

A Brief History of the Kalachakra

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INTRODUCTION

The history and mythology of the Kalachakra, the “Wheel of Time,” is a fascinating subject. The bodhisattvas and vajracharyas responsible for the transmission of this unique Vajrayana Buddhist tradition are a colorful group, and their deeds are often astonishing. In this essay, I will describe the history of the Kalachakra from its origin to the present, and then continue with what is forecast for the future. I hope that this brief history will increase the reader’s appreciation of the Wheel of Time.

Myth and history meet and mingle in the Kalachakra, and many of the elements in this mixture are amenable to more than one interpretation. In other words, Buddhist proponents of the Kalachakra may accept a given portion of the following account as representing both an actual historical event occurring in the world, and as an allegory symbolizing a yogic process occurring within the practitioner of the Kalachakra. The symbolic nature of the Kalachakra’s history is due to a special correspondence set up between the historical drama occurring in the macrocosm of world history, and the spiritual drama unfolding in the microcosm of a person’s

religious transformation. This correspondence is one of the features that distinguishes the Kalachakra from other Buddhist tantric systems, and many pitfalls can be avoided by keeping in mind the multivalent character of the mythopoetic elements in the history of the Kalachakra.

The history of the Kalachakra is contained in a variety of written and oral sources: late-classical Buddhist Sanskrit texts and their Tibetan translations, subsequent Tibetan commentarial and historical exegesis, and the living Tibetan oral tradition. Much of this essay is based on Sanskrit texts that, with their Tibetan translations, are the common property of all the different Tibetan Kalachakra traditions. However, the Sanskrit sources are often open to varying interpretations. Tibetan scholars who have concerned themselves with this topic have produced a voluminous literature that is full of controversies about various important details in the history of the Kalachakra tradition.

Entering into these controversies is an enterprise that would take us far beyond the scope of the present study. Moreover, I will not engage in a critical evaluation of the source materials. Rather, I will present the history of the Kalachakra as it is recounted by the dGe lug pa (Gelugpa) school of Tibetan Buddhism, thus allowing the Buddhists to present their own version of the evolution of the Kalachakra tradition.

THE TEACHING OF THE *PARAMADIBUDDHA* (THE KALACHAKRA *MULATANTRA*)¹

His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, has written:

Because these teachings were given by mystical manifestations of the Buddha to those in a mystical state of purified karma and perception, it does not matter much whether or not any specific tantra in question was expounded during the life of the historical Buddha. Yet, in fact the *Root Tantra (Mulatantra)* of Kalachakra was set forth by the Buddha during his life.²

The *Paramadibuddha*, the original textual redaction of the Kala-

chakra system, was taught by the Buddha one year after his enlightenment. It was the full moon of *Caitra* (March–April), the first month of the year in the Kalachakra reckoning. It was the time for the conquest of Mara called “Victorious Over the Three Worlds.” To the front or east was the full moon; to the back or west was the sun; to the left or north, was Rahu, the “head of the dragon,” or ascending node of the moon; to the right or south, was Kalagni, the “tail of the dragon,” or descending node of the moon. And, at this same time, while he taught the Kalachakra at Dhanyakataka, the Buddha was dwelling on Vulture Heap, Grdhrakuta, near Rajgir in present-day Bihar, with a vast entourage of bodhisattvas, and was teaching them the Perfection of Wisdom.

The Buddha taught the Kalachakra inside of the stupa known as Shri Dhanyakataka.³ This stupa was the site of a great Vajrayana concourse at which the Buddha taught not only the system of the Kalachakra tantra, but also that of the Vajrabhairava or Yamantaka, the Heruka or Chakrasamvara, and all the other tantric systems as well. Although these systems first became widely known in India through their Sanskrit redactions, the *Paramadibuddha* states that they were in fact originally taught in various languages, in accordance with the dispositions of various sentient beings.

Furthermore, the Vajrayana, or Mantrayana, teachings did not originate with the Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha; he merely represented doctrines that had been taught in a previous eon by Dipamkara Buddha, the buddha who had predicted Shakyamuni’s enlightenment.

The Buddha was dwelling inside the Shri Dhanyakataka stupa, in a cavern miraculously expanded to gigantic proportions. He emitted two mandalas. Below was the mandala, the “Sphere of Phenomena,” of a form of Manjushri, called Dharmadhatuvagisvara, the Lord of Speech; above was the splendid mandala of the asterisms.

In the form of Kalachakra, the Buddha stood on the vajra lion throne in the middle of the great mandala of the “Sphere of Vajra” (vajradhatu) the abode of great bliss. He was absorbed in the *Paramadibuddha* (Kalachakra) samadhi. Inside the mandala he was encircled by a host of buddhas, bodhisattvas, wrathful kings, gods, nagas, and male and female deities. Outside the mandala were the disciples. These included the ninety-six satraps of Shambhala,

headed by the requestor of the tantra, King Suchandra of Shambhala, an emanation of Vajrapani.

The entire three realms (the desire, form, and formless realms) saluted the feet of the Buddha, and bodhisattvas, demons, and gods made copious offerings of divine flowers, food, music, and so forth. Representing the entire assembly, Suchandra miraculously entered the dharmadhatu mandala, circumambulated the Teacher, and offered jeweled flowers at his feet. He saluted the Buddha again and again, and sat down before him. With folded hands, Suchandra requested initiation into, and instruction on, the Kalachakra tantra. The Buddha was pleased by Suchandra's request, and he bestowed the full eleven Kalachakra initiations (the ten worldly initiations and the eleventh, transcendental initiation) on everyone assembled there. He taught the twelve thousand verse *Paramadibuddha* in five chapters or investigations: cosmos, soul, initiation, practice, and gnosis. He then predicted the careers of the subsequent kings of Shambhala, the enlightenment of the gods and demons, and the attainment of the noble path by the sentient beings dwelling in the 960 million villages in the lands of Shambhala, and so forth. Suchandra wrote down the *Paramadibuddha* in a volume and, accompanied by his satraps, returned to Shambhala.

SHAMBHALA⁴

As the circumstances of the first teaching of the Kalachakra indicate, this Vajrayana system is closely connected to the land of Shambhala. Shambhala lies north of India and the Himalayas. It is north of the Sita River (the Tarim River in Eastern Turkistan). It is a land of tantric adepts, and its geography reflects this. Shambhala is shaped like a giant lotus having eight petals. The outer perimeter of the entire lotus is formed by a circle of great snow mountains, as is the perimeter of the pericarp that makes up the central third of the country. The interstices of the lotus petals are formed by rivers and snow mountains, and the entire land is covered with beautiful lakes, ponds, meadows, forests, and groves.

The central pericarp of Shambhala is elevated a bit above the surrounding lotus petals, and on it stands the capital of Shambhala, Kalapa. Kalapa is twelve leagues in breadth, and its palaces

are made of gold, silver, turquoise, coral, pearl, emerald, moon-crystal, and other precious stones. Kalapa blazes with such a luster that the full moon is a mere pale disc overhead. The light given off by the mirrors on the outside of the palaces is so bright that night cannot be distinguished from day. The thrones inside the palaces are made from the finest beaten gold, and from the gold of the Jambu River. In front of the thrones are crystal looking-glasses that allow one to see far into the distance. On the ceilings are special circular crystal skylights that allow one to observe the palaces, gods, and parks of the sun, moon, and stars, as well as the rotating celestial spheres, and even the zodiac, all as though they were right in front of one. Surrounding the thrones in the palaces are lattice-work screens made of sandalwood that exude fragrances that scent the air for miles. The couches and cushions are all made of the finest, most precious fabrics. In brief, each building in Kalapa is worth many huge ships piled full of gold.

North of Kalapa there are wooded, craggy, crystalline peaks. On the faces of the peaks are very tall designs depicting the buddhas and gods. When seen from a distance, the depictions are very clear, but when viewed up close, they become indistinct. There are one hundred thousand of these images, ten thousand of each of the ten bodhisattvas: Bhadrakala, Merusikharadhara, Kshitigarbha, Manjushri, Avalokitahalahala, Arya Tara, Guhyakadhipati Vajrapani, Devi Kesini, Paramarthasamudgata, and Maitreya.

South of the village of Kalapa there is a sandalwood pleasure grove. It is twelve leagues in breadth, the same as the village of Kalapa. East of the grove is a miniature Manasa lake, twelve leagues in breadth. To the west is a white lotus lake having the same measure. Humans, gods, and nagas enjoy themselves on the lakes in boats made of jewels.

The sandalwood pleasure grove is between the two lakes, and in the middle of the grove is the mandala circle of Bhagavan (Lord) Kalachakra that was made by King Suchandra. The mandala consists of male and female deities, and it is fashioned from the five precious materials: gold, silver, turquoise, coral, and pearl. This mandala is three-dimensional, square, and four hundred cubits in breadth.

To the outside is the body mandala. It is square, has four entrances, four portals, and is adorned with eight charnel grounds.

It is enclosed by five fences, and outside it is adorned with four discs of earth, water, fire, and wind, and then with a row of vajras. The diameter of the vajra row is eight hundred cubits.

The speech mandala is in the middle of the body mandala; it is square, and half the measure of the body mandala. It has four entrances and is adorned with four portals. It is enclosed by five fences.

The mind mandala is half the size of the speech mandala. It is square, has four entrances and is adorned with four portals. It is enclosed by three fences.

The gnosis circle is half the size of the mind mandala. It is beautified by sixteen pillars. The eight-petaled lotus is half the size of the gnosis circle. One-third of the lotus is its pericarp.

Thus, the body, speech, and mind mandalas are endowed with all the prescribed characteristics. They are furnished with strings and half-strings of pearls. They possess jeweled tapestries, daises, and *bakuli* trees. They are illuminated by mirrors, half-moons, and bells. This mandala was erected by King Suchandra, but there are also many other marvelous mandalas in the grove that were erected by the kings that followed him.

The Kalki (the lineage king) of Shambhala binds his hairlocks on top of his head; he wears a sacred headdress made out of dyed lion's hair and a crown marked with the symbols of the five buddha families. He wears the costume of a universal emperor (*chakravartiraja*), and fortunate people are able to obtain the good path just by seeing or touching him. The Kalki's emblematic earrings, and the bracelets on his arms and legs are made of the gold from the Jambu River. The light from his ornaments mixes with the light that arises from the white and red luster of his body. It shines out to the horizon; it is so bright that even the gods cannot bear it.

The Kalki has excellent ministers, generals, and a great many queens. He has a bodyguard, elephants and elephant trainers, horses, chariots, and palanquins. His own wealth and the wealth of his subjects, the power of his magic spells, the nagas, demons, and goblins that serve him, the wealth offered to him by the centaurs, and the quality of his food are all such that even the lord of the gods cannot compete with him.

Since the Kalki has a great many queens, he has many sons and daughters. However, when the Kalki-to-be is born (it does not mat-

ter whether he is the oldest son or not) there is a rain of white lotus flowers, and for one week prior to his birth the crown prince's body emits light like a radiant jewel. The queen mother, a daughter of one of the ninety-six satraps of Shambhala, is distinguished by the fact that at the time of her birth a rain of blue lotuses falls and a huge, previously unknown flower grows in front of her home. The Kalki and his queens possess the four aims of life: sensual pleasure, wealth, ethics, and liberation. They never become sick or old, and although they always enjoy sensual pleasure, their virtue never decreases. The Kalki does not have more than one or two heirs, but he has many daughters who are given as vajra ladies during the initiations held on the full moon of *Caitra* each year.

Each of the eight lotus petals of Shambhala has 120 million villages in it. Thus, adding them all together there are 960 million villages in Shambhala. Each ten million villages is governed by a satrap, so there are ninety-six satraps. The satraps teach the Kalachakra as long as the Buddha's Dharma endures. Most of them are adept at magic spells. Each of the ninety-six satraps has a magical staff; when the staff is given to a messenger, the messenger instantaneously arrives wherever the satrap wishes.

The houses in the 960 million villages of Shambhala are pleasant two-story houses similar to the houses in India. The people born in Shambhala have fine bodies and appearances, and they are very wealthy. Even those having relatively little wealth have near to a hundred treasuries full of jewels. The men of Shambhala wear caps, and white or red cotton clothes. Women wear white or blue garments pleated and patterned with beautiful designs.

The people of Shambhala live in accordance with very mild laws; beating and imprisonment are unknown. There is absolutely no sickness, famine, and so forth. The people are naturally good, intelligent, and inclined towards virtue. Most of the people born in Shambhala obtain buddhahood during that very life by means of the Guhyasamaja, Samvara, Hevajra, Kalachakra, or one of the other *Anuttara* Yoga tantra systems. Most have obtained samadhis such as are taught in the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. Even the laypeople's servants who do not practice meditation are able to advance to a pure land by transferring their consciousnesses at the time of death. No one is born into an evil state of existence from Shambhala.

The clergy, and the various sacred receptacles of body, speech, and mind (such as images, texts, stupas, and so on) receive measureless honor and worship in Shambhala. It seems that most of the monks there are provided with naga or demon servants through the power of magic spells, but in general the clergy does not possess fine things. They go bare-headed and barefoot, and only keep the three vestments and the mendicant's bowl and staff; they are extremely faithful towards even the minor Vinaya vows.

All the authentic Buddhist doctrines that exist in the southern continent, *Jambudvīpa*, (that includes the earth) are in Shambhala. From the minor practices of the eighteen Vaibhasika schools, such as the ordained person's rule about rinsing the mouth before and after meals, on through the scriptures and commentaries of the four classes of Mahayana tantras, all are there. In particular, the teachings of Tsong kha pa and his disciples have been magically carried to Shambhala from Tibet by heroes, wizards, and the Kalkis of Shambhala.

SUCHANDRA⁵

There is little recorded about the history of Shambhala prior to Suchandra. We are told the names of his father and mother, Surya-prabha and Vijaya, and that the dynasty of Shambhala belongs to the same Shakya line into which Shakyamuni Buddha was born, but that is about all. However, later events will show that the religion of Shambhala prior to Suchandra's introduction of the Kalachakra belonged to the Indian Vedic tradition.

King Suchandra, like King Indrabhuti of Uddiyana, was an emanation of the tenth-stage bodhisattva Vajrapani. This is significant because Vajrapani is the chief redactor of the Vajrayana teachings. Vajrapani and his various emanations serve as the intermediaries between the Buddha and ordinary human beings in the transmission of the Vajrayana doctrines.

After the Buddha taught the *Paramadibuddha* at Dhanyakataka, Suchandra and his satraps returned to Shambhala, as mentioned above. Suchandra then composed a sixty thousand line commentary on the *Paramadibuddha* using the language of Shambhala. Having erected the great Kalachakra mandala south of Kalapa, Suchan-

dra offered initiation into, and explanation of, the Kalachakra system to the residents of the 960 million villages of Shambhala. Those who liked these teachings listened to them, recited them, memorized them, and in turn gave them to others. In the second year after he taught the tantra, Suchandra manifested various miraculous phenomena. Then, using an enjoyment body (*sambhogakaya*), he returned to the place his emanation body (*nirmanakaya*) had come from, as a cause for sentient beings' siddhis (attainments).

YASHAS AND PUNDARIKA⁶

The sources are silent about the careers of the next six kings of Shambhala. We are told only that they reigned for one hundred years each, teaching the Dharma and protecting their land. (See the Appendix for their names.)

However, the seventh Dharma King of Shambhala, Sureshana, and his queen Vishvamata give birth to a son who was to leave his mark on the subsequent history of Shambhala. He was called Yashas—"the Renowned"

King Yashas, an emanation of Manjushri, taught the Dharma on the bodhisattva's lion throne of Shambhala for one hundred years. Then, at the end of his reign, he knew that the time had come for the maturation of the 35 million brahman sages of Shambhala. By the power of his five psychic powers⁷ he knew that the sages would obtain the noble path. On the full moon of *Phalguna* (February–March) King Yashas summoned the 35 million brahman sages, who were led by Suryaratha, to the mandala house south of Kalapa. There he gave them the following precept:

"O Suryaratha, and you other brahman sages, listen to my speech that bestows the excellence of omniscience! On this full moon of *Caitra* (next month) I must give the Vajrayana doctrine to you who observe the precepts of the Vedas and *smrtis*.⁸ Thus, venerable sirs, separate out the brahmans belonging to the families of various other countries and show them to me."

Because of that statement, they scrutinized the practices of the

various countries: eating from skulls, eating beef and buffalo flesh, drinking liquor, committing incest with one's mother, and so forth. When they saw that the countries' customs were mutually contradictory, they all fell down.

Thus, seeing their contradictions, King Yashas spoke:

"Here, I must enter you into this mandala house of Lord Kalachakra and give you the worldly and transcendental initiations. Furthermore, you venerable sirs must eat, drink, and form marriage relations with the vajra family, in accordance with my command. But if you will not obey my command, venerable sirs, then quit my 960 million villages and go wherever you will!

"Otherwise, after eight hundred years have elapsed, your sons, grandsons, and so forth will engage in the barbarian Dharma and will become teachers of the barbarian Dharma in the ninety-six great lands of Shambhala and so forth. Using the mantra of the barbarian deity Vishavimla⁹ they will hack the throats of beasts with cleavers. Then they will enjoin eating the flesh of those beasts killed with the mantra of their own deity, and they will prohibit eating the flesh of beasts that die due to their own karma.

"Also, that Dharma is authoritative for you because of the statement in the *smṛti*: 'Beasts are emitted for sacrifice.' There is no difference between the Vedic Dharma and the barbarian Dharma with regards to killing.

"Therefore, the sons, grandsons, and so forth of your family will see the valor of those barbarians, as well as the entrance of their devil deity into battle, and in the future, after eight hundred years have elapsed, they will become barbarians.

"Once they have joined the race of the barbarians, everyone dwelling in the 960 million villages, the four castes and so forth, will also become barbarians. For the brahman sages say: 'Where the great person goes, that is the path.'

"Here, in the barbarian Dharma as well as in the Vedic Dharma one must kill for the sake of the deity and the ancestors, and the same is true in the Dharma of the kshatriyas. For the brahmins say: 'Having satisfied the ancestors and the gods, there is no guilt in eating flesh,' and likewise: 'I see no fault in one who would do ill to a vicious beast.'

"Thus, holding the Vedic Dharma to be authoritative, they will

take up the barbarian Dharma. For this reason, so that the barbarian Dharma will not enter Shambhala in the future, I give you this precept. Therefore, you venerable sirs must obey my command."

Spoken in such a fashion, King Yashas's speech, together with its chastising command, was like a lightning-bolt falling on the heads of the brahman sages. They said to Suryaratha: "O Suryaratha! Please inform the lord of the people, Yashas: 'We will not abandon the Dharma of race that is explained in the Vedas and engage in the Dharma of initiations of the vajra family. Therefore, in accordance with your command, it is best that we go to the land of the Aryans (India), south of the Sita River and the Himalayas, north of the island of Lamka (Sri Lanka)'."

Using the words of the brahman sages, Suryaratha informed the lord of the people Yashas: "O great king! Emperor! Supreme sovereign! You are fully endowed with the thirty-two major marks and the eighty minor marks of a great person! You are the ornament of the splendid Shakya family! Supremely compassionate one! Have mercy on those engaged in the Dharma of their own family! Since by all means we must obey your command, we will not engage in the initiations of the vajra family; it is best that, in accordance with your command, we go to the land of the Aryans south of the Sita River, between the Himalayas and the island of Lamka."

Then, because of Suryaratha's speech, King Yashas said: "Venerable sirs, quickly leave the land of Shambhala! In this way all the sentient beings dwelling in the 960 million villages north of the Sita River will completely abandon the non-virtuous karmic paths of killing and so forth. Then, by the blessing of Lord Kalachakra, they will obtain the path of right gnosis."

In accordance with King Yashas' command, all those brahman sages left the village of Kalapa. On the tenth day they entered into a forest.

Through the power of his five psychic powers, King Yashas knew that they had entered into the forest. He knew that should the brahman sages go to the land of the Aryans, all the sentient beings dwelling in the 960 million villages would have disastrous thoughts. The kshatriyas and other people would think: "Here, the reason the sages left is that the path spoken of in the Vajrayana is not the path of right gnosis. For this reason those sages have completely

abandoned their own place, from fear of the splendid King Yashas. Taking their households, they have gone to the land of the Aryans. They all strive for liberation." Thinking this way the sentient beings would obtain ill fortune because their minds would become unsuitable vessels for the profound and extensive Dharma.

Thus, knowing the dispositions of the individual minds of all people, the lord of the people, Yashas became absorbed in the samadhi named "Stupefier of All the Families of Vishnu, Brahma, and Rudra." By means of that samadhi, and by the power of the deity's blessing, all the sages in the forest became stupefied. Aborigines and so forth dwelling in that forest bound all the sages, brought them back to the great mandala house, and threw them before the feet of the lord of the people, Yashas.

Awakening, they saw the lord of the people, Yashas, the mandala house, and the sandalwood pleasure grove. When they saw these things they were astonished, and said this: "Oh! This is very strange! Who brought us from the great forest back to the mandala house while we were unconscious?"

King Yashas' minister, Sagaramati, an emanation body, heard this speech of the brahman sages and said: "O Suryaratha and you other brahman sages, do not be astonished! This King Yashas is not parochial. He is a great, enraged bodhisattva who has appeared due to the blessing of the Buddha in order to take care of you. Therefore, go to his feet for refuge and request initiation into the path that achieves the worldly and transcendental siddhis in the King of Tantra—the Adibuddha!

Then, due to Sagaramati's speech and the blessing of the Buddha, Suryaratha and the other brahman sages were awakened, and said this: "Well said! Well said, Sagaramati! Your speech has awakened our minds. Therefore, now we will go for refuge to the Three Jewels and request initiation into the path that achieves the worldly and transcendental siddhis, in the King of Tantra—Kalachakra, so that all sentient beings may obtain true, complete buddhahood in this very life."

Having said that, the sages called to Suryaratha, king of the brahman family: "O Suryaratha! You are a single book that contains the texts of the Vedas and so forth! Your heart grasps that which is to be demonstrated in all the worldly and transcendental treatises! Thus, request King Yashas with our words of request! We

too will go for refuge, preceeding it with a mandala, and then all of us will request instruction."

Then, in accordance with the speech of the brahman sages, Suryaratha made a mandala of flowers formed from jewels and gold. He scattered handfuls of jeweled flowers before the feet of the lord of the people, Yashas. Placing their knees on the ground and their hands on top of their heads, Suryaratha and the brahman sages bowed to the feet of Yashas. Then Suryaratha planted his right kneecap on the earth, set his cupped hands at his forehead, and requested the lord of the people, Yashas for instruction: "Please teach the King of Tantra—the Adibuddha! In it the Bhagavan explained that even those who created the five sins of immediate retribution¹⁰ may obtain buddhahood in this very life. He explained that they will obtain the *mahamudra* that is governed by the supreme unchanging bliss of Bhagavan Vajradhara. Please redact this twelve thousand verse *Adibuddha* that the Tathagata taught to King Suchandra by making the text shorter, and compose a short *Adibuddha, King of Tantra*. Then, please teach it to the brahman sages."

King Yashas was pleased by the request of Suryaratha and the sages. On the full moon of *Caitra* he initiated the sages in the great Kalachakra mandala south of Kalapa. As the sages requested, Yashas taught them an abridgement of the *Paramadibuddha*. On the full moon of the following month, *Vaisakha* (April–May), the sages attained the supreme siddhi of *mahamudra*.

The abridged tantra (*laghutantra*) that Yashas taught the sages is called the *Sri Kalacakra*, and it is our basic tantra for the Kalachakra system.¹¹ Yashas later taught the sages an addendum to the *Sri Kalacakra* entitled *Sri Kalacakratanrottara Tantrahrdayanama* (Peking #5). The *Tantrahrdayam* contains, among other things, some fascinating and obscure prophecies. Yashas also taught the sages an extremely abbreviated form of the *Sri Kalacakra* from the point of view of vajrayoga. This text, the *Kalacakralaghutantrarajahrdaya Nama*, is only extant in the Lhasa edition of the Tibetan *Kanjur* (#373). Another text redacted by Yashas is the *Sri Kalacakranama Tantragarbha* (Peking #6). This text is a condensation of the *Paramadibuddha's sadangayoga* sadhana.

All four of the preceding texts are mainly composed of the

speech of the Buddha, (*buddhavacanam*). Yashas was primarily the redactor of these texts; only in a derivative sense was he the teacher of them.

However, two treatises independently authored by Yashas have come down to us: the *Pradarsanumatoddesapariksa nama* (Peking #4610), and the *Triyogahridayaprasasa nama* (Peking #2087). With the all-important exception of the *Sri Kalachakra*, none of the texts listed above are known to have survived in the original Sanskrit.

Yashas's conversion of the brahman sages was to have an important impact on the subsequent history of Shambhala. By combining all the castes of Shambhala into one vajra family, Yashas became Kalki, the lineage king of Shambhala. The Buddha had prophesied this in the *Paramadibuddha*:

*vagmi vajrakule yena tena vajrakuli yasa/
caturvarnaikakalkena kalki brahmakulena na//*

"Vagmi Yashas, possessing the vajra family, will become Kalki by making the four castes into a single clan, (*kalkah*), within the vajra family, not by making them into a brahman family."

By becoming Kalki, Yashas ensured that Shambhala will remain outside the range of the barbarian depredations. In particular, he ensured that his descendant Kalki, Raudra Chakri, and the armies of Shambhala will perform their role at the end of the current Age of Strife, the *Kaliyuga*.

Yashas and his queen Tara had a son named Pundarika, who was an emanation of Avalokiteshvara. In accordance with a prophecy made by the Buddha in the *Paramadibuddha*, Yashas appointed Pundarika as the second Kalki and ordered him to write a commentary on the *Sri Kalachakra*; then Yashas passed away. Kalki Pundarika followed his father's command and wrote the *Vimalaprabha*.

This huge commentary (together with the *Sri Kalachakra*) is our basic textual source for the Kalachakra system as a whole. We are very fortunate that the *Vimalaprabha*, like the *Sri Kalachakra*, survives in the original Sanskrit.

Two other works by Kalki Pundarika have also come down to us. The *Kalachakratantragarbha vrtti vimalaprabha nama* (Peking #4608) is a short but important commentary on the *Tantragarbha* (Peking #6), mentioned above. Pundarika's *Sri Paramarthaseva* (Peking #2065) is an independent composition, entirely in verse, that is mainly concerned with ethics and yoga. Fragments of the *Paramarthaseva* exist

in Sanskrit.

The rule of the Kalkis subsequent to Pundarika seems to have been fairly uneventful. At any rate the literature has little to say about their activities.

INDIA

With the introduction of the Kalachakra into India we come into first contact with "history" as defined by western-style historical science. There are indications that some form of an Adibuddha/Kalachakra tantra was known in India prior to the period we will discuss,¹² but for practical purposes we can safely say that the Kalachakra system first openly appeared in India at the beginning of the 11th century A.D.

This period is established by two facts: 1. The main basic texts of the Kalachakra system used by the Indians, the *Sri Kalachakra* and the *Vimalaprabha*, contain a date that can be calculated as 1012 A.D.¹³ This date forms the basis for all the astronomical calculations in the Kalachakra *laghukaranam*. Although this date does not necessarily represent the exact year of the composition of these texts, the mathematics of the Kalachakra astronomy and a great deal of other internal evidence certify that these texts were composed around this time. 2. The vajracharyas responsible for the early propagation of the Kalachakra in India can all be dated to the beginning of the 11th century, insofar as they can be dated at all. This will be demonstrated below.

Unlike most Vajrayana systems, we are able to establish a fairly narrow temporal frame of reference for the introduction and early spread of the Kalachakra. However, the exact circumstances of these events are far from clear. The Tibetan historians, our main sources, repeat a mass of Indian stories that cannot be easily reconciled with one another. As one Tibetan historian rather diplomatically put it, "In general, it is possible that even the stories of the Indians are uncertain."¹⁴ A comparison of all the different Tibetan histories would show that some Tibetans also added to the confusion.

Part of the apparent confusion in the Indian stories can be traced to the fact that some Indian vajracharyas went by more than

one name, whereas in other cases two or more gurus were called by the same name. As a general principle this is accepted by both the Tibetan and the western-style historians.

Another cause of variation in the Indian accounts is the manner of transmission. As we will see later, the Kalachakra went from India to Tibet via a number of different guru lineages. Thus, the Tibetans studied under Indian masters who were themselves various stages removed from the original Indian source of the Kalachakra. Given this, and the fact that these were oral traditions until the Tibetans wrote them down much later, it is not surprising that we are presented with a number of different versions of the Indian origins of the Kalachakra.

In what follows I will give a translation of one important source for the history of the Kalachakra in India.¹⁵ Bu ston Rin chen grub set this account in writing in 1329, making it the oldest dated source to my knowledge. Even so, Bu ston did not invent these stories. Rather, he drew them, probably verbatim, from earlier sources that are not available to us. Bu ston's account describes the Indian origins of two traditions: the "Rwa tradition"—the Kalachakra tradition introduced into Tibet by the Nepalese pandit Samantashribhadra and the Tibetan translator Rwa Chos rab; and the "Bro tradition"—the tradition introduced by the Kashmiri pandit Somanatha and the translator 'Bro Shes rab grags. ("Rwa" and "Bro" are names of Tibetan clans.) Following the translation I will present and discuss some information drawn from other sources that I hope will shed light on certain obscure points in the translation.

According to the Rwa tradition, the Kalachakra and related commentaries famed as the *Bodhisattva Corpus* appeared in India during the simultaneous reigns of three kings. Taking the area known as Vajrasana (Bodh Gaya in present-day Bihar) as the center, the three kings were: Dehapala, the Master of Elephants, in the East; Jaugangapa, the Master of Humans, in the South; and Kanauj, the Master of Horses, in the West. At that time the great pandit Cilu (Tsi lu), who mastered all aspects of the Buddha's Dharma, was born in Orissa, one of the five countries of eastern India. Cilu studied all the Buddhist texts at the Ratnagiri *vihara* (northeast of

modern-day Cuttack in Orissa), at Vikramasila, and at Nalanda (Na Lendra).

In particular, he studied at the Ratnagiri *vihara* that was undamaged by the Turks. Cilu realized that, in general, in order to achieve buddhahood in a single life he would need the Mantrayana, and in particular, that he would need the clarifications of these doctrines contained in the *Bodhisattva Commentaries*. Knowing that these teachings were extant in Shambhala, and depending on the instruction of his deity, he joined up with traders who sought jewels in the ocean. Having agreed with the traders, who were setting out across the sea, to meet up after six months, they went separate ways.

Cilu proceeded in stages and finally, upon climbing a mountain, he met a man. The man asked him, "Where are you going?" Cilu replied, "I am going to Shambhala in search of the *Bodhisattva Corpus*." The man said, "It is extremely difficult to go there, but if you can understand it, you could listen to it even here." Cilu realized that the man was an emanation of Manjushri. Cilu prostrated, offered a mandala, and requested instruction. The man conferred all the initiations, the tantra commentaries, and the oral instructions on Cilu. He grasped Cilu, placed a flower on top of his head, and blessed him, saying, "Realize the entire *Bodhisattva Corpus*!"

Thus, like water poured from one vessel into another, Cilu realized the entire *Bodhisattva Corpus*. He went back the way he had come and, meeting with the traders, he returned to eastern India.

Another tradition, possibly Rwa, has it that the pandit Cilu was the son of a yogi and that his father led him to Shambhala. There they met a monk having a handsome appearance, an emanation of Avalokiteshvara. By his blessing Cilu was able to memorize a thousand verses each day. Having memorized all the tantra commentaries, he returned to India where he became renowned by his ordination name, "Cilupa" (Tsi lu pa).

Later Cilupa resided in the capital of the king of Kataka (Ka ta ka; present-day Cuttack in Orissa). He had three disciples. Because the disciples asked him to write the tantra commentaries down in a volume, he did so. One of the disciples remained ordinary, but another, *Jinakaragupta (rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas sbas pa) gained siddhi. The third, "Pido acharya" (or below, Pinda acharya), born in Bengal in eastern India, became a great scholar who comprehended and experienced the entire *Bodhisattva Corpus*.

At that time another king made war on Kataka, so the master and his disciples hid all the texts of the tantra commentaries in a pit and fled. When the war subsided and they looked for the books, they found that the last halves of the commentaries on the Samvara and the Hevajra tantras were missing. The disciples asked Cilupa to rewrite the missing portions, but he refused, saying that since the *dakinis* had hidden them it was improper to write them again. Cilupa then returned to eastern India.

Later, Pinda acarya taught the *Bodhisattva Corpus* to acharya *Kalachakrapada the Elder (Dus zhabs pa chen po) who was born in Varendra (northern Bengal). *Kalachakrapada the Elder understood and experienced the teachings as the previous masters had.

Some say that *Kalachakrapada was able to ask for whatever he wished due to a vision of Tara, and that in dependence on the instructions of Tara he went to Shambhala. On the way he was met by Avalokiteshvara, who led him to the mandala house in the sandalwood grove of Kalapa. There he was initiated and given explanations of the tantra commentaries, together with the books that contained them. *Kalachakrapada returned to eastern India and lived at *Phullahari (Me tog khyim). Among his disciples the four best were *Kalachakrapada the Younger (Dus zhabs chung ba), *Vinayakaramati ('Dul ba 'byung gnas blos gros), *Simhadvaja (Seng ge rgyal mtshan), and *Ananta (mTha' yas).

*Kalachakrapada the Younger was born in the east in the Manjuha region (Northern Bengal?). He was also called "Bodhipa," and "Nalendrapa" as well. Some hold that he was identical with Dharmakara, but this is unacceptable because Dharmakara was the disciple of Sadhuputra, and therefore is later. The Rwa tradition says that *Kalachakrapada the Younger taught the *Bodhisattva Corpus* to Ratnakara, who propagated it at Nalanda. However, previous lamas have said that the two were friends, and that *Kalachakrapada the Younger erected a Kalachakra temple at Nalanda and attracted many pandits as his disciples. These lamas said that since this correlates with other lineages, there is no need to mention Ratnakara.

*Kalachakrapada the Younger thought that if the Kalachakra was propagated in Magadha it would spread everywhere. During the period when The One Having A Wooden Seat (? Shing stan can) was ruling Magadha and the Sendhapas¹⁶ controlled Otanta-

puri *vihara*, *Kalachakrapada the Younger went to Nalanda. Above the door of the *vihara* he drew the mantra of The One Possessing Power In Ten Aspects (*dasakaravasi; rnam bcu dbang ldan*). Below the mantra he wrote:

Those who do not know the *Paramadibuddha*, do not know the *Namasamgiti*. Those who do not know the *Namasamgiti*, do not know the Gnosis Body of Vajradhara. Those who do not know the Gnosis Body of Vajradhara, do not know the Mantrayana. All those who do not know the Mantrayana, are samsaric: they are separate from the path of Bhagavan Vajradhara.¹⁷

About five hundred pandits living at Nalanda were displeased with this, and debated with *Kalachakrapada the Younger. But he defeated them all with the profound and vast nature of the Kalachakra doctrines, and they became his disciples. In particular, Manjukirti, Abhiyukta, Pandit *Parvata (Ri bo pa), *Da Bodhisattva (Da byang chub sems dpa'), Abhaya, *Mahapunya (Punya chen po), Gambhira the Kashmiri, Santagupta, Gunaraksita, Somanatha, rTsa mi (Sangs rgyas grags pa, a.k.a. Buddhakirti, of Mi nyag), and other scholars became his disciples. Even the royal family, the kshatriyas, and the merchants had such faith that they copied texts and created the causes of their future realization of the doctrines. In this way the Kalachakra became widely spread. Later Pandit Samantashribhadra, born in Patan (Ye rang) in Nepal, heard the Kalachakra taught by five masters, and in particular followed Manjukirti.

According to the 'Bro tradition, the Kalachakra was brought to India during the reign of Kalki Shripala. A couple who practised the yoga of Yamantaka, duly performed the ritual for the birth of a son as it is given in the *Yamantaka Tantra*, and had a son. When he grew up he learned that in the North the bodhisattvas themselves taught the Dharma, and he went to listen to them. With his psychic power Kalki Shripala knew of the youth's pure motivation and enthusiasm for the profound Dharma. The Kalki knew that if the youth attempted to come to Shambhala it would endanger his life because of the waterless wasteland that takes four months to cross. Shripala used an emanation body to meet the youth at the edge of the desert.

The Kalki asked the youth, "Where are you going, and why?"

When the youth told him his intention, the Kalki said, "That road is very difficult. But if you can understand these things, couldn't you listen to them even here?" The youth realized that this was an emanation of the Kalki, and asked him for instruction. Right there the Kalki initiated the youth, and for four months he taught him all the *Anuttara* tantras, especially the three inner *Bodhisattva Corpus* commentaries. Like a vase filled to the brim, the youth realized and memorized all the tantras. When he returned to India he became renowned as an emanation of Manjushri, and his name was "*Kalachakrapada."

At that time in India there was a very dull monk who wanted to increase his intelligence. Depending upon the instructions he received from his deity in a dream, he made an image of the goddess Kurukulla out of coral and inserted it in the mouth of a woman's corpse. Sitting cross-legged on her back, he practised sadhana for seven days. The corpse's face looked up, and she said, "What do you want?" Although he wanted to be able to memorize all that he read, due to his stupidity he said that he wanted to be able to memorize all that he wrote. The corpse said, "So be it." From this he was called Pandit Vagishvarakirti (Ngag gi dbang phyugs grags pa; "The Renowned Lord of Speech"). He lived at the *vihara* of Khasarpana, and once he asked the acharya *Kalachakrapada, "How many tantras do you know?" The acharya answered, "I know this and that," but it is said that the pandit could not remember even the names of the tantras!

*Kalachakrapada had many disciples, and most of them became yogis. From among them, the one who maintained the tradition of teaching was his disciple Nalendrapa, who was also renowned as "*Kalachakrapada the Younger." He is said to have possessed qualities equaling his guru's. Some accounts say *Kalachakrapada the Younger and Nalendrapa were guru and disciple.

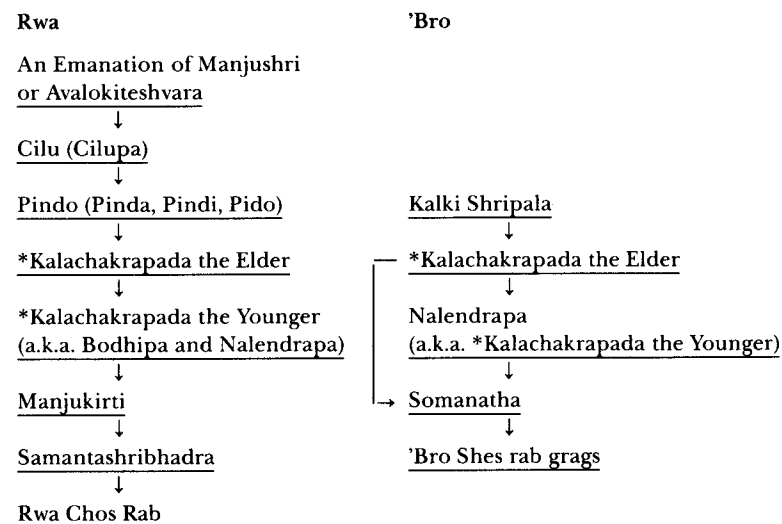
At that time Somanatha, the very intelligent son of a brahman, was born in Kashmir. For twelve years he learned his father's heretic Dharmas, but his mother was a Buddhist and she told him that he should study her religion. She put him under the tutelage of the Kashmiri pandit called "*Brahmanapada" (Bram ze zhabs). Since Somanatha was very handsome, the pandit's daughter said, "You must have intercourse with me in order to listen to the Dharma." Somanatha accepted that and listened to a lot of Buddhist Dharma.

At that time *Kalachakrapada the Elder's disciple, *Vinayakaramati (Dul ba'i blo gros), sent the *Sehoddessa* and a commentary on the *Sekaprakriya* to *Brahmanapada.¹⁸ *Brahmanapada showed them to Somanatha, who read them and admired them a lot. Somanatha went to Magadha, met the Elder and Younger *Kalachakrapadas, and received instruction on all of the three *Bodhisattva Corpus* commentaries.

At that time Somanatha became involved in a debate with the Kashmiri scholar *Ratnavajra (Rin chen rdo rje), and Somanatha won. *Ratnavajra told Somanatha that he should go elsewhere lest *Ratnavajra's disciples lose faith. Somanatha, thinking that he would spread the Kalachakra in Tibet, acquiesced, and this is what he did.

* * * * *

The Rwa and 'Bro traditions give divergent accounts of the Indian origins of the Kalachakra. The Rwa tradition in particular seems to be divided into a number of opinions about the introduction of the Kalachakra into India. Nevertheless, we can simplify and schematize the Rwa and 'Bro lineages as follows:



Taking the Rwa lineage first, it is worth noting that none of the Kalkis in the time frame we are considering (after Pundarika and before Raudra Chakri—see Appendix) are emanations of either Manjushri or Avalokiteshvara. Likewise, Cilu is a particularly obscure individual. There are two works clearly attributed to him in the Tibetan *Tanjur*: a commentary on the *Guhyasamaja* (Peking #2709), and a short instruction on the *sadangayoga* (Peking #2090). But neither of these texts is intrinsically related to the Kalachakra or the *Bodhisattva Corpus*.

When we reach Pindo, however, things are quite different.¹⁹ The Bengali guru Dipamkarashrijana, better known as Atisha (ca. 982–1054), refers to “the great Adibuddha tantra” in his famous *Bodhipathapradipa*.²⁰ In his auto-commentary to the *Bodhipathapradipa*, Atisha informs us that this reference to the *Paramadibuddha* derives from the oral instructions of his guru Pindo (bSod snyoms pa).²¹ Atisha also tells us that his guru Pindo was a monk, and that he came from Suvarnavipa (gSer gling), i.e., Java (Yavadvipa; Ya ba di pa). This information correlates nicely with the colophon to the *Sri Kalacakragarbhalaṅkāra nama Sadhana* (Peking #2081). This sadhana, one of the oldest Kalachakra translations in the Tibetan *Tanjur*, was written by “the great scholar, the brahman Pindo (bSod snyoms pa), who was born in the land of the southern ocean.”

I think Pindo’s having been born in Java, “the land of the southern ocean,” explains an otherwise very strange statement appearing in a prayer of the ’Bro Kalachakra tradition. This prayer, recorded by Bu ston, requests the blessings of “Kalki Shripala at the end of the southern ocean.”²² Thus, I think Kalki Shripala is another name for Pindo.

I also think that the identification of Kalki Shripala with Pindo would harmonize with Taranatha’s assertion in his *History of Buddhism in India* that, “Pindo (Pi to) acharya introduced the Kalachakra tantra during the second half of Mahipala’s lifetime.”²³ The Mahipala referred to by Taranatha must be the Pata king Mahipala I (reigned ca. 988–1038). I do not think it is mere coincidence that Kalki Dripala was the successor of Kalki Mahipala in the dynasty of Shambhala (see Appendix). If, as I too believe, Pindo introduced the Kalachakra into India during the reign of Mahipala, it would have been a stroke of genius to make the reigning

Kalki of Shambhala have the same name as the reigning monarch in eastern India.

The Rwa and ’Bro accounts translated above make it clear that the Kalachakra system first appeared in India in conjunction with the *Bodhisattva Corpus* (Byang chub sems dpa’i skor). These three tantra commentaries are:

- 1) *Vimalaprabha* by Kalki Pundarika
- 2) *Hevajrapindarthatika* (Peking #2310) by Bodhisattva Vajragarbha
- 3) *Laksabhidhanaduddhrtalaghutantrapindarthavivarana nama* (Peking #2117) by Bodhisattva Vajrapani

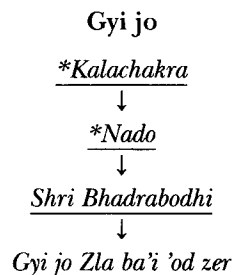
These texts comment on the abridged tantras (*laghutantra*) of the Kalachakra, Hevajra, and Samvara systems respectively. Also, the latter two commentaries explain their tantras in accordance with the special ideas of the Kalachakra. All three commentaries have stylistic and doctrinal features in common, including passages that correspond verbatim. All three refer to and cite the *Paramadibuddha*. The latter two commentaries are called *pindarthatika* and *pindarthavivarana*. As the Tibetan translators have shown, these phrases both mean, “a commentary on the condensed meaning.” But perhaps they can also be translated as, “a commentary according to the thought of Pindo.”

If we accept the identification of Kalki Shripala with Pindo, the Rwa and ’Bro traditions would agree that he was the teacher of *Kalachakrapada the Elder. In fact I would go one step further, and put forward the proposition that *Kalachakrapada is yet another name for Pindo. I base this idea on a very valuable piece of historical data, the translator’s colophon to Pundarika’s *Kalacakratantra (garbha) vritti vimalaprabha nama* (Peking #4608). This colophon was written by Gyi jo Zla ba’i ’od zer, who translated the text under the guidance of the Indian pandit Shri Bhadrabodhi. I translate this colophon as follows:

The one called “*Kalachakra” (Dus kyi ’khor lo pa) went to the land of Shambhala (Sam ba la) and gained mastery of the psychic powers. The one called “Nado” (Na ro pa), a brahman by caste, born in the land of Uddiyana (U rgyan), was the successor in his (i.e., *Kalachakra’s) lineage; he was born from shakti and author-

ized by the deity. The guru (Shri Bhadrabodhi) was of his (i.e., *Nado's) caste; he heard the tantra, he was taught by the heavenly deity. By listening to him and making effort to translate this commentary, may I obtain the state of fearless bliss.

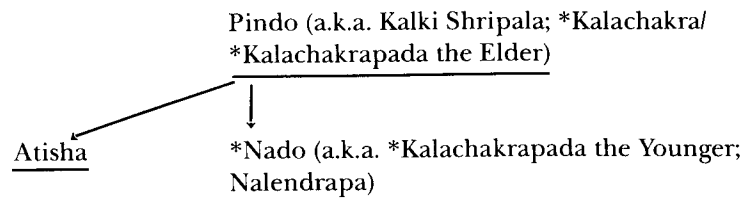
Gyi jo Zla ba'i 'od zer was probably the first Tibetan to translate texts on Kalachakra. He was active in the middle of the 11th century, as is evident from the translation work he performed under Atisha. We can schematize Gyi jo's Kalachakra lineage as follows:



*Nado, better known by the Tibetan spelling of his name—Naropa, passed away *circa* 1030 A.D.²⁴ We know that *Nado was a master of the Kalachakra; this is evident from the large commentary he wrote on the *Sekoddesa*. If this is the case, then why doesn't he appear in the Kalachakra lineages put forward by the Rwa and 'Bro traditions?

In fact he does appear. As Bu ston tells us, Gyi jo Zla ba'i 'od zer's guru, Shri Bhadrabodhi was the disciple of *Kalachakrapada (Dus zhabs).²⁵ Thus, *Nado was called *Kalachakrapada the Younger, and Nalendrapa (the man of Nalanda), within the early Kalachakra cult in India. The former name is applicable because, as Gyi jo tells us, *Nado was the lineage holder of *Kalachakra, who brought the Kalachakra to India from Shambhala. The latter name certainly fits *Nado, the crest jewel of the contemporary Nalanda vajracaryas.

To summarize all of the preceding discussion, I put forward my own notion of one aspect of the early transmission of the Kalachakra in India:



There are no obstacles to this theory from the point of view of chronology because Atisha was a younger contemporary and associate of both Pindo and Nado. Also, I accept Taranatha's assertion that Pindo introduced the Kalachakra during the last half of Mahipala's lifetime, and it makes sense that the great *Nado would have studied this extraordinary doctrine directly under the guru who introduced it.

Even if the above theory turns out to be correct, it only accounts for one aspect of the early spread of the Kalachakra in India. The Kalachakra literature in the *Tanjur* is evidence of the dynamics of a school. It could not be the product of merely one or two individuals.

To give just one example to illustrate this point: Anupamarakshita is revered by many Tibetan lamas as the most eminent Indian fountainhead of the Kalachakra *sadangayoga* precepts. Yet he does not appear (under this name, at least) in the Kalachakra lineages examined above. Anupamarakshita must have been among the earliest masters of the Kalachakra because *Nado cites him as an authority. Also, Anupamarakshita's *Sadangayoga* (Peking #2102) contains a block of twenty-four verses that also appear in the first "Brief Account" (*uddesa*) of the *Vimalaprabha*. Obviously, much more research is needed before we can say much that is definite about the history of the Kalachakra in India.

The history of the Kalachakra in India cannot be separated from the history of later Indian Vajrayana Buddhism as a whole. And, from the point of view of western-style historical science, a history of Indian Vajrayana Buddhism remains to be written. But one thing is clear: from the introduction of the *Bodhisattva Corpus* early in the 11th century until Buddhism as an organized religion was wiped out by Central Asian barbarians during the 13th and 14th centuries, the Kalachakra captured the imaginations of Vajrayana Buddhists in north India. Renowned vajracaryas composed an

extensive literature dealing with it, and, in certain sense, the Kalachakra can be seen as the culmination of Indian Vajrayana Buddhism.

It was during this period also that the Kalachakra became an international religious phenomenon. From the great monastic universities of Magadha, Bengal, and Orissa, it went east and south to Burma and the Indonesian archipelago. Similarly, the Kalachakra was carried north to Kashmir, Nepal, and Tibet, and from Tibet it eventually spread to Mongolia and China.

TIBET²⁶

The Kalachakra was transmitted from India into Tibet via a number of different guru lineages from the 11th through the 14th century. As mentioned previously, two of the most important lineages are styled the "Rwa tradition" and the "'Bro tradition."

According to Bu ston, the translator Rwa Chos rab traveled to central Nepal (probably Patan) where he studied under the pandit Samantashri for five years, ten months, and five days. Having mastered all the Kalachakra doctrines, Chos rab invited his guru to Tibet where together they continued the work of translating the various texts and disseminating the teachings. The Rwa tradition continued in Tibet through Rwa Chos rab's son and grandson.

The 'Bro tradition originated from the visit of the Kashmiri pandit Somanatha to Tibet. Together with 'Bro Shes rab grags, Somanatha translated the *Vimalaprabha* into Tibetan and established this important teaching and practice lineage. By the middle of the 14th century the *Sri Kalacakra* had been translated into Tibetan fifteen or sixteen times; the *Vimalaprabha* more than ten. This is really remarkable given the size and complexity of these texts. No other Buddhist text received a comparable amount of attention from the great Tibetan translators.

The Rwa and 'Bro lineages continued through successions of teachers and eventually flowed together. One particularly noteworthy name from this period is that of Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364). Bu ston is perhaps best known for his part in the editing of the Tibetan canon, but later lamas especially praised him for his key role in the preservation of all of the different types of tantra

exposition and practice.²⁷ Bu ston made a close study of the Kalachakra; he produced a revised, annotated edition of the canonical translations of the *Sri Kalacakra* and the *Vimalaprabha*. He also wrote a number of important monographs on special topics in the Kalachakra.

rJe Tsong kha pa bLo bzang grags pa (1357–1419), founder of the dGe lug pa school, studied the Kalachakra under a disciple of Bu ston. Tsong kha pa in turn transmitted it to his disciple mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang (1385–1438). mKhas grub mastered the entire Kalachakra system and composed a commentary on the *Vimalaprabha* that is enormous even by Tibetan literary standards. Entitled *The Illuminator of Reality (De kho na nyid snang bar byed pa)*, it occupies three large volumes in his collected works.

The dGe lug pa school maintained the study and practice of the Kalachakra over the centuries. The Panchen Lamas of the Tashilhunpo monastery in gTsang were especially active in the practice of the Kalachakra. At Tashilhunpo there was a special school devoted to the Kalachakra (*Dus 'khor grwa tshang*).

The third Panchen Lama, bLo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780), composed a prayer in which he expressed the wish to be born in Shambhala during the reign of Kalki Raudra Chakri.²⁸ He also wrote a book that came to be known as the *Guidebook to Shambhala (Sambha la'i lam yig)*.²⁹ In addition to a more general account of Asian history and geography, the book describes the route to Shambhala and the means by which a person can travel there. This portion of the book is based, to a great extent, on another "guidebook" translated from Sanskrit, the *Kalapavata, (Entrance to Kalapa)*, the capital of Shambhala; Peking #5908).

rGyal ba 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho, the 8th Dalai Lama (1758–1805), introduced the Kalachakra into his personal monastery, the rNam rgyal grwa tshang. From that time to the present, the rNam rgyal grwa tshang has continued the study and practice of the Kalachakra, including the full complement of the intricate Kalachakra rituals. His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, belongs to a Kalachakra lineage that traces itself back to the teaching of the *Paramadibuddha* at Shri Dhanyakataka. His Holiness has been extremely generous in making this religious tradition available to the people of the West.

At present the Kalachakra tradition appears to be in danger of

extinction. Due to the extreme complexity of this tantra, its masters have never been numerous. Today, following the Chinese of invasion of Tibet, their number has dwindled to a handful of refugees in India.

THE FUTURE³⁰

The eventual disintegration and disappearance of Buddhism is not unexpected within the Buddhist view of history. A number of sutras prophesy the decline of the Dharma and human life in general during the end of the current age, and predict the glorious coming of Maitreya Buddha in the distant future.

The Kalachakra tradition has a different vision of the future of the world. It too depicts a steady degeneration of the world in conjunction with the disappearance of virtuous forms of religion. In the Kalachakra this period of decadence is synchronous with a steady increase of the powers of evil in the form of barbarians allied with demons. However, unlike the Maitreya prophecies, the Kalachakra does not predict the total extinction of Buddhism, for it teaches that the Buddhadharmas will be preserved in Shambhala out of the reach of the barbarians. When conditions finally reach their nadir at the very end of the current Kali age, a great war will erupt in which the army of Shambhala will do battle with the evil barbarians and demons.

Conditions south of the Shita River will continue to degenerate until the last Kalki, Raudra Chakri, ascends the lion throne of Shambhala. Raudra Chakri, "The Wrathful One with the Wheel," will teach the Buddhadharmas for almost fifty years, but then the impending conflict between good and evil will come to a head. By that time the southern half of Jambudvīpa, that which is south of the Shita River, will have come under the control of the barbarian overlord Krinmati. Centered in Dili (Delhi) in western India, Krinmati and his vassals will set their sights on the conquest of Shambhala.

When Raudra Chakri sees the wild barbarians preparing to attack, he will enter into an unwavering trance called "The Samadhi of the Supreme Horse." While Raudra is absorbed in this trance, his vast army will gather. Raudra and his generals, Hanu-

man and Rudra, will command an army of truly gigantic proportions. It will have 90 million cavalry mounted on horses swift as the wind, four hundred thousand battle-intoxicated elephants, five hundred thousand golden chariots, and uncountable infantry, all brightly caparisoned. Composed of six divisions, the army will be led by the ninety-six satraps of Shambhala. However, this war will involve more than mere earthly forces, for the demons will side with the barbarians, and Raudra Chakri will be assisted by the twelve great gods: Hari (Vishnu), Nairrti, Vayu, Yama, Agni, Shanmukha (Skandha), Kubera, Shakra (Indra), Brahma, Rudra (Shiva), Samudra, and Ganesha.

The army of Shambhala will come out of Kalapa and travel south of the Shita River to India—there the great war will erupt. Kalki Raudra Chakri will strike down the barbarian overlord Krinmati, and Hanuman and Rudra will overcome the barbarian commanders. Raudra Chakri's skilled and heroic archers will defeat the barbarian infantry, the ninety-six satraps of Shambhala will conquer the barbarian captains, the horses of Shambhala will rout the barbarian cavalry, and the elephants of Shambhala will crush the barbarian elephants. In particular, the twelve great gods will destroy the demonic deities of the barbarians, and the forces of evil will be completely eradicated. Having utterly destroyed the barbarians, Raudra Chakri and his divine entourage will return to Kalapa, the city on Mount Kailasha created by the gods.

Raudra Chakri's achievement of complete dominion will mark the beginning of an Age of Perfection (*Kritayuga*). Human lifespan will increase, and people will abandon evil behavior and only cultivate virtue. They will enjoy good ethics, sensual pleasure, wealth, and spiritual liberation. Grain will grow in the wild without cultivation, and trees will perpetually bear fruit. A special feature of this period is that during it a practitioner can achieve the highest siddhi through the Kalachakra with relative ease. Consequently, the earth will become populated with Vajrayana adepts; even those with lesser abilities will make great progress on the Mahayana path.

The great *chakravartin* Raudra Chakri will live to be a hundred years old. At the end of his reign he will appoint his elder son Brahma as the lord of Shambhala and his younger son Suresha as master of the lands south of the Shita River. Having done this,

Raudra Chakri—last of the Kalkis, will return to the abode of bliss from which he came.

During the reigns of Brahma and his son Kashyapa, the average human lifespan will be nine hundred years. It will diminish during the subsequent reigns, and at the same time divisions based on caste will reappear. As a result of this disintegration, in accordance with the cycles of time, the various types of humans—royalty, sages, and barbarians—will appear again, and, again, the *chakra-vartin* will appear to subdue and reunify them.

Having read the preceding brief account of the eschatological doctrines contained in the Kalachakra, it is worthwhile to remember that, like everything else in this intricate system, they operate on more than one level of meaning. The “Great War” and the Age of Perfection that follows it can be interpreted literally as external historical events predicted to occur in about four hundred years.

However, the *Sri Kalacakra* and the *Vimalaprabha* give another, allegorical interpretation of the same myth. Here we find the elements of the Kalachakra apocalypse identified with the forces of gnosis and nescience within the Kalachakra practitioner. When a yogi conquers ignorance by means of the method and wisdom actualized in the Kalachakra vajrayoga, then the inner devils, demons, and barbarians that make samsaric life miserable are destroyed, and the Age of Perfection of complete enlightenment is produced. This is wholly in keeping with the fundamental structure of the Kalachakra system: the Outer Wheel of Time, i. e., the cosmos, is a reflection of the Inner Wheel of Time, i. e., a person's soul or psychophysical constituents. These worlds form the basis that is purified by the Other Wheel of Time, the soteriological path of apotheosis produced by the generation and completion processes of the Kalachakra vajrayoga.

APPENDIX: THE DYNASTY OF SHAMBHALA³¹

<i>King</i>	<i>Emanation of Bodhisattva/ Wrathful King (wk)</i>
Suryaprabha (and Queen Vijaya)	Vighnashakta (wk)
<i>Dharma King</i>	
1) Suchandra	Vajrapani
2) Sureshvara (a.k.a. Suresha)	Kshitigarbha
3) Teji	Yamantaka (wk)
4) Somadatta	Sarvanivaranavishkambhi
5) Sureshvara	Jambhaka (wk)
6) Vishvamurti	Manaka (wk)
7) Sureshana (Queen Vishvamata)	Khagarbha
<i>Kalki</i>	
1) Yashas (Queen Tara)	Manjughosha (= Manjushri)
2) Pundarika	Lokanathav (= Avalokiteshvara)
3) Bhadra	Yamantaka (wk)
4) Vijaya	Kshitigarbha
5) Sumitra	Jambhaka (wk)
6) Raktapani	Sarvanivaranavishkambhi
7) Vishnugupta	Manaka (wk)
8) Arkakirti	Khagarbha
9) Subhadra	Vighnashakta (wk)
10) Samudravijaya	Vajrapani
11) Aja	Yamantaka (wk)
12) Surya	Kshitigarbha
13) Vishvarupa	Jambhaka (wk)
14) Shashiprabha	Sarvanivaranavishkambhi
15) Ananta	Manaka (wk)
16) Mahipala	Khagarbha
17) Shripala	Vighnashakta (wk)
18) Hari	Vajrapani
19) Vikrama	Yamantaka (wk)
20) Mahabala	Kshitigarbha
21) Aniruddha	Jambhaka (wk)
22) Narasimha	Sarvanivaranavishkambhi
23) Maheshvara	Khagarbha
24) Anantavijaya	Vajrapani
25) Raudra Chakri	Manjughosha

Kings of the Age of Perfection

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1) Brahma (elder son of Raudra Suresha (younger son of Raudra, he will rule south of the Sita River, thus he is not counted in the dynasty of Shambhala) | Manjushri
Avalokiteshvara |
| 2) Kashyapa | a tenth stage bodhisattva |
| 3) Matsya | a bodhisattva emanation |
| 4) Kurma | a bodhisattva emanation |
| 5) Varaha | a bodhisattva emanation |
| 6) Narahari, or Narasimha | a bodhisattva emanation |
| 7) Vamana | a bodhisattva emanation |
| 8) Yamadagni (= Parashurama) | a bodhisattva emanation |
| 9) Rama | a bodhisattva emanation |
| 10) Krshna | a bodhisattva emanation |

NOTES

1. Sources: *Nado (S) pp. 1-4, (T) 105/4:106/4; *Sri Kalacakra* (S & T) I. 1-3; Bu ston 1329:23-27; mKhas grub 1434:129-135; kLong rdol 1765:246-248; Hoffmann 1973:136-140.
2. Dalai Lama 1981:8.
3. This stupa received its name from an event that occurred during the time of Buddha Kanakamuni. There was a bad famine, and a monk magically caused a rain of rice to fall for twelve days. This relieved the starving beings. The leftover rice was collected and the Heap of Rice (*dhanyakataka*) stupa was constructed out of that (kLong rdol 1765:247).

The Dhanyakataka stupa was located at what is now Amaravati in the Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh. Although the stupa was razed by the local people for building materials in the 18th and 19th centuries, enough remains in the Madras, Calcutta, British, and Amaravati museums to show that it was one of the architectural wonders of ancient India. The Dhanyakataka stupa dated back to at least the 2nd century A.D., probably earlier.

4. Sources: This section is all translated from kLong rdol 1765:238-246, except for the description of the mandala, which is translated from the *Vimalaprabha* (S) 15a-15b, (T) 354-355. Cf. also *Sri Kalacakra* (S&T) I. 149-150; mKhas grub 1434:1068-1079. I have slightly rearranged the order of presentation of kLong rdol's narrative. kLong rdol's description of Shambhala is based on the *Kalapavantara* (Peking #5908) and Panchen bLo bzang dpal ldan ye she's *Shambha la'i zhing khod bri tshul* (gSung 'bum "bKa' rgya ma" vol. 13).

Much ink has been spilled by western scholars speculating about the "location" of Shambhala. But so far no one seems to have closely examined the Sanskrit Kalachakra texts, the ultimate source of Buddhist Shambhala. The Buddhist myth of the Kalkis of Shambhala derives from the Hindu Kalki of Shambhala myths contained in the *Mahabharata* and the Puranas. The *Vimalaprabha* even refers to the *Kalkipurana*, probably the latest of the *upapuranas*. This relationship has been obscured by western scholars who have reconstructed the Tibetan translation term *rigs ldan* as "Kulika." Although Tibetan *rigs ldan* is used to translate Sanskrit *kulika* in other contexts, here it always represents Sanskrit *kalkin* (possessive of *kalkah*; I use the nominative *kalki*). This will be made clear below at the end of the section on Yashas. (Western scholars have also falsely reconstructed Yashas's Tibetan name *grags pa* as Kirti).

Although the Buddhist myth of Shambhala derives from the Hindu Kalki myth, this does not mean that the Buddhist Shambhala is a mere fiction. If we assume a Buddhist Shambhala actually existed at the time of the composition of the Sanskrit Kalachakra literature, it is not too difficult to determine what historical entity it corresponded to. The primary texts of the Kalachakra system came into being around the beginning of the 11th century (see notes 11 & 13), so Shambhala must have existed at that time. The *Vimalaprabha* tells us that Shambhala is on a latitude north of Tibet, Khotan, and China. Furthermore, the *Vimalaprabha* says again and again that Shambhala is north of the

- Sita River. The descriptions of the Chinese traveler, Hsuan tsang (7th century), and the Tibetan traveler, Man lungs Guru (13th century), both clearly identify the Sita as the Tarim River in Eastern Turkistan. Thus, "Sambhala" must be a special name for the Uighur kingdom centered at Khocho that flourished circa 850–1250. Needless to say, substantiation of this theory will require another essay. In particular, we will have to consider the entire matrix of the 11th century Asian history together with the motives of the Kalachakra myth-makers.
5. Sources: *Vimalaprabha* (S) 13a-14b, (T) 346–354; Bu ston 1329:27–28; mKhas grub 1434:135–137, 165; kLong rdol 1765:248.
 6. Sources: *Vimalaprabha* (S) 14a-17b, (T) 351–361; Bu ston 1329: 53–55; mKhas grub 1434:152, 166; Bandyopadhyaya 1952:74–75. The section between the asterisks is translated from the *Vimalaprabha*.
 7. The five psychic powers are clairvoyance, clairaudience, mind reading, remembrance of one's own and others' former existences, and the magical power of flying in space.
 8. In general the term *smṛti* refers to the whole body of brahmanical sacred literature that is the product of human authors. *Smṛti* is contrasted with *śruti* which, strictly speaking, refers only to the mantra sections of the Vedas, that were divinely intuited by the ancient seers. The *smṛtis* quoted below are probably taken from the *Brahmanas* or *Dharmashastras*—the Vedic ritual and law textbooks.
 9. Vishavimla (*bi si mi lla*): This is the form that appears in the oldest manuscript from which I am working; (mss. do not distinguish *ba* and *va*). Hoffmann (1969:62, 64–65) has proposed that this "mantra of the barbarian deity" represents the Arabic *bismillah*: "in the name of Allah." This can hardly be questioned given the context. The usual name for "the barbarian deity" used in the *Sri Kalacakra* and the *Vimalaprabha* is Rahmana (*rahma na*). This represents the Arabic *al-Rahman*, "the Merciful." See also note 13 below.
 10. The five sins of immediate retribution are patricide, matricide, murder of an arhat, intentionally wounding a tathagata, and creating schism in the Sangha. These sins are so heinous that, unless antidotes are employed, their karmic results definitely ripen in the very next life.
 11. This statement must be qualified. The *Paramadibuddha* is the basic or root tantra (*mulatantra*) of the Kalachakra system. The *Sehoddasa* (Peking #3) is a section extracted from the fifth chapter of the *Paramadibuddha*, and the *Tantragarbha* (Peking #6) is a condensation of material drawn from the fourth chapter of the *Paramadibuddha*. Also, hundreds of verses quoted from the *Paramadibuddha* appear in the Indian Kalachakra literature.
However, the *Paramadibuddha* as a whole has not been preserved in Sanskrit and was not translated into Tibetan. Thus, for the Kalachakra system as a whole the *Sri Kalacakra* functions as the basic tantra for the Tibetans and ourselves.

12. See: *Sriyajramalabhidhanamahayogatantra sarvatantrahridayarahasyavibhanga nama* (the *Vajramala*) Peking #58; vol. 3, 226/15; and *Sridvibhujasahasamvarasadhana* by Shri Vajraghanta Peking #2155; vol. 51, 183/2/1–3. I suspect these verses are interpolated in the preceding texts; they all appear in the *Vimalaprabha* as well.
13. *Sri Kalacakra* (S & T) I. 27.ab; *Vimalaprabha* (S) 51b, (T) 480–481. The date is written in "number symbols" (*vahnau khe 'bdhau*) that represent the number 403. Previous Tibetan and western-style scholars have concluded that this year corresponds to the first year of the newer Tibetan chronology, i.e., 1027 A.D. There are some good reasons for accepting this interpretation.
However, the *Vimalaprabha* explains that this year 403 is "the year of the lord of the barbarians" (*mlecchendravarsham*). Furthermore, the lord of the barbarians is "Muhammad, the incarnation of al-Rahman, the teacher of the barbarian Dharma, the guru and swami of the barbarian Tajiks" (*madhumati rahmanavataro mlecchadharmadeshako mlecchanam tainam guruh svami*). Given this, it seems to me that the year 403 should be calculated in the era of the Hijra: 403 A.H. equals 1012–1013 A.D.
14. 'Gos lo tsa ba 1478:672.
15. The text translated below is Bu ston 1329:56–61. mKhas grub 1434:167–173 corresponds verbatim to Bu ston's version of the Rwa tradition, but it differs a little in the 'Bro lineage account. The differences are mainly in the form of additional information, and I have inserted this in my translation. mKhas grub's text was translated by Roerich 1932:18–22. I hope I have improved upon Roerich's generally excellent translation; in any case, the journal it was published in is extremely rare and difficult to obtain.
Those with an appetite for more stories about the spread of the Kalachakra in India should see 'Gos lo tsa ba 1478:661–673, translated by Roerich 1949:753–766. 'Gos lo tsa ba collected a virtual cornucopia of these legends, and their basic unreliability becomes apparent when they are juxtaposed. This problem is especially pressing for the very beginning of the Kalachakra tradition in India. Any given story of the introduction of the Kalachakra into India can be contradicted by another, equally venerable story. The only way to extract history from such material is to bring in external evidence, as I have tried to do below.
16. For more on the mysterious Shing stan can see Roerich 1949:1021–1022, 1031. The "Sendhapas" were Sinhalese Theravadin monks active in Magadha during the Pala and Sena dynasties. I have collected a number of references to them from the Tibetan histories, and I hope to publish an article on them in the near future.
17. "The One Possessing Power In Ten Aspects" is a mantric cosmogram symbolizing the entire universe as conceived in the Kalachakra. It consists of a number of different-colored letters woven together, and it often appears above the doors and gateways of Tibetan monasteries and temples. The manifesto *Kalachakrapada the Younger wrote over the door of Nalanda is taken

from the *Vimalaprabha* (S) 33b, (T) 419–420. *Namasamgiti* is the short title of the *Manjushrijnanasattvasya-paramarthanamasamgiti* (Peking #2). The *Vimalaprabha* says this short text contains the definitive meaning of all the mantra systems of the Mantrayana.

18. The *Sekoddesa* has been mentioned above (note #11). The *Sekapraakriya* (Peking #7 & 4609) treats the Kalachakra initiation rituals. It is composed of three blocks of verses from the *Sri Kalacakra*, two from the third chapter and one from the fifth. The commentary referred to is probably Darika's **Sri-Kalacakra-tantrarajasya sekapraakriyavrtti vajrapadodghati nama* (Peking #2072).
19. I have adopted the form "Pindo" from 'Gos lo tsa ba 1478:664–666, 671. The references in the rest of this paragraph were first collected by Ruegg 1981:215–218. I am grateful to Ronald M. Davidson for drawing my attention to Ruegg's article.
20. Peking #5343; vol. 103, 21/5/1–4.
21. *Bodhimargapradipapanjika nama* Peking #5344; vol. 103, 44/4/1–45/4/3.
22. Bu ston, Collected Works (cited under Bu ston 1329 in the bibliography), Part 3 (GA), 319.
23. Taranatha 1608:214.
24. My reconstruction of *Nado's Prakrit name is a combination of the Sanskrit form reported by Carelli (see *Nado (S)) and the most common Tibetan form: *Na ro pa*, or *Na ro*. A safe approximation for the date of *Nado's nirvana has been established by Wylie 1982: 687–692.
25. Bu ston 1329:74.
26. The Tibetan histories contain an abundance of generally reliable information on the spread of the Kalachakra in Tibet. What follows is necessarily just a sketch, and it is written from the point of view of the dGe lug pa school. The account through mKhas grub is drawn from Bu ston 1329:61–74; mKhas grub 1434:173–197. For more on the spread of the Kalachakra in Tibet see 'Gos lo tsa ba 1478:673–741, translated by Roerich 1949:766–838.
27. Some recent writers have characterized Bu ston as a kind of enemy of the rNying ma traditions. This is utterly false. Bu ston's biography records his study of rNying ma tantra, including the *rdzogs chen*. Also, Bu ston defended the authenticity of rNying ma tantra translations for which Sanskrit originals could be found.
28. Edited and translated by Schubert 1953:424–473.
29. Edited and translated by Grunwedel 1915.
30. Sources: *Sri Kalacakra* (S & T) I. 151–153, 158–168. (The *Vimalaprabha* does not comment on these verses.) My interpretation of these verses is based on mKhas grub 1434:1082–1091, 1098–1111. Some details are taken from kLong rdol 1765:256–262.

31. Sources: *Sri Kalacakra* (S & T) I. 152, 156–157, 165–167; *Vimalaprabha* (S) 14b-15a, (T) 351–354; mKhas grub 1434:148–151, 436–438, 1096–1098, 1106–1110; kLong rdol 1765: 248–251.

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mKhas grub (1434)

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THE WHEEL OF TIME

The Kalachakra Tantra Initiation

GESHE LHUNDUB SOPA¹

INTRODUCTION

The Kalachakra or "Wheel of Time" (*dus kyi 'khor lo*) is a tantra that plays a unique and paradoxical role in Tibetan Buddhism. On the one hand, most Tibetan Buddhists believe it to represent the very pinnacle of Buddhist esoterism. The Kalachakra presents the Buddha's most profound and complex statement on matters both worldly and religious, and its intricacies have placed it beyond the ken of all but a specialized few scholars and practitioners² who can master it only by understanding a vast range of traditional ideas and practices. On the other hand, initiations into the meditational practice of Kalachakra are the only *Anuttara Yoga* tantra initiations that are offered to the general public. The Kalachakra's association with the kingdom of Shambhala, the ground of a future revival of the Dharma, gives it a special eschatological focus.

Presence at a Kalachakra initiation, whose blessings may help one to be reborn in Shambhala in the future, is considered highly auspicious. Such initiations, particularly when offered by a Dalai Lama, usually are attended by thousands upon thousands of the faithful.³

THE WHEEL OF TIME

The Kalachakra In Context

Geshe Lhundub Sopa
Roger Jackson
John Newman

With a Foreword by
His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

Edited by Beth Simon



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Front cover photograph by Glenn Trudell.
The front cover shows two Namgyal monks performing one of the many preparatory rites for the Kalachakra initiation given by H. H. the 14th Dalai Lama in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1981. This photograph is one of a series shot by Glenn Trudell.

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