

# The Fourteenth Dalai Lama's Oral Teachings on the Source of the *Kālacakrantra*

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THIS PAPER WILL PRESENT some rhetorical and discursive elements in oral versions of the history of the *Kālacakrantra* as currently presented by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Focusing on the definition of the *Kālacakra's* "word of the Buddha" (*buddha vacana*), the paper will show how the Fourteenth Dalai Lama constructs an innovative version in his teachings, manifesting the relations between the esoteric tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and its contemporary religious milieu as it is being defined in exile. These relations are apparent both in the information that is being taught and in the argumentation that constructs it.

## DEFINING THE KĀLACAKRATANTRA AS BUDDHA VACANA

The issue of the source of the *Kālacakrantra*, or in other words, defining the *Kālacakrantra* as *buddha vacana*, is of prime importance, not only for the study of the *Kālacakra* itself, but for the study of *tantra* in general.<sup>2</sup> From the esoteric perspective connection with the Buddha is significant, not simply as a quasi-historical element, but as an element of practice, one that establishes a direct link with the possibility of enlightenment. According to the prevailing version in the *Kālacakra* tradition, the Buddha Śākyamuni taught the *Kālacakrantra* to King Suchandra of Shambhala. According to the *Kālacakra* tradition, it was at this occasion that the Buddha taught all of the *tantra-s*.

From a traditional hermeneutical perspective the source of the teaching is of prime importance as it defines the fourfold relationship of: original author/original audience // current teacher/current audience. The significance of this point within the context of tantric teaching is that it is considered to be part of the five preliminaries, the first of the "seven jewels" (Tib. *rgyan bdun*) expounded by Candakīrti.<sup>3</sup> Within the "preliminaries" the master establishes the text's original context by first relating the name of the *tantra*,

second identifying its original audience, third identifying its authority, fourth its size, and fifth its purpose.<sup>4</sup> As elaborated by Tsong-kha-pa, establishing a text as originating from the Buddha, a Buddha emanation, establishes the text as an avenue to buddhahood. The connection with the Buddha is also important in that the connection is used as an explicit analogy for the master who conducts the initiation. According to the *Vimalaprabhā*, in terms of the ultimate truth, the “master” refers to the Buddha Śākyamuni.<sup>5</sup>

From a Western-based scholarly perspective, attributing the *Kālacakratāntra* to the Buddha is of course problematic. Scholars date the *Kālacakratāntra* to around the eleventh century. These two perspectives, the emic and the etic, are, as put by Jackson, “Profoundly, perhaps irrevocably opposed, based as they are on radically differing views not only on how evidence is to be weighed in the determination of religious history, but also on the place and potential of the mind within the scheme of the cosmos.”<sup>6</sup> What I argue in my analysis is that we can no longer speak of such a clear-cut dichotomy. In the current situation, where Buddhist masters are active in the West and where many Western Buddhologists adhere to Buddhism, the images produced by these two different prisms are increasingly superimposed on one another. This is apparent especially when one analyses oral versions of the Dalai Lama’s presentations of the history of the *Kālacakra*.

#### ACCOUNTS IN THE KĀLACAKRA LITERATURE

Although the root text of the *Kālacakra*, the *Kālacakramūlatantra*, is allegedly lost, there are various sources which claim to quote passages from it. These include the *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*,<sup>7</sup> as well as the three texts which form the Bodhisattva Corpus (*Byang chub sems dpa’i ’khor*): the *Vimalaprabhā*, the *Lakṣābhīdhānoddhṛtalaghutantrapiṇḍārthavivarāṇa*,<sup>8</sup> and the *Hevajra-piṇḍārthatīkā*<sup>9</sup>—commentaries on the *Kālacakra*, *Cakrasamāvāra*, and *Hevajralaghutantras*, respectively.

Bu-ston quotes the following verses out of the *Kālacakramūlatantra* in his *History of the Kālacakra* (*Dus ’khor chos ’byung rgyud sde’i zab don sgo ’byed rin chen gces pa’i lde mig*):

In the same way that the Teacher set forth  
*Prajñāpāramitā* at Vulture Peak  
 He also taught the dharma in the Mantrayāna way  
 at *’Bras spungs*.

To whom? Where did he teach?  
 Who taught the *tantra*?  
 In the assembly of whom did he teach?  
 Why (did he teach)?

He taught at Vulture Peak Mountain  
the unsurpassed Mahayana,  
the way of the *Prajñāpāramitā*  
to the bodhisattvas

Then the Tathāgata was dwelling at one great stupa  
in the *maṇḍala* of *dharmadhātu*  
with the bodhisattvas, and so on.

In the ether which is not motionless, completely pure,  
all pervading, and extremely radiant,  
the abode of the multi-colored *vajra*,  
a dwelling place, a magnificent *dharmadhātu*,  
it was there that the *tantra* was taught.  
It is necessary for the merit and wisdom of human beings.<sup>10</sup>

The *Vimalaprabhā*, the main commentary on the *Kālacakralaghutantra*, attributes the teaching of the *Kālacakra* not only to Śākyamuni Buddha, but also to the *Ādibuddha* (Tib. *dang po'i sangs rgyas*), to previous buddhas (specifically to Dīpaṅkara), and also to Mañjuśrī.<sup>11</sup> The *Vimalaprabhā* emphasizes that the teaching of the *Kālacakra* was not one single event taught by one single buddha, but rather a teaching that happened, happens, and will happen in the three times by countless buddhas.<sup>12</sup>

## ORAL TEACHINGS

Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche

Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche is considered one of the highest living authorities on *Kālacakra* in the dGe-lugs-pa school. In his oral teachings, Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche attributes the *Kālacakra* to the historical Buddha without raising any of the problematic issues that may be related to such an assertion. As for the question of when the Buddha taught the *Kālacakra*, Kirti Tsenshab presents two different traditions, prevalent in commentaries on the *Kālacakra*. One attributes the teaching of the *Kālacakra* to the Buddha's eighty-first year, while the other attributes the teaching of the *Kālacakra* to the Buddha's thirty-sixth year. When presenting both versions, Kirti Tsenshab himself did not seem to favor either of these two views:

So the Buddha achieved Buddhahood and then he taught *Kālacakra*.  
When did he teach the *Kālacakra*? There are two different traditions  
of calculating the year in which he taught the *Kālacakra*. One tradi-  
tion is that of the three Gyatsos, these are three Tibetan scholars

who share the second name Gyatso. There was one called Norsang Gyatso,<sup>13</sup> one called Chodrak Gyatso,<sup>14</sup> and one called Lhundrup Gyatso.<sup>15</sup> According to these three, he taught the *Kālacakra* in his eighty-first year at the end of his life.<sup>16</sup>

Then in another tradition which is that of Bu-ston Rinpoche and Tsong-kha-pa and mKhas-grub-rje he attained enlightenment when he was thirty-five and then in the following year when he was thirty-six, at that time he taught the *Kālacakra*. So there are these two different traditions, whether he taught the tantra when he was thirty-six or when he was eighty-one, the difference is forty-five years.<sup>17</sup>

### Serkong Rinpoche

Also very close to textual versions is the oral version that was presented by Serkong Rinpoche in his *Kālacakra* teachings that took place in the USA in 1982:

As it is said in the root tantra text, "Just as the universal teacher taught the *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras at Vulture Peak, likewise he taught the various tantras at the stupa, called Śrī Dhanyakataka."

What this quotation is saying is that at the time after the great universal teacher Śākyamuni manifested his enlightenment, he taught at the place called Vulture Peak, the perfection of wisdom sutras, the *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras. In this same fashion, in another location, there is a stūpa which is called Śrī Dhanyakataka.... And there, inside this stūpa, he rose with these two mandalas, he rose in the form of the deity Kālacakra and delivered the various tantric teachings, or root texts.<sup>18</sup>

### The Fourteenth Dalai Lama

When teaching in India to a mostly Tibetan audience the Dalai Lama presents a similar traditional account, without relating to the scholarly-traditional discrepancy. He only refers to the discrepancy within the tradition itself, mentioned above by Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, as to whether the Buddha taught the *Kālacakra* in his thirty-sixth or eighty-first year:

Now with regard to the time when the supramundane victor Śākyamuni Buddha set forth the *Kālacakratantra*, there is one system that [says] this occurred right in the year of his own display of gaining highest enlightenment. . . . In another system it is said that he set it forth one year prior to his death. According to the as-

sersion of the adept and scholar Nor-bzang rgya-mtsho, Buddha set forth the *Kālacakratantra* in the year prior to his death. It is said in the *Kālacakratantra* itself that just as Buddha was setting forth the Perfection of Wisdom sutras on the Vulture Peak, so he was setting forth the *Kālacakratantra* at the *stūpa* at 'Bras spungs. With regard to those whom Buddha was manifestly or explicitly setting forth the *tantra* at that time, the *tantra* was requested by the King Suchandra of Shambhala.<sup>19</sup>

In another *Kālacakra* initiation (in Spiti, India, 2000), discussing the validity of the *Kālacakra* teachings, the Dalai Lama described what we could term as a "Vajrayāna validity circle," which is based on *faith*. In the Dalai Lama's exposition of this validity principle, first comes the valid *original teacher*, the Buddha, who has given the tantric teachings. The validity of the *scriptures* is established through him. In the second stage, learned scholars wrote valid *commentaries*. Then, by reflecting on the teachings and the commentaries, one can become a valid *lama*. Then, in the fourth stage, by relying on the *lama*, the adept is able to develop *experience* within his or her own mind, hence the valid experience. These four aspects of validity not only work in a linear way, but in a circular manner, working the other way on a higher level. Once the student has developed his or her own *experience*, he or she is able to develop further veneration towards their *lama*. Acknowledging that the wisdom of the *lama* came into existence from practicing the profundity of the teachings of the *commentaries*, one sees them as valid. Since these commentaries are based on the *teachings of the Buddha*, both sutras and *tantra*-s, one is:

able to develop conviction towards the valid teachings of the Buddha and you are able to see that these teachings of the Buddha contain complete meaning and in this way you are able to develop genuine faith towards the Buddha. So relating to these tantric teachings, which are quite hidden from our mind to start with, it is important to develop conviction [relating to them] through these four points of validity.<sup>20</sup>

This presentation is an interesting variation on the discussion of conviction as found in the first chapter of the *Vimalaprabhā*:

Here in the Mantrayāna the Bhagavān speaks of three types of conviction: first, conviction derived from the *tantra*; then conviction derived from the *guru*; then conviction derived from oneself. The path of the true, perfect Buddha becomes completely

pure by means of these convictions. Otherwise, without these three convictions, the path that the guru relates to the disciple will not give the result of true, perfect Buddhahood; due to the idiocy of the disciple's faith, he will get a worldly result in accordance with phenomenal truth.<sup>21</sup>

### TEACHING IN THE WEST

When teaching in the West, the Dalai Lama relates to the basic discrepancy between traditional accounts and scholarship. Acknowledging the type of information to which his contemporary audience is exposed, such as the various books by Western scholars on the *Kālacakra*, the Dalai Lama's written and oral accounts relate to this discrepancy in a way that can be seen to have been evolving over the years.

In the Dalai Lama's written presentation of the *Kālacakra* prepared for the first *Kālacakra* initiation he gave in the West, in Madison, Wisconsin in 1981, the Dalai Lama related to this discrepancy, but gave precedence to the traditional version (my emphases):

Then in the forms of various mandala deities embodying the inseparable union of method and wisdom he taught the highest yoga tantras.

Because these teachings were given in mystical manifestations of the Buddha to those in transcendental states of purified karma and perception, *it does not matter much* whether or not any specific tantra was expounded during the lifetime of the historical Buddha himself.

*However, in fact, the Kalacakra Root Tantra was set forth by Buddha Shakyamuni himself during his very lifetime.*<sup>22</sup>

In 1988 the Dalai Lama gave a series of lectures in London dealing with various aspects of Tibetan Buddhism. These were translated, transcribed, and then edited into what later became a best-selling book titled *The World of Tibetan Buddhism*. On this occasion the Dalai Lama began to present his own version of authorship, a version that takes into account both the Tibetan traditional points of view on the one hand, and Western notions of time and place on the other (as well as Western scholarship that is based on these notions). It is from this point onwards that the Dalai Lama's own synthesis regarding these different standpoints can be seen to be expressed.<sup>23</sup> In the part devoted to the Vajrayāna Buddhism of Tibet, the Dalai Lama said:

There are some chronological issues concerning the evolution of Buddhist tantra, questions of when and where the Buddha taught

the various tantras.<sup>24</sup> However, we need not presume that all of the teachings of tantra 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. As a result of such investigation, a practitioner can attain very high realizations and visions, thus enabling him or her to receive tantric teachings at a mystical level. Therefore, when we reflect on tantric teachings, we should not limit our perspective by rigid notions of time and space.<sup>25</sup>

A further development in the Dalai Lama's standpoint was evident in his teaching of *Kālacakra* as given in August 1999, during the Bloomington *Kālacakra* initiation. Relating to the issue of the source of the *Kālacakra* teachings the Dalai Lama said (my emphases):

I think it is important to bear in mind that our understanding of the authenticity of the *Kālacakra* as a Buddhist *tantra* should not be dependent upon the fact that ... it could be empirically proven that the *Kālacakra* was spoken by the historical Buddha.... I don't think that this question of the *Kālacakra's* authenticity and its connection with the historical Śākyamuni needs to be a fact that lends itself to the conventional historical perspective, to historical analysis. And there is no need for the *Kālacakra* to have been spoken by the Buddha in the conventional sense that we understand it. For example, [in] many of the sutras that are attributed to the Buddha, it is evident they were not literally spoken by the Buddha in the conventional sense to a large public gathering. What can be attributed to the Buddha historically, in the conventional way, are those [teachings] which have been compiled and edited during the councils of the arhats following the death of the Buddha. These are compiled and edited in the Tripiṭaka. However, the Mahayana sutras, and also the *tantra-s*, and the *Kālacakra*, these evolved as a result of the Buddha teaching only to a selected few, whose mentality was appropriate, and conducive, and receptive to these teachings. So these teachings, including the Mahayana sutras, need not necessarily be able to be traced to the historical Buddha in the conventional sense.

I speculate, for example, if you look at the condensed *Kālacakratāntra* we have now, although *the Kālacakra teaching must have come originally from the Buddha to King Suchandra*, later it was one of the Kalki kings who actually composed the condensed *Kālacakratāntra*, and if you look at the composition style of this condensed *tantra*, it

may reflect particular temperament and also a convention of style that was contemporary to this Kalki king, *although the essence of the subject matter, the condensed tantra, was taught by the Buddha.*

And this is also quite similar to the situation with revealed texts in the Tibetan tradition. Although the original texts may have been hidden by great masters such as Padmasambhava at the time of reign of Trisong Detsen<sup>26</sup> and so on, and great masters such as the twenty-five realized masters, but later when the revealed texts were conceived and experienced several generations before, because they were revealed by great masters a couple of generations later, the actual composition, the wording of the text would reflect the particularity of that new situation. If you look at this carefully, *this is something understandable, since the main intent of these texts was to be of benefit to others, in order to benefit it has to reflect that particularity of the new situation, the new environment and therefore the same goes for the Perfection of Wisdom sutras.*

In fact, some people try to dispute the authenticity of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras by saying that the Perfection of Wisdom sutras contain language and style conventions which were current only many centuries after the Buddha's death, which may be true, but that does not negate the fact that the Perfection of Wisdom sutra[s] can be attributed to the Buddha. So in any case, *the basic fact is, as we discussed earlier, that the form body, the physical embodiment of the Buddha, is used exclusively and only in relation to the needs of other sentient beings and the principle beings for which buddhas, fully enlightened beings, engage in activities or help others, is their speech and the speech has to reflect the needs and concerns of a given society and a given time.*<sup>27</sup>

The Dalai Lama set off by taking a philological approach, maintaining that the style and language do indeed make it impossible to attribute various teachings to the Buddha. However, using the basis of the bodhisatva ideals and the buddha-bodies theory, he built his argument to show why indeed speech was used in the way that it actually was. In this way, the Dalai Lama created a version that would seem plausible to a Western audience while at the same time remaining Buddhist in its presuppositions.

The Dalai Lama started his argument with the premise:

*The scriptures' (relating to: Kālacakra, gTer-ma and Prajñāpāramitā) wording and style reflect a time that is much later than the lifetime of the Buddha.*

This premise can lead to two conclusions:



*Conclusion One:* the scriptures are not authentic.

*Conclusion Two:* (yet still) the scriptures are authentic (i.e., the fact that the wording and style are much later does not mean they were not spoken by the Buddha).

The underlying logic that allows the move from the premise to Conclusion One can be either reflecting inner Buddhist opposition to the *Kālacakra* (given the context: not likely) or Western (given the context: likely). The underlying basis for Conclusion Two is a Mahayanic and Vajrayānic one. This basis maintains that there is a *cause*, an aim, and that is the bodhisattva's aim.

It is interesting to note how the Dalai Lama expanded his argument of authenticity to include not only the *Kālacakra*, but also the revealed texts and the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. As has been pointed out by Makransky, this has become a very pressing question, mostly for Western followers of Mahayana Buddhism, as well as for Western teachers of Mahayana Buddhism. Nowadays, still, many of the most learned Asian teachers continue to speak as if the historical Buddha actually taught the Mahayana scriptures in person, in spite of much evidence to the contrary.<sup>28</sup>

Another line of argument used by the Dalai Lama is a practical one. His practical argument states, plainly, that the authoritative nature of the teachings need not necessarily come from them being taught by the historical Buddha, but rather from their practical aspect. The Dalai Lama argues: the teachings work, therefore they are valid. The practical aspect works in three levels: the level of the great masters of the past, the level of a contemporary great master, and the level of oneself:

Questions have also been raised regarding the authenticity of the *Kālacakratāntra*.... Perhaps the most important thing is that many great masters of the past in India and Tibet, as a result of undertaking intensive practices of the *Kālacakratāntra*, particularly the six yogas of the completion stage of the *Kālacakra*, they have gained deep and profound realizations, and so this fact that great masters have gained great realizations on the basis of the *Kālacakra* practice, particularly the six yogas of the *Kālacakra*, is a proof that not only is the *Kālacakratāntra* authentic, but also is a *tantra* that has very profound qualities....

In the final analysis, the ultimate determining factor really is one's own practice. If as a result of one's sustained and continued practice, if there is any benefit, or if one can gain any spiritual realization, of course we are not talking just in a matter of days of months, but over a prolonged sustained period of time, if there is a result of one's practice, if one can gain benefit from such a

practice, then such a practice can be regarded as authentic. If, on the other hand, in spite of sustained prolonged practice, if there [are] no results forthcoming, then that practice is not authentic so far as you yourself [are] concerned.<sup>29</sup>

The Dalai Lama's interpretations on the question of authorship can be viewed through Geoffrey Samuel's terminology, what he calls the "shamanic current" and the "clerical current" within Tibetan Buddhism, and Robert Mayer's subsequent analysis of these terms vis-à-vis questions of authenticity.<sup>30</sup> According to Mayer, the clerical view, as typically exemplified by the dGe-lugs-pas, emphasizes the role of the historical Buddha as the source of the *tantra*-s. In contrast, the shamanic view, typical of the rNying-ma-pas, attributes the *tantra*-s to utterances of various transcendent buddhas, not confined to a specific time and place.<sup>31</sup> As a member of the clerical strand, not to say, "the" member of the clerical strand, the Dalai Lama, in presenting these views, is not only making himself more accessible to his Western audience, but also taking on board the shamanic views, thus incorporating them into mainstream Tibetan Buddhism.

In terms of his positions vis-à-vis *gter-mas*, the Dalai Lama is in fact entirely accepting of the rNying-ma defense of *gter-ma* as little or no different from earlier Buddhist scriptural revelation, and thus distances himself from the scholastic perspective, which rejected the *gter-mas* as well as other rNying-ma tantric texts.<sup>32</sup> The Dalai Lama's incorporation of views that have been more prevalent in non-dGe-lugs strands within Tibetan Buddhism can be seen as deriving from the institutional place taken by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in exile, not just as a head of the dGe-lugs-pa school, but as a head of all schools of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>33</sup>

## MEDIA AND MESSAGES

Much has been written both in support of, as well as in opposition to, Walter Ong's characterization of oral cultures as conservative when compared with cultures that employ writing, which are seen as being more innovative.<sup>34</sup> Orality and writing may vary in the way that they innovate. While oral cultures can indeed preserve "traditions" with little change, it is possible for an oral tradition to innovate without necessarily explicitly recognizing any change, thus allowing for adaptation to specific circumstances while denying change. In the history of the Jewish tradition, for example, the lines of oral transmission were where innovations took place.<sup>35</sup> In the Jewish experience of exile, the need to adapt old teachings to new circumstances in order to survive was ever-present.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who on many occasions has related to the Jewish experience of preserving culture in exile as a source of inspiration for him, is clearly using the mode of speech as an avenue for innovation and reform. He engages the texts that he teaches in an active way, creating an opportunity for re-search in its very basic meaning: *searching again* for new meanings in territories already known. In this sense the Dalai Lama is actively engaging in the Vajrayānic hermeneutics principle of treating a teaching as an “open text,” allowing for a number of equally valid interpretations, depending on the disciples he is addressing.

The theoretical and methodological questions that arise from contemporary modes of orality have other dimensions as well. In today’s world, oral teachings are recorded, sometimes transcribed, sometimes subsequently edited and published as books. Oral teachings are also transmitted as audio and/or video internet-based cyber-casts that can be downloaded and saved into one’s computer. These blurred boundaries between different media raise new theoretical issues, which concern the significance of orality separated from an event, separated from a certain temporal flow and a fixed place. In the tantric environment, these questions are especially intriguing in the context of the initiation.<sup>36</sup>

According to the *Vimalaprabhā*, the *Kālacakra* has been, is, and will be taught throughout the three times by countless buddhas. It is this premise that lets the Dalai Lama argue for the benefit of his Western audiences that it is indeed not important whether the historical Buddha *really* taught the *Kālacakra*. His innovative line of presentation can, in fact, also be seen to comply with the verse from Bu-ston attributed to the *Kālacakramulatantra* quoted above. While most commentators have taken these lines to imply that the Buddha taught the *Kālacakra* and *tantra-s* in general at the same *time* he was teaching the Perfection of Wisdom sutras, the Dalai Lama is emphasizing the interpretation that the Buddha taught the *tantra-s* in the same *way* that he taught the Perfection of Wisdom sutras, or in other words: that he *did not* teach the *tantra-s* in the same way that he *did not* teach the Perfection of Wisdom sutras (as well as the revealed texts), but that the historical element of it is not the important one.

What becomes evident when analyzing the differences between the ways in which the Dalai Lama constructs his arguments for a mostly Tibetan versus a mostly Western audience are the different ways in which “reason” is constructed in both contexts, i.e., the different presuppositions that back up the Dalai Lama’s reasoning in both contexts.

In addition to the differences in reasoning, in a mostly Tibetan context one also finds greater emphasis on *faith*. In the present time, when Tibetan Buddhism is becoming a global religion,<sup>37</sup> I think the interactions that are developing between these different strands of Tibetan Buddhism are and will be fascinating to observe.

## NOTES

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2. On this issue see also Ronald M. Davidson, "An Introduction to the Standards of Scriptural Authenticity in Indian Buddhism," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1990); Matthew Kapstein, "The Purificatory Gem and Its Cleaning: A Late Tibetan Polemical Discussion of Apocryphal Texts," *History of Religions* 28, no. 3 (1989): pp. 217–244; Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robert Mayer, *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis* (Oxford: Kiscadale Publications, 1996), chaps. 1 and 4; Janet Gyatso, "The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition," *History of Religions* 33, no. 2 (1993): pp. 97–134; and Dale Wright, *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 110–111. Much has been written on this issue with respect to Mahayana literature. See, for instance, Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 30.
3. In the *Pradīpoddyotanā* (Tib. *sGron ma gsal bar byed pa*). This text, which is part of the *Guhyasamāja* commentarial literature, deals with principles of teaching the *tantra*-s. For Steinkellner's analysis of the text see E. Steinkellner, "Remarks on Tantric Hermeneutics," in *Proceedings of the 1976 Csoma de Kőrös Memorial Symposium*, ed. L. Ligeti (Budapest: Bibliotheca Orientalia Hungarica, no. 23, 1978).
4. Tsong-kha-pa, *rGyud bshad thabs kyi man ngag gsal ba bstan pa* (Tibetan Tripitika [TTP], Peking edition, #6198). See also Robert Thurman, "Vajra Hermeneutics," in *Buddhist Hermeneutics*, ed. Donald Lopez (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press and the Kuroda Institute, 1988), pp. 135–136.
5. Vesna Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratāntra: A Buddhist Tantric View of the Individual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 8.
6. Roger Jackson, "Kalachakra in Context," in *The Wheel of Time: The Kalachakra in Context*, ed. Beth Simon (Madison: Deer Park Books, 1985), p. 4.
7. TPP, Peking edition, #2068.
8. TPP, Peking edition, #2117.

9. TPP, Peking edition, #2310.

10. ston pas bya rгод phung po ru | shes rab pha rol phyin tshul bzhin |  
chos bstan dpal ldan 'bras spungs su | de bzhin gsang sngags tshul rab  
gsungs |

gang la gang gnas ston pa ni | su yis rgyud kyang ci zhig bstan |

gnas ni gang du 'jig rten ba'i | 'khor ni su yis rgyud ci yis |

bya rгод phung po ri chen por | theg pa chen po bla na med |

she rab pha rol phyin pa'i tshul |

byang chub sems dpa' rnam la bstan | de nas gcig sku mchod rten cher |

chos kyi dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor du | byang chub sems dpa' sogs rnam kyis |

thabs cig de bzhin [6] gshegs pa bzhugs | nam mkha' bem [rlung] min shin  
[me] tu dang |

go [chu] skabs med par rab tu gsal | |

sna tshogs rdo rje'i khang pa gnas | chos kyi dbyings dang yid 'ong bar |

rgyud bstan skyes bu rnam kyis ni |

bsod nams ye shes dgos pa 'o | | shes gsungs so

Bu-ston, *Dus 'khor chos 'byung rgyud sde'u zab don sgo 'byed rin chen 'ces pa'i lde mig ces bya ba*, in *The Collected Works of Bu-ston*, Part 4 (nga), ed. Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1965), fol. 12b, lines 3–6. For Hoffmann's translations of these verses as quoted in the *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*, see Helmut Hoffmann, "Buddha's Preaching of the Kālacakra Tantra at the Stūpa of Dhānyakataka" in *German Scholars on India: Contributions to Indian Studies*, Vol. 1 (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1973).

11. As explained by Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, they are to be seen as different manifestations of the same entity: "The ādibuddha and Buddha Śākyamuni are to be seen as manifestations of the same entity, or manifestations of one another. Sometimes the Buddha would assume the aspect of a saffron clad monk [Buddha Śākyamuni] and sometimes he would assume a different aspect, especially when tantric teachings were given. As for Mañjuśrī, he should be understood to be present when the original teachings were given in two levels: in one level he appeared in the audience and received the empowerment and the commentary as part of the eight close Bodhisattvas. On another level, he was part of [the omniscience of] the Buddha who bestowed the empowerment." Kirti Tsenshab, personal communication, Delhi, 2002.

12. *Vimalaprabhā*, chap. 1, second brief account. Bu-ston, ed. fol. 336. In Newman's translation, John Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time: Vajrayana Buddhist Cosmology in the Kālacakra Tantra" (PhD diss, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987), p. 276.

13. mKhas-grub Nor-bzang rgya-mtsho (1423–1513) [Tutor of the Second Dalai Lama dGe-'dun rgya-mtsho (1476–1542)].

14. Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho; probably the seventh Karmapa (1454–1506).
15. Phug pa lhun grub rgya mtsho; he wrote his famous astrological work in 1447.
16. Nor-bzang rgya mtsho says, “Therefore, the first year of the six hundred years mentioned in the prophecy of king Manjushri Yashas would be four years before Wood Monkey year. This is Iron Dragon year and in this the year on the full moon of the *chaitra* month the Buddha taught the *Root Tantra*. In the Wisdom Chapter of *The Great Commentary*, in the Supreme Unchanging Wisdom summary, it says, ‘Manjushri, six hundred years after I have passed away, in the land of Shambhala, from the womb of Vijayadevi of Shakya lineage, the lineage bearer Manjushri Yashas, son of Sureshana will appear.’ In the same text it states that Manjushri Yashas will appear six hundred years after our Teacher taught the *Root Tantra*. Therefore, the *Root Tantra* was taught in the year of Buddha’s passing. This means that the Iron Dragon year was the year in which our Teacher taught the *Root Tantra* and was also the year in which he passed away.” G. Kilty, trans., mkKhas-grub Nor-bzang rgya-mtsho, *Phyi-nang-gzhan-gsum gsal-bar byed-pa dri-med ‘od-gyi rgyan* (Dolanji, India: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1975; translation forthcoming).
17. Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, oral teachings of *Kālacakra*, trans. Peter Roberts (London: Jamyang Buddhist Centre, June 1996).
18. Serkong Rinpoche, oral teachings of *Kālacakra*, trans. Alex Berzin (Madison, WI, July 1982). Hopkins, quoting a similar version relating the teachings to the Buddha’s thirty-sixth year, is basing himself on Geshe Thupten Gyatso of the Go-mang College of ‘Bras spungs (Drepung). Hopkins adds: “According to another version, the *Kālacakra Tantra* was set forth a year before his death, but the first version seems to be favored.” The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Kalachakra Tantra Rite of Initiation For the Stage of Generation: A Commentary on the text of Kay-drup Ge-leg-bel-sang-bo by Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Text Itself*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Hopkins (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1999 [1985]), pp. 59 and 482, note 58.
19. Fourteenth Dalai Lama, oral teachings (Bodhgaya, 1985).
20. Fourteenth Dalai Lama, oral teachings (Spiti, 2000). These four points of validity are also very similar to the Tshad-ma bzhi, or the “Four Truth-tests” as described by Dan Martin, *Unearthing Bon Treasures: Life and Contested Legacy of a Tibetan Scripture Revealer* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 157–158, 171–177. The four points are: (1) The truth-test of scriptural authorities, (2) the truth-test of the experience of the Vajra Master, (3) the truth-test of history-interdependent origination, and (4) the truth-test of the yogin’s own experiences. This formulation originated in the Lam-‘bras tradition and was later used by the bKa’-brgyud tradition and in Bon teachings.

21. *Vimalaprabhā*, first chapter, fourth section; Bu-ston, ed. fol. 377; Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time," pp. 338–339.
22. Fourteenth Dalai Lama, "Concerning the Kalacakra Initiation in America," *The Tibetan Review* (April, 1981).
23. In the preface to the book, Geshe Thubten Jinpa, who was translating the talks at the time and later also edited and annotated the transcriptions into the book, notes: "Looking back, I feel that those lectures marked an important turning point in His Holiness's method of teaching Buddhism to a modern audience." Thubten Jinpa, preface to *The World of Tibetan Buddhism: An Overview of Its Philosophy and Practice*, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. ix.
24. Here Geshe Thubten Jinpa adds a note regarding the two versions of the traditional historical accounts of the teaching of *Kālacakra*. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
26. Khri srong lde'u bstan.
27. Fourteenth Dalai Lama, oral teachings (Bloomington, 1999).
28. John J. Makransky, "Historical Consciousness as an Offering to the Trans-Historical Buddha," in *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars*, eds. R. Jackson and J. Makransky (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 2000), p. 11.
29. Fourteenth Dalai Lama, oral teachings, 1999.
30. Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993); Mayer, *A Scripture of Ancient Tantra*.
31. See Mayer, *A Scripture of Ancient Tantra*, chap. 1. It is interesting to note, however, that in the context of the contemporary rNying-ma oral *Kālacakra* teachings, Penor Rinpoche simply takes a conventional traditional dGe-lugs-pa view and attributes the teachings of *Kālacakra* to the historical Buddha. Penor Rinpoche, oral teachings (Halifax, May 1995).
32. I thank Cathy Cantwell for pointing out this to me.
33. As a manifested statement, this was evident by the positioning of the heads of the Buddhist schools on the lower thrones during the *Kālacakra* initiation, situated on both sides on the Dalai Lama. It is interesting to note that these included heads of the dGe-lugs-pa, Sa-kya, rNying-ma, bKa'-rgyu, and also, Bon.
34. Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982). For some responses to Ong, see David Olson and Nancy Torrance, eds., *Literacy and Orality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). With respect to Buddhism, especially as relating to the transition into Mahayana, see David McMahan, "Orality, Writing, and



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Authority in South Asian Buddhism: Visionary Literature and the Struggle for Legitimacy in the Mahāyāna," *History of Religions* 37, no. 3 (1998).

35. For an illuminating collection of articles on this issue, see Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni, *Translating Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality and Cultural Diffusion* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

36. I related to this issue in Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, "The Kālacakra Initiation as Conducted in Exile by Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche" (paper presented at the UK Association of Buddhist Studies Annual Conference, London, July, 2001).

37. Geoffrey Samuel, "Tibetan Buddhism as a World Religion: Global Networking and Its Consequences" (paper presented at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, King's College, University of London, 1995), available online at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/departments/so/samuel/global.htm>



