

DEVELOPMENT OF THE KĀLACAKRA SYSTEM IN LATER BUDDHISM

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The Buddha, the Perfectly Enlightened One, is represented in the sacred texts as having preached a doctrine unheard before. He is said to have realised the Truth by his own unaided effort and to have shown a Path which makes an end of suffering leading to release from repeated existence in the world. His words attracted the attention of a large number of people and spread over a large area. What we mean by Buddhism today is, however, not the essence or fundamentals of this new doctrine but a religio-philosophical system which assimilated and adopted new ideas and beliefs from the environment in which it developed. Elaborate ethical principles and stringent doctrinal disciplines together with the insistence on retirement from worldly life kept Buddhism confined to the recluses and monasteries during the first century of its existence.

To understand the background of Buddhism one has to take into consideration the problem of the relation of Buddhism to Brahmanism. Brahmanism as developed from the religion of Aryan India and influenced by non-Aryan contacts had by the sixth century B.C. become an 'elaborate sacrificial and sacerdotal system'. It was in the midst of this Brahmanic system that Buddhism originated. Brahmanic ideals and principles have very much influenced and guided Buddhism particularly in its later phase which is more akin to Brahmanism. The elaborate ritualistic systems of the later phase of Buddhism gave the Buddha's religion a totally different form and flavour.

It was perhaps a century after the Passing away of the Founder that Buddhism began to assimilate some current ideas and thoughts which ultimately led to the historical division of Buddhism into two schools, Hinayana and Mahayana. Mahayana has a broader and liberal outlook and possesses a deep sympathy for the suffering beings. It is true that this broadness of outlook and liberal attitude saved Buddhism from its narrow scholastic dogmatism of the age but it can not be denied as well that once the portals of this religion of rigorous moral discipline were thrown open, it paved the way for the incorporation of various practices and ideas in Buddhism. In the early centuries of the Chris-

tian era Buddhism started adjusting itself to the pressure of the environments, and Mahayanism with its promise to deliver all beings and with the idea of making Buddhism acceptable to all classes of people, began to incorporate all sorts of popular ceremonies and practices in the religion. With this process continuing in about the eighth century and thereafter Buddhism underwent a great change when various elements like **mantra, mudrā, maṇḍala** and other religious practices began to make their way into Buddhism. An altogether new form of Buddhism called the Vajrayana with much emphasis on rituals, meditational practices, gods and goddesses appeared as the third major division of Buddhism. This new phase of Buddhism is more or less a kind of Buddhist Tantrism and the appellation Mantrayana or Tantrayana is also given to it as it is based on **mantras, tantras** etc. In its form and characteristics the principles, doctrine and paraphernalia of Tantra-Buddhism are much the same as are found in the so-called Hindu tantras.

For a long time Tantrism has been considered as an off-shoot of Brahmanism or that it is a phase of Brahmanic **sādhana** only. A very recent work on Tantra-study even states that 'as regards Buddhism, **Tantra** stands for a Hindu conquest'². In the context of modern researches on the subject we can hardly accept such ideas and the materials at our disposal will not allow us to conclude that the Buddhist tantras originated from the Brahmanic **Tantra-sāstra** or the vice versa. The Buddhist tantric literature is perhaps richer and more varied than its counterpart in the Brahmanic domain. The Tantric literature is to be regarded as an independent religious literature consisting essentially of religious methods and practices current in India from a very old time. As a system it may not have developed in the Vedic age but many of the rites that have constituted the system at a later period are found scattered in different parts of the Vedic literature. Whether Vedic or non-Vedic in origin the Tantras, Brahmanic or Buddhist, represent a special aspect of the social, religious and cultural life of India and it is not possible to trace the origin of any of these two groups to any system or systems of philosophy. The Tantrik tradition is not the work of a day, it has a long history and the principles on which the Tantras, Hindu or Buddhist, are based were not evolved by either Hinduism or Buddhism out of their own materials but were the growth of the soil utilised both by the Hindus and the Buddhists. In the Pali canonical literature we have references to practices observed by religious sects during or before the time of the Buddha, which seem to be mainly tantric in character. It is also a historical fact that some tantric trends 'arose particularly on India's

extreme boundaries, some even outside Indian territory³. As it appears no particular age of origin can be assigned to the development of the vast Tantra literature, the age of each Tantra has to be determined on the basis of available evidences in and about the Tantra.

In spite of the fast-growing interests of scholars during the last few decades the Tantra has remained an enigma to us. There is perhaps no other branch of Indian studies which has evoked so much interest and at the same time has been subject to gross misconceptions leading to various contradictory views. Outwardly Tantra denotes both **niyama**, injunction, and **vidhi**, regulation, and essentially it connotes the nature of being revealed and the revelation itself at the same time. In the spiritual context they are some experience-concepts realisable in terms of revelation of the mysteries of men and matter, and ethically the tantras are the directive principles helping to formulate what is good and what is bad in the social context. The aim of the Tantra is to spread that kind of knowledge which saves the individual from suffering and helps him to receive Divine Grace. With the help of the knowledge inculcated in the Tantra one can realise his own essential nature and thereby attain freedom from worldly limitations. The supreme ideal of Tantra-worship and practice is the identity of the individual with the Supreme. This nature or characteristics of the Tantras hold good in the case of both the Hindu and Buddhist tantras. There seems to be no essential difference between Brahmanic and Buddhist Tantrism. Both of them inculcate a theological principle of duality in non-duality and hold that the ultimate non-duality possesses two aspects in its fundamental nature - the negative and the positive, **nivṛtti** and **pravṛtti** represented as Śiva and Śakti in Brahmanism and as Prajñā and Upāya in Buddhism. In the case of Brahmanism the metaphysical principles of Siva and Sakti are manifested in the material world as the male and the female whereas in Buddhism the principles of Prajñā and Upāya or Śūnyatā and Karuṇā are objectified as the male and the female. The ultimate goal of both is the state of perfect union and the realisation of the non-dual nature of the self and the not-self.

The fundamental principles are the same in both the Tantric schools and whatever differences we may observe are due to the fact that Brahmanic Tantrism bears the stamp of Brahmanic philosophy, religious ideas and practices, whereas Buddhist Tantrism is permeated with Buddhist ideas and practices. In the Buddhist Tantras we find fragments of Mahayanic metaphysics influenced by Upanisadic monism, often with ideas of śūnya-vāda, vijñāna-vāda, vedānta etc.

put side by side indiscriminately and sometimes jumbled up confusedly. The fundamental principles of early Buddhism are also found scattered in Buddhist tantric texts along with Mahayanism and Brahmanic ideas often in a distorted form. In this context a correct assessment of many of the Buddhist Tantras will appear to be difficult if not impossible at present. It is indeed an interesting study to find out how the teachings of Śākyamuni remarkable for its ethical and moral discipline could incorporate so many heterogenous and sometimes even revolting ideas within its fold. Whatever be the origin, antiquity, source or character of the Tantras the fact remains that a large number of such texts belonging to various Buddhist and Brahmanical sects have been written, and it is a pity that most of these texts have still remained in manuscripts keeping us ignorant of a valuable treasure of Indian studies.

With our present state of knowledge in the subject it is indeed difficult either to trace any organic relation between Buddhism and Tantrism or to ascertain as to how, when and by whom these esoteric elements or practices were introduced in Buddhism. Attempts have been made to connect even the Buddha with the introduction of these elements⁴. It has been held on the basis of a statement in the **Tattva saṃgraha**⁵ that the Teacher made provision for these practices to help his disciples of lower calibre who would not be able to understand his noble and subtle teachings. This seems to be in direct contradiction of the life and teachings of the Master who has always been represented as an uncompromising critic of the Brahmanic system of rituals and ceremonies. No testimony from any source can convince us that the Buddha whose entire life was dedicated to stem the tide of evils generated by the prevalent religious systems should have himself advocated for these elements only to attract a larger number of people to his fold.

Traditionally Asanga, the exponent of the Yogācāra philosophy, has been responsible for the introduction of the esoteric principles in Buddhism, and in some sources Nāgārjuna, the propounder of the Mādhyamika philosophy, has been mentioned as the founder of the Buddhist esoteric school. Buddhist **dhāraṇīs** have been sometimes considered to be precursors of the tantras and Tucci thinks the **dhāraṇīs** to be 'the first kernel from which the Tantras developed'⁶. A number of tantric texts are reported to have been introduced into Kambuj as early as the beginning of the 9th century. The Suram-gama-sutra repeated by Fa-Hien for his own protection and held by him with high reverence has been thought to be a collection of not later than the first century. In this context the Buddhist tantras may

be traced to the beginning of Christian era. Yuan Chwang considers the **dhāraṇīs** belonging to the Mantrayana to be as old as the Mahā-saṅghikas (1st – 2nd C.A.D.).

Whatever be the time and the reason for the introduction of the esoteric elements and whoever be the person responsible for that it seems reasonable to maintain that the Mahayanic pledge for universal redemption could not but make way for the current popular religious practices into Buddhism to make it generally acceptable. Buddhist principles and traditions tinged with these materials helped the growth of the so-called Tantrik Buddhism commonly designated by the term Vajrayāna. As a corporate system Vajrayāna has incorporated a large number of popular beliefs and practices which have played a significant role of far-reaching consequences in the development of Buddhism at its later phase. With continuous flow of these beliefs or even rituals into the body of Buddhism the Teacher who was so much against anything connected with deity and divinity became himself deified and was considered as **Lokottara** or super-human. The Buddhist masters with their broad-minded receptiveness strengthened by the tendency of spreading over the backward frontier peoples did not hesitate to accept their ideas and even deities in their fold. These elements were, however, fully transformed, 'purged of their primitive crudeness' and endowed with secret symbols. Many of the **mandalas** of Vajrayana reveal contact of Buddhism with frontier peoples.

Though the **Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa** describes a number of gods and goddesses Buddhism did not have even then, about second century A.D., any conception of a well classified Pantheon, and it is with the emergence of Tantric Buddhism that gods came to be multiplied. The different branches or sects of Vajrayāna accepted the ideas and institutions current among the masses and with their tolerant universalism incorporated popular indigenous deities in their **mandalas** as acolytes of their chief gods. In the process popular Hindu deities like Indra, Varuṇa, Maheśvara, Kuvera, Skanda, Viṣṇu, and even Kāma, the god of love, are all admitted wholesale into Buddhism and find the places in the mandalas but as keepers of the quarters. With the diversion of Buddhism to this direction a large number of divine and fiendish beings also found their places in Vajrayanic texts, often in female forms and sometimes with monstrous appearances. In almost all texts of later Buddhism we meet with such beings as Cundā, Ambā, Dakinī, Yoginī, Yakṣinī and a host of others like them.

The incorporation of Hindu gods and goddesses into Buddhism reached its maximum limit with the development of the Kālacakra

system. The most important factor for the increase of the compromising attitude of the Buddhists towards different Brahmanic sects may be traced in the change of Indian situation with the advent and infiltration of Islamic religion and culture. It is learnt from Kālacakra texts that the Buddhists were faced with the social problem of the overpowering infiltration of the Semitic culture and to resist the growing influence of the foreign elements they offered to join hands with the followers of the Brahmanic religion. It is said that the purpose of introducing the Kālacakra system has been to prevent the people from being converted to Islam. In order to stop the inroad of the alien culture the leader of the Buddhists proposed intermarriage and inter-dining among the Buddhists and the Brahmanical sages and appealed to the sages to assemble under the banner of the one Lord Kālacakra, the Adi Buddha, the progenitor of all Buddhas, the unitary embodiment of Prajñā and Upāya the Omniscient One .

Buddhism or for that matter Vajrayāna seems to have reached its extreme development with the Kālacakra system or Kālachakrayana. Both Indian and Tibetan sources agree that this system was introduced in India from a country named Sambhala about sixty years before it went to Tibet. It is generally accepted that the system penetrated into Tibet through Kashmir in 1026 A.D., and it was approximately in 966 A.D. that this phase of Buddhism was first known in India. The system exercised a potent influence in the life and thought of the Tibetan people. The Lamaist religion is fully influenced by the system and a large number of treatises have been written by Tibetan scholars mostly in the form of commentaries and sub-commentaries to original Sanskrit works.

A land of Śambhala has been mentioned in some Puranic texts as the birth place of the kalkī-incarnation of Viṣṇu. Ptolemy speaks of a Śambhala as a city of Rohilkhand in the east of Delhi. But the land of Sambhala of the Kālacakra texts is undoubtedly a different one and in all probability was a place outside India which in course of time became shrouded in mystic tales and accounts and passed as only a mythical country. The Vimalaprabhā locates the country in the north of the river Śītā, and the ārya-viṣaya, the land of the Aryans, i.e., India, is said to be situated in the south of the river and in between the Himavat and the island of Laṅkā. CsomadeKörös places the land between about 45° and 50° North Latitude beyond the river Śītā which he identifies with Jaxartes. Descriptions about the way to the mysterious land of Śambhala as given by Tibetan sources, however, suggest Tarim in East Turkestan to be the Śītā of the Kālacakra fame.

Tibetan sources describe the country as of the shape of a lotus having eight petals. In each of these eight petals there are twelve big states each with a king. In each of the twelve states there are about hundred provinces, each having a crore of villages in it. The central part of the lotus is surrounded by the Himalayas. In the centre of the country is situated the great capital city of Kalāpa with the royal palace at its centre and in that area known as **mahāmuni-grāma** dwell great Brahmanical sages. King Sucandra represented as an incarnation of Bodhisattva Vajrapāni, and as associated with the preaching of several esoteric teachings, is the lord of the land. In the centre of the southern direction of the **mahāmuni-grāma** lies the **malaya** garden, the garden of sandal trees, with a **maṇḍala** of Kālachakra, built by king Sucandra, which is of a four-cornered shape having a breadth of 400 cubits. There is also a smaller **maṇḍala** built by king Pundarika, one of Sucandra's successors. The **malaya**-garden is as large as the capital city with a circumference of 12000 **yojanas**. In the east and west of the garden are located respectively the **Upamāna** and the **Puṇḍarika** lakes each of which occupy an area of 12000 **Yojanas**.

Waddell once discarded the system as unworthy of being considered as a philosophy and found in it nothing but 'a monstrous and poly-demonist doctrine.... with its demoniacal Buddhas' S.B. Dasgupta in his excellent work entitled 'An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism' seems to have tacitly accepted the view of Waddell. Considered on the basis of Sanskrit texts now available, both in prints and in manuscripts, the view of Waddell loses its ground. The Kālacakra-tantra, the Vimalaprabhā, the exhaustive Commentary on the Kālacakratantra, the Sekoddeśatīkā, and various Tibetan commentaries on the subject help us to understand the real nature and characteristics of the system which in keeping with the tradition of the Vajrayāna attempts to explain the whole creation within the body.

The Kālacakratantra, now extant as the Laghu-Kālacakratantra is the only available fundamental text of this system, and it appears from various sources that there was a **Mula-tantra** from which the present text of **Laghu-tantra** was adapted. The text of the Tantra is composed in Sanskrit verses of the Sragdharā metre with occasional irregularities. With a total number of 1047 verses the text is divided into five **paṭalas** or chapters, viz., Lokadhātu paṭala (169), Adhyātma-paṭala (180), Abhiṣeka-paṭala (203), Sādhana-paṭala (234), and Jñāna-paṭala (261). The Vimalaprabhā informs us in its introductory part that the text in its five chapters contains 1030 verses in the **Sragdharā** metre. Bu-ston in his History III records this point and

observes that some of the verses of the **Laghu**-version do not come from the original text. He mentions verses 93 and 148 of the first chapter as of later origin and is of the view that all parts of the **Laghu-tantra** are not from the **Mūla-tantra**. According to the Vimalaprabha the title of the Jantra-text known to us at present is **Laghu-Kālacakra-tantra** and the Commentary designates itself as **Laghu-Kālacakratantra-rāja-tīkā** and claims itself to be **mūla-tantrā-nusārinī**. In the **Sekoddeśa-tīkā** of Naḍapāda (Naro-pa) on the **Seka**-section of the **Kālacakratantra** we have at least fifteen quotations from the **Mūlatantra**. According to Naro-pa's exposition each Tantra is presented in two recensions, viz., **Mūlatantra** i.e., the basic or original text, and **Laghu-tantra** i.e., the abridged text. The **Mūlatantra** of the **Kālacakra** seems to have been lost to us in as much as we do not possess anything of the **Mūlatantra** either in the Tibetan or in the Chinese canon. But a voluminous literature gradually developed from the **Mūlatantra** which belongs to the group of **mātṛ-tantras**, 'Mother-Tantras'. The **mātṛ-tantras** inculcate teachings on **Prajñā** or Transcendental Wisdom, whereas the other group known as the **pitṛ-tantras**, 'Father-Tantras' are concerned with the active realisation of the ideal of **Karuṇā** 'compassion'. This Tantra is also considered as an **advaya** tantra.

The Buddha is supposed to have preached the Kalacakra doctrine himself on the famous Grdhrakūta-mountain in Rājagṛha after the promulgation of the Mahāyāna, the Prajñāpāramitāyāna. He proclaimed the Kālacakra-teachings again at Dhānyakāṭaka which with the famous Amarāvati-stūpa and the sacred **Śrī-parvata** must have played important and significant roles in the propagation and development of Vajrayāna in general and Buddhist Tantrism in particular. To associate the Master with the preaching of the **Kālacakra-tantra** and similar other texts has been in accordance with the practice of the Buddhists of the later times. With a view to giving a colour of authority and sanctity to later texts and passing them off as the **Buddhavacana**, the Buddhists would prefer to put the new teachings in the **mouth** of the Buddha who would be depicted as delivering the lectures **in an assembly** of gods, men, Bodhisattvas and other beings. This **form of introduction** to important texts has been known as the **Saṅgīti-form** and can be found to have become very popular during the later stage of Buddhism. This form is similar to the introductory portions of the earlier **sūtras** of the canonical texts where the Teacher is depicted as lecturing to earnest listeners.

Some Tibetan sources hold that the Buddha revealed the **Mūla-tantra** of the **Kālacakra** in the year of his Enlightenment while others

think that the basic text was preached by the Master in his eightieth year. It is said that while the Master was revealing the esoteric teachings in the assembly of gods, Bodhisattvas etc. Sucandra, the king of Śambhala, was present there in a mysterious way and he prayed to the Buddha for the text of the teachings in Kālacakra. One year later the **Mūla-tantra** with 12000 verses was recorded and preserved in Śambhala.

The text of the present Tantra opens with a prayer of king Sucandra to the omniscient Buddha for an exposition of the **yoga** of **Śrī Kālacakra** so that the people in the **Kālī**-age can set themselves on the right path and attain emancipation. This introduction to the text shows that this text is the work of an author different from King Sucandra. The original text was prepared by King Sucandra from the exposition made by the Buddha and later King Yaśas, a successor of King Sucandra, explained the text in an abridged form i.e., the present **Laghu**-text to Sūryaratha, the leader of the Brahmanical sages of Śambhala, in order to convert the sages to the teachings and practices of Śrī Kālacakra.

King Sucandra, generally accepted by traditions as the inspirer of the Kālacakra doctrine, is supposed to be the first in the line of seven 'Priest-kings' of Śambhala. This line of 'Priest-kings' was succeeded by a line of twenty six **Kalki** or **Kulika**-kings each of whom ruled for one hundred years. Verse 151 of the first chapter of the present **Laghu**-text speaks of thirty five **kalkins**, but Bu-ston refers to the number of **kalki**-kings as 26. It seems that Bu-ston keeps the seven 'Priest-kings' out of this list while the text and its commentary include the seven kings as well as the two sons, Brahmā and Sureśāna, of the 26th **Kalkin** of Bu-ston's account making the total number of the **Kalki**-family of Śambhala as thirty five. Rudracakrin, the 26th and supposed to be the last **Kalkin**, will annihilate the Mlecchas in a fierce battle and a Golden Age of happiness and prosperity will usher in. Many Tibetans still believe that such an incident will take place bringing in new hopes for Buddhism. It is stated that the religion of the Mlecchas will exist for eight hundred years and after its destruction by the great Rudracakrin the religion of the Buddha will continue for 19800 years : **vimśat sahasraṃ karaśataraḥitaṃ Buddhadharmapravṛtīḥ.**

King Yaśas who has been credited with the introduction of the **Laghu**- version of the Kālacakratantra is a **nirmāṇa-kāya** of Mañjuśrī and has been referred to as the eighth king of Śambhala and the first of the **Kalkins**. He is said to have converted the Brahmanical sages of Śambhala into the system and principles of Kālacakra.

Since very ancient time **kāla** (Time) has been regarded as the Supreme Lord by many Brahmanical Schools. **Kāla** has been described in the Mahābhārata in an elaborate metaphorical way that one who knows well the flow of **kāla** is never deluded and reaches his **goal**. The Lord Kālacakra might have been set up as a non-sectarian God to make it possible for all the warring elements of different religious groups to unite and fight under one banner of leadership against a foreign culture. The development of this system with abundant incorporation of Brahmanic deities in the **mandala** might have been an unavoidable necessity to cause a cultural fusion in offering a united resistance to the impending danger of the Semitic penetration. With that end in view, an endeavour was made to bring all the followers of the different sects of Brahman, Viṣṇu, Śiva and such other sages united in one family, the **Vajrakula**, with the four-fold initiation (**abhiṣeka**) in the Kālacakra—all differences in race, class, creed and customs were sought to be removed: **kalāśa-guḥya-prajñā-jñāna-bhiṣekataḥ sarva-varṇānām eka-kalko bhavati**. Besides the developing systems of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism the system seems to have borrowed from the flourishing Manichaeism and other foreign elements. The Kālacakra system and the concept of Kālacakra are two important examples of the process of cultural fusion as taking place in India since long.

The Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and even Śākta ideas and Yoga elements are noticeable in a large measure in the principles and doctrine of the kālacakra system. The practical side of Tantra-Buddhism generally follow the specific yogic method but in the case of Kalacakra we have the system of **utpannakrama** and **śaḍaṅga-yoga**. The importance of the four stages of sleeping, dreaming etc. and **mokṣa** in the formation of the meditational system of Kālacakra, and particularly the reference to the **avatāras** (incarnations) of Viṣṇu, especially of the ninth and the tenth **avatāras**, i.e., Buddha and Kalkin, have given a distinct Vaiṣṇava colour to the system. It echoes the Vaiṣṇava ideas that the rituals of animal sacrifices are of no rationalistic necessity and the **himsā** in the rites is the source of evils and cause fights. Similar to the Vaiṣṇava belief that the **Kalki**-incarnation of Viṣṇu is to destroy all wicked beings and establish the rule of peace and justice, we find here the hope that between the 25th and 26th kings of the **kalki**-family of Śambhala, a fierce battle will take place between the united army of the land and foreign powers. In this battle the followers of Kālacakra would emerge victorious and led by Viṣṇu, Śiva and other generals would retire to the residence of the ruling **kalki**-king in the **kailāsa** mountain. All the sentient beings in the world would

become happy and satisfied with **dharma** and **artha** recovered and established. All these traits have sometime led scholars to misunderstand this system as fully Vaiṣṇava in origin and character. It is true that Vaiṣṇava elements are there but to call it a Vaiṣṇava work is to ignore textual materials. The anti-animal-sacrifice sentiment and that violence or hatred breeds hatred etc. are as much Buddhist as they are Vaiṣṇava and early Buddhist texts abound in such sentiments and statements. The **Kalkin** in the Kālacakra is in no way identical with the **kalki**-incarnation of Visnu but stands for a family of kings of noble descent (**Kulika**) : **sakalko' syastīti kalki** (Tib. rigs idan) **tasya gotram kalki-gotram vajrakulābhiṣekataḥ** : Excepting the prominence of these **Kalki-gotra** kings the Kālacakra text nowhere speaks of Viṣṇu or of his incarnation with the same glory, glamour or excellence as could be expected of a Vaisnava work, - rather the incarnations of Visnu are referred to as possessed of **rajas**-quality and Visnu as a lieutenant of the **Kalki**-king.

The Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Yoga principles along with other forms of Indian and foreign ideas might have, however, played an important rôle at some time or other in the formation of the kālacakra system, which is certainly a syncretic one, particularly in its meditational principles, it is nevertheless out and out a Buddhist system in origin, spirit and character. Its essentially Buddhist characteristics can not be missed by anybody examining its ideas, theories, and propensity. It is a system which true to the principles of Tantras and Vajrayāna attempts to explain the whole creation within this body. An elaborate system of Yoga-practices with the control of the vital winds in the body has been regarded as a very important fundamental factor in realising the Truth in the form of the Lord Kālacakra. A Kalacakrayanist wants to keep himself above the influence of the cycle of time, which is ever moving to cause decay, death and rebirth. The flow of time is nothing but the working of the vital winds in the body, it is in the action of these winds that time reveals itself and if a **sādhaka** can control and stop this action he can stop the flow of time and can thereby raise himself upto the state of **Mahāsukha** removing suffering, death and rebirth.

Since **Kāla** is the most important concept in their philosophy these Buddhists have attached greatest importance to the astronomical conceptions of **yoga** (variable divisions of time in astronomy), **karāṇa**, **tithi** (lunar day) and to the movements and positions of the Sun, the planets and the constellations. Experts in astronomy and astrology they interpret the principles and fundamentals of Buddhism in relation with time and its different units.

In the Tantra-text we find the theory of **Pratīyasamutpāda** interpreted in a novel way as the movement of the Sun through the twelve zodiacal signs in twelve months. The first **nidāna** in the process is caused by the Sun's entry into the sign of Capricorn, i.e., with the beginning of the northern movement of the Sun. To understand life and the cause of life, to know the real nature of the phenomenal objects, one should comprehend this movement and the process. To put an end to the mass of evils is to stop it.

Of the two cardinal principles of Buddhism, **Śūnyatā** and **Karuṇā**, **Śūnyatā** has been represented by these Buddhists as the Sun of the dark fortnight and **Karuṇā** as the Moon of the bright fortnight. First they speak of three **Śūnyatās** : **śūnyatā**, **mahāśūnyatā** and **paramārthasūnyatā**, and three **Karuṇās** : **sattvāvalambinī**, **dharmāvalambinī**, and **anāvalambinī**. The three types of each of the two principles are further analysed into sixteen in relation to the fifteen **tithis** of each fortnight.

The first of the sixteen types of **Śūnyatā** has been defined as the voidness of five **skandhas** and is supposed to comprise five **śūnyatās** developing during the first five days of the Sun of the dark fortnight. The second i.e., the **mahāśūnyatā** explained as the voidness of the five **dhātus** is said to comprise the five **śūnyatās** developing during the next five days of the Sun of the same fortnight, i.e., from the sixth to the tenth **tithis**, whereas the **paramārthasūnyatā** is understood as the voidness of the five **indriyas** developing during the next five days, i.e., from the eleventh to the fifteenth **tithis** (**amāvasyā**) of the dark fortnight. The sixteenth **śūnyatā** is held as to arise with the position of the Sun at the juncture of the end of the dark fortnight and the beginning of the bright fortnight which is all-pervasive, **śarvākārā**.¹⁴

The first group of five of the sixteen **Karuṇās**¹⁵ develops as the sympathy or compassion for the suffering beings during the first five days of the Moon of the bright fortnight. The second i.e., the **dharma-valambinī** type, compassion for the phenomenal world i.e., viewing the world of appearances as with no existence by nature, develops during the next five days of the Moon of the same fortnight, i.e., from sixth to the tenth **tithis**. The third or the **anāvalambinī** type, the compassion based on no object and which is a part of the nature of the **Bodhi**, develops during the third five days of the fortnight, i.e., from the eleventh to the fifteenth **tithis** (**pūrṇimā**) of the bright fortnight. The sixteenth **karuṇā** is held as to arise with the position of the Moon at the juncture of the end of the bright fortnight and the begin-

ning of the dark fortnight. It may be mentioned here that **dohās**, **caryapadas** and other Tantra-texts understand **Sūnyatā** as **Prajñā** i.e. Moon and take **Karuṇā** as **Upāya** i.e., Sun; but it is explicitly stated by these buddhists as **Ḳṣṇapakṣa sūryaḥ prajñā, sukḻapakṣas candramā upāyaḥ** : the Sun of the dark fortnight is the **Sūnyatā** or **Prajñā** and the Moon of the bright fortnight is **Karuṇā** or **Upāya**. Besides these cardinal principles the system in keeping with the fundamental characteristics of Buddhism treats of the two truths, **saṃvṛti** and **paramārtha**, the four **abhisambodhis**, the four **kāyas**, the five **abhijñās**, etc., but in the light of their own theory centering round the concept of **Kālacakra**.

Kālacakra, the highest God of worship in this system, is substantially of the same nature as that of the concept of **Vajrasattva** as found in different **Vajrayana** texts. He is the unity of **Prajna** and **Upaya**, the **Bodhicitta**, the ultimate immutable One in the form of the motionless Great Bliss (**Mahāsukha**)¹⁶. He is without origination and destruction, the unitary embodiment of knowledge and knowable embraced by **Prajna** (Transcendent Wisdom) both endowed with and bereft of forms (contents). He is the creator of all Buddhas, the **Adi Buddha**, the only Lord. The **Vimalaprabha** explains the expression **Kālacakra** by showing that each and every syllable of the word is invested with a meaning :

Kakārāt kārṇe śānte lakārāc ca layo'tra vai 17
cakārāc calacittasya krakārāt kramavandhanāt .

Kā means causality, **la** denotes absorption, or dissolution, **ca** signifies the unstable mind and **kra** stands for the chain of events or the process.

Thus **kāla** comes to mean the state in which 'the original cause-potency' has been absorbed, that is the state of immutable happiness of knowledge, this is **Upaya** and it is of the nature of **karuṇā**; **cakra**, on the other hand, stands for the cycle of world process and this is the principle of knowability, this is **Prajna** and is of the nature of **sūnyatā** :

Kālo'kṣarasukham jñānam upāya karuṇātmakāḥ
jñeyākāram jagac cakram Śrī Prajñā sūnyatātmikā.
karuṇā-sūnyatāmūrtiḥ kāla-saṃvṛtirūpiṇiḥ
sūnyatā cakram ityuktam kālacakro'dvayo mataḥ. 18

Kālacakra is thus the state of absolute unification of Prajna and Upaya, i.e., **sūnyatā** and **karuṇā**. He is the One God to be realised by these Buddhists to free themselves from the bondage of repeated existences (**samsāra**). The importance that this concept once exercised among the Buddhists may be evident from the famous sentences reported by Padma dkar po to have been inscribed by Tsi lu pa on the upper side of main entrance to the Nalanda monastery: 'He who does not know the Adi Buddha, does not know the Kalacakra; he who does not know the Kālacakra does not know how to utter the mystic names properly;' and so on. The Lamaist religion of the present day is fully influenced by this system and the present cycle of Tibetan years came into vogue from the date of the introduction of the system in Tibet. The Pagan Inscription of 1442 A.D. mentions the names of two texts, Mahākālacakka and Mahākālacakkatīkā, which suggests that the system was also known to Upper Burma in the 15th century. It was known in eastern India during the reign of king Mahipala of Bengal.

It can not be said with any certainty as to who first made the system known in India since there are contradictory reports on this issue. Tsi lu pa, Pi to pa and the older Kālacakrapāda are generally mentioned in different sources as the first Indian scholar of the system. We have two different lines of teachers inculcating the tradition of Kalacakra established by Tibetan Masters, one started by Tsi Lu pa and the other by Pandit Somanātha, a disciple of Naro pa.

The materials available to us are so scanty that we are not able yet to form a correct idea about the teachings of the system. The language of the texts and the numerous astronomical calculations seem to be baffling to a modern scholar. It is well known a fact that the Tantras have always been transmitted from the preceptors to the disciples in the most secret manner and it has been held an unpardonable crime on the part of a **sādhaka** to let the uninitiated into the secrets of their **sādhanā**. As a result tantrik texts have never been the subject of a pure academic discussion and any attempt to have an insight into the doctrines of the tantrik schools of Buddhism pose insurmountable difficulties to which the Kalacakra school is no exception.

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1. Cf. N. Dutt, Early Monastic Buddhism I (1941), Ch. III G.C. Pande, Origins of Buddhism, 316 ff.
 2. M. Basu, Tantra, 24

3. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls I, 210
4. B. Bhattacharya, Buddhist Esoterism, 18 ff.
5. Tattva Samgraha, Sl. 3487
6. Tucci, op. cit. 223.
7. Tucci, op. cit. 215
8. See the present author's article in J.A.S. XVIII, II
9. Lamaism, 131
10. As under n.8 above
11. Vimalaprabha I
12. Loc. cit.
13. See present author's article in K.C. Chattopadhyay Vol., Allahabad - G.N. Jha Inst.
14. See the present author's article in Proc. Gauhati Session, AIOC.
15. See the present author's article in Proc. International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi 1964.
16. See the present author's article in L.Sternbach Fel. Vol. I
17. Vimalaprabha I
18. Vimalaprabha I