholars such as Hoffmann[257] hypothesized that Kālacakra entered India from Central Asia and was practiced in the Indian provinces of Bengal and Kashmir. But even if a Central Asian kingdom such as Khotan did serve as the model for the "Sambhala" mentioned in the *Śrī Kālacakra*, a Khotan-*cum*-Sambhala could have been invoked to legitimate the *Śrī Kālacakra* and the *Vimalaprabhā*, while these texts still could have been authored in India. As mentioned previously, it is probable that at least some portion of the *Paramādibuddha*, minimally the *Sekoddeśa*, circulated in northern India during the early part of the eleventh century, the height of the importation of Buddhist texts, practices and institutions into Tibet.[258] Regarding the era of composition and dissemination of other Kālacakra texts, Newman[259] claims that a prophecy from the *Śri Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā* I. 27 states that this literature was composed in India during the sexagenary cycle from 967 to 1026.[260] Although *Śrī Kālacakra* I.

---

257 Hoffmann (1961: 125); Bernbaum (1980: 40-41)

258 Newman (1987a: 532-533; 1987b: 97-100)

259 According to Newman (1987a: 538), this verse employs "number symbols" (Skt. bhūtasaṅkhyā; Tib. grangs brda), which, according to Pingree (1981: 1), are "common objects that appear or are understood to appear in the world in fixed quantities as synonyms for those quantities." As Newman notes, when they occur together, number symbols should be read backwards. As Wayman (1977: 63) reports, Buddhist tantric texts, especially Highest Yoga Tantras, often employ numerological symbolism. In the *Śrī Kālacakra*, six-fold correspondences are common, in which the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space are complemented by the addition of the wisdom element. In addition, many nouns in the text are actually numerical designations for certain measurements of the maṇḍala. The following nouns often appear in the text, and commentaries often provide their corresponding numerical values: sky (0); moon (1); hand (2); fire (3); world (3); quality (3); time (3,4 or 6!); age (4); ocean (4); water-treasure (4); arrow (5); element (5); seal (6); season (6); taste (6); mountain (7); sage (7); weekday (7); nāga (8); wealth (8); sun (12); and fault (18).

260 According to Orofino (1994b: 14-16), KT I. 27 and the VP commentary on this verse mention that the end of the sexagenary cycle falls "403 years" (Skt. vahnau khe 'bdhau; Tib. me mkha' rgya mtsho) after the "Hijra" -- "the year of the lord of the barbarians" (Skt. mlecchendravarṣam; Tib. kla klo'i dbang po'i lo). "Lord" here refers to Muhammad and "the barbarians" refers to the Muslims. Though Newman (1987b: 100) has argued that linguistic usage from the KT and VP suggests that the year 403 should be calculated according to the Muslim lunar calendar Hijra chronology (i.e., 1012/1013), Orofino is correct that the year 403 should be calculated according to lunisolar chronology based or stabilized sexagenary Jupiter cycles (i.e., 1027). Orofino therefore concludes that the end of the sexagenary cycle corresponds to 1026, which means that the sexagenary cycle began in 967, 403 years after the elapse of the Hijra in 622. She also notes that the first year of the sexagenary cycle is referred to as "prabhava." According to Grönbold (1991: 397-398), KT I. 26 states that Kalkī Yaśas will reign six hundred years

27 does not cite India as the locus of authorship, the *Vimalaprabhā*[261] commentary to this verse states "ihāryaviṣaye," which may be translated as either "Here in the land of the Aryans..." or "Here, in the land of the Aryans..." In his dissertation, Newman opts for the former interpretation and claims that the *Vimalaprabhā* cites India as the land of its origin. More recently, however, Newman notes that Puṇḍarīka often introduces new subjects with the term "iha," and hence the statement is ambiguous.[262] Judging from Puṇḍarīka's style, I favor the second interpretation -- neither the *Śri Kālacakra* I. 27 nor the commentary on this verse from the *Vimalaprabhā* actually mention India *per se* as the locus for their authorship.

Other evidence also supports the hypothesis that the *Śri Kālacakra* and perhaps even the *Vimalaprabhā* may have been written during the first few decades of the eleventh century, concurrent with Maḥmūd of Ghazna's raids into northern India. First, no historical references to the Kālacakra tradition exist before the early eleventh century, and the masters responsible for Kālacakra's propagation probably lived during this period. Second, the *Śrī Kālacakra* and *Vimalaprabhā* make abundant reference to the Muslim Tajiks. And third, Tibetan historiographical sources support the hypothesis that the Kālacakra tradition originated in a movement that spread in certain regions in east and north India during the sexagenary cycle preceding 1027. For example, Tāranātha Kun dga' snying po (1575-1634) mentions that the *yogi* Piṇḍo introduced Kālacakra into Tibet during the time of King Mahipāla (977-1027).[263]

---

after the KT was proclaimed. Eight hundred years after that, in 622, the religion of the "mleccha" in the land of "Mekka" will begin. This date is one of the fixed points of Kālacakra time reckoning, and the period from 624 to 1027 is 403 years. This period is half of 806, a number extremely important in Kālacakra time reckoning. The epoch for the calculation of the KT is the beginning of the month Caitra of in 806. At that point, a simplified "karaṇa" reckoning begins in the Kālacakra calender. From 624 to 806, the hundred-year cycle of row of Kings of Sambhala was interrrupted.

261 Upadhyaya (1986: 78)

262 Newman (1987a; 1987b: 100; 1997)

263 Orofino (1994b: 23); Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya (1970). For more on Indian history during this period, see H. Bhattacharyya (1937) and Wink (1990).