The Broader Theoretical Framework of the Kalacakratantra

The Kalacakratantra belongs to the class of the unexcelled yoga-tantras (ānunatana-yoga-tantras) and together with its most authoritative Indic commentary, the Vimalaprabhā, it stands as the most comprehensive and informative tantra of its class. According to the Kālacakra tradition itself, the Kalacakratantra is the most explicit tantra, which imparts its teaching by revealing the actual meanings; whereas the other anunata-yoga-tantras, which are regarded as secret, or concealed, tantras, convey their meanings in an implicit manner.

Accordingly, the Vimalaprabhā asserts that in every king of tantras (śrīja-tantras)—specifically, in the method tantris such as the Cānhasanātantra, and in the wisdom tantras such as the Cakrasamudratantra—the Buddha taught the blissful state that arises from sexual union, but concealed it out of his great compassion for the sake of the spiritual maturation of simple-minded people. For those who seek understanding of other anunata-yoga-tantras, the Kalacakratantra is of inestimable value for it explains the meanings in detail.1 In the instances in which other systems of the anunata-yoga-tantras offer only scant information, the Kalacakratantra system explicates in detail. For example, the Vimalaprabhā points out that unlike the other tantras of its class, which only suggest that the fourth initiation is like the third, the Kalacakra tradition reveals in full its content and implications.2 The Kālacakra tradition also gives the most elaborate presentation of the human psyche-physiology and the individual's natural and social environments and their relevance to tantric practices.

With regard to the Kalacakratantra's explicit and elaborate manner of presenting its topics, the Vimalaprabhā, just like the Sādhanāsāra, asserts that in the Abhidhānamatā, the Buddhī illuminated the śrīja-word by means of general expositions (sadāśī), detailed descriptions (niyama), and reported references (pratisaṃśaya).3 In light of its explicitness, the Kalacakratantra claims superiority over all other tantras in the following manner:

The Buddha taught the female word and in the Abhidhāna, he taught it explicitly and in full for the sake of the liberation of living beings. Therefore, Sautrānta, the splendid Abhidhāna, is a discourse of the supreme lord of buddhas,5

According to the Vimalaprabhā commentary on this verse, the Buddha Śākyamuni, who abides in the sūtra of indivisible goras, the inconceivable mind-sūtra, concealed the supreme, imperishable bliss (paramākāra-sūtra) in those yogini and yoga tantras, because otherwise the conceited Buddhī pāṇiḥs in the land of the Arvas, who did not wish to listen to the spiritual mentor (gītika), would read the book and claim that they understood the sūtra-word. Thus, they would not receive the initiation and would go to hell, due to their self-grasping (abhyāsa). In contrast, he taught it explicitly in the Abhidhāna in order to mature those who were born in the land of Sambhala and whose minds were free of self-grasping. On these grounds, the Vimalaprabhā affirms that the Abhidhāna, which is the discourse of the infinite Sāllumākāya, is more comprehensive and higher than the kṣitigarbha and yoga tantras.

This is one way in which the Kalacakratantra system substantiates its self-designation as unexcelled (ānunatana). Likewise, interpreting yoga as the union, or absorption, of bliss and emptiness, or of method and wisdom, this tantric tradition presents itself as a nondual (adhyāta) yoga-tantra, which is ultimately neither a wisdom tantra nor a method tantra. It views its nonduality of wisdom and method as an expression of nondual gnosia, without which Buddhahood could never occur.6

The Kālacakra tradition also affirms its unexcelled status by claiming that the Abhidhāna, which does not come from a succession of transmissions of spiritual mentors, nor is it established by means of the spiritual mentor's authority (āttā).7 The Vimalaprabhā states that one cannot achieve omniscient Buddhahood and lordship over the three hosts by the mere blessing and authority of a spiritual mentor.8 The Abhidhāna asserts the same in this manner:

The perceptible mind, which is stained by attachment and other mental afflictions, is the cause of transmigratory existence. It is pure due to its separation from these [impurities]. It is pure and stainless by nature.

None [of the impurities] can be taken out nor thrown into [the mind] by the authority of a spiritual mentor. The sublime, imperishable, pure reality (sūtra) cannot be given or taken away.

A spiritual mentor is neither a giver nor a remover of the pure reality. In the case of those who are devoid of the accumulation of merit, the omniscient lord himself [cannot give or remove the pure reality].9

In light of this, the Vimalaprabhā disparages the Saiva tantric tradition, which claims that its teaching regarding the supreme Īśvara who brings forth pleasure (bhūka) and liberation (mukti) is handed down by a succession of teachers and through the blessing of the spiritual mentor. It warns against the dangers of following teachings that come in this way by deprecating the Saiva tantric teachers on the basis that they have trifling knowledge but have become the spiritual mentors of the children due to showing a few limited siddhis. They require trust from their deluded followers, who, thinking that their spiritual mentor is liberated, do everything that he commands. They kill, speak falsehood, steal, drink liquor, and so on. In this way,
they perform the deeds of Māras and do not obtain the bodily Siddhas by the blessing and authority of the supreme livas. At death, their bodies are either incinerated by fire or eaten by dogs and birds, and their consciousness does not become Śiva.9

According to the Vinānadanaṇḍika, one cannot teach the tantra without knowing first the list of the principles of the Buddha Dharma (dharma-samgraha) for one who does not know it teaches the evil path. One becomes a knower of the dharma-samgraha and a teacher of the three vehicles—the Vehicles of the Srivaksas, Pratyeka-buddhas, and Samyaksaṃbuddhas—only by accomplishing these two: (1) gnosis (jñāna), which is the apprehending mind (pratikā-citta) and wisdom (prajñā); and (2) space (ākāśa), or the empty form (śānta-timba), which is the apprehended object (graha) and method (upāya).10

The Vinānadanaṇḍika entreats those who desire to enter the Vajrasya to completely investigate a tantric teacher, and it points to the danger of practicing a distorted Dharma and going to hell due to honoring a spiritual mentor who lacks the necessary qualifications. The Kālacakramaṇa provides a list of the qualifications of a saujātika, who must have tantric pledges (sanyāsa). These qualifications, according to the Vinānadanaṇḍika, are of two kinds—external and internal—and must be understood in terms of their definitive and provisional meanings. Likewise, the tantric teacher is expected to practice meditation on reality, and that meditation is also of two kinds—one which accomplishes mundane siddhis and the other which accomplishes full and perfect awakening (samyaksaṃbuddha). He must be free of greed, not grasping onto his sons, wife, his own body, or anything else. He must be devoid of all mental afflictions (āsā). He is not to be patient, not having any expectations, and he must follow the path of full and perfect awakening. The Kālacakramaṇa asserts that a spiritual mentor who has these qualifications is able to provide his disciples with the path and to remove their fear of death, because as a “celibate” (brahmācārī), meaning, as one who has attained supreme, imperishable bliss (parāpara-saṇāc), he is a sajña-rudd to the four classes of Māras.13 In contrast to the qualified tantric teacher, a corrupt spiritual mentor is said to be full of concepts, which is of many kinds: concept in one’s own learning, in one’s own wealth, seeing others as beneath oneself, and so on. His absence of humility is seen as an indication of his lack of compassion. Likewise, one is advised to shun a tantric teacher who is overcome by anger, who is devoid of tantric pledges, and who publicly practices the secret pledges that disgust the world.14 Similarly, a saujātika who is greedy and attached to mundane pleasures, or who is an undisciplined fool, ignorant of the true path and not initiated into the tantra, or who is fond of liquor or sex, is to be avoided, for he leads his disciples to hell.15 In light of this, the Vinānadanaṇḍika points out that the well-known saying that one should always look for the acārya’s good qualities and never for his faults has been mis-understood in the past and will be in the future by foolish people who have lost the true path. It suggests that sayings like this should be understood in terms of both ultimate and conventional truths, that is to say, in terms of their definitive and provisional meanings. In terms of the ultimate truth, an acārya refers to the Buddha Śakyamuni, to “the omnipresent and omniscient saujātika, who practices (ācāra) the sajña-word in order to benefit sentient beings within the three realms.” Thus, the aforementioned saying is to be understood literally only when examined from this point of view. Supporting the Kālacakramaṇa’s position that before honoring a spirit-
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siddhi but desires a siddhi on the mahamudra siddhi, and who does not associate with evil people such as dikas who are greedy householders and ascetics who live off the temples and monasteries. Such a disciple is considered to be qualified to receive the first seven and the other four higher initiations in order to meditate on the path of emptiness. The middling disciple is one who is endowed with mediocre qualities and who seeks a siddhi on the mundane siddhi, and he is qualified to receive only the first seven initiations in order to meditate on the madhya, manus, madhy, and the like. Lastly, the disciple of inferior qualities who respects the spiritual mentor is said to be qualified to be a lay practitioner, and he may receive the five Buddhist precepts but not the initiations.22

In light of this, the Kalacakrayana classifies the Buddhist community at large into two groups—Srivakas and Anuttaras—each consisting of four types of Buddhist practitioners. The four categories of Srivakas are the Buddha (maha-pa) and monks (bhuja) and the great female (mahojukta) and male (mohojukta) lay disciples. The group of Anuttaras includes the yogis and yogis who delight in innate bliss—that is to say, those who have received the higher initiations and who practice the stage of completion—and the female (apta) and male (apta) lay tantric practitioners, who have received the first seven initiations and who practice the stage of generation.23 The Kalacakrayana asserts the superior quality of the Anuttaras on the ground that there is no monk or celibate who can equal one who has taken the tantric vows and precepts and who is self-powered by means of mantras.24

The theoretical principles of the Kalacakrayana are imbedded in the conceptual context of Vajrayana as a whole. Therefore, in order to understand the conceptual framework of the Kalacakrayana tradition in India, one needs to examine its own interpretation of Vajrayana. According to the Kalacakrayana tradition's explanation of the term Vajrayana, the word vajra signifies liberation (sajja), or the indivisible oneness that cannot be destroyed by conceptualization;25 and the word yana is understood as a vehicle that is of a dual nature. It is the means by which the tantric adept advances toward liberation and the aim toward which the tantric adept progresses.26 The Vimalaprabha also identifies Vajrayana as Samayakshobhiyavajrayana (the “Vehicle of a Fully Awakened One”), since it cannot be damaged by the vehicles of heterodox groups (prthukru), Srivakas, or Pratyekabuddhas.27

The Kalacakrayana tradition also interprets Vajrayana as the system of mantras (mantra-nayo) and the system of perfections (paramit-nayo).28 As the system of mantras, it characterizes itself as the system that includes ideas pertaining to both mundane (avvada) and supramundane (avokatra) truths. Teachings pertaining to the mundane truth are said to be discussed from the conventional point of view, and teachings pertaining to the supramundane truth are said to be discussed from the ultimate point of view. Moreover, the ideas that are taught from the mundane, or conventional, point of view are said to have a provisional meaning (pratayatra); and the ideas that are taught from the ultimate point of view are said to have the definitive meaning (nayatra). Likewise, the ideas that are discussed from the conventional point of view are regarded as ideations (kapan) of one's own mind, which lead to the attainment of mundane siddhis. They are said to be taught for mediocre Vajrayana students who seek nothing more than the accomplishment of mundane siddhis.29

The ideas that are imparted from the ultimate point of view are considered as clear manifestations, or reflections (prabhava), of one's own mind, which are not of the nature of ideations. As such, they are believed to lead to the achievement of the supramundane siddhi, called the mahamudra siddhi, or the attainment of supreme and imperishable gnosis (paramakshobhiyavajrayana). Indeed, they are said to be taught for superior Vajrayana students, who aspire to spiritual awakening. Likewise, the Vimalaprabha views Vajrayana as a unified system that consists of both the cause and the result. Thus, the system of mantras is said to refer to compassion (karuna) and is characterized as the result.27 In this tantric system, as in the related systems of the anuttara-yoga-samay, in addition to the standard Mahayana practices of developing compassion, the cultivation of compassion also entails seminal nonemission. In this regard, compassion is here also referred to as the gnosis of sublimate bliss (mahabuddha). The system of perfections, on the other hand, refers to the wisdom (prajna) that cognizes the emptiness (tyanata) of inherent existence. This wisdom is viewed as the cause of the aforementioned results.

Although the Kalacakrayana tradition acknowledges the Mahayana view of emptiness as its primary theoretical foundation, it has its own unique interpretation of emptiness, not only as a mere negation of inherent existence (svabhava), but also as the absence of material constituents of the individual's body and mind. Hence, the emptiness, which is also called the "aspect of emptiness" (avanakshita), or the "form of emptiness" (avanata-avam), is a form that is empty of both inherent existence and physical particles. It is a form that is endowed with all the signs and symbols of the Buddha. That form of emptiness, also known as the "empty form," is also regarded as the "animate emptiness" (avakshita). Due to being animate, this emptiness is the cause of supreme and immaterial bliss (paramakshobhiyavajrayana). The non-duality of the cause and effect is the essential teaching of this tattva.

From that unique view of emptiness stem the Kalacakrayana's unique goal and path to that goal. The Kalacakrayana's most significant goal is the transformation of one's own gross physical body into a luminous form devoid of both gross matter and the subtle body of prana. The transformation of one's own mind into the enlightened mind of immaterial bliss occurs in direct dependence upon that material transformation. The actualization of that transformation is believed to be perfect and full Buddhahood in the form of Kalacakrayana, the Supreme Primordial Buddha (paramakshobhiyavajrayana), who is the omniscient, innate Lord of the Jina, the true nature of one's own mind and body. Thus, according to this tantric system, the supreme Adibuddha refers not only to the Buddha Sakyamuni, who is said to be the first to attain perfect awakening by means of the supreme, imperishable bliss,31 but also to the innate nature of every sentient being.32 This points to another unique feature of the Kalacakrayana's theory, namely, the assertion that all sentient beings are Buddhhas, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7 on the "Gnostic Body." The Kalacakrayana's view of the ultimate nature of sentient beings and their environment as blissful is reflected in the Kalacakrayana's explicit usage of sex tantric practices on the spiritual path. The generation of sexual bliss without emission of regenerative fluids is regarded in this tattva as the most direct method of generating the mental bliss that refines the mind by diminishing conceptualizations and thus makes it fit for the realization of the empty nature of phenomena. One who practices the generation of sexual bliss without emis-
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The Classification of the Families in the Kalacakratantra

The Kalacakratantra, like the other tantric traditions of the amanta-yoga class, categorizes the family of its principal deity into three: four, five, and six families (kula). The Kalacakratantra’s classification and interpretation of the Kalacakratantra family can be summarized in the following manner.

In terms of the individual, the classification into three families corresponds to the classification of the body, speech, and mind, or the left, right, and central naḍīs. In terms of the universe, the three families are the three realms—the realms of desire, form, and formlessness. With regard to ultimate reality, however, the three families are the three bodies of the Buddha—the Nirmāṇakāya, Saṃbhogakāya, and Dharmakāya.

In terms of the individual, the classification into four families corresponds to the classification of the four types of consciousness: the classification of the body, speech, mind, and speech, which accords with the classification of the four drops (binda) and with the four states of the mind—namely, waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth state. In terms of the universe, the four families are the families of the sun, moon, Rāhu, and Agni (Ketu), and in terms of society, they are the four castes.

With regard to ultimate reality, the four families are the four bodies of the Buddha—the aforementioned three bodies and the Jñānakāya.

With regard to the individual, the five families are the five psycho-physical aggregates (skandhas), and in terms of society, they are the four castes and the outcastes. With regard to ultimate reality, they are the five types of the Buddha’s gnosis manifesting as the five Buddhas—Aksobhya, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amogasiddhi.

In terms of the individual, the six families are the five psycho-physical aggregates and their emptiness; and in terms of society, they are the four castes and the classes of Dumbas and Candālas. With regard to ultimate reality, the six families are the five aforementioned Buddhas and the Svabhāvikakāya.

The Mādhyamika Critique of Other Philosophical Systems

Although it has many unique features, as will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters of this book, the Kalacakratantra tradition shares some of its fundamental ideas with other Buddhist systems. The Kalacakratantra summarizes its fundamental philosophical views in this single verse:

Identitylessness, the emanation of karma, the three realms, the six states of existence, the origination due to the twelve-limbed dependence, the Four Truths, the eighteen unique qualities of the Buddha, the five psycho-physical aggregates, the three bodies and the Sahajātikāya, and animistic emptiness. The system in which these tenets are taught is the clear and definite instruction of the Vajrā.

Positioning itself in the above-mentioned philosophical views, it critiques all other philosophical systems, including the Buddhist schools other than Mādhyamaka.

Although the Kalacakratantra tradition’s refutation of the non-Buddhist philosophical systems is based on the standard Mādhyamika arguments, at times it uses new and interesting examples in its logical analysis of other systems. It regards its critique of certain tenets of other philosophical systems as a means of leading individuals of different mental dispositions to some understanding of emptiness, which would be the foundation of their attainment of mundane Siddhas. The following brief summary of the Kalacakratantra’s refutation of the dogmas that in one way or another contradict the view of the absence of inherent existence best demonstrates the degree to which the Kalacakratantra tradition follows the Mādhyamika mode of investigation.

The Kalacakratantra critiques Viṣṇuism for its view of the Veda as being self-existent, eternal, and similar to space. It refutes the notion of the Veda as self-existent and external on the basis that the word “Veda” signifies a referent that is produced by the activity of the throat, palate, and the like. It further argues that the Veda is also not identical with the referent, since a word and its referent cannot be identical. If there were such an identity, then when one utters the word “fire,” it would burn one’s mouth. Likewise, it refutes the notion that the Veda is similar to space on the grounds that it is local in usage and rectified by the mouth. It also objects to the no-
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Moreover, the Kālacakratantra critiques the Saiva notion of īvara as the cre-
ator. The Kālacakratantra argues that if one asserts īvara as the creator, one
implies that īvara is one who experiences karma, since it is never the case that one
person eats a salty cake and another person experiences the result and dies from
thirst. An agent is never established without karma. And if he is not an agent of
karma, as Saivas claim, then it implies that he is dependent on another agent, who is
his instigator. This, it says, contradicts the very term īvara, which implies indepen-
dence. Thus, according to the Kālacakratantra, īvara has never been the creator who
bestows the results of virtue and sin, disregarding the karma of living beings. Likewise, if the cre-
ator is devoid of the atoms of the elements, then in the absence of matter, he does not
create anything; and if he is devoid of the sense-objects, as Saivas say, then that
creator has neither perceptual nor inferential means of valid knowledge.

In light of its view of dependent origination, the Kālacakratantra asserts that the
efficacy of phenomena is not caused by anyone in the triple world but that the origi-
nation of all phenomena takes place due to the conjunction of things. Thus, due to
the conjunction of a moon-stone with moon-rays, water appears from the moon-
stone, and due to the conjunction of an iron-stick with a ledge-stone, the iron stick
is set in motion, and so on. By means of these and other examples, it tries to demon-
strate that things never occur by the will of the creator.

From the vantage point of identitylessness, the Kālacakratantra critiques the notion
of the Self (ātman) as being omnipresent and permanent. It argues that the Self
cannot be omnipresent, since it experiences suffering due to separation from rela-
tives. If it were omnipresent, it would exist as one and would not suffer due to being
separated from loved ones. Likewise, if the Self were omnipresent, one sentient
being would experience the suffering of all sentient beings. Moreover, it argues that
one cannot say that there are many Selves, because that would imply that there is no
omnipresence of many Selves. It refutes the notion of the permanent Self, pointing
to its susceptibility to change, as in the case of falling in love.

In light of its refutation of the Self, the Kālacakratantra asserts that there is no
one who departs to liberation—there is only a collection of phenomena in cessation
—and yet there is a departure to liberation. Likewise, there is bondage for origi-
nated phenomena, but there is no one who is bound. The state of the Buddha is
identical with existence and nonexistence, and it is without inherent existence, de-
void of conceptualizations and matter, and free of momentariness. Therefore, the
teachings of the Buddha, which are free of the demers of conceptualizations, cannot
be destroyed by the words of gods and sages, which are accompanied by demons, just
like a wrestler who is free of demons cannot be killed by a wrestler who is possessed
by demons.

The Kālacakratantra refutes the teachings of Bahvanam, or the Dharma of Tīyakas,
on the basis of their assertion that in this life the individual experiences the result of
actions that he performed earlier in this lifetime, and that a person who dies ex-
periences pleasure or suffering in heaven or hell though another human form. It ar-
gues that if it is as the Tīyakas teach, then one could not annihiltate one's own karma
from one birth to another, and consequently one could not escape transmigratory
existence or enter liberation even in the course of an immeasurable number of lives.

It critiques the doctrine of the Materialists (Cārvāka), which denies the exist-
ence of god and the manifestation of karma and claims that one experiences only the
amusement of atoms, arguing that this Materialist doctrine destroys the path of lib-
eration for people. The Kālacakratantra argues that if, just like the power of intox-
icating drink, the witnessing mind rises due to configurations of the elements, then
trees would also have consciousness due to the agglomeration of the elements. But if
innate things lack the efficacy of living beings, then the agglomeration of the ele-
ments is inadequate for producing consciousness.

The Kālacakratantra tradition also refutes the Jaina doctrine, specifically, the Jaina
assertion of a permanent soul (jīvā) that has the size of the body, and the Jaina view
of the permanence of atoms. The Kālacakratantra argues that if the soul would have
the size of the body, it would perish after the removal of the arms and legs. Likewise,
it argues that atoms are not permanent, since they are liable to change, as are gross
and subtle bodies.

The Vimalaprabhā critiques the Jains argument that the substance of the soul is
permanent, as gold is permanent, whereas its modes are impermanent, just as the
modes of gold such as marcasite are impermanent. The Vimalaprabhā rejects this argu-
ment as invalid, on the basis that if the substance and its mode were identical, then
there would be no difference between the two; and if they were different, there could
be no mode without the substance; nor can one say that they are both identical and
different, because of their mutual exclusion. Likewise, it refutes the Jaina notion that
the three worlds are permanent on the basis that whatever is made of atoms never
remains permanent. It also critiques the Jaina view that one soul acquires one body,
that plants and grains are also living beings. It argues against this view, stating
that if a single soul is in a single body, then when one breaks the stem of a sugar cane
into pieces, there would not be many pieces. But since there are many pieces, then
the soul must have entered one of those pieces due to its karma. That does not stand
up to logical analysis, because a sprout arises from each of the pieces of sugar cane
that are replanted in the earth.

The Kālacakratantra tradition also critiques the Vaibhāskarins, Saunātikas, and Yogā-
chirins as simple-minded Buddhist dhīkkhas who, grasping onto their own dogmatic
positions (pāka), grasp onto the dogmatic positions of others and see the similarity
or the contrariness of this or that dogmatic position of others. The Kālacakratantra
refutes the Vaibhāskaras’ assertion of the reality of the person (pudgala) endowed
with a body at birth as the implication of the inherent existence of the pudgala. It argues
that the pudgala cannot be one’s inherent nature, because if the pudgala were of the
nature of cognition, then it would be impermanent, for the nature of cognition is
impermanent; and if the pudgala were of the nature of non-cognition, then it would be
unaware of its happiness and suffering.

It critiques the Saunātikas for asserting objects by means of conventional truth
and claims that for this reason they consider the unknown ultimate truth that has
the Jñānaśīkṣā ("Cognition-body") as nonexistent, like the son of a barren woman. Ex-
plaining the basis for the Kālacakratantra’s critique of Saunātikas, the Vimalaprabhā
cites the following verse from Aryadeva’s Vimalaprabha:
The Vinaya Pitaka argues on the part of the Kālacakratantra that if the unimpeded form, that is, the Dhammakaya, does not exist, then the omniscient one would not exist either. It asserts that nirvāṇa is not the same as the extinction of a lamp, that is to say, it is not the same as the cessation of all awareness. In the absence of the four bodies, there would not be Buddhahood with a localized body. Without the unimpeded body, there would be no displays of the extraordinary powers of all the forms of the Buddha.

The Kālacakratantra refutes the Yogācāra’s assertion of the inherent reality of consciousness and its classification of consciousness. In light of this rejection, the Viṃalaprabhā asks the following: If there is no form of an external object other than consciousness, then why does the external form of visual consciousness as the apprehender manifest itself as being of the nature of the apprehended? It cannot be due to the power of the habitual properties of spiritual ignorance, as the Yogācāras say, because spiritual ignorance has the characteristic of the three realms, and the three realms are mere consciousness. Thus, mere consciousness is of the nature of spiritual ignorance, therefore, spiritual ignorance is not the disappearance of consciousness; but if the three realms are not mere consciousness, then the Yogācāras’ position has failed. The Viṃalaprabhā also refutes the Yogācāra’s assertion that self-knowing awareness arises and ceases in an instant, resorting to the standard Mahāyāna argument that the origination, cessation, and duration of phenomena do not occur simultaneously, for if they were to exist in a single moment, then due to the fact that time is a moment, birth, old age, and death would be identical. Moreover, if consciousness were to arise from a consciousness that has ceased, then it would be like the origination of a flame from a flame that has ceased, and this makes no sense. But if another consciousness were to arise from a consciousness that has not ceased, then it would be like the origination of a flame from a flame that has not ceased, which means that from origination to origination there would be a series of consciousnesses, like a series of flames. In this case, one cannot say that after the cessation of an earlier consciousness there is an origination of another consciousness, nor can one say that there is an origination of another consciousness from the earlier unceasing consciousness, nor from the combination of the aforementioned two manners of origination, because of their mutual contradiction.47

However, the Kālacakratantra indicates that the Mahāyāna’s negation of the inherent existence of consciousness, which inspired some to say that the Buddha’s wisdom is not located anywhere, is a danger for those who, devoid of the self-awareness of imperishable bliss, will grasp onto that emptiness and will thus fall into the trap of a doctrinal view and attain nothing.48

After refuting the preceding tenets of the Indian systems of thought in the above-discussed ways, in order to assure one of the pure motivation behind its criticisms, the Kālacakratantra states that its assertion of the absence of inherent existence is free from mundane concerns and intended to be of service to others.49 Likewise, in order to establish one’s confidence in the supremacy of the source of its teaching and to bring one to final conversion, the Kālacakratantra ends its critique of other philosophical systems with these words of the Buddha to the king Sucandra:

I am Indra, the spiritual mentor of thirty-three men in heaven, the universal monarch (kṣitigarbha) on the earth, the king of sages in the underworld, revered by asuras. I am the highest, great, the Buddha, the lord of sages, the imperishable, supreme sovereign, the yogī’s savior, the Veda, self-awareness, and the purifier (purusa). O king, take refuge in me with all your being.50

With regard to the criticism of one’s own or other Buddhist tantric systems, the Kālacakra tradition views this as the major cause of committing the sixth of the fourteen root downfalls (māyāparipuṇa), which is specified in the Kālacakratantra (Ch. 3, v. 100) and the Viṃalaprabhā as revealing the sīdlāsānas of the system of perfections within the mantra-system. The Viṃalaprabhā indicates that criticism of one’s own or other Buddhist tantric systems is often an expression of one’s own ignorance with regard to the relation between the subject and predicate in Buddhātman, and as such, it leads the faultfinder to hell.51

The Concept of the Ādibuddha in the Kālacakra Tantric System

One of the most important concepts in the Kālacakra system is that of the Ādibuddha. Even though the concept of the Ādibuddha is not unique to the Kālacakratantra, it is most emphasised and discussed in the Kālacakraka literature. To the best of our knowledge, the earliest reference to the Ādibuddha is found in the Mahāyānasūtrasūtra (Ch. 9, v. 27), which refers to the notion of the Primordial Buddha on the grounds that there is no Buddhahood without the accumulations of merit (puṇya) and knowledge (jñāna). Later references to the Ādibuddha are found in the Mahāyānaśāstra (v. 100), in the commentarial literature of the Gyautsasāṃśa corpus, and in the yogī-sūtraṃs. The Kālacakraka tradition’s interpretation of the Ādibuddha is primarily based on the Nāmaṣāṃśā’s exposition of Vajrayāna, who is Vajradhara.

According to the Kālacakraka tradition, the Ādibuddha is called the Primordial Buddha because he was the one to obtain Buddhahood by means of the imperishable bliss characterized by perfect awakening in a single moment.52 In connection with this interpretation, the Viṃalaprabhā asserts that according to the words of the Bud- dha in the Nāmasāṃśā (v. 97), which praises Vajradhara as one who is free of mental obscurations, a person who is devoid of merit and knowledge does not in any way become a Buddha.53 Such an interpretation does not seem to contradict the Mahāyānasūtrasūtra’s assertion that there is no Buddha who has been enlightened since beginningless time. On the other hand, the Viṃalaprabhā interprets the word ādī (“primordial”) as meaning “without beginning or end,” meaning, without the origination and cessation.54 This interpretation of the word ādī with regard to the Buddha is reiterated by Nāpasāḷa in his Sūkṣmedāsūtra, which further interprets the Ādibuddha’s freedom from origination and cessation as omniscience.55 The Kālacakraka tradition’s interpretation of the word is based on the Nāmasāṃśā, v. 100, which begins with: “Without beginning or end, he is the Buddha, Ādibuddha. . . .”56

This interpretation of the word ādī appears to contradict the aforementioned interpretation of the Primordial Buddha. However, analysis of the Kālacakraka literature re-
veals that when the Kālacakra tradition speaks of the Ādibuddha in the sense of a beginningless and endless Buddha, it is referring to the innate gnosia that pervades the minds of all sentient beings and stands as the basis of both sāṃśāra and nirvāṇa.

Whereas, when it speaks of the Ādibuddha as the one who first attained perfect enlightenment by means of imperishable bliss, and when it asserts the necessity of acquiring merit and knowledge in order to attain perfect Buddhahood, it is referring to the actual realization of one's own innate gnosia. Thus, one could say that in the Kālacakra tradition, Ādibuddha refers to the ultimate nature of one's own mind and to the one who has realized the innate nature of one's own mind by means of purificatory practices.

The Kalaccharantra and the Mahājñāparamarśana

The Kālacakra tradition views its essential topic, which is the Jñānaśīla, or Vajraśīla, as indivisible from that of the Nāmasamgiti, which, according to the Vimalakīrtī, makes the Jñānaśīla of Vajrākhyātra evident. The Vimalakīrtī remarks that in every kingdom of sāṅgita, the Buddha described the sāṅgita-word as the imperishable bliss of sāṅgita, and in them he designated that sāṅgita-word as the Jñānaśīla, which is described by the Nāmasamgiti. According to the Kalaccharantra, this teaching should be meditated on by all beings, not only by those who have awakened, in order to achieve the full awakening of all the beings.

The Vimalakīrtī also comments that the path of purification that brings forth the mahāsiddha was written explicitly in the Paramādīuddhakṣastra only after the Buddha made the Nāmasamgiti as an authoritative scripture. Knowing that in the future sentient beings will be free of doubts, the Buddha taught Vajrapāṇi the definitive meaning of all the tantric systems, in accordance with the Nāmasamgiti. In light of this, it affirms that in order to know the Nāmasamgiti, one must know the Ādibuddha. If one does not know the Nāmasamgiti, one must know the Jñānaśīla of Vajrākhyātra, and not knowing the Jñānaśīla of Vajrākhyātra, one will not be able to know the Nāmasamgiti.

In verses 12–13, the Nāmasamgiti asserts its durability, claiming that the Buddhas of the past, present, and future have taught and recited the Nāmasamgiti and that the innumerable Buddhas have praised it. On the basis of these verses, the Vimalakīrtī asserts that it is due to Vajrapāṇi requesting the Buddha to teach the Nāmasamgiti that all the Tathāgatas taught the Mantra Vehicle. This statement may clarify just why it is that most Buddhist tantric traditions mention Vajrapāṇi as one who both requests the teachings and compiles the tantras such as the Ādībuddha and the Ādibuddha tantra.

Similarly, according to the Vimalakīrtī, the sāṅgita that is the imperishable bliss, the subtle goal (mahāsāṅgita) of the Kalaccharantra, has already been declared in the Nāmasamgiti by fourteen verses (48–56) in praise of the mantra of the sāṅgita.
Similarly, the Kālacakra tradition gives its own interpretation of the Nāmasamjñā's (v. 133) description of the Buddha as the referent of the truth that has twelve aspects, and as one who knows the sixteen aspects of reality and is fully awakened with twenty aspects. According to the Viṣṇu-pādābhadra, he is the referent of the truth with twelve aspects, because he has attained the twelve bodhisattva-bhūmīs due to the cessation of the twelve reiterates, and according to the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra (182. s. 1), he is the referent of the truth with twelve aspects, because he has the twelve sense-bases (āyatana), which are his aspects in conventional truth. Although the Kāla-
cakra tradition and the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra agree that the sixteen aspects of reality refer to the sixteen types of emptiness—to be discussed in chapter 7 on the "Gnostic Body"—the Kālacakra tradition offers its own reason for the manifestation of the six-
teen aspects: the cessation of the sixteen digits of the moon. With regard to the full
awakening with twenty aspects, the Kālacakra tradition also departs from the inter-
pretation given in the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra (182. s. 2). According to the Viṣṇu-pādābhadra,
the Buddha has spiritual awakening with twenty aspects because he fully knows the
five purified psycho-physical aggregates, the five sense-faculties, the five sense-ob-
jects, and the five types of consciousness, since they were purified in the central
nādī by means of the six-phased yoga. According to the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra (182. s. 3),
whilst the other ten aspects are the earlier mentioned sixteen aspects and the four
types of the Buddha's gnosia.

The Kālacakra tradition also considers its exposition of Kālacakra as consisting
of the four families—specifically, the four bodies of the Buddha—to accord com-
pletely with the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra (v. 140) description of the Buddha as the sublime
mind (mahā-citta) of all the Buddhas, as the desire of the mind (mano-gati), as the sublime
body (mahā-labhā) of all the Buddhas, and as the speech (saraṇa) of the Buddhas. Thus,
it interprets the sublime mind of all the Buddhas as the Vaikūṇtha-flya, the de-
sire of the mind as the Dwipa-māla, the sublime body of all the Buddhas as the
Nirmāṇakāya, and the speech of all the Buddhas as the Dharma-māla. Likewise, the
Viṣṇupādābhadra suggests that the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra's (v. 33) characterization of the Buddha
as one who has five faces and five hair-knots is most relevant to the Kālacakra tradi-
tion's presentation of the Buddha as one who, due to the classification of the five psy-
cho-physical aggregates and elements, consists of the five families. Finally, it asserts
that the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra's (v. 39) description of the Buddha Vajrādha as one who bears
the sublime illusions is taught there in terms of the Kālacakra tradition's classifications
of the six families and the hundred families.

The Nāmasamjñāyativottāra's presentation of Vajraśāstra has also influenced certain forms of
Kālacakra practice, whose goal is the actualization of Vajraśāstra as he is de-
scribed in the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra. For example, verse 111 from the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra, which
states that the sublime Vajraśāstra of the Buddha bears all illusions, is considered to be
a theoretical basis for the Kālacakra practice of the stage of generation, more
specifically, for the practice of meditation on the universal form (sūtra-rūpa) of the
empty and blissful Buddha that has many arms, legs, colors, and shapes. Similarly,
the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra's (vs. 61–66) description of the self-arisen Vajraśāstra as the sub-
lime fire of wisdom and gnosis that has arisen from space and its (v. 66) characterize-
tion of the Buddha as one who has abandoned all thoughts and is free of idéation
are pointed out as reasons why the Kālacakra practice of the stage of comple-
tion is to be practiced in the form of meditation that is free of idéation. Moreover,
the Viṣṇupādābhadra indicates that the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra's (v. 33) assertion that the Buddha
is free of the sense of "I" and "mine" is the reason why at the stage of completion,
practice one should not practice self-identification with Vajraśāstra but should re-
sort to ultimate truth. The recitation of certain verses from the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra also forms an integral part
of Kālacakra practice. Thus, at the end of the stage of generation practice, af-
er the tantric adept has meditated on the Kālacakra-mantra and on the enlightened
activities of the deities in the mandala, and after he has practiced sādhanā on the yogi
of drops (bindu-yogi) and the subtle yogi (śūlakṣa-yogi), he recites verse 358 from the
Nāmasamjñāyativottāra, with which he expresses his reverence for the enlightenment of
the Buddha, whose essence is emptiness. By reciting this verse, he establishes the appro-
priate attitude with which he is able to purify his four drops within the four calyxes by
emancipating the principal deities within those calyxes.

With regard to the Kālacakra initiation, the Kālacakra tradition's interpre-
tation of the Kālacakra's four higher initiations as a symbolical passage from
being a lay Buddhist practitioner to being a wandering ascetic, a monk, and a Bud-
dha is justified in the light of the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra (vs. 81, 51–53, 94–95), which de-
scribes the Buddha as being a youth, an elder (śrāvaka), and an old man, as a leader
of the Pratyekabuddhas, an Arhat, a monk, and the progenitor (prajñāpāli), and as one
who has the great vow, great austerity, and so on. Likewise, the receiving of disèm
(pātis) and crown (mañul) during the four higher initiations is explained in terms of
the Nāmasamjñāyativottāra's (v. 93) description of the Buddha as an ascetic with a crest of hair
and disèm.

A Brief Analysis of the Inner Kālacakra

The entire Kālacakra is divided into five main chapters—the chapters on the
world system (lokādhātu), the individual (ādhyātma), initiation (bhūja), sādhanā,
and gnosis (bhūma). The subjects of these five chapters delineate the Kālacakra tradi-
tion's vision of the gradual transformation from the macrocosmic and microcosmic
aspects of provisional reality to ultimate reality, culminating in gnosis. They also rep-
resent a unitary reality that manifests as the universe, the individual, the path of pu-
ritification, and its result.

The first chapter of the Kālacakra begins with the words of King Sucandra
requesting the teaching on the yoga of the Kālacakra from the Buddha Śākyam-
un, for the sake of the liberation of human beings who live in the hāl-yuga and
the last chapter concludes with Sucandra's homage to Kālacakra, who is the
master, the presiding deity Vajraśāstra, the union of wisdom and method (prajñāpāli-yogi), and
the reality (savāl) with sixteen aspects. Each of the other four chapters also begins
with Sucandra's request for teachings on the main topic of the chapter, and the re-
maining verses of each chapter contain the Buddha's response to Sucandra's request.

The Inner Kālacakra, or the "Chapter on the Individual," begins with Su-
candra's question to the Buddha: "How can the entire three worlds be within the
body?" It continues with the Buddha's summary of how all phenomena in the world
are the three modes of the Buddha's existence that are present in the human body,
all of which should be known by means of the classifications of emptiness. This is followed by a further exposition on the origination of the individual’s body, speech, and mind by means of the agglomeration of atoms and the power of time. The detailed description of the conception and development of the fetus in the womb indicates the author’s familiarity with embryology, as taught in the earlier Buddhist writings such as the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, Ānāgārika, and the Aṣṭasāhasrika Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, in tantric works such as the Vajraṭaravījī and the Añjana-pāsasamāsadhuvāhika, and in tantric medical treatises. For example, the Kālacakra-vatana’s description of the necessary conditions for conception, the characteristics of the fetus, and its growth correspond to that in the Aṣṭasāhasrika Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra and the Vajraṭaravījī. Likewise, the Kālacakra-vatana’s statement that the manna, bones, and ligaments of the fetus arise from the father’s semen, and the skin, blood, and flesh arise from the mother’s urine blood corresponds to a great degree with the Añjana-pāsasamāsadhuvāhika’s assertion that the bones, brain, and spinal cord of the fetus arise from the father’s sperm, and the muscles, blood, and viscera arise from the mother’s urine blood. Similarly, the Kālacakra-vatana’s classification of the human life into ten stages corresponds to that given in earlier works such as the Añjana-pāsasamāsadhuvāhika and the Nanda-pāsasamāsadhuvāhika.

Explaining the functions of each of the elements in the formation of the human being and of the conditions in the mother’s womb, the author tries to demonstrate the manner in which the principles of dependent origination (pratītya-samutpāda) apply to the origination of the human psycho-physiology.

The first section of the inner Kālacakra-vatana continues with an exposition of the precociousness of human birth and continues with an explanation of the ways in which the four bodies of the Buddhas are present in the body of the individual. It represents the individual in the specific stages of life within and outside the womb, as the provisional manifestations of each of the four bodies of the Buddha. It identifies the individual with the four bodies of the Buddha in accordance with the degree of development of the individual’s bodily, verbal, mental, and sexual capacities. It shows further the manner in which the elements, the psycho-physical aggregates, the āgya-jīva, and the mind support each other in the body of the individual; and it explains the relation among the sense-faculties and their corresponding sense-objects in terms of one type of element apprehending a different type of element. For example, the olfactory sense-facility, which arises from the water-element, apprehends taste as its sense-object, which arises from the fire-element. Explaining their relation in this way, the author tries to demonstrate that all the constituents of the individual and all his experiences arise due to the union of opposites, often referred to in this tantric system as the “different families.” He specifies the elements from which each of the psycho-physical aggregates, the āgya-jīva, and the causas arise in order to demonstrate the material nature of the transmigratory body.

The second section of the inner Kālacakra-vatana (vs. 27–47) specifies the locations of the four bodies of the Buddhas within the individual. It describes the manner in which mental states enter the body and the body enters mental states, and thus they become of the same taste. Likewise, it dis-

 predicts the elements of the bodily constituents in terms of wisdom and method, and it suggests that everything pertaining to the body and the mind of the individual comes into existence due to the union of these two. In this way, it provides the reader with a description of the kālasūtra-mandala in terms of the human being. It further depicts the ways in which the presence of time and the universe is to be recognized in one’s own body and shows the correspondences between the passage of time in the world and the passage of ājīva within the body. In this regard, this section also discusses the different functions and locations of the diverse types of prāna in the body.

The third section of the inner Kālacakra-vatana (vs. 48–60) begins with a description of the current battle between the universal monarch (cakravatā) and the lord of the Barbarians (nāga) within the body of the individual, which will take place in the land of Mecca and be between the external manifestations of good and evil. It also describes the ways in which the nāga and nāgarūṃa, such as the Māyājīva and the Gāyatrījī, and the tantric families of their deities are present within the individual and included in the kālasūtra-mandala. In this regard, it further describes the location of the male and female deities of the kālasūtra-mandala within the body of the individual and identifies them with the ājīva and the passage of time in the body.

The fourth section of the “Chapter on the Individual” (vs. 61–81) gives a detailed description of the characteristics of the unfavorable signs of death, beginning with descriptions of the ways in which one can determine the number of the remaining days of life by examining the flow of the prāna in the ājīva. For example, if the prāna uninteruptedly flows in the left ājīva for a day and a night, then one has one more year to live, and so on. It associates the unfavorable signs of untimely death with the gradual ceasing of the ājīva’s flow in the individual ājīva of the nava-cakra. It also describes the characteristics of timely death, which begins with the disintegration of the ājīva in the nava-cakra and progresses throughout the body through the severance of the ājīva within all the other causas and bodily joints. It compares the process of death to the moon and the sun leaving their lunar and solar mansions. The gradual severance of the ājīva is said to manifest for six days in the acrality of urine and in the ājīva’s departure from the sense-facilities. During the other six days, it is said to manifest in the following symptoms: one perceives the tip of one’s nose as dangling down, one perceives the sun as being black and the full moon as being yellow, and the planets as the sparks of fire, and a black line appears below one’s tongue, and so on.

The fifth section of the inner Kālacakra-vatana (vs. 82–106) discusses the kāla-cafet, or the moment of seminal emission, in terms of conventional reality, as an agent of the creation and annihilation of the individual. It also points to the individual’s conceptualizations and ārāma that is contained in the genus of ājīva as causes of transmigratory suffering and happiness. It classifies the ārāma of human beings into three kinds: gross, subtle, and subtlest, in accordance with the classification of the body, speech, and mind. It also distinguishes a ārāma with regard to the individual’s grasping onto the agent of action. When one thinks, “I am the agent,” this is a distinct ārāma; when one thinks, “The supreme litara is the agent,” this is a ārāma; but when one thinks, “Neither I nor anyone else devoid of ājīva is the
A close look at the Kālacakra tantra's six-phased yoga reveals its correlation and historical connection to earlier forms of the six-phased yoga, found in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Moreover, it also reveals the unique character of the practical applications and implications of the Kālacakra tantra's six-phased yoga. To the best of my knowledge, the earliest reference to a six-phased yoga is found in the Maitreya's, or Maññū Pūgasā, which belongs to the branch of the black Yajur Veda and is considered to be the last of the classical Pūgasā. The sadāṅga-yoga of the Maitreya's Upānisaṃ, Ch. 6, v. 18, contains the following six phases: breath-control (prāṇāyāma), retraction (prāṇyāma), meditative stabilization (dhyāna), concentration (dhyāna), contemplative inquiry (sāra), and samādhi.1 It is taught in this Upānisaṃ as a method for achieving union with the supreme Self (paramānām). If we accept that the Maitreya's Upānisaṃ predates Patañjali, we can assume that this six-phased yoga also predates the eight-phased yoga (āṣāṅga-yoga) of the classical Yoga system. The fact that Patañjali never makes any reference to a six-phased yoga and that his Yogsūtra never mentions contemplative inquiry (sāra) is not sufficient evidence to regard the six-phased yoga as a later revision of the eight-phased yoga, as Günther Grin- bold suggests.2 Even if the sixth chapter of the Maitreya's Upānisaṃ, which incorporates a six-phased yoga, is a later interpolation, as Mirees Eliaide speculates,3 the antecedence of the six-phased yoga to the yoga of Patañjali is still quite plausible. The phrase "for it is said elsewhere," which often occurs at the beginning of the verses of the sixth chapter, indicates that the Maitreya's Upānisaṃ draws its yogic elements from the earlier yogic sources. Even though we are unable to determine the exact sources of the yogic elements in the Maitreya's Upānisaṃ, it is obvious that different forms of its six-phased yoga have very early origins in India. The six-phased yoga was later modified into diverse forms of yoga with varying numbers of phases.
For example, in one of the earliest Purāṇas, the Vāyu Purāṇa, Ch. 10, v. 76, one encounters a five-phased yoga, whose fifth phase is recollection (smāraṇa), corresponding in name to the fifth phase of the Kālakāraṇa's six-phased yoga. In this Purāṇa as in the Kālakāraṇa, contemplative inquiry (īśṭāna) is replaced by recollection. Considering that the Purāṇa underwent many revisions after the majority of its material was composed during the Gupta reign (c. 320-c. 500 ce), it is extremely difficult to establish whether the recollection phase of yoga was established first in the Purāṇa tradition or in the Buddhist tradition, specifically, in the Gāyatrīsūryaṇa, which some scholars date as early as the fourth century ce and some as late as the eighth century ce.

Within later Hindu sources, a six-phased yoga is also mentioned in a number of texts belonging to the Upaniṣads of the Yoga school—specifically, in the Amṛtabhadra Upaniṣad—and in the Saiva Āgamas. Saiva sāstras, and some Dharma Sūtras, where there is a slightly different order of phases than that found in the six-phased yoga in the Mahābhārata Upaniṣad. For example, in the Amṛtabhadra Upaniṣad, v. 6, the six phases of yoga are retraction (pratāpaṇa), meditative stabilization (dhyāna), breath-control (prāṇāyāma), concentration (dharani), contemplative inquiry (Īśṭāna), and samādhi. This particular sequence of the phases of yoga is almost identical to that of the Kālakāraṇa. The difference between the two lies in the designation of the fifth phase of yoga as contemplative inquiry (āshīvī) instead of recollection (anumey).5 Even though contemplative inquiry is not explicitly mentioned among the six phases of the Kālakāraṇa's six-phased yoga as a separate member, it is not absent from there. Rather, it is included within the phase of meditative stabilization (dhyāna), along with wisdom (prajñā), analysis (vīchara), joy (śānti), and immutable bliss (acala-nātha).6 Contemplative inquiry as a constituent of the phase of meditative stabilization is explained in the Viśvalaṅkāra as the apprehension of the phenomenon of empty form that is being observed or meditated upon during this phase.7 As such, it is an indispensable element in the practice of the Kālakāraṇa's six-phased yoga. Nevertheless, it is not given superiority over all other phases of the six-phased yoga as some elements in it in Kālakāraṇa—specifically, in the Saivismāsas and in the works of Abhinavagupta and Jayaratha. Abhinavagupta (775–1035) in his Ānandaśrīvallabha assumes that "among all the lights of the component parts of yoga, contemplative inquiry (śītā) has already been determined in the earlier Mādhvaśāstra to be 'the brilliant sun by which one gets liberated and liberates others.'" When commenting on Abhinavagupta's Tatālākṣa, Jayaratha (thirteenth century) in his Tatālākṣaśāstra mentions the six-phased yoga that has breath control (prāṇāyāma) as its first member and contemplative inquiry (āśīvī) as its fifth member and also adds it as the highest (utama) phase.8 Moreover, just as contemplative inquiry is included in the six-phased yoga of the Kālakāraṇa, even though it is not regarded as a separate phase, so too are meditative posture (āsana) and restraint (nīyama) implicitly included in this yoga. The āsana-posture (pratāpaṇa) is often referred to as the posture in which an adept of the Kālakāraṇa does his meditative practice, whereas nīyama is included in the observance of the Kālakāraṇa's ethical discipline, in the form of restraint from indulging in the five objects of desire and keeping the twenty-four Kālakāraṇa ascetic precepts (śītāsamāraṇa), which are deemed prerequisites for the successful outcome of the practice of the six-phased yoga.10 The Viśvalaṅkāra defines nīyama as a Buddha's command (budhattaḥ) with regard to the twenty-five precepts.11 Since these two prerequisites to the Kālakāraṇa's six-phased yoga are present in each phase of the yoga as qualifying conditions, they are not considered to be separate phases. Within later Hindu sources there are also others who speak of a six-phased yoga that does not include the phase of contemplative inquiry but includes meditative posture (āsana) as the first phase. For example, some Upaniṣad—specifically, the Dhyānabhadra Upaniṣad, v. 41 and the Yogavāda Upaniṣad, v. 2—several texts of the Gauḍāja corpus (c. twelfth century), and the Nītīsūtra, cited in Kṛṣṇadāsa's Vakrānti (eleventh century) commentary on the Śiva Śūtra 6, contain the following list of the six phases postures (āsana), breath-control (prāṇāyāma), retraction (pratāpaṇa), meditative stabilization (dhyāna), concentration (dharani), and samādhi. This form of the six-phased yoga seems to be later than that found in the Gāyatrīsūryaṇa and later incorporated into the Kālakāraṇa. Thus, it is most likely that the Buddhist six-phased yoga chronologically precedes the six-phased yoga containing contemplative inquiry (īśṭāna) as the fifth phase, which continued to be in practice in later times as well. However, it is also more difficult to determine with certainty whether the Buddhist six-phased yoga precedes the six-phased yoga of Kālakāraṇa which contains meditative posture (āsana) as its first phase or whether it was contemporaneous with it. If one were to rely only on the extant Śaiva texts that refer to the six-phased yoga having meditative posture as its first member, it would seem that the Buddhist six-phased yoga preceded that particular yoga of Kālakāraṇa. Considering the incompleteness of textual and historical information, it is impossible to reconstruct an accurate and precise history of the six-phased yoga in India. Therefore, I offer here only a limited comparative table of the different types of six-phased yogas that were cited in specific Śaiva, Vaiśnavas, and Buddhist texts. As table 3.1 indicates, not only were teachers of different religious traditions but also various teachers of different schools within the same tradition taught diverse forms of the six-phased yoga. Some, according to their intended goals. Even though these diverse types of the six-phased yoga were couched within the different theoretical and practical frameworks of disparate traditions, they all share some commonalities. The most salient aspect of commonality is that each form of the six-phased yoga is viewed within its own tradition as conducive to the accomplishment of both limited, or mundane, and supreme sādhu. There are also other commonalities in the more general interpretations of some phases of the diverse types of six-phased yogas, despite the clear divergence in the manner in which particular phases are structured and practiced within the different traditions. For example, in both Kālakāraṇa and Buddhism, the phase of breath-control (prāṇāyāma) involves bringing the breath into the central nadī; the phase of retraction (pratāpaṇa) involves the withdrawal of the senses from external objects; and meditative stabilization (dhyāna) implies meditation on a divine form, and so on. Their interpretations also coincide to a certain degree with Pāṇini's definitions in the Yājñavalkya Sūtra. For the various listings of the six phases of the six-phased yogas within the different schools of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions see table 3.1. Within the Indian Buddhist tradition, teachings on the six-phased yoga are found within two Buddhist śūraṇās—Kālakāraṇa. The Nītīsūtra (Ch. 8, vs. 21–22) also mentions a six-phased yoga, but it does not list its members nor does it elaborate on it. Even though the six-phased
merely receiving the instruction that confirmed, "This is reality," he entered samadhi; and upon emerging from his samadhi in the early morning, Anupamarakṣita taught this knowledge to Śrīdhara.

With some variations, this story is repeated several times in later Tibetan chronicles of Buddhism and the lineage of the Kālacakratantra’s six-phased yoga. Apart from Padma dkar po, who mistook Vikramapura for Vikramasthila monastery in Bihar, none of the sources specify the location of Vikramapura nor the place from which Anupamarakṣita went to Vikramapura. It is likely that the Vikramapura to which Ravirājīṣṭha refers is Vajrayāniṇī village in contemporary Dacca, located in east-central Bengal, which is also thought to be the birthplace of Atīti. This is perhaps the same Vikramapura mentioned in the inscriptions found in north India. In the inscriptions related to the rulers of the Varman and Vikramāditya dynasties of northern India, Vikramapura is mentioned as their capital during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Varman dynasty ruled eastern Bengal in the second quarter of the eleventh century, and their Vikramapura was eventually overtaken by Vaiṣṇavas, the greatest king of the Sena dynasty, in the middle of the twelfth century. Thus, Ravirājīṣṭha, who, according to Tārātīrthā’s History of Buddhism in India, lived during the reign of the Sena dynasty, could have been referring to that Vikramapura. Some inscriptions mention Vikramapura as a capital founded by Vikramāditya VI c. 1076–1126. His father, Somesvara I, reigned in Magadha and eastern Bengal, and he himself conquered central Bengal shortly before 1086 CE, after defeating Vajrapāla III. According to Tārātīrthā’s History of Buddhism in India, Anupamarakṣita lived during the period of the Bhayaprāpta and Narapāla kings of the Pāla dynasty. Navapāla, the father of the mentioned Vajrapāla III, ascended the throne in the early eleventh century and ruled the kingdom that extended on the west up to Bihar and to the east to central Bengal. Tīrīthā’s information coincides with Vaiśeṣika bhāga’s mention in the Blue Annals that Anupamarakṣita could not have been later than Nārāyaṇa (1150–1190 CE), since Nārāyaṇa cites Anupamarakṣita’s teaching in his Śāktaratnakāra. Thus, whether Ravirājīṣṭha was referring to the Vikramapura of the Pāla, Varman, or Vikramādityas, according to Buddhist tradition the Kālacakratantra’s six-phased yoga was first disseminated in Bengal.

Anupamarakṣita’s name could have been easily related to the well-known Anupama monastery (śālā) in Kāśī, which produced Buddhist śrīdharā, Suryakṣita, and Sākṣatīrthā, the great early eleventh-century Kāśī scholars of the Kālacakratantra. His name also could have been related to Anupama pura, the seat of the two greatest Buddhist centers of learning in Kāśī during the eleventh and twelfth centuries—the monasteries of Rāmānuja and Rāmānuja. In either case, Anupamarakṣita could have come to Bengal from Kāśī.

It is clear from the extant Indian and Tibetan sources that there were several lines of the Kālacakratantra’s six-phased yoga in India. As these sources indicate, the most important among those lines was that of Anupamarakṣita. In the Čandālādīrā, Ravirājīṣṭha gives the following lineage: Anupamarakṣita—Śrīdharā—Bhūkara—Ravirājīṣṭha. The same lineage, but in an extended form, is also given in the Blue Annals, the fifteenth-century Tibetan chronicle of Buddhism in Tibet, which also mentions the famous lineages of Indian Buddhist masters. According to the Blue Annals, the most famous lineage of the Kālacakratantra’s six-phased yoga in
The Nature of Syncretism in the Kālacakra Tantra

Reading the Kālacakra tantra, one immediately notices its prominent, syncretistic character, but close examination of this tantra and its commentarial literature reveals that the Kālacakra tradition has preserved a distinctively Buddhist orientation, and that its affiliation with non-Buddhist Indian systems is in form rather than content. The syncretism of this tantric system is a self-conscious absorption, or appropriation, of the modes of expression that are characteristic of the rival religious systems of India. This self-conscious syncretism variously permeates several areas of the Kālacakra tantra, such as its theoretical system, language, medicine, and cosmovision; and it is often inextricably related to Buddhist tantric conversionary efforts. For this reason, the term syncretism does not quite fit this tradition, whose rhetorical strategies and linguistic divergences, though cleverly disguised, are firmly rooted in Buddhist doctrine. The Kālacakra tradition expressly justifies its adaptive character as a skilful means for leading individuals of diverse mental dispositions to spiritual maturation. The Panamāla-buddhakāṇṭha asserts that "one should teach the Dharma in whatever manner matures sentient beings."

The conversionary mission of the Kālacakra tantra is not the sole basis of its syncretistic character. The growing pluralism within the inner life of Indian Mahāyāna communities could have been another contributing factor in the proliferation of syncretism, for the flourishing of religious pluralism often makes syncretism a necessity rather than just a possibility. The pluralism that is characteristic of Indian tantric Buddhism can be described as a self-conscious recognition that although the Buddhist tradition is shared by all the members of a specific Buddhist community, the way it is interpreted, analyzed, and experienced differs within that community. It seems that the Kālacakra tradition tried to find grounds for dialogue with other Buddhist and non-Buddhist systems without ignoring their differences; while at the same time, it was apprehensive about losing its own distinct identity. Its ambivalence with regard to its own syncretism is evident throughout the Kālacakra tantra and the Vimalakīrti. For example, while refuting the particular views of the Indian non-Buddhist and the so-called Buddhist heterodox schools, the Kālacakra tantra states:

India begins with Anupamaramitā and ends with the Bengali mahā-pañjā, Vararudra (1384–1468). Vararudra received the transmission of the six-phased yoga from the mahā-siddha Savaripa, one of the eighty-four legendary mahā-siddhas of India, and he taught it extensively in Tibet during the first half of the fourteenth century. The extended lineage is given as follows: Anupamaramitā—Śrīdhāranandana (Śikhṣa-pa)15—Bhaktaravasā—Sarvajñātā (Śrīśyā)—Dharmakīrti—Bragdrupa—Nārendrabhadha—Mākharipācana—Śūyā—Buddhi-dhāya—Vasarudra. The exact same lineage of Indian masters is also mentioned in Padma dbang po’s (sixteenth century) Dbu med 'tshe'i rgyas kyi rdo 'byor. yan lag drug po t'ai khrid nā 'tgul yi rgyud.18

Earlier Tibetan historians of Buddhism in India and Tibet recorded a shorter branch of Anupamaramitā’s lineage in India. In his Dpe ted 'tshe'i drug gi br gya gnad no, included in the Gsang sngo phyad dge 'bshi's gnam 'bum,19 Bu ston offers the following list for the Indian masters following the lineage of Anupamaramitā: Anupamaramitā—Śrīdhāra—Bhaktaravasā—Dharmakīrti—Sarvajñātā—Nārendrabhadha—Mākharipācana—Śūyā—Buddhi-dhāya—Vasarudra. This line of Indian Buddhist masters ends with Vībhūtītārṇa (eleventh–twelfth centuries). According to Padma dbang po,20 Vībhūtītārṇa received his Kālacakranāma initiation and teachings from three Indian scholars: Šilakṣetradhāra, the mahā-pañjā of Kāntrik,21 who was his principal spiritual mentor, Vīhīṣṭhyājita, and Dharmadāsa. In Nepal, he mastered the Kāla-acakranāma under the guidance of Ratanākṣita, the Newari mahā-pañjā, from whom he received the teachings of the six-phased yogas of the Kālacakranāma in the tradition of Anupamaramitā. During his stay in Nepal, Vībhūtītārṇa became an expert in the Kālacakranāma and in the practice of the six-phased yoga. According to Padma dbang po,22 he wrote annotations to the Kālacakranāma and the Vīmāla-paṭḍha, which influenced later Tibetan translators and commentators on the Kālacakranāma. As one of the Indian mahā-pañjās, Vībhūtītārṇa visited Tibet three times and became fluent in the Tibetan language. He himself translated his Sādāgīrtagāmā (Bru la 'byor yan lag drug pa)23 into Tibetan. According to the Tibetan six-phased yoga tradition, the Sādāgīrtagāmā is the direct transmission of the six-phased yoga practice that Vībhūtītārṇa received from Savaraipa during his stay at Śrīham Bhārata monastery in Karmāṇḍa, upon which he attained dākṣiṇa, the fourth phase of this yoga. In subsequent centuries, this text became one of the most important and authoritative texts for the direct transmission of the Kālacakranāma’s six-phased yoga in Tibet, especially in the Jonangpa tradition. According to Marṇātha,24 the teachings on the six-phased yoga that Savaraipa revealed to Vībhūtītārṇa were based on the dhāraṇa of Śrīhāra and Śrīhāra’s yoga practice itself was based on the six-phased yoga.

In the Sādāgīrtagāmā (Bru la 'byor yan lag drug pa)25 (fourteenth–fifteenth centuries), following his teacher Bu ston, cites the Indian lineage of Anupamaramitā in this way: Anupamaramitā—Śrīdhāra—Bhaktaravasā—Dharmakīrti—Sarvajñātā—Buddhi-dhāya—Vasarudra.
through intermarriages. Likewise, the mutual pervasiveness of the mind and body of the Buddha and the interdependence of the thirty-seven factors of awakening represent the ultimate unity of the society, which is characterized by the interdependence and pervasiveness of its thirty-six social classes. Similarly, the mutual relations and influences of the individual, the cosmos, and time parallel those in the society. Thus, the organization and functions of the different members of the social body are nondival from the structure and functions of the different members of the bodies of the individual, the cosmos, and enlightened awareness. By identifying Indian society with the individual, the cosmos, time, and ultimate reality in the above-illustrated ways, the Kālacakra tradition demonstrates its vision of the ideal society and its potential, and it provides its rationale for that vision. Just as the transformation and unification of the various components of one's own mind and body on this tantric path transform one's experience of one's natural environment, so it transforms one's experience of one's social environment. Likewise, in this tantric tradition, the unification of all the phenomenal and ultimate aspects of the cosmos, which abolishes all dualities, is nothing other than the state of self-knowing: the state of knowing oneself as the cosmos, society, individual, and enlightened awareness; and that self-knowledge is what is meant by omniscience (sarva-jñatā) in the tradition of the Kālacakra tantra.

The Gnostic Body

The Kālačakra Tantra as a Buddhist Gnostic System

The twenty-first-century discoveries of the Nag Hammadi Codices (Upper Egypt, 1945), and the Manichaean texts of Inner Asia (Taklamakan desert, 1902–1914) have given rise to the contemporary view of gnosticism as a world religion rather than a mere heretical formulation of Christianity. This new awareness of the temporal and geographical, as well as the theoretical and practical diversity of gnosticism, has aroused great interest in that tradition among contemporary scholars of religions. At present, there is a wide range of translations of gnostic texts and secondary literature on gnosticism.

Fairly recent endeavors of Buddhist scholars in preparing new editions and definitive translations of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist tantras are bringing to light diverse and intriguing aspects of tantric Buddhism. Some Buddhist tantras, especially the tantras of the amantā-yoga class, show a strong affinity with the gnostic views of the individual and the universe and striking similarities with practices of various non-Indian gnostic groups. Likewise, due to their strong emphasis on the soteriological significance of realizing gnosis (jñāna), the unmediated knowledge of absolute reality, the amantrā-yoga-tantras can justifiably be considered as religious treatises of a Buddhist gnostic tradition in India. The interpretation of gnosis as intuitive knowledge, knowledge or a vision of oneself as a spiritual reality, and the view of the universe as the macrocosm of that reality are found equally in Jewish and Christian forms of gnosticism, in eastern Manicheism, and in the amantrā-yoga-tantras. Similarly, the view of gnosis as distinct from reflective knowledge, namely, wisdom that is acquired through study and investigation, is common to the aforementioned gnostic traditions. I will attempt to demonstrate here that the Kālačakra tradition in India is an authentic gnostic tradition of Indian Buddhism and that gnosticism manifested itself in a greater variety of forms and localities than many scholars have originally thought.

While using the term "gnosticism" as a typological category, I am fully aware that
this term is a modern construct that does not accurately define all of the traditions and sources regularly classified as "gnostic." The term "gnosticism" has often been used as an umbrella term for various systems of belief and multilayered traditions of thought that were held together by gnostics. One of the most renowned scholars of gnosticism, Hans Jonas, asserts that we can speak of gnostic schools, sects, and cults, of gnostic writings and teachings, of gnostic myths and speculations in the sense that they share the following common features: (1) the emphasis on gnostics as the means for attaining liberation or as the form of liberation itself, and (2) the claim to the possession of gnostics. This broad typological definition of gnosticism can most certainly be applied to the branch of tantric Buddhism that is represented in the Kālačakra and other amantā-yoga-samānās.

In the Kālačakra, gnosis (pātha), which is considered the ultimate reality, is the most correct concept. As in other gnostic traditions, the main focus of the Kālačakra is on gnosics as the source of the individual's aspiration for enlightenment, as the means leading to the fulfillment of that aspiration, and as the fulfillment of that aspiration. When this source of aspiration for spiritual awakening is brought forth, or made fully conscious, it liberates one from cyclic existence. But when it is not brought forth, or remains unconscious, it destroys the individual and keeps him in cyclic existence. Therefore, it is said that gnosics is the source of both cyclic existence and nirvāṇa. In this regard, the Kālačakra fully accords with the writings of other gnostic systems, which also see gnosics as the source of sublime power, the ground of all being, and the potential for liberation or destruction, existing in a latent state within the psyche of all people. The Gospel of Thomas expresses it in this way:

If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.

Likewise, the Kālačakra's interpretation of gnosics as the ultimate support of the conceptual mind in which it expresses itself by means of thought resonates with the following passage from the Nag Hammadi text Theophanes Proterogenos:

I am perception and knowledge, entering Voice by means of Thought. I am the real Voice. I cry out in everyone, and they know that the seed dwells within.

Or in the poem that is included in the longer version of the Apocalypse of John, the Revealer says the following:

And I entered in midst of their prison, that is, the prison of their body. And I said, "Who heath, wake up from the heavy sleep!" And he wept and poured forth heavy tears, and then wiped them away and said, "Who is it that is calling my name? And from where does this hope come, since I am in the chains of the prison?"

The Kālačakra tradition's interpretation of the presence of pure and transcendent gnosics within every sentient being and within all things as their nature, even when not being yet realized as such, also accords with interpretations of gnosics in other gnostic texts. For example, in the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus says to his disciples who mistake salvation, or "Kingdom," for a future event, that the Kingdom is inside them and also outside of them. He says further: "What you look forward to has already come, but you do not recognize it."

Furthermore, in the same way that some Christian gnostic texts identify Jesus the teacher simply with "knowledge of the truth," so the Kālačakra tradition identifies the Buddha Kālacakra with both knowledge (pātha) and truth (nāma). For the Kālačakra tradition as well as all other gnostic traditions, knowledge of the truth can be actualized only by looking within, for one's own gnosics is ultimately one's own teacher. The Kālačakra speaks this in the following manner:

What mother or father, what precious son or daughter of yours, what brother or sister, what wife, what master or group of friends, having abandoned the path of truth, can remove [your] fear of death?

The Christian gnostic text the Testimony of Truth asserts that the gnostic is a disciple of his own mind, "the father of the truth." Therefore, gnosics is nothing other than self-knowledge, insight into the depths of one's own being. As for all other gnostic traditions, so too for the Kālačakra tradition, the individual who lacks this knowledge is driven by impulses that he does not comprehend. One suffers due to ignorance regarding one's own divine nature. Therefore, ignorance of oneself is a form of self-destruction. To know oneself, one must first understand the elements of one's own natural environment and of one's own body. For this reason, the first two chapters of the Kālačakra focus on the exposition of the elemental nature of all the cosmos and the individual and on the manner of their origin and destruction. In this respect, the Kālačakra also shows a great affinity with other gnostic writings.

The following passage from the Christian gnostic text the Dialogue of the Savior perfectly accords with the Kālačakra tradition's way of understanding oneself and the world in which one lives in terms of conventional reality.

... If one does not [understand] how the fire came to be, he will burn in it, because he does not know his root. If one does not first understand the water, he does not know anything. ... If one does not understand how the wind that blows came to be, he will run with it. If one does not understand how the body that he wreaked came to be, he will perish with it. ... Whoever does not understand how he came will not understand how he will go.

Just as in the context of Christian gnosisim, whoever achieves gnostics is no longer a Christian, but a Christ, so for the Kālačakra tradition, whoever actualizes gnosics is no longer a mere tantric Buddhist, but the Buddha Kālacakra. In other words, in these gnostic traditions, one becomes the transcendent reality that one perceives at the time of spiritual transformation. Having perceived oneself in this way, one perceives and knows all things in the same way. Likewise, just as in the Kālačakra, so too in some Christian gnostic systems, the realization of gnosics entails the transcendence of all differentiations, or dualities, for it is the final integration of the knower and the known. One reads in the Gospel of Thomas:

When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same... then you will enter [the Kingdom].

The Kālačakra speaks of this nondual perception of the world in terms of seeing all things as being of the "same taste" (sama-rasa), the taste of gnosics.
There are many other "gnostic" features characterizing the Kālacakratantra and other Buddhist tantric systems in India that are also characteristic of other ancient gnostic systems. Some of their common, gnostic characteristics are the following: (1) an affinity for the nonliteral significance of language and for the usage of symbolic language, (2) the assertion that the ultimate is essentially indecipherable but can be imagined as androgynous, a dyad consisting of masculine and feminine elements, the Father and Mother, (3) the claim to the possession of esoteric teachings that are not intended for the general public but only for those who have proven themselves to be spiritually mature and qualified for receiving initiation, and (4) a subversive attitude toward the social hierarchy and the deconstruction of established, cultural norms, which can be escaped through ritual enactments. 14 A certain ambivalence with regard to the physical body is equally found in various Nāg Hammadi texts, in the Kālacakratantra, and in other asanāta-yoga-tantras. On the one hand, these texts speak of the physical body as a "prison" and a source of suffering due to its weakness and impermanence; and on the other hand, they present the human body as a domain in which the convergence of the two realms—the utterly pure, transcendent realm and the impure, material realm—takes place. Just as the Kālacakratantra sees the human body as a microcosmic image of the external world and spiritual reality and the universe as the body of the Buddha Kālacaktra, so some Jewish and Christian gnostic groups saw the human anatomy as a kind of a map of reality and the universe as a divine body. For example, according to Hippolytus, Nesseus interpreted the biblical description of the Garden of Eden and its four rivers as the brain and the four senses, whereas Simonianus interpreted the Garden as the womb, Eden as the placenta, and the river that flows out of Eden as the navel, which is divided into four channels—two arteries and two veins. Similar allegorical interpretation of the human body and anatomical interpretation of the environment are characteristic of many Buddhist and non-Buddhist tantras. Likewise, for many gnostic systems, as for the Kālacakratantra tradition, a goal is not only to transform the body but also to transform the body itself.

There are also some commonalities regarding the methods of achieving gnosis. Even though most of the gnostic texts discovered at Nag Hammudi do not explain methods for realizing gnosis, few texts that describe the practice of meditation and ritual recitations as the means of accessing inner gnosis show correspondences with the Kālacakratantra and all other tantric systems.

The "Final Document" of the conference on gnosticism that was held in Messina, Italy, in 1966 proposes a working definition of gnosticism, according to which,

not every gnostic is Gnosticism, but only that which involves in this perspective the idea of the divine consubstantiality of the spark that is in need of being awakened and re-integrated. This gnostic of Gnosticism involves the divine identity of the Knower (the Gnostic), the known (the divine substance of one's transcendent self), and the means by which one knows that gnostic as an implicit divine faculty is to be awakened and actualized. This gnostic is a revelation tradition of a different type from the Biblical and Islamic revelation tradition.12

As the aforementioned parallels suggest, and as the rest of this chapter will demonstrate, the above-given definition of the gnostic of gnosticism can easily be applied to the Kālacakratantra, even though the Kālacakra tradition does not call itself "gnostic." Nowhere in the Kālacakra literature can one find explicit references to the tradition as a Buddhist gnosticism and to its adherents as gnostics, but this does not mean that this tantric tradition did not recognize its gnostic orientation. As the early Buddhist Pali sources indicate, the earliest disciples of the Buddha never referred to themselves as Buddhists (saddhā) but as disciples (śrāvaka), monks (bhikkhu), novices (śīlaṇga), mendicants (paribhogika), and so on. The absence of their self-designation as Buddhists by no means excludes their Buddhist self-identification. Moreover, one encounters in the Vimalakīrtinātā at least one implicit reference to the Kālacakratantra as a gnostic system. Defining the Kālacakratantra as the Vajrayāna tradition that consists of the systems of mantra (mani-yoga) and of perfections (pāramitā-yoga), the Vimalakīrtinātā interprets mantra as gnostic in the following manner: "Mantra is gnostic because it protects the mind."13 In this way, the Vimalakīrtinātā implicitly defines the Kālacakratantra as a gnostic system (jñāna-yoga).

The absence of the explicit self-designation "gnostic" is characteristic of most gnostic writings. Scholars of gnosticism point out that in all original gnostic writings of different gnostic traditions, the self-designation gnostikos nowhere appears. It is only in the works of the early Christian heresiologists, specifically, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius, that we read reports of the self-designation gnostikos. The contemporary American scholar of gnosticism Michael A. Williams asserts "to the extent that 'gnostic' was employed as a self-designation, it ordinarily, or perhaps always, denoted a quality rather than a sectarian or socio-traditional identity."14 This also seems to be the manner in which the Kālacakra tradition in India understood its gnostic character.

Some scholars of gnosticism, seeing the obvious similarities between Buddhist and Judeo-Christian gnosticism, have considered the possibility of Buddhist influence on gnostic communities in Alexandria, where Buddhist missionaries had been proselytizing for generations at the time when trade routes between the Greco-Roman world and Asia were opening up and gnosticism thrived (5–200 CE).15 Edward Conze also points to the possible influences of Buddhism on the Christian gnostic communities in South India, whose authoritative scripture was the Gospel of Thomas.16 However, for the time being, the lack of conclusive evidence leaves us uncertain as to whether their commonalities are due to mutual influences or whether they are expressions of the same issues taking different forms at different times and in various regions.

Likewise, the Kālacakratantra's evident gnostic orientation and affinity with non-Buddhist gnostic traditions led some German scholars to suggest that Manichaeism influenced the Kālacakra tradition in India and even tantric Buddhism as a whole.17 Their suggestions are not sufficiently substantiated, however, and need further, thorough investigation of all the relevant sources and a judicious and balanced treatment of the difficult issues pertaining to the question of the origins and historical development of the Kālacakra tradition and Manichaeism.

The Manichaeans texts do inform us that after engaging in missionary activities in the Parthian kingdom of the Sasanians, in 240 or 241, Mani visited India and the adjacent regions, known today as Beluchistan, where he converted a Buddhist king, the Tārin Shāh. In the Kephalaia, 1.42, Mani claims that during his visit to the India
Look, then, at how much the strength and diligence of the Mind of Light is upon all the watchtowers of the body. He stands before his camp. He shuts all the reasons of the body from the attractions of sin. He limits them, scatters them, removes them by his will. Thus, in the Kalacakratantra and in Manicheism, the soteriological struggles in the external world are constantly being enacted in exact mimesis within one’s own body. The powers in the world and within the individual are interrelated and analogous. The analogy between the microcosm and macrocosm plays an important role in both traditions. Similarly, the liberation of the mind involves its freedom from their matter, which fetters the mind to sin. Therefore, the holders of both traditions were equally concerned with their bodies as with their minds.

These and other similarities between the Kalacakratantra and eastern Manicheism do not constitute sufficient evidence for determining that the two traditions directly influenced each other. Rather, they suggest that their commonalities could have resulted from their independent reinterpretations of earlier Mahāyāna Buddhist concepts, which Manicheism liberally appropriated.

To determine the specific, gnostic orientation of the Kalacakratantra, we must first understand the ways in which this tantric system interprets gnostic and its functions and delineates the practices for actualizing it.

The Individual, Gnosis, and the Individual as Gnosis

As in the case of other anatman-yoga-tantras, the Kalacakratantra’s interpretation of gnostic has an earlier precedent in the Mahāyāna’s interpretation of the perfection of wisdom—specifically, in the literature of the Puṣṭiḥāṇamūrti corpus. The internal evidence, however, indicates that its closest precedent is the Maṭhajñānāmsaṃgiti and the Kalacakratantra are intimately related in terms of their expositions of the Jñānākṣa. The Maṭhajñānāmsaṃgiti was traditionally included in the literary corpus of the Kalacakratantra. Its close connection to the Kalacakratantra is indicated by the Vīnapāgarbhā itself, which states that the Kalacakratantra “is embraced by the Nāma-amsaṃgiti, which clarifies the Jñānākṣa, Vajradhāra.” It asserts that the Tathāgata, having extracted the essence of the Bhaṭantar Vajradhāra from all three Vehicles, illuminates the sublime, imperishable gnostic in the Nāma-amsaṃgiti.

In this way, the Vīnapāgarbhā suggests that the essence of the Vajrayāna teachings lies at the heart of all Buddhist teachings. It also states that the Jñānākṣa, which “is described by one hundred and sixty-two verses in the Nāma-amsaṃgiti,” is “called the su- ja-word in every king of tamas (ama-nāja)”... specifically, in the Mūsajā and in the Samājā, which it oddly classifies as the kṣīra and yaga-tamās. The Maṭhajñānāmsaṃgiti itself also bears at its affiliation with the Mūsajānstāna. The Vīnapāgarbhā frequently cites such verses from the Maṭhajñānāmsaṃgiti in order to support and elucidate the Kalacakratantra’s theory of gnostic and the Jñānākṣa. As the following analysis of the Kalacakratantra’s discussion of gnostic will demonstrate, the Kalacakratantra’s explanations of gnostic in terms of ultimate reality coincide at almost every point with the Maṭhajñānāmsaṃgiti’s present-
Gnosis as the All-Pervading Mind and as the Four Bodies of the Buddha

There are many ways in which gnosis is referred to and explained in the Indian sources of the Kālacakratantra tradition. It is primarily interpreted as the mind (citta) that brings forth immeasurable bliss as the desired result, and as the mind that is the result itself, namely, the mind of immeasurable bliss.22 Thus, gnosis is seen as the unity (ākāsa) of two aspects of the mind, which are the cause and result of spiritual awakening. From that vantage point, gnosis is also referred to as the supreme and indescribable suṣa-yoga consisting of wisdom (prajñā) and method (upāya), or emptiness (śūnyatā) and compassion (karunā). Emptiness, which is its reflection, or form (bhūmi), is the cause; and compassion, which is indestructible bliss, is the result. Gnosis is the nondual yoga of these two. As such, it is identified as the unified mind that is free of momentariness and any causal relation (nātāsaya), and lacks an inherent existence (nākāla).23 It is free of momentariness in the sense that for gnosis there is no origination, duration, or cessation of any phenomenon, although by its efficacy all worlds and everything in them arise and cease.24 It is free of causal relations in the sense that it transcends all conceptual classifications. The Ādībhūtatantra describes it in the following way:

It has passed beyond [the designations] "it exists" and "it does not exist." It is the cessation of existence and non-existence. It is nondual. It is the suṣa-yoga that is not differentiated from emptiness and compassion. It is the supreme bliss. It has transcended the reality of atma. It is devoid of empty dharma. It is free of eternity and annihilation. It is the suṣa-yoga that is without causal relations.25

In the Kālacakratantra literature, gnosis of the indivisible, supreme, and imperishable (akṣara) bliss is given different names in accordance with its qualities and function. Thus, it is called the "suṣa," and one who has it is referred to as a suṣa ("one who has a suṣa"). Vajra is characterized as indestructible (akṣara) since it is imperishable and does not go anywhere. Therefore, in the literary corpus of the Kālacakratantra, the word "imperishable" always designates supreme, imperishable bliss and gnosis of that bliss.

Gnosis is also called a mantra due to its function of protecting the mind. Likewise, it is called "spiritual knowledge" (vidyā) of the individual and the "perfection of wisdom" (prajñā-pāramitā). It is termed the "the great seal" (maṇḍala-mudrā), for it is believed that there is nothing beyond it. Similarly, it is referred to as the dharma-dhātu, the Suñjaśākya ("The Intimate Body"), the Jñānakī ("Gnosis-body"), or the Viśuddhikī ("Pure Body"). It is identified as the couple, Vajrasattva and Mātā, which evades the dependently arisen sense-faculties because it has transcended the reality of atoms (paramātman-dharmata) and because it is like a dream or an image in a yogic mirror. It is of the nature of the aggregates (skandhas) and sense-bases (jñānas), which are free of obstructions (dūraya) and have become of the same taste (sama-rasa). On that ground, they are called "supreme and indestructible" (paramātman). The supreme, indestructible is designated as the letter a, the Samyaksambuddhas, Vajrasattva, the androgynous state, the Bhagavān Kālacakratantra.26

Gnosis is the mind, radiant by nature and devoid of the impurities of habitual propensities (vīśāla) of transitory existence. This pure mind is not characterized by any form, for it is devoid of atomic particles, nor is it characterized by formlessness, for its "form" is emptiness.27 Thus, being devoid of both form and formlessness, it is like a reflection in a yogic mirror.

Gnosis transcends the duality of subject and object, for it is simultaneously both knowledge (jñāna) and the object of knowledge (jñeyam). As the subject and the object of knowledge, it is free of conceptualizations (vikalpa) and schematic classifications (paramātman-dvaya). Although gnosis is free of conceptualizations, it is not devoid of momentariness (cintāna) because unlike the state of deep sleep, it is self-aware (sva-samapāya).28 But its self-awareness does not preclude the fact that gnosis is the knowledge of the inherent existence of all phenomena. Moreover, it is precisely the self-awareness and natural luminosity of the Tathāgata's gnosis that enable the Tathāgata to teach Dharma in accordance with the mental dispositions of sentient beings. This self-awareness of the Tathāgata is not affected by the sense-faculties, so it is pure, all-pervasive, free of obstructions, and aware of the nature of all dharmas, which are themselves unconscious due to lacking self-awareness. The independence of self-awareness from the sense-faculties implies that one does not require a physical body in order to remove mental obstructions and experience the self-awareness of the gnosis of sublime, imperishable bliss due to the unification of one's own mind with the appearances (prajñābha) of that mind. According to this tantric system, gnosis can become self-aware through the mind alone, due to the efficacy of the adventitious (āgama), habitual propensities of the mind (citta-vīśāla). The adventitious, habitual propensities of the mind are the so-called psycho-physical aggregates, elements, and sense-bases. Under their influence, feelings of happiness and suffering enter the mind. Experiences in the dreaming state attest to the fact that the mind can become self-aware in the absence of a physical body in the dream. In the dreaming state, a dream body, which consists of the habitual propensities of the mind and is devoid of agglomerations of atoms, suffers injury or experiences great pleasure, and consequently, feelings of suffering or pleasure enter the mind of the dreamer, and self-awareness as knowledge of one's own suffering or happiness takes place. But this all occurs without the dreamer's actual body experiencing injury or pleasure. The Vimalakīrti refers to this ability of the mind as a "great miracle," which even the learned cannot fathom. It comments that if this limited knowledge is difficult to grasp for the learned, then how much more difficult it is for foolish people to understand
such, it is said to be present within the heart of every sentient being. As a sublime 
prana, it is recognized as the source of all utterances, even though it is unutterable it-
self.

As the pervader of everything, gnosis is recognized as the sixth element, the el-
ment of gnosis (jñāna-dhātu), or dhāma-dhātu, which exists in the other five ele-
ments—earth, water, fire, wind, and space—and is also their beginning (ādi). The 
Kālacakra tradition views the gnosis-element as the birthplace (yoni) of all pheno-
mena on the ground that it is primarily unmanifested. This view has its prece-
dent in the Mahāyāna view of the dhāraṇā-dhātu, as presented in the Mahāyānadvad-
hamatārtha, which reads:

The beginningless dhātu is the common basis of all phenomena. Because it exists, 
there is every state of existence and the attainment of nirvāṇa as well.8

The aforementioned explanation of the gnosis-element in the Kālacakra tradi-
tion indicates that the word dhātu in the compounds jñāna-dhātu and dhāma-dhātu 
is understood in three ways—as the ingredient, as the cause, and as the locus; 
whereas, in the Mahāyānadvadhamatārtha, the word dhātu seems to be understood 
in just two ways—as the locus and as the cause. The gnosis-element as the component 
of phenomenal existence has two aspects: atemporal and temporal. Although the 
gnosis-element as the beginningless source of phenomenal existence is atemporal, it 
appears as temporal when it arises in the impermanent body of the individual. 
In its temporal appearance, the gnosis-element, like the other five elements, originates 
in the body from one of the six flavors—specifically from the sour flavor, provided 
by the embryo’s nourishment through the mother’s food and drink.8 From that tempo-
ral gnosis-element within the body arise sexual bliss, which is a phenomenal aspect 
of gnosis, the individual’s mental faculty (mano-indriya), and sound (sādūra). These 
three are identified with the gnosis-element from which they originate. As the men-
tal faculty, the gnosis-element apprehends the dhāma-dhātu, which arises from the 
space-element (ākāśa-dhātu); and as sound, it is apprehended by the auditory sense-
faculty, which also arises from the space-element.4 In light of this, one may infer 
that within the body of the individual, the gnosis-element, being the apprehending 
subject (pratāhaka) of the space-element and the apprehended object (pratāhaka) of 
the space-element, bears the characteristics of the space-element. Thus, being like the 
space-element, gnosis is indescribable and eternal. However, one does not experi-
ce the gnosis-element as such until one’s own “gnosis merges with the form of 
emptiness (tānta-samā-tāna),” meaning, until the mind as the apprehending subject 
(pratāhaka) merges into the appearance of the mind as the apprehended object (pratāhaka) 
and “becomes of the same taste (sama-tāna)—imperishable and eternal.”42 The 
merging of gnosis into space, which is an empty dhāraṇā from which all phenomena 
arise just as a spout arises from a well,44 is understood here as emptiness. This aware-
ness of the ultimate absence of the origination and cessation of all phenomena is the 
appearance of one’s own mind. It is gnosis, the indescribable bliss. Thus, when one’s 
own gnosis merges into its own appearance, which is nothing other than the absence 
of the origination and cessation of the same taste, the cause that is directly perceived47 
does not to a casual, or generative, relation with regard to its own reflection, but due to 
being unified in the appearance of one’s own mind.44

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The Vimalakīrtiṇī interprets the Kālacakrataṇī’s characterization of gnosia as eternal (ātūtaka) in terms of its freedom from obstructions (nīvaraṇasa). In this way, it points to the lack of contradiction of this characterization of gnosia with the earlier quoted statement from the Aśkāḷaṅkāraṇa, which defines gnosia as “free of eternity (ātūtaka) and annihilation (uścita)” in terms of eluding any categorization.

Gnosia also transcends all classifications with regard to its grounding, for it does not abide in nirvāṇa or samsāra. A closer look at the Kālacakrataṇī’s interpretation of gnosia reveals that for this tantric tradition, gnosia is not grounded in either one of these two because in its empty aspect, it is devoid of nirvāṇa and in its blissful aspect, it transcends samsāra. This interpretation of the manner in which gnosia abides neither in nirvāṇa nor in samsāra is also expressed by the following verse from the Sākṣīdēśa, which states:

In form (bhūta) is devoid of nirvāṇa, and indestructible [bhūta] transcends samsāra. The union of these two, which is devoid of eternalism (ātūtaka) and nihilism (uścita), is nondual and without parallel.86

The same text explains further that this interpretation does not imply that the form of emptiness (ātītyātītaka) enters samsāra and indestructible bliss enters nirvāṇa. Instead, these two aspects of gnosia are “mutually embraced and peaceful, the supreme state of nonduality.”87

Although gnosia itself is not grounded in samsāra or nirvāṇa, it is called samsāra when it manifests as the universe with its atoms, stars, planets, mountains, rivers, sentient beings, and so forth, and it is called nirvāṇa when it appears as complete knowledge (panjītaka) of cyclic existence. The complete knowledge of cyclic existence is the perception of the three realms—the desire, form, and formless realms—as they are within the three times past, present, and future.88

This view of gnosia as the omnipresent mind of the Buddha, which simultaneously transcends the cycle of transmigration and is immanent within it, is similar to tertemism, the view that the finite universe lies within God, who is unbounded and infinite. However, the Kālacakrataṇī goes beyond tertemism by interpreting gnosia not only as being immanent within the insmanent universe and within every sentient being, but also as manifested in the form of the phenomenal existence. It asserts that the three realms of cyclic existence are the forms (kāya) of Vajraśrītva because gnosia dwells with great bliss within the nature of all things.89 Likewise, the Vimalakīrtiṇī asserts that “conventional reality has the form of emptiness and emptiness has the form of conventional reality,”89 since gnosia is free of atoms and yet it is found in emptiness. This conviction that the entire cosmos is a manifestation of gnosia underscores the Kālacakrataṇī’s theory of the cosmos as the macroscopic aspect of the individual and its presence within the body of the individual.

One may ask here: If gnosia is the source and ontological reality of everything, what are the implications for Buddhist claims about identitylessness (naśātmya) and emptiness (śūnyatā)? The Kālacakrataṇī indirectly addresses this question in a number of ways, which will be indicated later. Primarily, though, it addresses this question by identifying gnosia with the blissful aspect of the mind, which is nondual from the emptiness of inherent existence of that mind, and it thereby evades reification. It asserts that there is neither a Buddha nor enlightenment, since “the entire uni-
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TABLE 1: The Sixteen Aspects (ṣat jātikāṇā) of Gnosis (ṣāṭkāna)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gnostic Body in terms of conventional reality</th>
<th>Gnostic Body in terms of the ultimate reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Four Types of Bliss (āmūndat)</td>
<td>The Four Aspects of the Sahajakāya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the bliss of the mind (ākāśāvivek)</td>
<td>the Sahajā-Mind (sahajā-vīcāra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the bliss of the body (ākāśa-vivek)</td>
<td>the Sahajā-Body (sahajā-kṣaya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the bliss of speech (vākāvivek)</td>
<td>the Sahajā-Speech (sahajā-vāk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the bliss of gnosis (ṣāṭkānakṣāna)</td>
<td>the Sahajā-Gnosis (sahajā-sānta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Types of Supreme Bliss (paramāmūndat)</td>
<td>The Four Aspects of the Dharma-Kāya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the supreme bliss of the body (Ādīmāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Dharma-body (ādīva-kṣaya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the supreme bliss of the mind (Ādīmāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Dharma-mind (ādīva-vīcāra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the supreme bliss of speech (Ādīmāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Dharma-speech (ādīva-vāk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the supreme bliss of gnosis (Ādīmāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Dharma-gnosis (ādīva-sānta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Types of Extraordinary Bliss (citakramūndat)</td>
<td>The Four Aspects of the Sahajā-Kāya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the extraordinary bliss of the body (citakramāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Sahajā-Kāya-body (citakramāmūndat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the extraordinary bliss of the mind (citakramāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Sahajā-Kāya-mind (citakramāmūndat)</td>
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<td>the extraordinary bliss of speech (citakramāmūndat)</td>
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<tr>
<td>the extraordinary bliss of gnosis (citakramāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Sahajā-Kāya-gnosis (citakramāmūndat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Types of Intimate Bliss (uṇānāmūndat)</td>
<td>The Four Aspects of the Nirmāṇakāya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the intimate bliss of the body (uṇānāmāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Nirmāṇa-body (uṇānāmāmūndat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the intimate bliss of the mind (uṇānāmāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Nirmāṇa-mind (uṇānāmāmūndat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the intimate bliss of speech (uṇānāmāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Nirmāṇa-speech (uṇānāmāmūndat)</td>
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<td>the intimate bliss of gnosis (uṇānāmāmūndat)</td>
<td>the Nirmāṇa-gnosis (uṇānāmāmūndat)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sixteen facets of the four bodies of the Buddhas, namely, the Sahajākāya, Dharma-Kāya, Sahajākāya, and Nirmāṇakāya, are the sixteen aspects of bliss said to appear in these four bodies according to the superior aspirations (ādīvākānas) of sentient beings. Thus, the aspect in which this unified and indivisible reality, named gnosia, will appear to the individual is determined by the individual’s own dispositions and degree of spiritual maturation. Although the four bodies of the Buddha manifest and function in different ways, they are of the same nature and are mutually pervasive.

The Kālacakrā tradition’s theory of the manifestation of the sixteen aspects of gnosia in terms of both conventional (ṣāṭkānakṣā) and ultimate realities (paramāmūndat) is schematically presented in table 1.62

The sixteen facets of the four bodies of the Buddhas (listed in the second column of the following table) arise when the sixteen types of bliss that characterize the body of the individual cease. Thus, the sixty-four types of bliss of the individual are the impure, imperishable aspects of the sixteen facets of the sublime, imperishable bliss (mahākāla-sānta) of the Sahajākāya. They become purified due to the cessation of bodily senescent having sixteen parts, which are the internal sixteen digits of the moon. Due to the purification of senescent, one becomes the Buddha Kālākaras, whom the Vimalakīrtīnītikā characterizes in this respect as “the stainless light of the saṃsāra-moon,” using the words of the Mañjuśrīnītikā’s esegy of the gnostic being, Mañjuśrī.63

The Vimalakīrtīnītikā indicates that this classification of the gnostic saṁsāra of the Buddha, which has sixteen types of bliss, has its precedent in the Nāmasamgrāha’s characterization of Mañjuśrī at one who “knows the reality with sixteen aspects.”63 However, as indicated in the introductory chapter, the Nāmasamgrāha (182, s. 2, 3) interprets these sixteen aspects of reality not in terms of bliss but in terms of emptiness.

With regard to the spiritually awakened ones, the sixteen facets of the four bodies of the Buddhas are seen as the four types of unions (yogā), due to the classification of the four bodies of the Buddhas. In terms of ordinary human beings, the aforementioned sixteen types of bliss are also characterized as the four yogas—the yoga of the body, speech, mind, and gnostic—in accordance with the classification of the waking, dreaming, sleeping, and the fourth stage of the mind.64

In order to understand the Kālacakrā tradition’s concept of gnosia in terms of ultimate reality, one needs to look first at its most unmediated aspects and functions as expressed in the four bodies of the Buddhas. Emphasizing the inseparability of the four bodies of the Buddha, the Kālacakrā tradition often depicts them as the four saṁsāra—specifically, as the gnostic-saṁsāra, the mind-saṁsāra, the speech-saṁsāra, and the body-saṁsāra. The Kālacakrānātāsāṃsāra demarcates the four saṁsāras in the following way:

The body-saṁsāra of the Jina, which has all aspects, is inconceivable in terms of sense-objects and sense-features. The speech-saṁsāra accomplishes Dharma by means of attributes in the hearts of all sentient beings. The mind-saṁsāra of the Vīra, which is the nature of the minds of sentient beings, is present throughout the entire earth. That which, like a pure gem, apprehends phenomena is the gnostic-saṁsāra.65

On the premise that gnosia is constantly present in every sentient being born from the womb, the Kālacakrānātāsāṃsāra asserts that those four saṁsāras are perpetually present in all such sentient beings, but not in a fully manifested form. Their presence in every individual is attested by one’s capacities of the body, speech, mind, and gnostic, in the four states of the mind—waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth state, the state of sexual bliss—and in the classification of the four limbs of the individual. Within the ordinary human being, the four saṁsāras are located within the four respective calyces in the navel, heart, throat, and forehead. The four saṁsāras are the seats of the twelve links of dependent origination (pratītyasamutpāda). Thus, spiritual ignorance (avidyā), karmic formations (samudaya), and consciousness (vijnāna) are in the gnostic-saṁsāra. The mind-and-body (nāma-rūpā), six sense-fields (āyatana), and sensory contacts (sparśa) are in the body-saṁsāra. Feeling (vedanā), craving (trṣṇā), and grasping onto existence (upādāna) are in the speech-saṁsāra. Becoming (bhava), birth
(jāti), aging (jīva), and death (nirvāṇa) are in the mind-sūtra. In this way, the twelve links of dependent origination are the twelve impure aspects of the four sūtras. When the twelve links of dependent origination, the bodily sūtra, and uterine blood cease, that is to say, when they become the twelve faces of perfect awakening, the four sūtras of the individual manifest as the four purified sūtras, or the four bodies, of the Buddha Kālacakra. In this regard, the Vimalakīrti deva returns again to the Mahāparīnīma-nāma's description of Mahāprajñā, by characterizing the Buddha Kālacakra as "the sūtra sun, the supreme light." 86 These twelve aspects of the individual’s and the Buddha’s four sūtras are considered to be the twelve conventional aspects of the supreme, indestructible bliss of sentient beings and Buddhahood.

On the basis of the belief that the gnostic sūtra generates sexual bliss, it is considered as the "propagator" of the twelve links of dependent origination. This view of the gnostic sūtra as the fundamental cause of the twelve links of dependent origination indicates that all other sūtras of the individual’s body are simply different manifestations of a single gnostic sūtra, which has the twelve links of dependent origination as its twelve phenomenal aspects. 87 This fourfold classification of the gnostic sūtra corresponds to the Kālacakra tradition’s identification of the Jñānakīrti with the other three bodies of the Buddha.

Furthermore, it is also believed that the efficacy of the four drops (śraddha) generates the twelve links of dependent origination. The four drops are physical composites of the size of a small seed, which consist of red and white drops of the semen and uterine blood. They are pervaded by very subtle sūtras and located within the four earlier-mentioned caalas. Each of the four sūtras has its own specific capacities that may manifest differently, depending on whether or not they are affected by the habitual propensities of spiritual ignorance (asuddhi-saṃskāra). For example, the drop in the kālaśa has the capacity to bring forth appearances to the mind. When this drop is affected by the habitual propensities of spiritual ignorance, it brings forth impure appearances to the mind, and it produces the waking state when most of the prāna converges in the kālaśa. When this drop becomes purified, it manifests as nonconceptual gnosis. The drop at the throat-calca has the capacity to bring forth verbal expression. When this drop is affected by the habitual propensities of spiritual ignorance, it brings forth improper speech, and it produces the dreaming state when most of the prāna converges in the throat-calca. When this drop becomes purified, it brings forth the Buddha’s all-faceted speech. Similarly, the drop at the heart-calca has a dual capacity. In its impure form, this drop induces confusion, and it produces the state of deep sleep when most of the prāna converges in the heart-calca. When purified, it manifests as the nonconceptual mind. Finally, the drop at the navel-calca has the capacity to bring forth innate bliss. In its impure aspect, this drop brings forth the experience of sexual bliss when most of the prāna converges in the navel-calca. When this drop is purified, it induces the supreme, immutable bliss of nirvāṇa.

The four bodies of the Buddha, which are laity present within the individual, are located within the six calas of the individual’s body due to the gaps of those calas. Thus, the Sahajākāra, which is free of ideation and is similar to a prognosis mirror, is in the secret calca, in the saṃsāra, and in the navel-calca, which arise from the elements of gnostics, space, and earth, respectively. The Dhamma-kīrti is located in the heart-calca, which arises from the wind-element. The Saṃbhoga-kīrti is in the throat-calca, which arises from the fire-element. The Nirvāṇa-kīrti is in the kālaśa, which arises from the water-element. 87 Table 7.2 illustrates the manner in which the Kālacakra tradition delineates the four bodies of the Buddha with regard to the body of the individual.

The four sūtras that are present within the bodily calcas manifest as the four bodies of the Buddha only at the attainment of full and perfect awakening (samyak-sambodhi). When the individual reaches full and perfect enlightenment, the individual’s gnostic sūtra that has been purified by the liberation through emptiness (śūnyatā-vimuktas) becomes the Sahajākāra. The individual’s mind-sūtra that has been purified by the liberation through signlessness (anātman-vimuktas) manifests as the Dhamma-kīrti. The individual’s speech-sūtra that has been purified by the liberation through desirelessness (apetāna-vimuktas) appears as the Saṃbhoga-kīrti. The individual’s body-sūtra that has been purified by liberation through non-compositeness (anubhisamyak-samudaya-vimuktas) manifests as the Nirvāṇa-kīrti. 87

It is interesting to note the Kālacakra tradition’s interpretation of the phrase “liberation through non-compositeness.” A textual study of the literature of the Kālacakra tradition in India reveals that in the context of this tantric system, the term “non-compositeness” refers to both freedom from the accumulation of karma and to freedom from atomic matter. In all other anatman-vimuktas, however, it is explained chiefly in terms of the Buddha’s freedom from the accumulation of karma. For the Kālacakra tradition, the eradication of the fine atomic particles that constitute the transmigratory mind and body—which are the material repositories of affective and cognitive obstructions and the internal objects of one’s actions—includes the eradication of all karmas.

The Kālacakra tradition’s interpretation of the four bodies of the Buddha as the four purified sūtras has a direct bearing on its classification of the four gates of liberation (sūtras-maṇḍalas) as opposed to the more common classification of the three gates of liberation, which is characteristic of Mahāyāna literature in general. In terms
of the four gates of liberation, the Kalacakratantra views the four bodies of the Buddha as the four immediate manifestations of the Buddha’s fourfold perfect awakening: namely (1) perfect awakening in a single moment (alakṣaṇabhūmibhadra), (2) perfect awakening with five aspects (pañcaalakṣaṇabhūmibhūti), (3) perfect awakening with twenty aspects (dvadasi-alakṣaṇabhūmibhūti), and (4) perfect awakening with the net of illusions (mahāyogicaryābhūmibhūti).

1. Perfect awakening in a single moment refers here to enlightenment attained in a single moment of supreme, immutable bliss. It is the spiritual awakening that arises from bliss and that, in turn, generates immutable bliss. Thus, it is “of the nature of bliss and not of some other karma.” The moment of supreme, immutable bliss is the moment after which there is no origination, duration, or cessation of any phenomena. The moment of perfect awakening in a single moment of bliss (alakṣaṇa) signifies an absence of all moments, and that moment of bliss is the means by which the ten powers (daśa-bhūta) of enlightened awareness descend to earth from space. The purified aggregates that are produced by that moment of bliss, in turn, generate bliss. Thus, from the Sahajākṣa, which is the bliss of innate bliss, arises the Dharmaśākya; from the Dharmaśākya arises the Sahajākṣa; from the Sahajākṣa arises the Nirmāṇakāya; from the Nirmāṇakāya arises the Sahajākṣa. This innate bliss, or gnosia, is like a seed from which first arise the roots, then the branches and flowers, and lastly the fruits, which, in turn, produce the seed. This interpretation of the arising of the four bodies of the Buddha in dependence upon each other implies that even the four bodies of the Buddha, like everything else in the world, do not arise of their own nature. Their mutually dependent arising further implies their absence of inherent existence.

2. Perfect awakening with five aspects refers to enlightenment that is characterized by the five types of gnosia of the Buddha: namely, the mirror-like gnosia (ādārśa-pāla), the gnosia of equality (samatā-pāla), the discriminating gnosia (pratītyasamprapti-pāla), the accomplishing gnosia (kṛṣṇanirūpī-pāla), and the gnosia of the sphere of reality (dharmaśīlā-pāla). These five types of gnosia are understood here as one’s purified psycho-physical aggregates, sense objects and sense-fac-

ulties, Mitras, and five types of spiritual ignorance. They are the mutually indivisible vajras that have all the aspects.

According to the Sūtrālañcatīta, the perfect awakening with the five aspects is analogous to the five types of knowledge that are of the nature of the habitual propensities (uśna) of the form and other aggregates (asattā), which the fetus acquires, having the indication of the five limbs, like a tortoise. With regard to the enlightened awareness, it interprets the perfect awakening with five aspects as the Dharmakāya, the sāṃsāra-yoga of the mind, a sublime being (mahā-sattva) that has the supreme, imperishable bliss due to being enlightened with five aspects. The characteristics of the five types of gnosia are of the nature of the wisdom and method of the elements and psycho-physical aggregates due to the cessation of the five mandalas.

The Kalacakratantra tradition defines these five types of gnosia in a number of ways. In its esoteric gnosia with five aspects, the Abhidharmakosā describes each aspect in terms of supramundane truth with the following five verses. With regard to the mirror-like gnosia, or the purified aggregate of discernment, it says:

This collection of phenomena in space, which is devoid of the form of ideation (ādattā), is like a prophetic image (pratighṇa) in the mirror of a young maiden.

With regard to the gnosia of equality, or the purified aggregate of feeling, it states:

Having become identical to all phenomena, it abides as a single, indescribable phenomenon. Arisen from the imperishable gnosia, it is neither nihilism nor eternalism.

With regard to the discriminating gnosia, or the purified aggregate of discernment, it says:

Letters, having all designations, have their origin in the family of the letter a. Having reached the sublime, imperishable state, they are neither the designation nor the designated.

As for the accomplishing gnosia, or the purified aggregate of mental formations, it states:

Among non-originated dharmas, which are devoid of mental formations (sattvā), there is neither spiritual awakening nor Buddhahood, neither a sentient being nor life.

Lastly, with regard to the gnosia of the dharma-pāla, the purified aggregate of consciousness, it says:

The dharmas that have transcended the reality of consciousness, that are purified in gnosia, transparent and luminous by nature, are present on the path of the dharma-pāla.

In terms of the relation of the five types of gnosia to cyclic existence, the Kalacakratantra characterizes them in the following manner:

That in which the form of birth reaches its culmination is called the sublime form.

That in which the suffering of transmigratory existence reaches its culmination is called the sublime feeling. That in which a discernment of transmigratory existence
the [limitless] world systems and as the [grains of] sand of the river Ganges. The words of the simple-minded people are: “Upon going to a single world system by means of his Rūpaṅka and performing actions that benefit sentient beings dwelling there, he goes to another world system, and after that, he goes elsewhere.” This does not stand logically: Why? Because world systems do not have a measure with regard to the division of directions. Repeatedly going by means of the Rūpaṅka (in the form of [immanent] sentient beings to world systems that are located in the ten directions, he would not be able to benefit sentient beings even in the course of limitless years.

Likewise, the Vimalakīrtiṇī rejects the belief that the Buddha attracts sentient beings who dwell in the world systems of immeasurable Buddha-fields by the power of his meditation and mantra, places them in front of himself and teaches them Dharma, establishes them in the Buddha path, and sends them back to their world systems. It rebuts this notion on the basis that the Buddha cannot simultaneously abide with a body of atoms in the presence of limitless sentient beings who dwell in the numerous world systems that are present throughout space. It asserts:

According to the words of simple-minded people, by means of his Rūpaṅka, he engages in activities that benefit sentient beings dwelling in the triple chiloucom within a single Buddha-field. When this statement is investigated logically and in terms of ultimate truth, it is found to be meaningless, just like the words of āvatāra, which are established by means of authority (āvatāra) and are devoid of verifying cognitions (pratijñā) and logic. According to the received Agamas, āvatāra is a particulars of all. Not taking into consideration the effect, he creates and destroys the world for the sake of play, as it pleases him. In some way, because of this heterodoxy, the Bhagavatī Rūpaṅka, who brings about the benefit of all sentient beings, is established by means of authority. Thus, due to the absence of wisdom among Bud- dhist heterodox groups (ūtākā), there is nothing special even about their āvatāra. Therefore, these words that are not truthful (paramākṣa) are not of the Bhagavatī Rūpaṅka, which is the Buddha who is investigated in the Nārāyanīgaṇī, and not the Nīkāyakāṇa.

Thus, since he has arisen in space, he is self-arisen (seamlessly), has all aspects (sādhuṣa) and is without aspects (sādhuṣa), holds the four bindas, transcends the state of having parts and is partless, holds the tens of millions (millions) of the fourth binda, is detachment and supreme attachment, is free of possessions (manumāna) and self-grasping (āhāram-kārta), generates the meanings of all nāmāra, is the supreme binda, indestructible, the sublime emptiness (mahā-vāca) of the five indescendibles,3 is the indescendibility of the space binda, and is similar to space. Thus, the Bhagavatī Buddha explained the Vajra- dharākāla of Vajrapāṇi in terms of both truths by means of one hundred and sixty-two verses of the Nārāyanīgaṇī, beginning with “Now, the glorious Vajrapāṇi” and ending with “Have you been robed of your Dharma?”… Thus, according to the Bhagavatī words, the Bhagavatī is not the Rūpaṅka, because he is the assembly (sādhuṣa) of all the Buddhas. If the Rūpaṅka were the Buddhas, then the Rūpaṅka would not come together in the form of atoms. Even after hearing the Bhagavatī’s words in this manner and investigating the deep and profound Dharma that was taught by the Bhagavatī, sentient beings do not understand it. Not testing a spiritual mentor for the sake of Buddhahood, they do not honor him. Great fools, overcome by greed, think: “In this life, our patriarch bodies are the bodies of the Bud- dhas.”
Thus, for the sake of eradicating the self-grasping (ahamkāra) of the Śrēvakas in heaven, and for the sake of helping them understand that the state of a god is one of great suffering, the physically nonembodied Tathāgata displays his supernatural power among them by means of his Sāṃbhogakāya. By means of his Dharma-kāya, he reveals his supernatural power among the Bodhisattvas, Subhūti, Maitreya, and others who abide in the realization of emptiness, for the sake of establishing them in the highest, perfect awakening by teaching them about the four bodies of the Buddhas.

3. Perfect awakening with twenty aspects is not explicitly described in the Kāla-cakṣuṣana or the Vimalaprabhā. Nevertheless, Mahāyāna literature, that is cited in the Vimalaprabhā, enumerates the twenty aspects of the Buddha's mind. According to the Vimalaprabhā, the twenty aspects of perfect awakening include the sixteenfold knowledge of the sixteen types of emptiness and the first four of the aforementioned five types of the Buddha's gnosia. According to the Sūkṣmādīśā, the perfect awakening with twenty aspects should be known as being due to the cessation of the five sense-faculties, the five sense-objects, the five faculties of action (karmendrās), and the activities of the five faculties of action that are with obscurations. The same text also indicates that the perfect awakening with twenty aspects is analogous to the classification of the habitual properties of the four elements, earth and the like, and to the body of the fena that has twenty fingers. In terms of enlightened awareness, it explains the perfect awakening with twenty aspects as the sūtra-yoga of speech of the Sāṃbhogakāya and as a Bodhisattva who assists other Bodhisattvas and teaches Dharma by means of the utterances of all sentient beings due to being enlightened with twenty aspects.

4. According to the Vimalaprabhā, perfect awakening with the net of illusions refers to the Buddhas' Nirmāṇakāya, which manifests in innumerable forms, like an endless net of illusions, and knows the reality that has sixteen aspects. The Sūkṣmādīśa describes it in a similar fashion but adds that the perfect awakening with the net of illusions is the bodily sūtra-yoga, a pledge being (samaya-samā) who is the foremost assistant to sentient beings due to his knowledge of the reality with sixteen aspects. For Nāgāpūda, this type of awakening is due to the cessation of the drops of the sixteen types of worldly bliss (kāya-adhāna). He also sees it as analogous to the knowledge of the limitless phenomena that are like a net of illusions, which is acquired by being born from the womb. Just as the Buddha's mind is characterized by the four types of spiritual awakening, so are the four bodies of the Buddha characterized by the four different types of knowledge and their functions. The Sāṃbhogakāya is characterized by omniscience (sarvajñatā) on the ground that it sees everything. The Dharma-kāya is characterized by the knowledge of the aspects of the path (mārga-bhāsmi), because it is saturated by supreme, immortal bliss. The Sūkṣmādīśa is characterized by knowledge of the path (mārga-bhāsmi), for it simultaneously teaches the mundane (isokara) and supermundane (lokottara) Dharmas, using the different modes of expression of countless sentient beings. Finally, the Nirmāṇakāya is characterized by knowledge of all aspects (sarvadhyāsa), since it simultaneously spreads its powers and manifestations by means of limitless Nirmāṇakāya.

Each of these four bodies of the Buddha represents a particular type of union (yogā). For example, the Sāṃbhogakāya represents the union of purity and gnosia; therefore, it is also called the pure yoga (sadbha-yoga). The Dharma-kāya is the union of the Dharma and the mind; hence, it is also referred to as the dharma-yoga. The Sūkṣmādīśa is the union of speech and enjoyment; for that reason, it is also identified as the mantra-yoga; and the Nirmāṇakāya is the union of the body and its emanation, therefore, it is also designated as the form-yoga (sāṃskāra-yoga). This perspective on the four bodies of the Buddhas as the four types of yoga explicates the Kāla-cakṣuṣana tradition's definition of gnosia as the sūtra-yoga. As alluded earlier, these four types of yoga, which purify Kalacakra, are the four gates of liberation (mokṣa): a liberation through emptiness (dānya-dvāra), a liberation through illumination (ānimittā-dvāra), a liberation through blissfulness (ānandavāra), and a liberation through non-composition (aparādavāra). According to the Sūkṣmādīśa, a liberation through emptiness is the gnosia that is characterized by its condition of being empty and by apprehending that the past and future are empty. Due to that gnosia, the purified, imperishable, sublime bliss (maha-suddha) arises from the eradication of the fourth state of the mind (nara). This liberation through emptiness is nothing else than the sūtra-yoga consisting of compassion, the Shajikāya, or the purified yoga. A liberation through illumination is the gnosia that is characterized by nimita (a cause, a cause of a cause), which is a mind with conceptualizations such as the "Buddha," "enlightenment," and so on. Due to this absence of a cause, the mind of the deep sleep vanishes and the mind-sapta that consists of loving kindness (maitri), which is the Dharma-kāya, arises. Since its nature is Dharma, it is also called the dharma-yoga. A liberation through blissfulness is a liberation through blissfulness from the absence of reasoning (tara) that manifests in thinking "I am the fully awakened one," and so on. The absence of such reasoning results from the absence of the earlier mentioned sign or cause. In liberation through blissfulness, the sleeping state is destroyed, and on account of that, arises the indestructible voice that is characterized by namartha and sympathetic joy (natartha). That voice is the speech-sapta, the Sūkṣmādīśa. It is a mantra because it protects (ṣastra) and gladdens (moda), the minds with the expressions of all sentient beings. Therefore, it also called the mantra-yoga. A liberation through non-composition, which results from the absence of wish (praṇākāra) is the form-yoga. It is the body-sapta that consists of egolessness (apakñaja) and that manifests with all former: fierce, passionate, peaceful, and so on, leading others to the path of opposition to mental afflictions by means of limitless Nirmāṇakāya. This liberation is said to be pure due to the destruction of the waking state.
well-being. Due to freedom from the state of deep sleep, the Dharmakṣāya is never saturated by darkness. It is of the nature of both wisdom and compassion due to the distinction between gnosis (śruti) and consciousness (viśiṣṭa). Gnosis is understood in this context as the apprehending mind (vijñānaka-sīna), the mind that is the sub-ject; and consciousness is taken to mean the apprehended (gṛhya) knowledge of other-s' minds, minds that are objects of knowledge (jñeyas). Gnosis, or the apprehending mind, is wisdom (prajñā) because it is devoid of illusion (saṃkṣa), and the apprehend-ed mind—namely, enlightened awareness as it manifests as the world—is method (pphā), which is conceptually fabricated (sambhāpa) and has the charac-teristic of compassion. Likewise, the Sambhogakṣāya is the mind that is free of the dreaming state, which is invariably produced by prajñā. It is also of the nature of wisdom and compassion. By means of the divine eye (ākāra-calpa), its divine con-sciousness (ākāra-viśiṣṭa) perceives past and future forms like transparent reflections in a mirror; and by means of the divine ear, it apprehends sounds that arise in those transparent forms as echoes. It knows past and future times, as well as certain events that have happened or will happen. The Sambhogakṣāya becomes the Nirmāṇakṣāya for spiritually mature sentient beings. The Nirmāṇakṣāya is the mind that is free of the waking state, and therefore it is not characterized by false notions arising from conceptualization. It also consists of wisdom and compassion. Even though it is one, it becomes many, because sentient beings see its various emanations. Ultimately, the unity of one and many Nirmāṇakṣāyas is the unity of wisdom and compassion, even though conventionally there is an obvious contradiction in the concept of one and many Nirmāṇakṣāyas. The illusion of the Buddha's emanations, which have imme-a-surable qualities, is said to be inconceivable even to the Buddhas themselves.93

Table 7.3 illustrates the Kālacakra tradition's characterization of the four bod-ies of the Buddha as the four types of spiritual awakening and the four faces of the Buddha's mind. As was indicated earlier, these four bodies of the Buddha collectively and indi-vidually are understood to be nothing other than the four different manifestations of the Jñānavāda ("Gnosis-body"). The Kālacakra tradition's characterization of the Jñānavāda is based on the Matuyānāsaṃyogita's characterization of Matutā, who is identified there with the Jñānavāda. Likewise, as the main topic of the Kāla-cakravāra's discourse, the Jñānavāda is referred to as the "vaśya-vaśya" that is also taught in other "kings of sense"—specifically, in the method-sāmaṇḍa such as the Gaṇḍāvāśāna.124 Thus, in this tantric system, the Jñānavāda is the unity of the speaker, who is the Adhikīṃ, and his teaching, the vaśya-vaśya. In the Kalacakravāra, the Jñānavāda is discussed in terms of both conventional and ultimate realities. In terms of ultimate reality, it is taught in the above way as the four bodies of the Buddha, or as the clear light of the mind (cittaprabhābāla), appearing in space and being directly perceived through the yogic practices of unifiedness of the light and right nāḍī in the madhumā. In terms of conventional reality, it is pre-sented as the body that is mentally fabricated by the yogi's own mind as being en-dowed with form, various colors, and other attributes.

With regard to the impure manifestations of the four bodies of the Buddha within the individual, the Kālacakra tradition correlates the four bodies of the Bud-dha with the four stages of development of a fetus in the womb and with the four phases of one's life outside the womb. Thus, at the moment of conception, consciousness, gnosis, senses, and uterine blood constitute the impure, or obscured, pheno-menal aspect of the Sajñāvyuha. The fetus consisting of the psycho-physical ag-gregates and elements corresponds to the Dharmakṣāya. The fetal state of developing the sense-bases (āyatana) corresponds to the Sambhogakṣāya; and the fe-tus that at the time of birth is completely endowed with arms, legs, hair, and the other bodily parts corresponds to the Nirmāṇakṣāya.95

With regard to the individual who is outside the womb, a newborn infant, whose prajñā first begins to flow from the navel-calpa, corresponds to the Sajñāvyuha. The newborn child, though, corresponds to the Sajñāvyuha only for the period of sixty breaths during which the infant's prajñā flows in the central nāḍī. The child, in the phase of life in which its limbs begin to move due to the circulation of prajñā, in which its first teeth begin to grow and its indistinct speech begins, corresponds to the Dharmakṣāya. From the time that the child's first teeth fall out until the age of eight, when its new teeth grow up and its speech becomes clear, the child corresponds to the Sambhogakṣāya. Lastly, in the phase of life from the growth of new teeth until death, the individual represents the impure aspect of the Nirmāṇakṣāya.96 This categoriza-tion of the four bodies of the Buddha as the individual in the four phases of life is based on the Kālacakra tradition's view of the manner in which the individual's prajñā, speech, and mind interface. Even though the Kālacakra tradition often speaks of gnosia as the ultimate na-ture of all sentient beings and of the four bodies of the Buddha as present in the body of every individual, the Vinayaśāstra emphasizes that this does not imply that all sen-
dent beings are already Nīmāṭikāya of the Buddha. It criticizes those who mistakenly conclude that the bodies of sentient beings are the Buddha’s Nīmāṭikāya simply because all the kings of matter (santuṣṭa) identify the five psycho-physical aggregates with the five Buddhas, the bodily elements with the consorts of the five Buddhas, and so on. It argues that if sentient beings within the three realms of cyclic existence are already Nīmāṭikāya of the Buddha, then this implies that they have previously become Samañyanabuddhas. However, the fact that sentient beings lack the powers and qualities of the Buddha and are still subject to the origination, cessation, and all the other sufferings of transmigratory existence indicates that they are not perfectly awakened but deeply entrenched in samsāra. It also argues that if sentient beings have already attained Buddhahood, then the practices of generosity, meditation, reflection, listening to Dharma teachings and the like would be useless. This, it says, “has not been seen, heard, inferred, or predicted by the Tathāgata.” Likewise, it claims that the Kālacakra’s identification of the bodily components—specifically, the male and female sexual organs, feces, urine, uterine blood, and semen—with the five Buddhas does not imply that these impure bodily constituents are actually the five Buddhas. Such identification, it says, is to be understood in terms of the language of tantric pujas (samayā-pūja) and not in terms of definitive language, which employs words that explicitly designate their referents. It also argues that a localized (mālākṣa) body of the individual cannot be taken as the all-pervasive body of the Buddha.

The Kālacakra’s fourfold categorization of the Buddha’s body has its precedent in the earlier Mahāyāna classification of the Buddha’s body into the Svabhāvikāya (“Essential Body”), Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya, and Nīmāṭikāya. The Kālacakra itself never mentions the Svabhāvikāya; it mentions only the Sahajākāya, the Viśuddha-kāya (“Pure Body”), and the Jñāna-kāya as synonymous. However, the Vimalaprabhā comments that in the system of perfections, which has the characteristic of the cause, the mind of perfect wisdom (paripuṇa-jñāna) is designated as the “Svabhāvikāya of the perfection of wisdom (prajñāpāramitā),” or as the “Prajñāpāramitākīrti” (“Body of the Perfection of Wisdom”). Whereas in the system of mantra, which has the characteristic of the result, it is called “innate bliss” (sa-haṁmāda) or the “Sahajākāya.” For this reason, the terms “Svabhāvikāya” and “Sahajākāya” are sometimes used interchangeably in the commentary literature of the Kālacakra tradition.

The Vimalaprabhā, cites the Abhisamayālaṃkāra (Ch. 1, v. 18), to support this view of the close relation between the Svabhāvikāya and the Sahajākāya; and it suggests that its classification of the four bodies of the Buddha has precedents in the interpretations of some Mahāyāna authors. The cited verse from the Abhisamayālaṃkāra reads:

The Dharmakāya, which is with activity, is said to be of four kinds: the Svabhāvikāya, together with the Sambhogakāya, and the Nīmāṭikāya.

The Kālacakra tradition interprets the Sahajākāya similarly to some Indian Mahāyāna authors’ interpretation of the Abhisamayālaṃkāra’s reading of the Svabhāvikāya. Just as in the Abhisamayālaṃkāra, the Svabhāvikāya is just another way of characterizing the essential nature (svabhāva, ākāśīya) of unqualified Buddhas dhammas, so in the Kālacakra, the Sahajākāya is the defining essence of Buddahood, which is indivisible from the Dharmakāya. Furthermore, just as in the Abhisamayālaṃkāra, the Svabhāvikāya designates the emptiness of the Buddha’s nonconceptual mind, characterized by the freedom from delusions (sīvāsina) and the purity of all aspects (sambhūta vidyādhi), so according to the Kālacakra tradition, the mind that is devoid of the habitual propensities of transmigratory existence is called Buddahood. Likewise, the Bhāvaviveka states in the Pañcapāramitāsūtra, “That mind, which is the mind, is not the mind.” That very mind that is devoid of the habitual propensities of transmigratory existence is luminous by nature (prakāś-prabhāsana). Therefore, Mira is the mind that has impurities (mula), and the Buddha is the mind that is without impurities (anūma). In another place, the Vimalaprabhā asserts:

That which is taught in terms of ultimate reality for the sake of attaining the supreme wisdom state (sahajākāya), which is endowed with the best of all forms, is the luminous (prabhāśa) of the saṅgha’s (true) mind, which can be directly perceived, which is devoid of the characteristics of the ideation of one’s own mind, which shines in the sky and is similar to the reflection in a young maiden’s mirror.

Thus, with respect to the essential purity of the Buddha’s mind, the Abhisamayālaṃkāra’s interpretations of the Svabhāvikāya accord with the Kālacakra tradition’s interpretation of the Sahajākāya. There are also other points of agreement between the Mādhyamaka interpretation of the Abhisamayālaṃkāra’s presentation of the Svabhāvikāya and the Kālacakra tradition’s interpretation of the Sahajākāya. For example, references to the Svabhāvikāya and the Sahajākāya as the mirrorlike gnosis (śāstra-dharma) are found in both Śāntarakṣita’s (eighth century) Saṃyogayāpanaśāra commentary on the Abhisamayālaṃkāra and in the Vimalaprabhā. Likewise, identifications of the Svabhāvikāya and the Sahajākāya with a Samantabhadra, pure luminosity, the dharmadāna, which is ultimately the sole body of the Buddha, are encountered in both Dhammapāla’s Pratijñāśāstra (late eighth–early ninth century) and in the Kālacakaratana and the Vimalaprabhā.

Furthermore, the Vimalaprabhā defines the Dharmakāya and the Svabhāvikāya in the following way:

[The body] that is neither impermanent nor permanent, neither single nor has the characteristic of many, neither substance (duṣṇa) nor non-substance (adhaśna), is the Dharmakāya, which is without birth (āntina).

[The body] that is indivisible from emptiness and compassion, free of attachment and non-attachment, that is neither wisdom nor method, is the additional Svabhāvikāya.

This description of the Dharmakāya and the Svabhāvikāya suggests that the Dharmakāya characterizes here enlightened awareness, which transcends the reality of atoms and yet exists in terms of emptiness, and which lacks a basis for superimpositions such as permanence and impermanence, existence and non-existence. Whereas the Svabhāvikāya represents the empty nature of the enlightened awareness.
which ultimately is neither the apprehending mind nor the apprehended mind. Thus, the Svabhāvikāya does not designate here some independent component of Buddhahood, but the essential nature of all the aspects of the enlightened mind. In this respect, the Kālacakra tradition's interpretation of the fourth body accords with the Mahāyāna interpretation of the Svabhāvikāya.

On the basis of textual evidence, one could infer that in the Kālacakra tradition, which claims to consist of both the system of perfections and the system of mantras, the Saṃdhinirmāṇa, or the Sahajātāya, represents the unity of the two aspects of the Buddha's mind—namely, the empty nature of the Buddha's mind, which is the cause, and the blissful aspect of the Buddha's mind, which is the result. On the grounds that the empty and blissful natures of the Buddha's mind are essentially non-dual, the Kālacakra tradition accords to them as a single fact, as a form (bhumī) of emptiness and compassion. More than the literature of Mahāyāna, the Kālacakra tradition, in addition to emptiness, strongly emphasizes the blissful aspect of Buddhahood, which is seen as ultimately nondual from emptiness. One reads in the Adhīdharma-puṇḍara: "this Vajrasattva is the foundation of the bliss of all Buddhas due to the union of the body, speech, and mind." In this is the regard that the Kālacakra tradition's interpretation of the blissful aspect of Buddhahood and the ways of achieving it diverge from the Mahāyāna's interpretation of the Svabhāvikāya and consequently from Mahāyāna forms of practice. Thus, in the Kālacakra tradition, the Sahajātāya designates the two aspects of the essential nature of the Buddha's mind: emptiness and bliss. Considering that for this tantric system, these two aspects are recollected from each other and indivisible from all other bodies of the Buddha, one may further infer that ultimately there is only one body of the Buddha, the Gnostic Body.

The primary purpose of the Kālacakra-nāmas's classification of the four bodies of the Buddha is to provide a model for the Kālacakra-nāma practice that will accord with its goal. In this tantric system, the fourfold classification of the Buddha's body outlines the essential components of spiritual awakening, which are meticulously correlated to the contemplative's psycho-physical constituents and their functions. Thus, the Sahajātāya is represented as both the basis of purification, which is the individual's psycho-physical constituents and their functions, and the result of purification, which is the components of Buddhahood and their activities. This concept of the Sahajātāya is common to all amata-yoga-nāmas. The Viśpanākriya denies that the realization of the Sahajātāya, or Jñānavīra, is ever found among Sātrikas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Viśisṭāntirvikas, for the Sahajātāya is free from all residues (upādhi) and transcends the reality of consciousness (vijñāna-dharmatā). This claim not only supports the Kālacakra-nāmas's openly stated affiliation with the philosophical views of the Mahāyānakas, but it also indirectly expresses the Kālacakra tradition's interpretation of other amata-yoga-nāmas as being based on the Mahāyānaka philosophy.

Gnosis and Mental Afflictions

The Kālacakra tradition's theory of the Jñānavīra is most intimately connected with the Kālacakra-nāmas's view that "sentient beings are Buddhas and that there is not some other great Buddha in the universe apart from sentient beings." This view of sentient beings' prayers and their elimination of conceptualizations (svākha) that cyclic existence ceases. As indicated earlier, this view of gnosis as innately present in all sentient beings was already expressed in the Mahāyāna-Mahāyāna, which affirms it in the following manner:

Present within the minds of all beings, he attained equality with their minds. Glad-devising the minds of all sentient beings, he is the joy of the minds of all sentient beings. This view of sentient beings is not unique to the Kālacakra-nāmas, as it is also found in the earlier amata-yoga-nāmas. For example, one reads in the Harṣacarana that the Buddha cannot be found elsewhere in some other world-system (loka-dīpti), for the mind itself is the perfect Buddha. It asserts that all species of sentient beings, from gods to worms, are innately endowed with a blissful nature. Likewise, in the root tantra of the Saṃsāra literature corpus, the Kāśāsāhāruṣa, it is stated that Vajrānantas, the sublime bliss, is within the self of sentient beings. Similarly, in the root tantra of the Yāmanaka literature, the Yāmanakālāma, cited in the Vīnaduprātha, states that a unique, principal deity resides in the self of the three worlds with the nature of innate bliss. The view that the Buddha's mind is present in all sentient beings has its earliest precursor in the early Buddhist notion of the innate luminosity, or purity, of the mind. The Alapana Nākka, I, 10, expresses this view in the following manner: "Mokṣa, the mind is luminous (prabhūsannam), but it is contaminated by adventitious defilements." Its later precursors can be traced to the Mahāyāna view of the mind and the tathāgata-garbhā theory. One reads in the Bhadraśāstra (Ch. q, v. 102) that sentient beings are by nature liberated. The Paññākṣa commentary interprets this statement in light of the Mahāyāna view of the absence of inherent existence of the transmigratory mind and of nirvāṇa. It asserts that natural nirvāṇa (pālaṇa-nirvāṇa), which is characterized by the absence of inherent existence, is always present in the streams of consciousness of all sentient beings. According to the Tathāgata-garbhā, which identifies all sentient beings with the embryo (garbha) of the Tathāgata, the Buddha sees with his divine eye that all sentient beings are endowed with the Buddha's knowledge (buddha-dīptā), Buddha's eyes (buddha-cakṣu), and Buddha's body (buddha-lāba). Likewise, the Sarvajñatattvam-saṃvakti-chopāya chapter of the Saṃsāra-kārikās asserts that the tathāgata-garbhā, which is inherently pure clear light and primordial purity itself, is present within the bodies of all sentient beings, covered over by the psycho-physical aggregates, elements, and sense-bases. Statements similar to these can also be found throughout the Ramagranthadāornings and other writings of the tathāgata-garbhā tradition. This identification of all sentient beings with the essence of the Buddha is also characteristic of some other Mahāyāna texts. For example, the Mahāyāna-mahāyāna states that all embodied beings are the embryos of Tathāgata-garbha. Likewise, according to the Mahāyāna-mahāyāna, the essence of the Buddha (buddha-dīptā) is found within all sentient beings. This view of all sentient beings as being endowed with the embryo of the Tathāgata has lent itself to two different interpretations. One is that the tathāgata-garbhā refers only to sentient beings' potential for spiritual awakening; and the other
is that the presence of the tathāgata-garbha in every sentient being implies that all sentient beings are fundamentally enlightened but need to recognize it. As in the case of other amanuṣya-yoga-samānas, the Kāśīputraṇaṇa's view of sentient beings as Buddhas largely accords with the second interpretation. The Kāśīputraṇaṇa explains that enlightened awareness is innately present within an ordinary individual's body in the following way:

Just as space does not disappear from a jar when water is poured into the jar, in the same way, the sky-sprite, who is the pervader of the universe and devoid of sense-objects, is within the body. Even though enlightened awareness is innate to each individual, it is not actualized as long as one does not ascertain one's innate gnosis as such. However, the ascertainment of one's own gnosis as enlightened awareness entails the absence of affective and cognitive obscurations, which impede one's self-recognition. Their absence is conditioned by the path of purification that aims at manifesting this self-awareness of gnosis. The Kāśīputraṇaṇa asserts that due to the power of unwholesome actions, a sinful person does not see that the wish-fulfilling gem is present in his own mind, but when purification takes place, that person becomes the Lord of Jivas (ātman) and has no use for any other jinas.

Thus, even though sentient beings are innately Buddhas, they are not manifestly Buddhahood, and their spiritual awakening needs to manifest as a non-dual gnosis that is directly aware of its own blissful and empty nature. That non-dual gnosis is the mind that is essentially pure and unfeathered by the obscurations of mental afflictions (kālīdāsana), even if it is veiled by them. Therefore, non-dual gnosis is effective in the elimination of mental afflictions. The mind of a sentient being that supports the habitual propensities of karma (karmasākṣa) and brings about suffering and happiness is the omnipresent mind that transcends transmigratory suffering and happiness and that cannot be destroyed by conceptualizations (vakrāśā). Like the texts of the tathāgata-garbha tradition, the Kāśīputraṇaṇa tradition offers explicit reasons why one's innate gnosis, although underlying mental afflictions, remain unmanifested by them. However, its explanations differ from those of the tathāgata-garbha tradition in several ways. According to the Rāmānujaṭa, the innate gnosis is unobscured by mental afflictions because mental afflictions that obscure the mind are adventitious (āgānanda) and are not connected with the mind, whereas the purifying elements present in the mind are innate to the mind and are indissoluble from it. Likewise, according to another text of the tathāgata-garbha tradition, the Śrīmāladeśa, the momentary mind (ākāśa-citta), whether it is wholesome (śānta) or unwholesome (ahāśā), remains unaffected by mental afflictions because those afflictions neither touch the mind nor are touched by the mind.

In contrast, a text of the Kāśīputraṇaṇa corpus, the Sākṣadēśa, explains the relationship between the mental afflictions and the mind in the following way:

An adventitious stain is not in the mind nor is it prior to the mind. It does not arise without the mind nor does it stay immutable in the mind.

If it were only adventitious, then the mind would be formerly stainless. If it is prior to the mind, then from where has it originated? If it is arising without the mind, then it is like a sky-flower. If it is always present in the mind, then it could never vanish. Just as the impurity of copper disappears due to the prepared mixtures, its natural property, which remains in the stainless state, does not vanish. So a stain of the mind disappears due to the yogis of emptiness, but its state of gnosis, which remains in the stainless state, does not vanish.

Even though the Sākṣadēśa agrees that human beings are already endowed with the immutable bliss that characterizes Buddhahood, it stresses the necessity for mental purification in this way:

Just as one must completely refine iron that is melted by intense fire, even though a precious substance is already present in one piece of the iron, in the same way, one must completely refine the mind that is heated by the fire of desire, even though immutable bliss is already present in one part of the mind.

The Vinudaprabha asserts that habitual propensities of the mind arise and cease due to the same cause, the power of the individual's rebirths. If the habitual propensities were inherent to the mind, then sentient beings could not acquire Buddhahood, because Buddhahood comes about due to the eradication of the habitual propensities of transmigratory existence. If one examines transmigratory existence in various ways, one finds that samsāra is nothing other than the degree of one's own habitual propensities of mind. A habitual propensity of samsāra is the moment (ākāśa) of bliss that is characterized by the emission of semen, and so it is perishable. A habitual propensity of nirvāṇa is the moment of bliss that is characterized by non-emission of semen, and therefore it is imperishable. The perfection of wisdom is the inconceivable gnosis of the Buddha because it consists of both attachment (asada) and aversion (ubhaya). When sentient beings start thinking, attachment to desirable things and aversion to undesirable things begin to arise. These two, attachment and aversion, are the mental causes of transmigratory existence. However, when gnosis, which is free of thinking, becomes actualized, there is no longer any attachment to desirable things or aversion to undesirable things. The absence of both results in freedom from transmigratory existence, and freedom from transmigratory existence results in full and perfect awakening.

The Kāśīputraṇaṇa itself offers only an implicit explanation. Its repeated assertion that the nature of gnosis is free of the elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and semen and their modifications implies that gnosis is free of mental afflictions, which arise from those elements. Moreover, the Kāśīputraṇaṇa's fundamental idea that mental afflictions, lacking inherent existence, are ultimately unreal implies that mental afflictions exist only from the perspective of the dualistic mind in which they arise. However, they neither exist nor exist in relation to innately pure gnosis, which is beyond every perspective. This seems to be supported by the Vinudaprabha, which maintains that "the nirvāṇa mind, which has transcended samsāra and is present in every body, is neither bound nor liberated by anything." It further asserts that "the sāttva, the purified mind, is the [mind] that does not have the two eternal existence and non-existence, or annihilation."
Furthermore, according to the upaniṣada-guha tradition and other Indian Mahāyāna schools, mental afflictions arise from the habitual properties of spiritual ignorance (avidyā-tūbāna), which manifests as erroneous views. Thus, these traditions see spiritual ignorance as the primary cause of mental afflictions, and they see the erroneous views that arise from that ignorance as the indirect cause of mental afflictions. For example, for Viśṇu, the direct cause of mental afflictions is the view of objectification (viśeṣa-dhyāna), and for Mahāyānakas, it is any view that stands as a dogmatic position (tathāga). The Kālacakrā tradition, however, does not explicitly speak of any particular view as the immediate cause of mental afflictions. Although the Kālacakrā tradition often implies that applying any view contrary to that of identitarianness (nāstikya) or emptiness (śūnyāta) is detrimental to one’s liberation, it clearly stresses the nature and function of práṇas as the immediate cause of mental afflictions and their elimination. In the Kālacakrā tradition, mental afflictions are also referred to as imperfections (kuṣolā) and are described as the perturbations or deformations (vikaraṇa) of the mind, which are most intimately connected with the psycho-physiological constitution and processes of the individual. According to the Kālacakrā tradition, the práṇas are closely related to the mental states of an individual and are thus at the basis of both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Práṇas give rise to mental afflictions by conveying the six elements through the nāḍīs in the body. However, it is due to the efficacy of the six elements that constitute the práṇa—namely, gnosia, sīś, air, fire, water, earth, and ether—that avicenna (maṇḍala), hatred (ādesa), jealousy (prajñā), attachment (rāgā), pride (māna), and confusion (moha) respectively arise. Thus, the same gnosial-element, which is identified as the cause of the sthānakaśīla, which is present in the individual’s secret cala, also functions as the direct cause of the three kinds of thephra, which give rise to avicenna.

According to the Kālacakrā tradition, as long as a sentient being remains in the mother’s womb, the práṇa stay motionless in the navel-calot, and mental afflictions do not arise. With the first breath at the time of birth, the práṇa begin to move, carrying the five elements and thereby mental afflictions along with them. The first breath, which begins in the central nāḍī, is said to be devoid of the three gnosia, whereas the second breath takes place either in the left or the right nāḍī that carries the ten nāḍīs, due to the power of the sattva-guna; the third breath takes place due to the power of rājñī, the fourth breath due to the power of tamas, and so on. Each of these breaths that are of the nature of sattva, rājñī, and tamas become the five kinds due to the classification of the nāḍīs of the five sense-objects. Then, due to the threefold classification of the body, speech, and mind, they become forty-five. Then, due to the further classification of the two feet and two arms, they become one hundred and eighty breaths; and afterward, due to the nature of wisdom and method, they multiplied by two, become three hundred and sixty breaths.

In this way, the práṇa sustain mental afflictions and consequently perpetuate the cycle of rebirth. When the práṇa are purified, that is, when the six elements constituting the práṇa are transformed into pure gnosia, they obliterate all causes of mental afflictions and secure the bliss of liberation. Likewise, when all the bodily constituents—constituting of the elements and manifesting with the nature of sattva, rājñī, and tamas—become purified from the afflicting and cognitive obsessions, they manifest as the ten bhūkṣuṣṭa-bhūmis and bring about Buddhahood. Thus, the bodily hair and the hair of the head become the first bhūkṣuṣṭa-bhūmis, pramadāna, the skin and flesh become Vimala, the two types of blood manifest as Prabhakara, sweat and urine as Arca, the bones and marrow as Sudarṣṇa, the nāḍī and práṇa as Abhimuka, the gnosia-sūtra and the element of passion (sūtra-dhāra) as Dītrōka, the mind-sūtra as Acāla, the urine blood as Śilabuddhi, and semen as Dīsā-mamagha. In light of this view, the Vinādakaprabhī asserts that apart from the body, there is no other Buddha who is the pervader (vispaka) and bestower of liberation. Being the direct causes of mental afflictions and the immediate causes of their elimination, the bodily práṇas are said to be supported by volition (caṛita). Volition is understood here as the mind (citā), which under the influence of sattva, rājñī, and tamas, has the waking, dreaming, and sleeping states. That mind is comprised of the five elements (ākārān), the mental faculty (manas), intellect (buddhi), and self-grasping (ākāṃkṣa). Hence, in this tantric system, volition, being the transmigratory mind, is both a mental and a physical phenomenon. This transmigratory mind is further supported by innate gnosia, which is free of the five elements and thereby free of conceptualizations and mental afflictions. Being free of conceptualizations and mental afflictions, gnosia is beyond happiness and suffering, and yet it is active in bringing about the eradication of happiness and suffering. This is yet another way in which the Kālacakrā tradition attempts to explain why present gnosia cannot be defiled by mental afflictions despite being covered by them. One may infer here that innately pure gnosia, being the ultimate and indirect support of práṇa, also functions as the ultimate factor in sustaining and eliminating mental afflictions. This understanding of the relationship between the innately pure gnosia and mental afflictions underpins the Kālacakrā tradition’s view of gnosia as the primary basis of both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Furthermore, spiritual ignorance (avidyā) is explained in the Kālacakrā tradition simply as a modification (praptaya) of the elements, which are contained in the mother’s blood and the father’s semen and are grasped by consciousness at the moment of conception. The very idea that spiritual ignorance never arises in the absence of the elements precludes the role of spiritual ignorance as the direct cause of mental afflictions. But the Vinādakaprabhī does, on the other hand, define spiritual ignorance as a mental affliction, which consists of attachment, hatred, and delusion, and it presents it as a primary cause of these mental afflictions. It describes it as a habitual propensity of beginningless attachment, but because attachment is perishable, it gives rise to aversion (stigga), or hatred (ādesa), which is of the nature of confusion (mitchva), or delusion (moha).

The Vinādakaprabhī defines these and other mental obsessions as mental stains, which are nothing other than the mind of Māra. On the ground that both the innately pure gnosia and afflicting and cognitive obsessions are present in the body of the individual, the Kālacakrā tradition asserts that both minds—the mind of Māra, which causes fear and agitation, and the blissful mind of the Buddhas—are present in the hearts of sentient beings. Whereas gnosia aspire and incite one to venture for liberation from cyclic existence, the mind of Māra is said to be forever devoid of such aspiration and venturing. Thus, it is due to the presence of both minds in the hearts of sentient beings that the three realms of cyclic existence endlessly revolve by the power of the Buddha within. Likewise, when the Buddha crushes the four
Moreover, in terms of conventional reality, the agent (karmadhatu) of karma is identified here as consciousness, or innate bliss, which appropriates the elements in the mother's womb. Eventually, when the body is formed, the six sense-faculties and the faculties of action become its means of action. However, that very consciousness is also recognized here as the agent of the elimination of karma, which at the time of death gradually leaves the five elements within the navel, heart, throat, forehead, and crown-cakra. In terms of ultimate reality, the agent of karma is not an agent but a "sky-pervader, a spout in the sky, free of sense-objects," the Sahajadhyaya without physical constituents. Thus, in terms of conventional reality, gnosis is the source, originator, and destroyer of karma; and in terms of ultimate reality, it is none of the above, since the mind of gnosis is neither a derivative of the five elements nor does it perceive itself or anything else as an agent.

Gnosis and Sexual Bliss

In the Kalacakra tradition supreme imperishable bliss is defined as tranquillity (śānta), which pervades the elements of every sentient being's mind and body and of the entire immanent world. Thus, the body of every sentient being is the abode of immutable bliss, and contains the four bodhis of the Buddha. In beings who are bound to transmigratory existence, the blissful nature of the Buddha's mind manifests in the form of sexual bliss, in which the mind, for a brief time, becomes nondual and free of conceptualization. However, since the experience of sexual bliss is mutable, it creates habitual propensities of mutable sexual desire (kama-rasa) and induces the further emergence of that desire. In this way, it reinforces mental afflictions by binding the experience to sensual pleasures. For that very reason, mutable bliss is viewed in the Kalacakra tradition as being characterized by transmigratory existence.

Nevertheless, the Kalacakra tradition stresses the importance of not avoiding sexual bliss but implementing it on the path as a condition that generates mental joy, which in turn brings forth the subtle mind that counteracts conceptualizations and directly perceives the empty nature of phenomena. Thus, by refining the mind, innate bliss secures freedom from cyclic existence. The Skokadeśa affirms the refining power of bliss in the following manner:

Just as copper, refined by chemical solutions, does not become copper again, so the mind, refined by bliss, does not enter suffering again.

Due to the purifying power of bliss, the experience of innate bliss is regarded as an indispensable condition for attaining Buddhahood. The Kalacarabhasya speaks of its soteriological significance in this way:

For one who abandons that [moment of bliss]—which is the cause of the Buddha, by means of which the Lords of Jina have originated and come out of the womb by the efficacy of duṣkri, and by means of which Siddhas, not entering samsara, have purification (śānta) and non-pollution (vāśānta)—and who mediates on another empty Buddhahood devoid of ammunable bliss, he will not experience innate bliss for tens of millions of eons.
Likewise, with regard to the soteriological efficacy of sexual bliss, one reads in the Vijnapti-Prabhāt:

Bliss that is produced by two sexual organs is the reality (sattva) that brings forth the result of Buddhahood. Men are the aspects of Vajrāraḍa, and women are the suprainfinites.

Since sexual bliss cannot arise without passion (stigga), the inducement and nurturing of passion are viewed as central components of the Kālacakratantra path to spiritual awakening. One reads in the Vijnapti-Prabhāt:

Sin is due to the elimination of passion, on account of which, hatred toward the most loved one arises. Due to hatred there is delusion; and on account of this, the mind always becomes stupefied due to the descent of one’s own sūtra.

The Skolddeśa also speaks of the absence of passion as sin. It states:

There is no greater sin than dissipation (stigga), and there is no greater virtue than bliss. Therefore, a king, the mind should always dwell in imperishable bliss. The fire of sexual bliss incinerates the impurities of the mind. Therefore, in this tantric system, to eliminate passion means to prevent virtue from arising. The tantric adept retains passion by retaining semen during sexual union, whereas the emission of semen results in dispersion, or inverson, and subsequent mental afflictions. It impedes the emergence of imperishable bliss and creates a condition for the further emergence of repeated desire for transitory bliss and all its unfavorable consequences.

The Skolddeśa cautious the deadly power of seminal emission in these words:

It has been known that emission arouses dissipation, and dissipation arouses suffering. Due to suffering the men’s elements are destroyed, and due to that destruction there is death. Due to death there is rebirth, and due to rebirth there are repeated deaths and seminal emissions. Thus, the rebirth of sentient beings is due to the arising of dissipation and not due to anything else.

Whether seminal emission occurs occasionally or frequently, the consequences of seminal emission are equally detrimental with regard to one’s liberation from cyclic existence. The Vijnapti-Prabhāt expresses it in these words:

A lion, who feeds on deer, occasionally engages in the pleasure of sexual union at the end of the year. A pigeon, who feeds on gravel, constantly engages in the pleasure of sexual union.

But just as neither one nor two has supreme bliss, due to emitting semen either once or at all times, so too an ascetic and a harmful man do not have it because of emission in sleep and in the waking state.

Just as a sleeping man who is bitten by a snake does not live, so too an ascetic is ruined by the vulva of a base woman, due to not retaining his semen.

The Kālacakratantra also asserts the adverse affects of the habitual propensities of seminal emission on one’s ability to actualize imperishable bliss, for perishable bliss is as antithetical to imperishable bliss as poison is to ambrosia. It asserts that imperishable bliss does not arise from the mind that is not purified from the perishable bliss of seminal emission, just as grapes do not come from the tulip tree and lotus flowers do not blossom from the sambhava tree. Whereas the passion that is characterized by seminal emission brings destruction, or death, the passion that is characterized by nonemission becomes the supreme and imperishable moment of bliss, by means of which sentient beings are liberated. In this regard, it is said that the Buddhist guard the bliss, present in their hearts, which sentient beings release. For this reason, the tantric yogī must learn to retain his semen for the sake of the siddhāna on imperishable bliss, which is taught as a meditation on bliss through sexual union without seminal emission. It is by means of such a siddhāna that one is able to eliminate the habitual propensities of the perishable bliss of seminal emission. One’s habitual propensity for seminal emission (cintā-satāma) is said to be an adventitious stain (āgaravika-sūtra), which has characterized the minds of sentient beings since beginningless time, and it is said to be a cause of transitory existence. However, just as sexual union creates a condition for the arising of the habitual propensity of seminal emission, so too does it create a condition for the arising of the habitual propensity of seminal retention. In light of this, the Kālacakratantra likens the transformative power of sexual union with regard to semen to the power of fire with regard to mercury. It states:

Fire is an enemy of mercury. The cohesiveness (haratuka) of mercury never occurs without fire. When it is not cohesive, it does not produce gold. Without gold, it does not give pleasure to alchemists. Likewise, the cohesiveness of men’s semen (bhucca) never occurs without union with a woman. If it is not cohesive, it does not transmute the body, and the non-transmuted body does not give supreme bliss.

Thus, just as mercury, which escapes due to its contact with fire, can also be made cohesive by that fire, so too semen, which escapes due to sexual contact, can be made cohesive by that contact. Likewise, just as cohesive mercury is exceptionally potent in purifying ordinary metal and transforming it into gold, so too cohesive semen has the power to purify one’s psycho-physical aggregates from obscurations. Therefore, in this tantric tradition, meditation on a deity during sexual union, including the union with an actual consort (krama-mudrā), in which the yogī’s semen becomes motionless, is considered to be analogous to the processes of calcination (gāna) and triratna (sūtra) of mercury. Just as the process of making mercury cohesive is of two kinds—one involving the triratna and the other involving calcination—so too the process of making one’s own semen cohesive and motionless has two aspects—dispersion (stigga) for a consort and passion (stigga) for a consort. It consists of passion and dispersion, because the yogī focuses his mind on a deity and on the personal identityless of himself and his consort, which induces dispersion, while engaged in sexual union with a consort, which induces passion. Likewise, just as the
the Buddha means to bring one’s own gnosic into conscious experience. One reason for this is that the presence of the gnosic of imperishable bliss in sentient beings does not imply that it is fully manifest in their experience. When nondual gnosic becomes fully manifest, an ordinary sentient being becomes the Bhagavatī Kālacakra, who, according to the Vimalaprabhā, “is praised by the Jinas in all the tattvas as Vajraśrava, the word esum.”  

The Kālacakra tradition’s interpretation of Vajraśrava, which is based on the definition given in the Abhidhānākāra, is almost identical to that of the Hevajratantra. It states:  

Gnosic that is entirely indivisible (abhāya) is called the “sūtra.” A being (śravaṇa) who is the unity of the three worlds is called “Vajraśrava.”

Likewise, according to the Vimalaprabhā, the word esum designates Vajraśrava in this way: the letter es denotes the space-element, which is the sūtra throne occupied by syllable sva, which denotes the body, speech, mind, and gnosic. In light of these interpretations of Buddhahood, one may say in conclusion that in this tantric system, the actualization of the innate gnosic of imperishable bliss involves the realization of the unitary nature of all forms of existence, which manifests in the four aspects that are, like space, all-pervading and empty of inherent existence.  

Thus, in the Kālacakra tradition, the transformation of mutable bliss into immutable bliss is contingent upon one’s motivation and one’s mode of engaging in sexual practices. Those who engage in sexual practices merely for the pleasure of mutable bliss or while grasping onto such concepts as the Self (ātman) and creator are said to be incapable of actualizing imperishable bliss.  

Thus, one may conclude that it is not the nature of gnosic itself that sustains and eliminates one’s mental obscurations but one’s mode of experiencing it. As long as one’s experience of gnosic as innate bliss is mutable, the cycle of transmigration is perpetuated. When one’s experience of innate bliss becomes immutable, Buddhahood is realized. The mode of one’s experience of innate bliss directly depends upon the presence or absence of mental obscurations, and the presence of those obscurations proceeds from the fusion of consciousness and matter. The Kālacakra’s view that a single, physical body is a more hindrance to Buddhahood is supported by the earlier-mentioned theory that mental afflictions and karmas arise from the elements that form the human body.  

From the premise that one’s psycho-physical factors are the source of one’s mental obscurations arises the necessity of transforming the ordinary physical nature of one’s body and mind. The Kālacakra considers that transformation as the most direct means leading to the state in which one’s own body, speech, and the mind of immutable bliss become mutually pervasive and unified. The result of that transformation is none other than the actualization of the four bodies of the Buddha, the four aspects of gnosic and bliss.
The Transformative Body

The Path of Actualizing Gnosis, the Individual, and the Path as the Individual

The Kalacakratantra’s theory of the nature of gnosia, prāṇa, spiritual ignorance, and mental afflictions, as well as the relationship among them, provides the rationale for the Kalacakratantra practice for eliminating mental afflictions and actualizing the four bodies of the Buddha. Among the Kalacakratantra’s multifaceted approach to the eradication of mental afflictions, several are especially significant. First, the path of eliminating mental afflictions is the path of sublimating the affective nature of mental afflictions into the peaceful and pure nature of the enlightened beings who are the pure aspects of the elements from which mental afflictions arise. Second, the path of sublimating mental afflictions in the Kalacakratantra tradition is the path of recognizing the ultimate nature of one’s own mental afflictions, which is gnosia. This path is comprised of two methods. One is a conceptual method of familiarizing oneself with the ultimate nature of one’s own mind by means of autoquestion, specifically by means of generating oneself in the form of the deities of the Kalacakratantra. The other method is a nonconceptual method of spontaneous and direct recognition of gnosia as the ultimate nature of one’s own mind. The first method, which is characteristic of the stage of generation (ajñānta-krāma), is centered and based on one’s faith in the innately pure nature of one’s own mind, and it uses primarily one’s powers of imagination. Even though it is characterized by freedom from grasping onto one’s own ordinary psycho-physical aggregates, or one’s self-identity as an ordinary being, it is still characterized by holding onto the imagined self-identity. The second method, which is characteristic of the stage of completion (sampaññā-krāma), draws upon the experience of imperishable bliss and the direct perception of the innately pure nature of one’s own mind, which is devoid of grasping onto any identity. Thus, on the path of sublimating mental afflictions, the Kalacakratantra adopts the purificatory practices using one type of conceptualization in order to eliminate another type of conceptualization, and concludes with the eradication of all conceptualization. In this tantric tradition then, mental afflictions are nothing other than conceptualizations that obstruct the unmediated perception of the empty and blissful nature of one’s own mind.

In the anuvātu-yoga-tantra other than the Kalacakratantra, the primary goal of the path of sublimating mental afflictions is the purification of their immediate causes, beginning with the prāṇa. In those tantras, the purified prāṇa eventually become a purified material substance of the mind of clear light, and one’s pure illusory body arises from this substance. In the Kalacakratantra, on the other hand, the primary goal of sublimating mental afflictions is the complete eradication of all present and future prāṇa. It is upon such complete eradication that the body of empty form, called “the form of emptiness” (tathatā-bhūma), and the mind of immovable bliss arise. Since the cessation of the circulation of the prāṇa induces the actualization of Buddhahood in the form of Kalacakra, Buddhahood is characterized here as the “windless state” (āśāla) that one attains by means of wind. Similarly, the nonshining nirvāṇa (apariṇāmavāṇa) of the Buddha is also explained in terms of the absence of the wind of the prāṇa.1 The eradication of the prāṇa is characterized by two conditions of the mind. First, due to the destruction of the prāṇa, one’s dualistic mind becomes united, and it becomes both the apprehending subject and the apprehended object. In this way, one’s own mind becomes a form of emptiness (tathatā-bhūma), in which conceptualizations cannot arise. Second, the destruction of the prāṇa and the elements that carry eradicates the five psycho-physical aggregates and, in their absence, imperishable bliss arises.

Thus, in the context of the Kalacakratantra, by completely extinguishing one’s own psycho-physiological constitution and processes, one extinguishes the source of one’s own cycle of rebirth and attains the state of the eternal manifestation of the gnosia of supreme, immovable bliss. From the premise that one’s ordinary psycho-physical factors, which are composed of atomic particles, are the source of one’s mental obscurations, arises the necessity of transforming the ordinary, physical nature of one’s body and mind into their blissful nature. The Kalacakratantra considers that process of transformation as the most direct means to the state of the mutual pervasiveness and unification of one’s own body, speech, and the mind of immutable bliss.

The diverse aspects of this tantric path of actualizing the gnosia of immovable bliss are closely related to the previously described views of the Kalacakratantra on the ways in which the four bodies of the Buddha are present within the individual and on the manners in which their powers manifest in the bodily, verbal, and mental capacities of the human being. In light of the Kalacakra tradition’s identification of the individual with the four bodies of the Buddha, the path of actualizing the gnosia of immovable bliss can be seen as the path of bringing forth the true nature of one’s own bodily, verbal, and mental capacities. The path of actualizing the four bodies of the Buddha is the path of purification of the previously mentioned four bodily drops from the habitual propensities of spiritual ignorance, which are sustained by prāṇa. Therefore, in the Kalacakratantra, the path of actualizing the fourfold mind of the Buddha is inseparable from the path of sublimation, or transformation, of the prāṇa and its inheritance. In that regard, the material forms of the four bodies of the Buddha and the manners in which they manifest within every individual are most intimately related through their common causal relation-
ship to the *sūtra*. Their interrelation is even more clearly demonstrated in the Kālacakratantra's multifaceted, practical approach to the actualization of the four bodies of the Buddha.

With regard to this, one may say that in this tantric system, the transformative body of the path of actualizing blissful gnosis is the path of the mind's self-discovery through the elimination of its inessential ingredients with which the mind falsely identifies itself. Thus, the transformative body of the Kālacakratantra path is nothing else than the gnostic body revealing itself in the process of elimination until there is nothing left to be identified with, until the basis for self-affirmation, or self-identification, ceases and nondual self-awareness arises.

As in other related tantric systems, here too, the transformative path of actualizing the gnosis of immutably blissful consists of the three main stages of practice: the initiation (*abhisambha*), the stage of generation, and the stage of completion. However, the contents of these three main stages of Kālacakratantra practice differ from those in the other *amanta-yoga-tantras*, since the form of *buddhaadhatu* that is sought in this tantric tradition differs from those in the other related tantras.

In this tantric tradition, the actualization of the four bodies of the Buddha as the four aspects of the *jñānakāya* is instantaneous, but the path of purifying the four drops, which are the inner supports of the four types of the *jñānakāya*, is gradual. The process of sublimating the four drops is characterized by the Kālacakratantra's unique path consisting of three types of accumulations: the accumulations of merit (*puņa*), ethical discipline (*śīla*), and knowledge (*jñāna*). For this tantric system, the accumulation of merit results in the attainment of the first seven boddhatva-bhūmis, and the accumulation of ethical discipline leads to the attainment of the eighth, ninth, and tenth boddhatva-bhūmis. The accumulation of ethical discipline is defined here as meditation on reality (*samā*), and it is said to result from observing the tantric vows (*vratā*) and pledges (*bīja*), especially those related to the practices with a consort. Lastly, the accumulation of knowledge results in the attainment of the eleventh and twelfth boddhatva-bhūmis, which are characterized by the actualization of the gnosis of imperishable bliss and by the purification of one's own mind and body. Consisting of not two but three types of accumulations, this tantric path is closely related to the yogic practices that are specific to the *amanta-yoga-tantras* and to the relevant schema of the twelve boddhatva-bhūmis.

Likewise, this entire tantric path of spiritual transformation is seen as being of two kinds, mundane and supramundane, due to the differing qualities of tantric disciplines. Thus, the stage of initiation is said to be of two kinds: mundane (*saṅgha* and unascended (*amanta*). The mundane initiations are those that involve the generation of bliss by means of sexual union with an actual consort (*karma-mudrā*). Due to their involvement with union with an actual consort, these mundane initiations are considered ineffective in bringing forth nondual gnosis, without which there is no *buddhādhatu*; and their inefficacy is explained as follows. If in the union of the tantric couple, the bliss of the male consort that has arisen due to the female consort is the gnosis of the female consort, then the bliss of the female consort that has arisen due to the male consort is the gnosis of the male consort. In that case, there are two types of gnosis between the two consorts, which means that there is an absence of nonduality. Accordingly, the *Vimalaprabhā* asserts that the mundane initiations are taught not for the sake of bringing about the experience of nonduality but for converting people to this tantric path. The unascended initiations, on the other hand, do not involve the union of two sexual organs but are practiced by means of the *mahāmudrā* consort, or the empty form consort, and these initiations do give rise to the nondual gnosis of imperishable bliss.

Similarly, the stage of generation, in which one mediates on the sexual union of oneself and an imagined consort (*ākāsa-mudrā*) is regarded as a mundane *sādhana*, for it brings about only mundane results, such as the perishable experience of intimate bliss and the mundane *siddhi*. The stage of completion, on the other hand, in which one mediates by means of the *mahāmudrā* consort, is seen as the supramundane path to *buddhaadhatu*, for it induces the realization of the supramundane gnosis.

Thus, the transformative body of the path takes on first a mundane form that is accessible to the tantric practitioner who is new to the Kālacakratantra theory and practice; and it gradually evolves into the supramundane form by means of which the mundane person is transformed into a supramundane being.

### The Transformative Body of the Path of Initiation

This tantric path of the accumulation of merit, ethical discipline, and knowledge begins with the sevenfold initiation into the Kālacakratantra-māṇḍalā and this is seen as the first step in enabling the individual's four *sūtra* to eventually arise as the four bodies of the Buddha. It ends with two sets of four higher initiations, intended for the advanced Buddhist practitioners. The first seven initiations authorize the initiate to engage in the meditations on *mantras*, *mudrās*, and *māṇḍalā* that will facilitate the elimination of mental afflictions and the consequent accumulation of merit. According to the Kālacakratantra tradition, they are given for the sake of converting sentient beings to this body of the path and for providing the initiate with an understanding of this tantric path. The four higher initiations authorize the initiate to engage in the meditation on emptiness that has the best of all aspects, which facilitates the accumulation of knowledge, and the four highest initiations authorize the initiate to become a tantric master, a *saṅgha-kīrtana*.

The initial method of manifesting the four bodies of the Buddha is characterized by the initiate's entrance into the *kālacakratantra*-māṇḍalā through the four gateways of the māṇḍalā-palace, which symbolize the four gates of liberation corresponding to the four bodies of the Buddha, and by the initiate's visualization of his own psycho-physical constituents in the form of deities. This visualization during the stages of initiation of one's own psycho-physical makeup in the form of deities is unique to Kālacakratantra practice.

1. The first two initiations, the *Water* (*uḍāla*) and Crown (*maṭraṇa*) initiations, are designed to induce the initial eradication of the obscurations of the drop in the *kāla*-gate by sublimating the initiate's elements and psycho-physical aggregates, respectively. Thus, these two initiations, during which the initiate is led into the māṇḍalā through the northern gate, are said to facilitate the transformation of the initiate's body and the eventual actualization of the five *tathāgata*-as. Thus, this initial purification of the drop in the *kāla*-gate is believed to empower the initiate to actualize the *nirvāṇa-kāya* of the Buddha.

2. The second two initiations, the *Limb* (*śāla*) and Crown (*maṭraṇa*) initiations, are designed to induce the transformation of the obscurations of the drop in the *kāla*-gate by sublimating the initiate's elements and psycho-physical aggregates, respectively. Thus, these two initiations, during which the initiate is led into the māṇḍalā through the northern gate, are said to facilitate the transformation of the initiate's body and the eventual actualization of the five *tathāgata*-as. Thus, this initial purification of the drop in the *kāla*-gate is believed to empower the initiate to actualize the *nirvāṇa-kāya* of the Buddha.
The other two initiations, the Crown-pendant (panja) and the Vajra-and-Bell (vajra-ghan) initiations, are designed to purify the drop in the throat-calabu by purifying the right and left naḍīs. In doing so, these two initiations, which are performed at the southern gate of the kālacaktra-mandala, are said to facilitate the purification of the initiate's speech-vañja and the actualization of the Śambhogakāya. The Crown-pendant initiation is said to empower the initiate to attain the ten powers that are for the sake of attaining the ten perfections, whereas the Vajra-and-Bell initiation is said to empower the initiate to attain imperishable bliss by purifying the semen and uterine blood.

Likewise, the Vajra-Conduct (vajra-śruti) and Name (nimū) initiations, which are performed at the eastern gate of the kālacaktra-mandala, are designed to facilitate the purification of the drop at the heart-calabu, which is the mind-vañja, and the actualization of the Dharmaśaya. The Vajra-Conduct initiation is said to induce the initial sublimation of the sense-faculties and their objects and to empower the initiate to attain the divine eye (śrīyād-vajra) and other divine faculties. The Name initiation is believed to purify the faculties of action (karmendriya) and their activities and to empower the initiate to attain the four Immeasurables (brahma-vihāra).

Lastly, the Permission (ānubhūti) initiation, which is performed at the western gate of the kālacaktra-mandala, is designed to remove the delusions of the drop at the navel-calabu and to facilitate the actualization of the Jñānakāya. It is said to empower the initiate to set the Wheel of Dharma in motion.

In this tantric system, the initiate who has undertaken this initial purification of the body, speech, mind, and gnosis by means of the seven initiations is considered authorized to practice the sūdhana for the sake of the mundane siddha (laṅkā-siddha). While receiving these seven initiations, the initiate takes the twenty-five tantric vows (śruti) and the pledges to avoid the fourteen root delusions (mulādepta). In this manner, he increases his store of merit. The power of merit that the initiate accumulates by means of the first seven initiations is considered effective in facilitating the attainment of the first seven bodhisattva-blams, either in this life or in a future rebirth. If the initiate visualizes the kālacaktra-mandala while he is being initiated into it, then he accumulates enough merit to empower him to attain mastery over the seven bodhisattva-blams in his present life. But, if the initiate who is free of the ten nonvirtues dies, he attains mastery over the seven bodhisattva-blams in the next life.

The four higher initiations are believed to empower the initiate to attain the remaining bodhisattva-blams by further purifying the habitual propensities of the previously accumulated impurities. In the course of these four higher initiations, the initiate engages in sexual union with an actual consort (karma-mātā), experiences sexual bliss, and at the same time meditates on emptiness. At the same time, the initiate identifies himself with the Buddha's four vajras—the vajra of the body, speech, mind, and gnosis, respectively. Thus, in the Vajra initiation, the initiate identifies himself with the body-vajra, and he mentally offers to his spiritual mentor the young consort, the manjūra, and the criminals. When the offered consort returns, the initiate gazes at the imagined consort, whom he visualizes as Viśvarūpa, and imagines caressing her breasts. By doing so, the initiate brings forth the experience of bliss (ānanda), and while experiencing that bliss, he meditates on emptiness. This unified manner of experiencing bliss and cognizing emptiness during the Vajra initiation is believed to facilitate the purification of the drop at the forehead-calabu and to further empower the initiate to attain the Nirmānakāya.

During the Secret initiation, the initiate identifies himself with the speech-vajra and visualizes his spiritual mentor engaging in sexual union with his own consort. Subsequently, he visualizes that rays of light, which are emitted from the spiritual mentor's heart, bring all the desires of the kālacaktra-mandala into the spiritual mentor's mouth. Those desires descend into the spiritual mentor's heart, and from there they arrive at the tip of his sexual organ, at which point, the initiate imagines the spiritual mentor placing a drop of purified semen into the initiate's mouth. The initiate gazing at the sexual organ of the consort and experiences sexual bliss, due to which the drop of bodhicitta from the throat-calabu descends into the initiate's heart-calabu and causes the initiate to experience supreme bliss (paramānanda). While experiencing supreme bliss, the initiate meditates on emptiness. Thus, by uniting the initiate's experience of great bliss with his cognition of emptiness, the Secret initiation facilitates the purification of the drop in the throat-calabu and further empowers the initiate to attain the Śambhogakāya.

During the Wisdom initiation, the initiate identifies himself with the mind-vajra. Here, the initiate enters into sexual union with the imagined consort (guhyamātā) whom he offered to his spiritual mentor during the Vajra initiation. During the imagined sexual union, the initiate visualizes his sexual organ as a five-pointed vajra and the organ of his consort as light out of which arises a red lotus with three petals, with the yellow syllable puṣā in its center. Due to this sexual union, the initiate experiences intimate bliss (adhāvānanda) as the drop of bodhicitta descends from the heart-calabu into the navel-calabu. While experiencing this supreme bliss, the initiate meditates on emptiness. Unifying the initiate's experience of bliss with his cognition of emptiness in this manner, the Wisdom initiation is said to facilitate the purification of the drop in the heart-calabu and to empower the initiate to attain the Dharmaśaya.

During the Gnosis initiation, the initiate identifies himself with the gnosis-vajra, and he identifies his consort with Viśvarūpa. He enters into sexual union with the consort and experiences supreme, immutable bliss (parama-sāma-mātā). Due to the experience of this bliss, a drop of bodhicitta descends from the sexu-calabu to the tip of his sexual organ and remains there without being emitted. While experiencing the moment of supreme, immovable bliss, the initiate mediates on emptiness.
this manner, the Gnosis initiation facilitates the purification of the drop in the navel column and empowers the initiate to attain the Jñānākāya.

Thus, one may say that in the four higher initiations, it is the initiate’s experience of the four types of bliss and emptiness that induces the further purification of the four drops. In the Vase initiation, it is the experience of sexual bliss induced by the imagined caressing of the body and breasts of the consort; in the Secret initiation, it is the experience of sexual bliss induced by the imagined sexual union; in the Wisdom initiation, it is the experience of sexual bliss induced by the pulsation (upadana) of the tip of the sexual organ; and in the Gnosis initiation, it is the experience of sexual bliss induced by the pulsation (upadana) of the tip of the sexual organ; and in the Gnosis initiation, it is the experience of sexual bliss by internalizing the sexual desire due to mentally gazing and caressing the breasts of a consort who is chosen from among the ten. Due to the aroused desire, a drop of bodhiśattva descends from his svāra into the alaṁ and gives rise to bliss (ānanda). During the other three highest initiations, due to the imagined sexual union with the remaining nine of the ten consorts and due to the retention of semen, he sequentially experiences supreme bliss (parānānanda), extraordinary bliss (virānānanda), and innate bliss (ukhaśānanda). As in the four higher initiations, which came earlier, here too the experience of the four types of bliss is accompanied by meditation on emptiness. Due to this, the experience is believed to further facilitate the transformation of the svāra of the body, speech, mind, and consciousness into the four bodies of the Buddha. As with the preceding path of the four higher initiations, due to the experience of the four types of bliss, this fourfold path of initiation has both aspects: mandala and supramandala. In this way, the four highest initiations are the preliminary practices for the stage of completion.

In the four higher and the four highest initiations, the experience of the four types of bliss becomes the means of purifying one’s own mental obstructions and facilitating the nondual vision of reality. As indicated earlier, the experience of sexual bliss is thought to exert its purifying power only when it is accompanied by both the retention of semen and meditation on emptiness. The following verses from the Abhidharmakosā express this in the following manner:

The union with an sexual consort (karmas-mahādī), and in desiring a gnosis consort (īśīn-mahādī), those who firmly hold the cows should guard them (buddhis), the great bliss.

Upon placing one’s own sexual organ into the yoni, one should not enter bodily. Rather, one should meditate on the entire three worlds as the body of the Buddha.

Due only to that guarded (budhi) Buddhas, which is completely filled with the accumulation of ethical discipline and is fully endowed with merit and knowledge, comes about in this lifetime.

The Samskāramārga, who have attained the perfections, abide in the three times. By means of this (guarding buddhis), all Samskāramārga turn the Wheel of Dharma.

There is no greater bliss than this, which is the lord of the three worlds and is not devoid of engrossing and compassion for the sake of accomplishing its own well-being and the well-being of others.
Thus, already in the stage of initiation, one's own gnosis that manifests as both sexual bliss, or passion, characterized by seminal nonsecretion, and as the cognition of emptiness, or dissipation, acts as the means for actualizing the gnosis of imperishable bliss.

The Transformative Body of the Path of the Stage of Generation

The second phase of the transformative body of the path of actualizing the four bodies of the Buddhas is the stage of generation (sambhava). It consists of four main phases of practice, which are classified as the four types of sādhanas:

1. the generation of the body, or the supreme king of mandalas (manḍala-rāja), which is specified as the "phase of worship" (devapūra),
2. the generation of the speech, or the supreme king of actions (karma-rāja), which is specified as the "auxiliary sādhanā" (upacāra-sādhanā),
3. the yoga of the drops (bindu-yoga), which is characterized by the generation of the drops of semen and is specified as a "śālākara," and
4. the subtle yoga (śālākā-yoga), which is characterized by the arising of bliss and is specified as the "sublime sādhanā" (mahā-sādhanā).

This fourfold classification of the stage of generation corresponds to the fourfold classification of the Buddha's bodies, and it delineates the body of the path which is made up of progressively more subtle forms of tantric practice. The first two types of sādhanas, which involve meditation on the fourfold kalacakra-mandala and all its in-dwelling deities, are based on intricate mental imagery, which cannot be maintained without adequate meditative quiescence (samādhi). Moreover, the symbolic implications of the mental imagery sustained by meditative quiescence facilitate the contemplative's insight (śūnyatā) into the empty and blissful nature of that imagery and its referents. Investigating the impermanent nature of the imagined deities of the kalacakra-mandala, and thereby realizing his own impermanence and the impermanence of all sentient beings abiding within the triple world, the tantric contemplative realizes that nothing in the kalacakra-mandala or in the three worlds is of endur- ing essence. Therefore, on the stage of generation, the path of the purification of the four drops is uniquely characterized by the simultaneous development of quiescence and insight. This path is complemented by the practice of the mediator's self-identification with the visualized deities, or the cultivation of divine pride, which is neces-sarily based on some conceptual understanding of the emptiness of inherent existence of the deities with whom the contemplative identifies himself.

The visual formation of the kalacakra-mandala is called "the supreme sovereign mandala" because it corresponds to the generation of the four bodies of the Buddhas. When this mentally created, supreme, sovereign mandala is conceived as the visual representation of the pure aspects of the contemplative's own gross, mind, speech, and body, it acts as the purifying agent of the mediator's four drops. The transformative power of the visualized kalacakra-mandala is believed to lie in its efficacy to partially eradicate the obscurations of conventional reality (sānyāsa-dūrayāna), by allowing ultimate reality to manifest itself through the generated mandala. However, as indicated earlier, its purifying efficacy is believed to be contingent upon the contemplative's own understanding of emptiness. The Kalacakra tantra asserts that one should engage in meditation on the kalacakra-mandala only after one has understood that "the entire world is empty," that ultimately "there is neither a Buddha nor spiritual awakening." The transformative power of this practice is also said to lie in the contemplative's understanding that the entire kalacakra-mandala, which is a mere illusion (māyā) and an idée fixe (kalpita), is nothing other than the manifestation of one's own mind. Accordingly, the contemplative must understand that in order to free his mind from illusion, he must eventually leave behind this form of practice and, in order to transform his mind into the actual Kalacakra, the unity of bliss and emptiness, he must engage in nonconceputal meditation. In light of this, the Kalacakra tantra states:

Because the entire sādhanā of a sādhu is an illusion, one should make one's own mind free of impurities; one should make it the lord of the mandala.

On the grounds that the visualized kalacakra-mandala is a mere mental construct that arises normally with the mediator's own mind, one may say further that in this stage of practice the transformative agent of the mediator's four drops is his own mind.

1. In the first phase of the stage of generation, the method of purifying the four drops is characterized by the visualization of the kalacakra-mandala and its diverse classes of deities, who represent the enlightened aspects of the mediator's body and of the cosmic body. As in the case of many Buddhist Mahāyāna meditational prac-tices, here too, the conception of self, rejoining its virtue, taking refuge, and arousing the spirit of awakening (buddhānā) precede the practice of meditative visualization.

The path of the actualization of the four bodies of the Buddhas on the stage of generation involves meditative practices during which the tantric adept imaginatively dies as an ordinary person and arises as the Buddha Kalacakra. For that reason, the stage of generation begins with a meditation in which the tantric adept mentally casts off his transmigratory psycho-physical aggregates in order to obtain the supra-mundane aggregates (lokuttara-lokhaṇa). In this phase of practice, prior to visualizing the kalacakra-mandala as the sublimated aspect of his own body and of the cosmic body, the tantric adept imaginatively dissolves the atomic structure of his own body and the body of the universe. In order to relinquish his habitualized sense of self-iden-tity and establish his new identity, the mediator mentally disintegrates his body in the same manner that the body dissolves by itself during the dying process. By meditating on the water-element, he eliminates first the fire-element; then when the earth-element has lost its solidity due to the absence of fire and it becomes liquid, he dries it up by meditating on the wind-element, which he disperses afterward into space. After that, he mediates on the space-element as the reflection of emptiness, or as empty form, which transcends the reality of atoms. This manner of setting one's own mind on empty form and establishing it as one's true identity is a prereq-uisite for adequate meditative practice of generating oneself in the form of the deities of the kalacakra-mandala.

Whereas the first phase of the stage of generation is analogous to the stage of dy-ing and the dissolution of the cosmos, the second phase of the stage of generation is analogous to conception in the womb and to the formation of the cosmos. It entails
the mental generation of the four divisions of the kālacakrā-mandala as the mother's body and as the cosmic body. In this phase of practice, the tantric practitioner visualizes first the mind-mandala, at the center of which is gnosia, which has the form of a lotus within the tetrahedral source of wisdom (pujñā-dharmadīrgha). In this way, he symbolically generates the Dharmaśākya and the Jñānakāya of the Buddha, the sublimated aspects of the wind and earth mandalas of the universe and of the mother's forehead and navel cañcara. After mentally generating the mind-mandala, the tantric contemplative visualizes the speech-mandala encircling the mind-mandala. By visualizing the speech-mandala, he generates the Samdhīpajñākāya of the Buddha, the sublimated aspect of the fire-mandala of the universe and of the mother's throat-cañcara. He further visualizes the body-mandala encircling the speech-mandala, and in this way, he generates the Nirmitākāya of the Buddha, the sublimated aspect of the water-mandala of the cosmic body and of the mother's heart-cañcara. Visualizing these four mandalas of the gnosia, mind, speech, and body, together with their individual sets of four gates, portals, and the like, the tantric yogi mentally generates the sublimated universe and the mother's body, as well as his transformed environment, in which he will arise as the Buddha Kālacakra in the next phase of the stage of generation practice. (See figure 8.1.)

The following verses from the Aṣṭabodhīsūtra indicate the manner in which a tantric adept should understand that the mandalas that he generates as the purificatory aspects of the mother's body and the cosmos are the symbolic representations of the Buddhahood into which he will arise as the Sādhanākāya:

The mandala of the mind, speech, and body correspond to the Buddha, Dharma, and subtler Saṃsāra. The four sūtra-lines correspond to the four divine abodes (brahma-vihāra).

A quadrangular form within the mandala entirely corresponds to the four applications of mindfulness (ātmanasiṣṭha), and the twelve gates correspond to the cessation of the twelve links (upādāna-ātmanasiṣṭha).

Likewise, the exquisite portals correspond to the twelve bāsas, and the creation grounds in the eight directions correspond to the Noble Eightfold Path.

The sixteenth pillars are [sixteenfold] eminences, and the upper floors correspond to the elements. The crests correspond to the eight liberations, to the eight corporealities (rupa), and to the eight qualities (adhaṃka).

The face and the sides [of the gates] accord with the classification of the mind, speech, and body. The five pure colors correspond to the five ethical discipline (śīla), and the like.

The three gates in the mandala of the mind, speech, and body correspond to the three Vehicles, to the three faculties of birth, and the like, and to the five powers (bala) of birth, and so on.

The pavilions in the three mandalas correspond to the samādhi and dhāranī. The variegated jeweled strips of fabric correspond to all of the ten perfections.

UNIVERSE

green space - mandala
black space - mandala
red fire - mandala
white water - mandala
yellow earth - mandala
Meru
moon-disc
sun-disc
rāhu-disc

INDIVIDUAL, SOCIETY

upādāna, dharma
śīle, dharma
sthāna-cañcara, ākṣara-cañcara
heart-cañcara, brāhma
navel-cañcara, vāra
secret-cañcara, caṇḍika
nāgī of semen
nāgī of seeds
nāgī of urine

The pearl-garlands and the half [pearl-garlands] correspond to the eighteen unique qualities of the Buddha (śākya-dharma). Bodhi flowers correspond to the [ten] powers. The balconies correspond to virtues.

[Balconies] filled with the sounds of bells and the like correspond to liberation through emptiness, and so on. Their state of being full of victory-banners corresponds to the [four] bases of supernatural power (vidyā-pāda), and their glittering with mirrors corresponds to the [four] exaltations (padha). The vibration of their yak-tail whisk corresponds to the [seven] limbs of enlightenment, and their decorative garlands correspond to the nine divisions of the Buddha's teaching. The cornets that are adorned with variegated sūpas correspond to the four means of assembly (upapāsaka).

Their being studded with the four jewels of the Four Noble Truths at the junctures between the gates and crests and always being surrounded by five great circles symbolize the five extra-sensory perceptions (pañcājñā).
They are surrounded by theupa-chain of the constituents of enlightenment (bud-kyāṅs) of one who knows all aspects, by a single wall of bliss, and by the light-rays of the gods-vipa.

The ever-risen moon and sun are in accordance with the division of wisdom and method. The pure mind, speech, and body are the Wheel of Dharma, the great pitcher, drum, tree of spiritual awakening, in wish-fulfilling jewels, and the like. This is a mandala of splendid Kalacakara, which is the dhāraṇī-dhātu.\textsuperscript{27}

After purifying one's own perception and conception of the environment in this way, the tantric practitioner enters the next phase of the stage of generation, in which he imagines himself as an enlightened being arising in a pure environment. Therefore, this phase of the stage of generation is analogous to the individual's development in the mother's womb and to the origination of cosmic time. At this phase of practice, the tantric yogī generates the body of the Buddha Kalacakara as the sublimated form of the universe and of his own body by visualizing Kalacakara standing on the discs of the sun, moon, and Rāhu and emanating the five rays of light. This phase of visualization is analogous to the moment of conception in the womb. Thus, the sun, moon, and Rāhu represent the purified aspects of the mother's uterine blood, the father's semen, and the meditator's consciousness, which are joined in the parasitical mother's body that was generated earlier as the four mandalas. The five rays of light symbolize the five types of gnosis, the purified aspects of the meditator's psycho-physical aggregates.

The next phase of visualization, which is analogous to the third month in the womb, represents the sublimation of the three links of dependent origination. In that phase, the meditator visualizes the Buddha Kalacakara standing in the uhūra posture,\textsuperscript{28} which symbolizes the flow of the prajñā in the meditator's right hand and their retraction in his left hand. With his feet, the Buddha Kalacakara crushes the hearts of Rudra and Mitra, the meditator's mental deities. Here the tantric contemplative visualizes Kalacakara in union with Viṣṇumātā, the personified representation of the perfection of wisdom, or gnosis, who is standing in the mṛdūbhāṣa posture,\textsuperscript{29} which symbolizes the flow of the prajñā in the contemplative's left hand and their retraction in his right hand. By visualizing Kalacakara and Viṣṇumātā, the tantric adept mentally generates the two aspects of the Buddha's mind: bliss and emptiness. According to the Vimalakīrti, Kalacakara represents innate bliss (saṁbhāna-citta), or supreme, imperishable bliss (akāra-saṁkara); and Viṣṇumātā represents the gnosis of the emptiness that has all aspects (saṅkara-tatva-saṁkara), which perceives the three times and is "purified by the elimination of the obscurations of conceptualizations (saṁkāra) and the bliss of seminal flow (saṅkara-saṁkara).\textsuperscript{30}" Their sexual union within the pericarp of the lotus of the mandala symbolizes the union of these two aspects of the Buddha's mind. The presence of these two deities in the heart of the kalacakra-mandala is to remind the meditator that gnosis, characterized by bliss and emptiness, is the ultimate nature of all other deities in the mandala, that is to say, of all other aspects of Bud- dhahood and of the meditator's own psycho-physical constituents. In other words, all other deities in the mandala are to be understood as the emanations of the two principal deities. For example, Viṣṇumātā, who is the perfection of wisdom, becomes Vajradhāvatī-pratī to the sake of destroying ordinary hatred (paścāt-vrata) and bringing forth sublime hatred (mahā-vrata), which is the absence of hatred. She becomes Loci-rī for the sake of destroying ordinary delusion. Due to her sublime compassion, she becomes Mañjuśrī for the sake of destroying ordinary pride, Pravīrā for the sake of destroying ordinary attachment, and Tān for the sake of elucidating ordinary envy, and so on. Likewise, Vaiśravaṇa becomes Vairocana for the sake of illuminating the minds of deluded people, Atripatthā for the sake of those afflicted by attachment, Ratnasambhava for the sake of generosity toward suffering beings, and Akṣobhyaśāśana for the sake of removing obstacles, and so on.\textsuperscript{31} In this way, united bliss and emptiness, symbolized here by the two principal deities in sexual union, free the mind from its obstructions by sublimating the elements that give rise to mental obstructions.

At times, the two principal deities are also identified with the contemplative's aggregate of gnosis (gūnā-saṁkāra) and the element of gnosis (gūnā-dhātu), respectively; and at other times, they are both referred to as the element of gnosis that gives rise to the individual's mental sense-facility (mano-indra). For this reason, they are also called "the gnostic deities" (gūnā-dhātu).\textsuperscript{32}

The subsequent phases of the visualization of the deities accompanying Kalacakara and Viṣṇumātā are viewed as analogous to the further development of the fetus in the womb and to the sublimation of the remaining links of dependent origination. Thus, the tantric adept further visualizes the two principal deities surrounded by the eight goddesses who stand on the eight petals of the lotus and represent eight perfections. As he visualizes the other deities of the mind-mandala—the four Buddhas and their consorts, the Vidyā, the deities with a tree and a pitcher (svarūpa-saṅkāra), the male and female Bodhisattvas, and the five male and female wrathful deities (krodha)-the tantric adept generates the sublimated aspects of his elements, sense-bases (sūtra), and other bodily constitutions. The generation of the four Buddhas and their consorts and the male and female wrathful deities within the mind-mandala is said to be analogous to the fourth month in the womb and to the sublimation of the fourth link of dependent origination.\textsuperscript{33} Whereas the generation of the male Bodhisattva is seen as analogous to the fifth month in the womb and to the sublimation of the fifth link of dependent origination or the six sense-facilities. The generation of their female consorts is analogous to the sixth month in the womb and to the sublimation of the sixth link of dependent origination.

In the schema of the fourfold kalacakra-mandala, the gnostic couple, Kalacakara and Viṣṇumātā, who are the meditator's sublimated gnosic-aggregate and element, represent the Sahajāyika of the Buddha; all other deities of the mind-mandala represent the Dharmaśāya of the Buddha. The sequential visualization of the deities of the gnosis and mind-mandala illustrates the Kalacakara tradition's view of the Dharmaśāya arising from the Sahajāyika as analogous to the arising of the sense-facilities and their objects from the elements. Accordingly, the Kalacakara tradition views the mental generation of the mind-mandala as the sublimation of the meditator's conceptual and perceptual types of sweetness. Every deity in the kalacakra-mandala corresponds to the specific component of the human body or to its functions. Table 8.1 illustrates the manner in which the Kalacakara tradition identifies the six Buddhas and their consorts with the six elements, and the six male and female Bodhisattvas with the twelve sense-bases that arise from the six elements.\textsuperscript{34}

Upon generating this mind-mandala, the contemplative generates the goddesses
Table 8.1: Buddhās and Bodhisattvas within the Human Body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six male buddhas and bodhisattvas</th>
<th>Six female buddhas and bodhisattvas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arupapajñātā (the wind-element)</td>
<td>Tatā (the wind-element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vajradhātu (the nose)</td>
<td>Sāpaśajñātā (touch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramamati (the fire-element)</td>
<td>Pāndanti (the fire element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāraṇārjuna (the eye)</td>
<td>Rasanipati (sun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varadāsa (the earth-element)</td>
<td>Lokaśānti (the earth-element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāvatvāntrayapajñātā (the body)</td>
<td>Ājātaka (small)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animaśāla (the water-element)</td>
<td>Mālanidhi (the water-element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lokapāla (the tongue)</td>
<td>Rūpajñātā (form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśārāja (the gross-element)</td>
<td>Vaiśārāja (the gross-element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadanipāla (the mind)</td>
<td>Sadanipāla (sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avajñānā (the space-element)</td>
<td>Dhanatthavīraśva (space-element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaipāraśvājñātā (the ear)</td>
<td>Dhanatthavīraśvajñātā (mental object)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of the naḍis of time (kāla-naḍi) within the speech-mandala, in addition to the eight goddesses (devī) and their attending sixty-four yoginis as standing on the eight petals of the speech-mandala. The visualization of the eight principal goddesses and their retinue of yoginis of the speech-mandala is analogous to the seventh month in the womb and to the sublimation of the seventh link of dependent origination. By visualizing the goddesses of the speech-mandala, the tantric adept generates the Sambhārakāya of the Buddhās. 33

After visualizing the speech-mandala, the meditator visualizes the diverse classes of deities of the body-mandala: namely, the nātāryas, sāyaśevas, nāgās, and prakāṣaṇaṇas. Visualizing the twelve nātāryas, the tantric practitioner generates the sublimated aspects of the twelve main naḍis of his body, and visualizing the twelve lotuses on which they are standing, he generates the twelve sublimated aspects of the calas within the twelve joints of his arms and legs, which are called the action-calas (karma-calas) and the activity-calas (kriya-calas). Similarly, mentally creating the sāyaśevas, the contemplative generates the purified aspects of the naḍis of his hands, feet, crown-calas, and arms. The generation of these two classes of deities, nātāryas and sāyaśevas, is viewed as analogous to the eighth month in the womb and to the sublimation of the eighth link of dependent origination. Visualizing the ten nāgās and ten prakāṣaṇaṇas within the body-mandala, the yogi generates the sublimated naḍis of his ten fingers and ten toes. This visualization is said to be analogous to the ninth month in the womb and to the sublimation of the ninth link of dependent origination. Visualizing the deities of the body-mandala in this way, the contemplative generates the Nirmāṇakāya of the Buddhās.

Just as all of the aforementioned deities of the four mandalas symbolize the puri-
fied aspects of the four bodies of the Buddha that are latent present in the body of the fetus, so do they symbolize the purified aspects of the four bodies of the Buddha that are latent in the body of the individual born from the womb. The deities of the gross and mind mandalas symbolize the four bodies of the Buddha latently present in the body of a young child, and the deities of the speech and body mandalas symbolize the actualized aspects of the four bodies of the Buddha that are present in the body of the individual. 34 Thus, by mentally generating the deities of the four mandalas, the tantric adept imaginatively transmutes his entire life, from the time of conception until death, into the state of Buddhahood.

Tables 8.2a–b show the correspondences among the deities of the fourfold mandala, the four bodies of the Buddha, and one’s bodily constituents.

The Buddhācetaka tradition sees this entire phase of the generation of the body of the Buddhācetaka as the fourfold Buddhācetaka-mandala as a meditation on perfect awakening with five aspects (pāṭikāla-samphala); and it considers the following phase of apādañjana to be a meditation on perfect awakening with twenty aspects. 35

2. The spaadhañjana phase of the stage of generation practice involves a nadhana on the enlightened activities of the deities of the Buddhācetaka-mandala, that is, the activities of the four bodies of the Buddhās. In this phase of practice, the tantric contemplative imaginatively awakens his consciousness, which has fallen into stupa and is unaware of its true nature, and he stimulates it to engage in enlightened activities. For example, he imagines the female consorts of the four Buddhās, who symbolize the four immaterialities, the pure aspects of the four bodily elements, as stand-

Table 8.2a: The Gross and Mind Mandalas within the Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buddhācetaka</th>
<th>Sambhārakāya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśāṣina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ākāra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmāṇakāya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2b: The Speech and Body Mandalas within the Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buddhācetaka</th>
<th>Sambhārakāya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśāṣina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ākāra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmāṇakāya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2c: The Speech and Body Mandalas within the Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buddhācetaka</th>
<th>Sambhārakāya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśāṣina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ākāra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmāṇakāya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2d: The Speech and Body Mandalas within the Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buddhācetaka</th>
<th>Sambhārakāya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśāṣina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ākāra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmāṇakāya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2e: The Speech and Body Mandalas within the Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buddhācetaka</th>
<th>Sambhārakāya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśāṣina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ākāra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmāṇakāya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2f: The Speech and Body Mandalas within the Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buddhācetaka</th>
<th>Sambhārakāya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśāṣina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ākāra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmāṇakāya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ing in his four caliras and sexually inciting the Buddha Kālacakrā, that is, his own mind-sūtra, with these songs:

I am Lokanātha, the mother of the world, present in the yogī's semantic emission. O Kālacakrā, arise with the nature of my mandala and desire me.

I am Māmākā, a sister, present in the yogī's spiritual maturation. O Kālacakrā, arise with the nature of my mandala and desire me.

I am Pinjharā, a daughter, present in any man among the yogīs. O Kālacakrā, arise with the nature of my mandala and desire me.

I am Tarā, a wife, present in the yogī's purity. O Kālacakrā, arise with the nature of my mandala and desire me.

Protector of the world, whose intention is the deliverance of the world, upon perceiving the empty mandala, expand the mandala of the body, speech, and mind.

Hearing their songs, one's own mind—the Buddha Kālacakrā who is absorbed in emptiness—awakens, perceives that the entire world is like an illusion, and engages in activities for the benefit of all sentient beings. This is the origin of the true awareness to engage in enlightened activities is closely related to the mutual union of the kālacakrā-mandala's female and male deities, which are the wisdom and method aspects, or the mind and body aspects, of the Buddha. The sexual union of the male and female deities, who belong to different families, is pertinent to the Kālacakrā tradition's view of the ways in which the mutual pervasion of the four bodies of the Buddha gives rise to their enlightened activities. For example, the union of the deities comprising the Sahajākyā and the body-sūtra gives rise to Kālacakrā's body, just as their phenomenal aspects give rise to the body of the female. Likewise, the mutual pervasion of the deities representing the Dharma and the speech-sūtra is for the sake of teaching the Dharma, just as their phenomenal aspects within the body of the individual give rise to the preaching of a child. The union of the deities symbolizing the Sarvabhūtakāya and the mind-sūtra acts for the well-being of all sentient beings. The union of the deities who comprise the Nirākārakāya and the gross-sūtra is said to bring about the liberation of sentient beings, just as their phenomenal aspects in the body of the individual give rise to the capacity for sexual bliss at the age of sixteen.

Upon generating the kālacakrā-mandala and all its deities in this way, the tantric adept performs a self-emancipation. He first purifies his bodily and mental constituents by invoking the deities that represent the sūtra of the enlightened body, speech, and mind, and he requests the initiation from the goddess who belongs to the mandala of the body, speech, and mind. This imagined initiation is said to further purify the contemplative's caliras and facilitate the actualization of the four bodies of the Buddha. Thus, the eight divyā purify his eight-spoked heart-calira and facilitate its transmutation into the Dhammakāya of the Buddha. The four Buddhas and their consorts, who are collectively multiplied by two due to being classified in terms of body and mind, purify the sixteen-spoked kālāma and facilitate its transmutation into the Sahajākyā. The six Bodhidhātvas, their consorts, and the four brāhmaṇs, who become thirty-two when multiplied by two due to being classified in terms of wisdom and method, purify the thirty-two-spoked throat-calira and facilitate its transforma-

tion into the Sagabhūtakāya. Similarly, the sixty-four yoginis purify the sixty-four spoked navel-caliras and facilitate its transmutation into the Nirākārakāya. All other caliras in the joints of the contemplative's arms and legs, all the nāḍis in the body, and the psycho-physical aggregates are purified by other deities of the kālacakrā-mandala. Upon imagining himself being initiated and purified in this manner, the tantric adept identifies himself with the body, speech, mind, and gnosis of all the Buddhas in order to further diminish his grasping onto his ordinary psycho-physical aggregates.

The two aforementioned phases of the stage of generation, the saṃyoga and apādābhava, constitute the Kālacakrā tradition's deity-sūtra (devatā-sūtra), which is believed to give mundane siddhis. Therefore, in this tantric system, a siddha on the kālacakrā-mandala is referred to as "a mundane siddha" (laññu-ācāri). In light of the fact that meditation on the kālacakrā-mandala is a conceptual meditation that involves mental visualization and imagination, the Vimalaprabhā speaks of the first two types of siddhās of the stage of generation as the siddhās in which the object of meditation lacks duration, for it is characterized by origination and cessation. The kālacakrā-mandala as the object of a siddha is understood to lack duration in the sense that in the moment in which the tantric contemplative concentrates on the principal deity in the center of the mandala, he is no longer aware of the other deities in the mandala. Likewise, when the yogi concentrates on the blue face of Kālacakrā, he is not cognizant of Kālacakrā's red, white, and yellow faces, and so on. Since meditation on the kālacakrā-mandala is characterized by limited and momentary cognition, it is considered ineffective in directly inducing the state of nonconceptional and imperishable gnosis. From this vantage point, the Vimalaprabhā speaks of the siddhā of the stage of generation as inferior siddha, which are designed for spiritually less mature practitioners. It comments in this regard:

The Brahmā, who knows reality, upon resorting to conventional truth in accordance with the power of sentient beings' inclinations, taught this truth as dependent on originally received powers—which is the domain of the self-originated siddhas and is limited and capable of limited functions—to simple-minded people who are lacking in courage, who do not seek ultimate reality, whose minds are stimulated by deep and profound gnosises, who are satisfied with siddhās for pacification and other such acts, who are attached to the pleasures of sense-objects, and delight in the siddhās for mundane siddhas, alchemists, cow-slaughter, pills, and the magic daggers.

On the one hand, the Vimalaprabhā acknowledges that there are inconceivable powers in this limited, conceptual meditation, along with the mantras, gems, pills, magical daggers, alchemical substances, and similar objects that are of limited functions. On the other hand, it affirms that the mundane knowledge and mundane siddhis that one acquires through the practice of conceptual meditation cannot perform the limitless functions of supermundane omniscience and the supermundane siddhas.

The limited knowledge and mundane siddhis do not bring about the omniscient language or supernatural powers (śrāvi), because they are not free of mental obscurations. Therefore, the yogis who practice conceptual meditation is thought to be unable to bring about the well-being of all sentient beings in the way that the
Jñāna-kāya, which is free of conceptualizations, is able to do. Since the imagined kāla-cakra-mandala is a reflection of the contemplative's own mind, which is obscured with obscurations, then the kāla-cakra-mandala is also a manifestation of the contemplative's mental obscurations. The Vimalaprabhā explains this in the following manner:

When a phenomenon (dhāraṇa) that is with obscurations is made manifest, the yogī does not become omniscient; when a phenomenon that is free of obscurations becomes manifest, the yogī becomes omniscient. The omniscient one has the divine eye and ear, knowledge of others' minds, recollection of former lives, omniscience, supernatural powers, the destruction of delusions (ātmanas), ten powers, twelve bhiṣisms, and the like. He who meditates on the mandala-calas, on the other hand, does not become Vajrasattva who has ten powers, but destroying his path to omniscience and being overcome by false self-grasping, he thinks: "I am Vajrasattva who has ten powers." This assertion not only reveals the Vimalaprabhā's view of the stage of generation practice as inferior to that of the stage of completion, but it also suggests that the stage of generation can be detrimental to the realization of the ultimate goal of Kālacakra practice. Further analysis of the text indicates that this is the Kālacakra tradition's reaction to some people's belief that due to the power of the sīdhāna using the mandala, the contemplative's psycho-physical aggregates will actually become transformed into the aspects of the mandala and will thereby directly cause Buddhahood. Therefore, the Vimalaprabhā also asserts that the contemplative cannot become a Buddha by the power of the generation stage practice alone and without the accumulation of merit and knowledge, just as a paper who is devoid of merit cannot become a king by merely imagining that he is the king. Although it denies the efficacy of the sīdhāna on the kāla-cakra-mandala for eliminating all of one's mental obscurations, it never denies that it has certain purificatory powers, if practiced with the understanding that the imagined deities are not ultimate truth and that one's own impure body is not manifestly the pure body of the deity.

The dītya-yoga of the stage of generation is followed by two yogic practices: the yoga of drops (bīdra-yoga) and the subtle yoga (śakti-yoga). The yoga of drops and the subtle yoga are designed to facilitate the purification of the four drops by inducing an experience of the four types of bliss. The yoga of drops directly induces the emergence of the drops of semen, and the subtle yoga induces the attainment of bliss caused by the flow of semen. The Adbhuddhānānama describes these two types of yoga in this manner:

That which makes the ambrosia that is of the nature of semen flow in the form of a drop and that holds the four drops is called the "yoga of drops." That which, transcending any partition, is partless and holds the highest point of the four dhātras is called the "subtle yoga," because it transcends any material entities.

The practice of the two yogas involves a sīdhāna on sexual bliss with a consort who in this stage of practice is commonly an imagined consort, also called a "gnosis-consort" (jñāna-mahād). According to the Vimalaprabhā, an actual consort is prescribed for simple-minded practitioners, an imagined consort for medially mature yogis, and the mahāmātā consort, who is implemented in the stage of completion, is prescribed for superior yogis.

In the yoga of drops, during union with a consort, the contemplative visualizes himself as Vajradhāra and meditates on the three worlds as being a reflection of the Buddha. Not emitting semen, he generates heat, called "caṇḍāli," in his navel-cakra. Upon generating caṇḍāli, the contemplative imagines that in the left nāda of his navel-cakra, it incinerates the five mandalas of the ātmanas, which are the phenomenal aspects of the five Tathāgatas, and that in the right nāda of the same calas, it incinerates the ātmanas of the sense-faculties and their objects, which are the phenomenal aspects of the consorts of the five Tathāgatas. The incineration of the consorts of the five Tathāgatas implies here the cessation of activity of the sense-faculties, because the mind apprehends the dharmas-abhis. When caṇḍāli incinerates the consorts of the five Tathāgatas, semen begins to flow in the form of a drop. The drop of semen (buddhīcita) flows to the top of the head, and from there it sequentially flows into the throat, heart, navel, and secret calas, bringing forth the experience of the four types of bliss (ānada), supreme bliss (paramānada), extraordinary bliss (ānadaśīluḥpaṇa), and innate bliss (sahajānanda), respectively. When a drop of buddhīcita descends into the throat and melts there, it becomes the purified drop of speech (vāja-bīdra); when it melts in the heart, it becomes the purified drop of mind (citra-bīdra); when it melts in the navel, it becomes the purified drop of gnosia (jñāna-bīdra); and when it melts in the secret-calas, it becomes the purified drop of the body (kūpa-bīdra).

In the practice of subtle yoga, the drop of purified buddhīcita that descends into the secret calas during the practice of the yoga of drops, now sequentially ascends into the navel, heart, throat, and āsuddhī, bringing forth the experience of the aforementioned four types of bliss, which melt the atomic nature of the four drops and facilitate their transformation into the four bodies of the Buddha. Thus, in the practice of these last two yogas, the path of the sublimation of the four drops is the path of the generation of sexual bliss, and the agent of sublimation is that very bliss. It is said that as the tantric adept purifies the drops of the body, speech, and mind in this manner, he also purifies the desire, form, and formless realms, which he previously imagined as the reflection of the Buddha. Mentally retracting the purified three realms with the light rays of his gnosia, or sexual bliss characterized by seminal emission, the tantric contemplative brings forth the gnosia of māyā (māyā-gnosia).

The Transformative Body of the Path of the Stage of Completion

The dītya-sīdhāna of the stage of generation is viewed in this tantric system as characterized by ideation or imagination (vikāraṇa). As such, it is considered to induce directly the attainment of mandane siddhi and only indirectly to induce the attainment of spiritual awakening as the pramandane siddhi (lokatattvā-siddhi) or the mahāmātā-siddhi. The preceding practices of the yoga of drops and the subtle yoga mark a transitional process from the stage of generation and its conceptualized sīdhāna to the stage of completion and its nonconceptualized sīdhānas. The practice
of the stage of completion is seen as the most pertinent to the attainment of spiritual awakening, for it is free of ideation and is uncontrived. It is free of ideation because it entails meditation on the form of emptiness (śūnyatā-bhūmi), or empty form, in which one does not imagine the deity's bodily form. Thus, due to the absence of the yogi's imagination of the bodily form, there is no appearance of empty form, and since the tantric yogi meditates on the empty form, it cannot be said that there is an absence of appearance of empty form. In this regard, the meditation on empty form is meditation on the nonduality of existence and nonexistence and on cyclic existence as devoid of inherent existence. In light of this, the Vimalakīrti-pañcha-characterizes meditation on empty form as a nonlocal, or nonlimited (anupalāka), meditation since it is devoid of all mundane conventions. It also interprets this form of meditation as a tantric implementation of the Mādhyaṃkika doctrine. Therefore, it is considered here inappropriate for one who wishes to attain the supramundane sādhu to imagine the empty form—which is the universal form that has all aspects and holds all illusions—in terms of limited shapes, colors, symbols, and the like. In contrast to the sādhu on the kālacakra-mandala, due to the absence of all conceptualizations, meditation on empty form is not characterized by the origination or cessation but by the absence of everything. Just as it excludes the visualization of Kālacakra and other deities, so does it exclude one's self-identification with Kālacakra. Due to the absence of characteristics, meditation on empty form is called the "śādhu of supramundane reality" (ekottarā-tattva-sādhu), the "gносис-sādhu," or the "śādhu on the form of emptiness" (śūnyatā-bhūmi-sādhu). Contrary to the sādhu on the kālacakra-mandala, the gnosis-sādhu of the stage of completion is believed to lead to achieving the mahāmudrā-sādhu. The mahāmudrā is understood here as the perfection of wisdom, characterized by the absence of inherent existence of all phenomena, the source of all phenomena (dharmadūsa), which is the Buddha-field, the place of joy (nirvāṇa), and the place of birth (jāmata-nātha). It is not a field of the transitory beings' attachment and aversion, nor is it an outlet of the ordinary bodily constituents, because it is the mind of imperishable time ( powstał-kala), free of origination and cessation, embodied by the body that is free of obscurations as its wheel (cala). It is said that whoever frequently and steadily mediates on this sublime emptiness, "the mother of innate bliss, who is a measure of the manifestation of one's own mind and is devoid of ideation with regard to all phenomena, and whoever embraces her, is called the omniscient Bhagavān who has attained the mahāmudrā-sādhu." Thus, by practicing a sādhu on the mahāmudrā, one practices a sādhu on the ultimate nature of one's own mind; whereas by practicing the sādhu on the kālacakra-mandala, one mediates on the conventional nature of one's own mind. These defining characteristics of conceptual and nonconceptual types of meditative practices are the most crucial factor in determining their soteriological efficacy with regard to their ability to provide one with the adequate accumulations of merit and knowledge. The Kālacakra tradition strongly affirms that just as the accumulation of merit does not take place without service to sentient beings, so the accumulation of knowledge does not take place without meditation on supreme, imperishable gnosis.

The practice of the stage of completion entails abandoning conceptual meditation, as well as sexual practices with the actual and imagined consorts. The union with either one of these two consorts is believed to induce perishable bliss only, the bliss characterized by pulsation (śūndra). In contrast, union with the mahāmudrā consort, or the "empty form-consort, who is of the nature of a prognostic mirror and is not imagined," is believed to induce supreme, imperishable bliss that is devoid of pulsation (nirvāṇa). The gnosis-sādhu is divided into four main phases: worship (śrāvita), the auxiliary sādhu (sūkṣma-sādhu), the śūnyatā-sādhu, and the supreme sādhu (mahā-sādhu). This four-phased sādhu describes the six-phased yoga (ṣad-ārka-yoga) of the Kālacakra-tradition, which consists of the following six phases: retraction (pratyāhāra), meditative stabilization (śādhanā), mental transformation (śādhanā), recollection (anumāna), and concentration (samādhi).

The first two phases of the six-phased yoga, retraction and meditative stabilization, constitute the worship phase of the gnosis-sādhu. They are also called the "verdolīka-yoga," since by means of these two phases, the contemplative mentally apprehends the ten signs, including smoke, and so on. The subsequent phases of pratyāhāra and retention constitute the sūkṣma-sādhu, which is characterized by perception of the subtle prāṇa body. The recollection phase constitutes the śūnyatā stage and is characterized by the experience of the three imperishable moments of bliss within the secret, navel, and heart calxes. Finally, the concentration phase of the six-phased yoga constitutes the mahā-sādhu, which is characterized by the unity of gnosis and its object and is accompanied by imperishable mental bliss. These four categories of the six-phased yoga are said to correspond to the body, speech, mind, and gnosis varṇas of the Buddha, or to his four faces in the kālacakra-mandala, for they bring forth the manifestation of the four bodies of the Buddhas.

On the stage of completion, the path of the purification of the four drops is characterized by meditation on the four drops. The final purification of the four drops takes place in the final phase of the six-phased yoga. Since the practice of the six yoga is believed to bring about the purification of the six aggregates—the aggregates of gnosis, consciousness, feeling, mental formations, discernment, and the body—it is interpreted in this tantric tradition as the way of actualizing the six Tathāgatas: namely, Vajrasattva, Akṣobhya, Amoghasiddhi, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Vairocana.

The Six-Phased Yoga

The Kālacakra-tradition'sṣad-ārka-yoga begins with the manifestation of the mentally interconnected appearances of one's own mind, that is to say, the nighttime and daytime signs, and ends with the manifestation of one's universal form (sūkṣma-bhūmi). In this way, the whole process of theṣad-ārka-yoga is a meditative process of bringing into manifestation the successively more subtle and more encompassing aspects of one's own mind.

1. The yoga of retraction (pratyāhāra) involves the meditative practice of retracting the prāṇas from the right and left nāḍīs and bringing them into the central nāḍī. In this phase of practice, the contemplative stabilizes his mind by concentrat- ing the aperture of the central nāḍī in the kalā, having the eyes opened with an upward gaze called the gaze of the glorious deities, Uṣṇīṣavārāhi. As a result of that,
the pārāśā cease to flow in the left and right nāḍī and begin to flow in the central nāḍī. The cessation of the pārāśā’s flow within the left and right nāḍī sever the connections between the five sense-faculties and their objects. Consequently, the five sense-faculties and their objects become inactive, meaning, the six types of consciousness cease to engage with their corresponding objects, and bodily craving for material things diminishes. This disregard for the pleasures of the body, speech, mind, and sexual bliss is what is meant here by worship. As the ordinary sense-faculties disengage, the extraordinary sense-faculties arise. Due to that, the ten sequential signs—the signs of smoke, a mirage, fire-flies, a lamp, a flame, the moon, the sun, the supreme form, and a drop—spontaneously appear; but these images are none other than appearances of one’s own mind. As the contemplative’s mind becomes more stabilized, the ten signs appear more vividly, and the contemplative’s perception of external appearances diminishes. Wisdom and gnosis become the apprehending mind, and the ten signs, which are like an image in a diagnostic mirror, become the apprehended objects. Thus, gnosis apprehends itself in the same way that the eye sees its own reflection in a mirror. This entering of the apprehending mind (grāhaka-cita) into the apprehended mind (grāhya-cita) constitutes its nonengagement with external objects.

The first four signs appear during the practice of retraction at nighttime or in a dark and closed space. Their appearance indicates that the pārāśā within the nāḍī in the intermediate directions of the heart-calaf have entered the madhyāmā. The other six signs appear during the practice of retraction-yoga during the daytime and in open space. A drop appears as the tenth sign with the form of the Buddha in its center. This Buddha is the Nirmāṇakāya, which is devoid of sense-objects due to its freedom from matter and dissolution (kalpāsa). Afterward, the yogi hears a sound that is not produced by any impact (anākṣa-dhāraṇa), which is the Sambhogakāya. The appearance of the first four of the six daytime signs indicates that the pārāśā within the nāḍī in the cardinal directions of the heart-calaf have entered the central nāḍī, and the appearance of the last two signs indicates that the winds of pārāśā and āṇāna have been dissolved. Due to the spontaneity of this arising of the ten signs, the purified aggregate of gnosis (jñānapāna) is considered to be uncontaminated or nonconceptualized (asukula). The yogi of retraction is said to induce the state of Kālacakra by purifying the aggregate of gnosis (jñāna-sūkha). In terms of mundane results, such a yogi can accomplish a siddhi by which all one’s words come true. This occurs due to the inactivity of the ordinary sense-faculties, which empowers the contemplative’s speech with more efficacy.

2. The yoga of meditative stabilization (āśaya) refers here to a meditative absorption on the all-pervading form (śūnyā-timba), which is also practiced with the gate of Īśvara-cakrā. It is designed to unify the five sense-faculties and their objects. Due to the tenfold classification of the sense-faculties and their objects as the apprehending subjects and the apprehended objects, meditative stabilization is considered here to be of ten kinds. It is also interpreted as a mind that has become unified with empty form as its meditative object and is characterized by the five factors of wisdom (prajñā), investigation (ārāṇa), analysis (śīla), joy (nut), and immutable bliss (acala-nirūta). According to the Vimalakīrti-nātha, wisdom here means observing the empty form; investigation means apprehending its existence; analysis implies ascertaining of that empty form; joy means absorption into the empty form; and immutable bliss is the factor that unites the mind with empty form.59 During the initial practice of the yoga of meditative stabilization, the ten signs, which appeared earlier during the retraction phase, spontaneously reappear. During the daytime yoga, the tantric yogi gazes at the cloudless sky either during the morning or afternoon, with his back turned to the sun, until a shining black line appears in the center of the drop. Within the central nāḍī, the body of the Buddha, which is the entire three worlds, appears. It looks clear like the sun in water, and it has all aspects and colors. It is identified as one’s own mind that is free of the sense-objects and not as someone else’s mind, because it lacks knowledge of other beings’ minds. Thus, in the sixphased yoga, one first perceives the appearance of one’s own mind with the physical eye (niḥṣīla-cācāra) of the Buddha, and at the culmination of the yoga, one perceives the minds of others with the divine eye of the Buddha.

The yoga of meditative stabilization is said to induce the state of Akṣobhya, for it purifies the aggregate of consciousness (sājñā-sūkha), and to induce the actualization of the five kinds of extraordinary perception (abhūtādhī). In terms of mundane results, it is believed to induce the experience of mental and physical well-being.

3. The yoga of pārāśāyana is thought to be effective in unifying the ten right and left mandalas by bringing the pārāśā into the central nāḍī. For this reason, it is said to be of ten kinds. In the practice of this yoga, the contemplative stabilizes the pārāśā within his own cala by concentrating on the center of that cala, which is regarded as the seat of the drop associated with the fourth state of the mind (nārtaka). In this phase of the yoga, the tantric adept practices the gaze of the fœtus being Vighnāntara, directing his gaze toward the fœtus. During inhalation, the contemplative apprehends the arisen form of the Kālacakra’s Sambhogakāya and brings it from his nāḍī into the navel, where Kālacakra and his consort merge with the drop. As the Sambhogakāya descends into the navel and merges into the drop there, the drop disappears, but Kālacakra and his consort remain in the navel-calas. During exhalation, Kālacakra and Viṣṇuvatā rises above the level of the drop so that it has reappeared and ascends along the central nāḍī. When they ascend during niḥṣīla,60 the tantric adept concentrates first on the lower aperture of the madhyāmā, wherefrom Kālacakra is brought into the navel; during niḥṣīla,61 he brings it down into the lower cala. Practicing in this way, the tantric contemplative brings the pārāśā into the navel-calas and stabilizes them there. As a result of this, the external breath ceases, and the contemplative’s speech with matterless Sambhogakāya, by means of kāma-kūta, in the drop of the navel-calas, the abdinal heat (candādhāra) arises, melts the drop at the top of the āṇāna, and induces the experience of the previously mentioned four types of bliss. When the drop reaches the throat-calas, the tantric adept experiences bliss (ānanda); when it reaches the heart-calas, he experiences the sublime bliss (mahānānanda); when it reaches the
nava-calas, he experiences the extraordinary bliss (śrīramānanda); and when it reaches the secret-calas, he experiences the innate bliss (śaṅkhashānta). By melting the four drops, the caṇḍī melts the affective and cognitive obscurations.

The yoga of pūjāyāma is said to induce the state of Amoghāshānta, for it purifies the aggregate of mental formations (saṃskāra-skandha); and in terms of mundane benefits, it is believed to purify the right and left nāḍī by conveying the pūjās into the central nāḍī, and it makes the tantric adept worthy of being praised by Bodhisattvas.

4. The yoga of retention (āhāra) is also considered to be of ten kinds due to the tenfold classification of the pūjās leaving from and arriving to the calas of the navel, heart, throat, lāṭā, and uṣṭāja. The yoga of retention entails the unification of the winds of pūjā and ājñā in the navel-calas and the practice of the gaze of Viyohāntraka. The unification of these two winds is accomplished by the manifestation of Kālacakra and his consort. In the subsequent stages of this yoga, the contemplative continues this practice by sequentially concentrating on the calas of the heart, throat, lāṭā, and uṣṭāja, which are associated with the elements of water, fire, wind, and space, respectively. As a result of this practice, the four elements sequentially dissolve into one another, and the yogi experiences the four types of bliss. As the contemplative’s concentration gradually moves from the navel-calas to the upper calas, he experiences the four types of ascending bliss; and as his concentration shifts from the uṣṭāja to the lower calas, he experiences the four types of descending bliss. After experiencing these four types of bliss, due to the cessation of the pūjās movements, the contemplative’s mind becomes unshod, and he apprehends the form of emptiness (śūnyatā-bhūta), the spontaneously arisen appearance of Kālacakra and Viṣṇumārtī.

The yoga of retention is said to induce the state of Ratnasambhava, since it purifies the aggregate of feeling (vedānta-skandha). Due to the power of this yoga, it is said that the tantric adept attains the ten powers (bala) and is purified of Māras and mental afflictions, due to unifying his mind and destroying the flow of pūjās.

5. The yoga of recollection (ānūṃpā) implies the union of the mind with empty form, the state of freedom from all conceptualizations. In the yoga of recollection, the contemplative perceives in his navel-calas the form of Kālacakra and Viṣṇumārtī as immovable rays of light consisting of five colors. The yoga of recollection is said to induce the state of Amiṭābha, since it purifies the aggregate of cessation (saṃbādha-skandha). In terms of immediate results, it is said to induce the realization of the form of gnosis (pārāśīna-bhūta), or the empty form. Due to the power of that form, one is purified to the point that one appears as a stainless-disc of light.

6. The yoga of samādhi is also classified into ten kinds, due to the cessation of the ten winds of pūjā. It is said to induce the state of Vaiśravana, since it purifies the aggregate of form (nīpa-skandha). According to the Vimalaprabhā, the contemplative who becomes purified by the yoga of samādhi attains the Sahajākṣāya within a period of three years and three fortresses.

In the samādhi phase, the object of gnosis (piṇa) and gnosis (piṇa) itself becomes unshod and gives rise to supreme, imperishable bliss. For that reason, the samādhi that is practiced here is defined as “a meditative concentration on the form of gnosis (piṇa-bhūta).” It is also interpreted as the imperishable bliss that arises from the union of the apprehended object (gaṇita) and the apprehending subject (gaṇita). This sixth phase of yoga is characterized by the simultaneous stacking of red and white drops in inverted order within the individual calas and by the resultant experience of the 21,600 moments of immutable bliss. In this phase of the yoga, the tantric adept stacks 3,600 white drops of bodhicitta, starting at the tip of the sexual organ and ending at the uṣṭāja; and he stacks the same number of red drops of bodhicitta, beginning at the lāṭā and ending at the tip of the sexual organ. As the bliss courses through the six calas during the 21,600 moments, it manifests two bodhicitta-bhūtas within each of the six calas, due to the destruction of pūjās. This stacking of 21,600 drops within the six calas brings about the experience of 21,600 moments of immutable bliss. By the efficacy of these moments of immutable bliss, 21,600 karmic pūjās cease; and consequently, 21,600 material elements of the yogi’s body transform into a body having the aspect of emptiness (śūnyatā-bhūta). Accordingly, the material aspects of the four drops also vanish, together with a cessation of the states of the mind of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth state; for the drops are the supports of bodhicitta, which is this fourfold mind of transmigratory beings. Due to the melting of the material nature of the four drops, which is their obscurations (āsana), pure gnosis, or the self-awareness of imperishable bliss, arises, and it becomes of four kinds, corresponding to the four bodies of the Buddha. The manner in which imperishable bliss transforms the elements of the body is likened to the manner in which a stainless jewel transforms stone and other elementary substances into a gem by merely touching them, without shattering them. It is said that from the moment that one’s material nature becomes transformed into empty form, its earth aspect is not perceived as solid, its water aspect is not perceived as liquid, its fire aspect is not fierce, nor does its wind aspect move anywhere. Because of the absence of matter, it has an empty aspect, the aspect of space. Likewise, although endowed with colors, it is colorless, due to the absence of matter; and though endowed with all aspects, it is invisible to the foolish. As one’s own body transforms into empty form, one’s mind pervades space and abides in the gnosis of the minds of others; the body pervades the mind, and speech pervades the body. In this way, the four mutually pervading aspects of the Buddhas become actualized as the four bodies of the Buddha that dwell in all sentient beings who are born from the womb. It is said that from that point on, being compelled by supreme compassion, the Śaṅkalarṣaṇa of the Buddha enters the realm of karma (karma-dhātu) for the sake of liberating sentient beings, is conceived in the womb, teaches Dharma, and creates the limitless illusions of his Nīmāṇakāya.

One may conclude here that within the methodological framework of the Kālacakra system, meditative concentration (samādhi) is given special attention in every stage of practice. It is in meditative concentration that the tantric adept finally attains the saṃmānākṣara psycho-physical aggregates and supreme, imperishable bliss. As in the stage of generation, so too in the stage of completion, meditative concentration is characterized by the union of quiescence (samāti), or bliss, and insight (vijñāna), or gnosis of that bliss. The path of actualizing the four bodies of the Buddha in all stages of Kālacakra practice—initiation, generation, and completion—is the path of uniting one’s own bliss and gnosis in order to completely and permanently manifest these
two aspects of one's own mind. Thus, in this tantric tradition, the innate purity and blissfulness of one's own mind is the transformative agent, the transformative means as the body of the path, and the transformed body of Buddhahood. That is to say, the empty and blissful gnosia is both the agent that actualizes gnosia and the object, the actualized gnosia itself. This perspective on the gnosia of imperishable bliss as the cause and result of Buddhahood is based on the previously discussed view of the Kālacakra-sūtra as the essential nature (śānta) and the support (ādāna) of all phenomena. For as soon as gnosia is asserted to be the ground of reality, it inevitably plays a central role in the soteriology of the Kālacakratantra.

The role of gnosia in the Kālacakratantra's soteriology parallels the salvific role of the tathāgata-garbha in the tathāgata-garbha tradition. For example, one reads in the Śrīmadāvatara that the tathāgata-garbha is the support (ādāna) of all conditioned (samyūtra) and unconditioned (āmūtra) phenomena; and "if the tathāgata-garbha would not exist, there would be neither avarōṇa suffering nor longing, earnestness, and aspiration for nirvāṇa." This and other previously discussed parallels between the tathāgata-garbha tradition and the Kālacakratantra tradition point to the influences of the earlier Mahāyāna interpretations of the inherent purity of the mind and its role in the path of the individual's spiritual awakening on the formulations of gnosia in the Kālakacakra tradition and other tantric systems of the amāṃśuka-yoga class.

As demonstrated earlier, in Kālacakratantra practice, the process of bringing forth the pure and blissful nature of gnosia starts with inducing many moments of immutability, or the bliss of seminal nonemission, and ends with the actualization of a single moment of supreme, immutable bliss. Thus, the mind of bliss that is characterized by nonemission purifies itself from its adventitious defilements by means of its own bliss; and due to the absence of defilements, it cognizes itself as such. It is in light of this view of the nonduality of gnosis and bliss, of the cause and effect of spiritual awakening, that the Kālacakrakacakra system identifies supreme, imperishable bliss as the gnostic yoga (ādīna-yoga), a unique peace. Therefore, in the context of the Kālacakratantra, the multifaceted process of actualizing the gnosis of imperishable bliss, or Kālacakrakacakra, is seen as the nondual transformative body of the path of gnosia. This transformative body, which is characterized by the nonduality of the basis, agent, means, and result of transformation is Kālacakra, the nondual center of the wheel of time.

Appendix

Table B.1 illustrates the Kālacakratantra's fourfold classification of the deities of the kālačakrabuddhā.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gnosia-mandala</th>
<th>Mind-mandala</th>
<th>Speech-mandala</th>
<th>Body-mandala</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Śūnyatākāya</td>
<td>Dharmakāya</td>
<td>Śūnyatākāya</td>
<td>Nīlamārta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kālacakrakacakra &amp; Vajrākāya</td>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>Dēṣa</td>
<td>Nātāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anuttarākāya</td>
<td>Anuttarākāya</td>
<td>Ācākāya</td>
<td>Dānakāya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasamārīnākāya</td>
<td>Rasamārīnākāya</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amāṃśuka</td>
<td>Amāṃśuka</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vairocana</td>
<td>Vairocana</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śūnyatākāya</td>
<td>Śūnyatākāya</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kānakāya</td>
<td>Kānakāya</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śūnyatākāya</td>
<td>Śūnyatākāya</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kānakāya</td>
<td>Kānakāya</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table B.2 demonstrates the manner in which the Kalacakra tradition identifies the thirty-seven yoginis of the Kalacakra-mandala as the sublimated aspects of the bodily constituents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yoginis of the Kalacakra-mandala and the Bodily Constituents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yoginis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaśrūta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lokaśā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pañjāra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māruśā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daṇḍa</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śrāvāndevī and Kṛṣṇidhā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anātha</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>As Addui</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.3 illustrates the Kalacakra tradition’s identification of the aforementioned thirty-seven yoginis with the thirty-seven factors of spiritual awakening (buddha-pākha-dharma). On this tantric path of sublimation, the bodily constituents that are represented by the following thirty-seven yoginis become transformed into the thirty-seven factors of spiritual awakening. Thus, once the purification takes place, these bodily constituents are said to bear the characteristics of the Dharmakāya.1

Table B.3: Yoginis of the Kalacakra-mandala and the Factors of Enlightenment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yoginis</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaśrūta</td>
<td>The four applications of mindfulness (cittāntāpākha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the mindfulness of body (kālī-cittāntāpākha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the mindfulness of breathing (kālī-cittāntāpākha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the mindfulness of the mind (kālī-cittāntāpākha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the mindfulness of dharmas (kālī-cittāntāpākha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daṇḍa</td>
<td>The seven limbs of enlightenment (ānubhūta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>equanimity (śamānubhūta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the investigation of dharmas (śamānubhūta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exaltation (vijñānabuddhi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the four abandons (śānta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the abandonment of negative non-dualism (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the abandonment of non-dualism (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the abandonment of an evil cess (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a transformation into Buddha-nature (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the abandonment of negative non-dualism (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the four kinds of extraordinary powers (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the basis of the extraordinary power of aspiration (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the basis of the extraordinary power of exaltation (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the basis of the extraordinary power of exaltation (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the basis of the extraordinary power of exaltation (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the basis of the extraordinary power of exaltation (śānta-viśvavidhāna)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### Table B.3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yagna</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Surya | The five powers:  
| Ashtli | the power of sight (prajñāphala) |
| Arka | the power of enthusiasm (āsrayaśca) |
| Vajraścatahala | the power of mindfulness (śamāphala) |
| Iśakti | the power of meditative concentration (śamādhiśa) |
| Candi | the power of wisdom (prajñāphala) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suryaśvara and Krodhikṣaś</th>
<th>The five faculties (madhyā)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sashānti</td>
<td>the faculty of virility (śāntaviryaśa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merci</td>
<td>the faculty of enthusiasm (śrayaviryaśa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jambhī</td>
<td>the faculty of mindfulness (śrajñāviryaśa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣāksā</td>
<td>the faculty of meditative concentration (śāntaviryaśa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rattanā</td>
<td>the faculty of wisdom (prajñaviryaśa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puṣṭaśvara</th>
<th>The eightfold noble path (asamkṣipta-sātra)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Śivā</td>
<td>the right view (sattavijñāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kākā</td>
<td>the right thought (sattavijñāṇavijñāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaṃshtā</td>
<td>the right speech (sattavijñāṇavijñāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uktā</td>
<td>the right action (sattavijñāṇavijñāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iśvāsaśa</td>
<td>the right livelihood (sattavijñāṇavijñāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graṇṭhaśa</td>
<td>the right effort (sattavijñāṇavijñāna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śāśaśa</td>
<td>the right concentration (sattavijñāṇavijñāna)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.4 illustrates the manner in which the Kalacakra tradition identifies the universe with the fetus. This form of identification is characteristic of the stage of the generation practice, in which one visualizes the origin of the universe as the mother’s body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The universe</th>
<th>The fetus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the wind-mandala</td>
<td>the belly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the fire-mandala</td>
<td>the throat cavity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the water-mandala</td>
<td>the heart cavity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the earth-mandala</td>
<td>the navel cavity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Meru</td>
<td>from the navel cavity to the secret cavity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sun, moon, and Buddha</td>
<td>the nāḍīs carrying fucus, uruc, and srenn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion

We have seen that the Kalacakratantra incorporates several literary genres, for its various parts display the distinctive features of tantric yogic, gnostic, prophetic, and medical literature. Its inclusion of different genres can be seen as yet another expression of a Buddhist tantric interpretation of a tantric as an expansion.

As a prophetic literary work, the Kalacakratantra shows features that are characteristic of prophetic literature in general. As we have seen in chapter 6 on the “Social Body,” the Kalacakratantra’s eschatological prophecies serve as a political justification for tantric practices that defy the prescribed norms of social conduct. Their function also lies in supporting and legitimating the power of a future universal monarch (calayaṃ). The Kalacakratantra’s prophecies are concerned with both religious and sociopolitical legitimations. Since their audience consists not only of monastic and lay Buddhist communities but also of all other religious and political communities existing in India at that time, their religious and political functions are not entirely separated.

Like other Buddhist tantric and gnostic literary works, the Kalacakratantra engages in the reformulation of some common Indian Buddhist tenets. However, its reformulation cannot be accused of having no boundaries. In fact, one can clearly see that in all of the anamata-yoga-anusas there is some consensus with regard to the boundaries of tantric reformulation. For example, in all such tantras, the radical break with the conventional rules of monastic celibacy, which is expressed in tantric hermeneutics and in tantric yogic practices, is seen as ascetic for as long as one’s engagement in sexual tantric practices complies with the given guidelines for practice.

The reformulation of common Mahāyāna Buddhist tenets in the Kalacakratantra is based on exegesis. Accordingly, exegetical issues form the basis for the Kalacakratantra’s refutation of certain Mahāyāna interpretations of Buddhist teachings. Like gnostic and tantric texts of other religious traditions, the Kalacakratantra resorts to historical realism, pointing to the proximity of the earliest holders and practitioners of this tantric tradition to Buddhist Śākyamuni as evidence of the validity of its reformulation of the conventional interpretations of Buddha’s teachings. We have
13. See the Vajraśāktaśāstra of Nāgārjuna, Peking ed. of The Ti-
   han Tripiṭaka, #20570, p. 124, 411.
15. Tārātūtra's History of Buddhism in India, 1990, p. 66.
16. Blue Annals, p. 797.
17. The broader theoretical framework of the Kālacakratantra.
18. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 4, v. 234, and 1966, Ch.
19. 11.
20. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 1, p. 19.
22. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 3, v. 341.
23. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1986, Ch. 1, p. 18.
24. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 1, p. 19.
25. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 5, v. 177.
26. The Ādībuddhāvatā, cited in the Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra,
   Ch. 5, v. 177.
27. Ibid.
28. See the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 5, v. 238–240, and the Vimalakīrti.
29. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 3, v. 2.
30. A list of the ten principles, which is given in the last chapter of the Vajraśa-
   ktaśāstra, includes the ten inner and ten outer principles. The ten inner principles are:
31. two rituals of warding off danger, the secret and wisdom empowerments, the ritual of sep-
   arating the enemies from their protectors, the offering cake (kuti) and upa-recitation, the ritual of
   worshipful accomplishment, blessing the images, and establishing manjūsās. The ten outer prin-
   ciples are: the manjū, meditative concentration (samādhi), mudrā, standing posture, sit-
   ting posture, recitation, fire ritual, applying activities, and conclusion. For the explanation of
   the ten outer principles, see Pratimāntara's Māyājātantrapātha.
32. The Ādībuddhāvatā, also known as the Gunaśākṣaraśāstra, was published in the Jaina
33. The Ādībuddhāvatā, cited in the Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra,
   Ch. 3, v. 3.
34. In his complete knowledge (pratiprasthāna) of the ten truths (dāta-tattva), among the
35. three, a fully ordained monk (Mikha) is superior (adhaśa); a wandering acetic (nirvāṇa) is said to be middling (pratipraśna); and a householder (gaṇadhara) is supe-
   rior (adhaśa) to the two.
36. The Ādībuddhāvatā, vs. 4–5.
37. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 3, v. 3.
38. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 4, v. 234.
39. The Vajraśāktaśāstra, which also distinguishes three types of upākāśa, asserting that the best upākāśa is a fully ordained monk, the middling upākāśa is a Buddha novice, and the lowest one is a householder who took tantric vows.

Notes to Pages 9–18
20. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 1, v. 4.
21. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 3, v. 4, and the Vimalakīrti.
22. The Ādībuddhāvatā, Ch. 4, v. 234. See also Bu stūra's annotations (2013).
23. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 4, v. 234.
24. See the Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 3, v. 2, and Ch. 2, v.
   13.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 13.
28. See the Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 3, p. 43.
29. See the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 1, v. 4, and the Vimalakīrti commentary.
30. See the Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 3, p. 4.
31. See the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 5, v. 172.
32. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 3, v. 127.
33. Ibid.
34. The Ādībuddhāvatā, part 2, Ch. 4, v. 97–99, and the Galasāmanāvatā, Ch. 18, v. 36.
35. The Ādībuddhāvatā, part 1, Ch. 3, vs. 2–7, and part 2, Ch. 11, vs. 5–7.
36. For the numbered classification in the Ādībuddhāvatā, see Senggev, Śūnyatā Tantric: A
37. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 1.
38. See the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 166–167, and the Vimalakīrti commentary.
40. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 170.
41. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 171.
42. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 172.
43. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 174.
44. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 176.
45. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 3, v. 176, and the Vimalakīrti commentary.
46. The Jñānaśākṣaśāstra, cited in the Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra,
   Ch. 2, v. 173.
47. See the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 173, and the Vimalakīrti commentary.
48. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 4, v. 200.
49. See the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 178.
50. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 2, v. 179.
51. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 5, v. 1.
52. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 1, p. 18.
53. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 5, v. 127.
54. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 3, p. 78.
55. Solodski's note 28 (2014, p. 2) states: "The word 'sāra' means with without begin-
   ning or end (adi-sāra 'nāmaṅkānādhi)." The Buddha means one who perceives all true phe-
   nomena (sārātman ca-sādhisthān bhūdhiṣṭ on bhūdhiṣṭ); and this Buddha is ultimate, the
   Prāmarīdhi Bodhi. He is devoid of origination and cessation, meaning, he is omniscient
   (upākāśa-akāśa-ratān śaanalā jñānī arthaḥ)."
56. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 1, p. 18 and the
   Solodski's note 28 (2014, p. 2) cites this line from the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra in order to substan-
   tiate their interpretation of the Aṭṭhika Bodhi.
57. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 4, v. 234
58. The Kālacakratantra, Ch. 4, v. 234.
59. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, Ch. 1, v. 2.
60. The Vimalakīrti commentary on the Kālacakratantra, 1966, Ch. 1, p. 19.
3. The Nature of Syncretism in the Kālacakra

2. The Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 177, lines 6–8.
3. Ibid., lines 1–6. This analogy of the mind’s impressionability to that of a crystal is most likely borrowed from the Vījñānavibhāga, Ch. 11, v. 2, which is cited in a different context in the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 47.

4. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 176.
5. The Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 86.
6. The Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 86.
7. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 5, v. 86.
8. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 5, v. 127.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
15. The Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 86, and the Vimalaprabhā.
16. The Śākyaśāsana, vs. 22, 23.
17. The Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 83, and the Vimalaprabhā.
18. See Śākyaśāsana, v. 23.
19. According to Śāṅkhyā, the functions of the mind (manas) are: analyses and conceptualization (vīkāra), and decision and determination (ūpārtha).
20. One can encounter a similar procedure in the Bhagavad Gīta’s exposition of the universal validity of the Vedic doctrine, where it often uses its terms with overlapping meanings. Cf. Edgerton’s entry (Ch. 105), accompanying his translation to The Bhagavad Gīta, 1972, p. 179.
22. The Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 95.
23. See M. Dyczkowski, The Apotropa of Śiva: The Śiva Śīva with Bhaktara’s Commentary, the Vāmaska, 1963, Ch. 1, p. 11.
25. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 61, v. 85.
27. The Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 7, and the Vimalaprabhā.
28. See the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 8.
29. See the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 5, v. 127.
30. Ibid.
31. For further information on the Kālacakra’s cosmology, see chapter 5 on the “Cosmic Body.”
32. The Kālacakra, Ch. 3, v. 169.
33. See the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 3, v. 169.
34. See the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 3, v. 167–168.
35. Ibid.
36. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 3, v. 127.
37. See the Kālacakra, Ch. 4, v. 5.
38. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 4, v. 48.
39. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, 1966, Ch. 1, p. 40.
40. Ibid., p. 38.
41. See the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 173.

4. The Concept of Science in the Kālacakra Tradition

2. Vases 128–127 of the first chapter of the Kālacakra give a detailed instruction on building the different types of weapons that should be used by the Kālī’s army in the final battle with the Heretics in the land of Mekha.
3. This view of theological knowledge and scientific learning as complementary is dominant in the Vaiṣṇavism, whereas in the writings of Mahāyāna they are simply compatible rather than complementary.
8. The Mahāyāna-bhāṣyāṇa, Ch. 12, v. 5.
9. This is not unique to the Kālacakras. The earlier medical treatises of Ayurveda—the Sudhakarana (first to second centuries CE) and the Cakulasāra (fourth century CE)—assert that the five elements that are present in the body—earth, water, fire, wind, and space—form the entire universe.
10. See the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, 1986, p. 43.
11. The Nemptaka, 1964, [v].
12. If one were to ask, “How is introspection scientific in the context of Buddhism?” an answer would be that just as physical phenomena are to be scientifically studied for in as far as possible by means of direct observation, similarly, it is true for the first-person mental phenomena. Introspection is widely recognized in Buddhism as the sole means of observing one’s own conscious states.
13. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 5, v. 127.
14. Ibid.
15. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 5, v. 124.
16. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, 1986, Ch. 1, p. 44.
17. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 3, v. 88.
18. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 96.
19. Ibid.
20. Already in the early Buddhist Pali literature, the Buddhist Dhamma was referred to as the “clear and seeing,” as the Dhamma that involves one’s “coming and seeing” (upasanna).
22. See the Kālacakra, Ch. 2, v. 96, with the Vimalaprabhā commentary.
83. The Kalacatavatana, Ch. 5, vv. 50–51.
85. The Kalacatavatana, Ch. 4, vv. 196, Ch. 5, vv. 48–49, 52.
86. The Kalacatavatana, Ch. 2, v. 161, and the Vimalaprabhā.
87. The Kalacatavatana, Ch. 4, vv. 201–204.
88. See the Kalacatavatana, Ch. 4, vv. 129–130.
89. The Kalacatavatana, Ch. 4, v. 211.
90. The Kalacatavatana, Ch. 4, vv. 217–219.
91. The Hevajratantra, Part 2, Ch. 8, v. 45.
92. Ch. 2, v. 44.
93. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kalacatavatana, Ch. 4, vs. 1–2.
94. According to the Kalacatavatana, Ch. 3, v. 7, and the Vimalaprabhā, the white soil of the Bhaiṣajya class has a divine smell, the red soil of the Kṣaṇaka class has a lotus-scent and a hot taste, the yellow soil of the Vaiśrava class has a pungent smell and a sweet and saline taste, the black soil of the Śūdra class has a putrid smell and a sour taste, and the green soil of the Dōma class incorporates all colors, smells, and tastes.
95. The Kalacatavatana, Ch. 3, v. 43, and the Vimalaprabhā.
96. For the classification of the yogīs of the Kālica-muṇḍaka in terms of social groups, see the Kalacatavatana, Ch. 3, vv. 144–147.
97. See the Kalacatavatana, Ch. 2, v. 51, and the Vimalaprabhā.

7. The Gnostic Book

7. The Kalacatavatana, Ch. 5, v. 166.
11. For example, in the Adinatha Hradda, 3.34–4.3, a sorrowless ascetic Bodhidharma of cuttin' is cut down to a rabbit that was offered to idols, of treating all sorts of behavior as morally neutral, and of resorting to magic, incantations and other occult practices.
14. Williams, Refraction of Gnosticism, p. 44.
with fire, so too those who are burnt by the fire of passion cure themselves by the fire of passion.

130. The Suttaṇḍā, v. 135.
131. See the Kālakāratanī, Ch. 4, v. 110, and the Vimalaprabhā.
132. The Suttaṇḍā, vv. 139-140.
133. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālakāratanī, 1986, Ch. 1, pp. 5-6.
134. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 71.
135. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 2, v. 44.
136. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālakāratanī, Ch. 3, v. 3 reads: "indeed the act of hitting animals with sticks is an act of cruel treatment."
138. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 143, and the Vimalaprabhā.
139. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 69.
140. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 2, v. 19, and the Vimalaprabhā.
141. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālakāratanī, Ch. 2, v. 19.
142. Ibid.
143. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 76; Ch. 1, p. 23.
144. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 68.
145. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 69.
146. According to the Vimalaprabhā on the Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 127, the obscurations of the body are the Skhandha Mitra; the obscurations of the mind are the Mūla Mitra; the obscurations of speech are the Kāla Mūla; and the prevalence of spiritual ignorance with regard to the world is the Devajata Mūla.
147. The Vimalaprabhā on the Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 127.
148. Ibid.: "Due to the cessation of speech, the habitual propensity of the perishable [menstrual] is not active, attachment, desire, anger, and spiritual ignorance. Likewise, there is a sequential cessation of the twelve limbs [of dependent origination]. Due to the cessation of the twelve limbs, there is a cessation of the cycle of existence (dhātu-cūtra)." Due to the cessation of the cycle of existence, there is Buddhahood, which is free of obscurations.
149. Ibid.
151. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 2, v. 81.
152. Ibid., Ch. 2, v. 83, and the Vimalaprabhā.
153. See ibid., Ch. 2, vv. 86-88, and the Vimalaprabhā.
154. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 4, v. 219, line 2: "sānānīyaṇa mohāyata samāsakaśa sātrāosaic nāṭikṣapāt kampen." (Note: This is a corrected and updated version of the original text provided.)
156. The Kālakāratanī, Ch. 5, v. 79.
157. So far, I have been unable to identify the original source of this verse cited in the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālakāratanī, Ch. 4, v. 124. It is possible that it is taken from the Aṅguttaraṇī.
158. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālakāratanī, 1986, Ch. 1, p. 4. Cf. the Ṣaṅgāyana, 1976, Part A, Ch. 2, v. 36, which states that just as those who are burnt by fire treat the burn
8. The Transformative Body

1. The Vaiśnavaḥ commentary on the Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 4, v. 115.
2. The Vaiśnavaḥ commentary on the Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, v. 1.
3. See the Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 5, vv. 111–112, and the Vaiśnavaḥ.
4. The Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, v. 5 and the Vaiśnavaḥ.
5. The Vaiśnavaḥ commentary on the Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, v. 96, the Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, vv. 99–100, and the Vaiśnavaḥ. According to the Vaiśnavaḥ commentary on the Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, v. 97, in other related tantras, such as the Gubāsūranaśatantra, the first five initiations are designed to purify the five psycho-physical aggregates, respectively.
6. The Vaiśnavaḥ commentary on the Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, v. 96.
7. The Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, vv. 96–97, 99–100, and the Vaiśnavaḥ.
8. See the Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, v. 96–97, 99, and the Vaiśnavaḥ. Cf. the Sūdā,

9. The Kālaśāvatāra, Ch. 3, v. 13–14 mentions the following twenty-five vices: (1) the avoidance of killing (viśāṭa), lying (nīcāya), stealing (śriyā), and drinking liquor (mācāya); (2) the avoidance of gambling (ākiṣṭa), unwholesome food (stūparunyā), негaive speech (lavāsāna-pārtha), and the religious teachings of the "demons" (Hindu), rājna (Barbarian); (3) the avoidance of five types of killing: the killings of cows (ga), children (lāka), women (nā), and the Buddha, the teacher of the ten principles (śatāntā), and the avoidance of harm (ākṣa) to the ten friends (nī

12. Bhūṣaṇa (matā), supreme bliss (paramātmanā), special bliss (avasthāmanā), and innate bliss (āhāropāra).
55. The Śūrañjivanī, cited in the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra-sūtra, Ch. 5, v. 127, states:

After leaving the karma-mūrti and the conceptualized (vikalpita) stātu-mūrti, one should meditate on the mūrti-mūrti by means of the supreme, imperishable yoga.

56. The Kālacakra-sūtra, Ch. 4, v. 129, and the Vimalaprabhā.

57. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Śūrañjivanī, Ch. 5, v. 115, asserts that the Buddha taught in the Samādhi-sūtra that the ten signs appear during the nighttime yoga, and in the Nīmatā-sūtra that they arise during the daytime yoga.

58. See the Kālacakra-sūtra, Ch. 4, v. 115, and the Vimalaprabhā.

59. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Śūrañjivanī, Ch. 4, v. 117.

60. Prākāra designates closing of the right nostril and inhalation through the left nostril. 

61. Bhūka designates the closing of the left nostril and exhalation through the right nostril.

62. Kumbhaka is a breathing technique in which one holds the breath by closing the mouth and nostrils.

63. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Śūrañjivanī, Ch. 4, v. 118.

64. The Śūrañjivanī, Ch. 4, v. 116, and the Vimalaprabhā.

65. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Śūrañjivanī, Ch. 4, v. 119.

66. The Kālacakra-sūtra, Ch. 4, v. 117, and the Vimalaprabhā.

67. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Śūrañjivanī, Ch. 4, v. 119.

68. See the Kālacakra-sūtra, Ch. 4, v. 133, and the Vimalaprabhā.

69. The Śūrañjivanī, Ch. 5, v. 119, and the Vimalaprabhā.

70. The Kālacakra-sūtra, Ch. 5, v. 193.

71. The Śūrañjivanī, Ch. 5, v. 193, states that māyā-vādiśāstra presents views on how karmādikānena kriyā paramasambhāvyena bhūtiḥūtānāsāmaḥ māyā-rūpaḥ sāradaśānasāmaḥ dharmaśāraṇāsāmaḥ kriyā paramasamāśānaṁ jana uṣā bhāgavan inādhhūtyā sa uṣāṁ.

72. The Kālacakra-sūtra, Ch. 4, v. 120, and the Vimalaprabhā.

Appendix

1. The Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakra-sūtra, Ch. 3, v. 168.

Bibliography

The Kālacakra-sūtra: Sanskrit Manuscripts


(Kā ma) The Kālacakra-sūtra[3] (Vimalaprabhā). A microfilm copy of the manuscript is preserved in the National Archives, Kathmandu by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (Rool No. A 628a; C. No. 5-290; V. No. 6).

(Ca ma) The Kālacakra-sūtra[4] (Vimalaprabhā). A microfilm copy of the manuscript is preserved in the National Archives, Kathmandu by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (Rool No. E 8678; E. No. 13746).

(Os ma) The Kālacakra-sūtra[5] (Vimalaprabhā). A microfilm copy of the manuscript is preserved in the National Archives, Kathmandu by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (Rool No. R. 5116h; C. No. 5-290; V. No. 6).

(Nē ma) The Kālacakra-sūtra[6] (Vimalaprabhā). The manuscript is preserved in the National Archives, Kathmandu by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (C. No. 5-254; V. No. 13).


(Chu ma) The Śūrañjivanī-kālacakra-sūtra[8]. The manuscript is currently in the private possession of Mr. R. Guli, Rome, Italy. It was written down about seventy years ago on the request of Mr. G. Tucci.


Sankrit, Tibetan, and Mongolian Sources

The Inner Kālacakratantra
A Buddhist Tantric View of the Individual

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
2001
Preface

The Kalacakratantra and its commentarial literature are a rich textual source for the study of diverse but mutually related fields of South Asian studies in general and of South Asian Buddhism in particular. The works that belong to the Kalacakratantra literary corpus warrant careful research for several reasons. They express the doctrinal and social theories of the relevant tantric practices that were characteristic of north Indian Buddhism in its final stages. A study of those theories and practices reveals the ways in which the Indian tantric Buddhists from the early eleventh century on interpreted and further developed earlier Buddhist ideas and their practical applications. The Kalacakratantra literature also sheds light on the religious and social conditions of eleventh-century India in general and on the social standing and role of Indian tantric Buddhism of that era in particular.

For these reasons, a main focus of this book is on the Kalacakratantra as an Indian Buddhist tradition. Although the Kalacakratantra tradition has been a significant component of Tibetan Buddhism to this day and has produced a large body of tantric literature in Tibet, for a number of reasons the intended task of this book is not to provide a detailed analysis of the Indo-Tibetan Kalacakratantra tradition as a whole. The Kalacakratantra tradition as a whole includes a plurality of texts and interpretative perspectives, some of which are in agreement with each other; and it deals with an extensive variety of topics, which deserve separate scholarly analyses. Likewise, the diverse and complex historiographical, textual, and philosophical problems surrounding the Kalacakratantra literature of both India and Tibet, which should be addressed in great detail, require a collaborative effort of scholars who are willing to undertake such a task.

The central topic of this book is the Kalacakratantra’s view of the nature of the individual and one’s place in the universe and society. Accordingly, a primary theme of the book is on the Indic tantric views about the nature of the individual (siddha-pati), and its principal commentary, the Vimalakirti. However, since the Kalacakratantra tradition’s theory of the human being permeates all the chapters of the Kalacakratantra, the sec-