

## The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 2. The Dalai Lama (Avalokiteshvara) and the Demoness (Srinmo)

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### Part II POLITICS AS RITUAL

*The Shambhalization plan for Japan is the first step toward the Shambhalization of the world. If you participate in it, you will achieve great virtue and rise up to a higher world*

Shoko Asahara

In order to be able to understand and to evaluate the person of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the history of Tibet, we must first set aside all of our *contemporary* western conceptions in which the domains of religion and politics, of magic and government decisions, and of worldly and spiritual power are separate from one another. We must also not allow ourselves to be influenced by the public self-presentation of the exiled Tibetan head of state, by his declarations of belief in democracy, by his insistent affirmations of peace, by his ecumenical professions, or by his statements on practical politics. Then a closer examination reveals the entire performance, oriented to western values, which he offers daily on the world political stage, to be a political tactic, with the help of which he wants to put through his atavistic and androcentric world view globally — a world view whose dominant principles are steeped in magic, ritual, occultism, and the despotism of an ecclesiastical state.

It is not the individual political transgressions of the Dalai Lama, which have only been begun to be denounced in the Euro-American media since 1996, which could make his person and office a fundamental problem for the West. Even if these “deficiencies” weigh more heavily when measured against the moral claims of a “living Buddha” than they would for an ordinary politician, these are simply superficial discordances. In contrast, anybody who descends more deeply into the Tibetan system must inevitably enter the sexual magic world of the tantras which we have described. This opens up a dimension completely foreign to a westerner. For his “modern” awareness, there is no relation whatsoever between the tantric system of rituals and the *realpolitik* of the head of the Tibetan government in exile. He would hardly take seriously the derivation of political decisions from the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala Myth*. But it is precisely this connection between ritual and politics, between sacred sexuality and power which is — as we shall demonstrate — the central concern of Lamaism.

European-American ignorance in the face of atavistic religious currents is not limited to Tibetan Buddhism, but likewise applies to other cultures, like Islam for example. It is currently usual in the West to draw a stark distinction between religious fundamentalism on the one hand, and the actual human political concerns of all religions on the other. The result has been that all the religious traditions of the world were able to infiltrate Europe and North America as valuable spiritual alternatives to the decadent materialism of the industrialized world. In recent years there has not been much demand for a sustained critical evaluation of religions.

Yet anybody who reads closely the holy texts of the various schools of belief (be it the *Koran*, passages from the *Old Testament*, the *Christian Book of Revelations*, or the *Kalachakra Tantra*), is very soon confronted with an explosive potential for aggression, which must inevitably lead to

bloody wars between cultures, and has always done so in the past. Fundamentalism is already present in the *core* of nearly all world religions and in no sense does it represent an essential misunderstanding of the true doctrine. [1]

The Dalai Lama is without doubt the most skilled and successful of all religious leaders in the infiltration of the West. He displays such an informed, tolerant, and apparently natural manner in public, that everybody is enchanted by him from first sight. It would not occur to anybody upon whom he turns his kindly Buddha smile that his religious system is intent upon forcibly subjecting the world to its law. But — as we wish to demonstrate in what follows — this is Lamaism's persistently pursued goal.

Although understandable, this western naiveté and ignorance cannot be excused — not just because it has up until now neglected to thoroughly and critically investigate the history of Tibet and the religion of Tantric Buddhism, but because we have also completely forgotten that we had to free ourselves at great cost from an atavistic world. The despotism of the church, the inquisition, the deprivation of the right to decide, the elimination of the will, the contempt for the individual, the censorship, the persecution of those of other faiths — were all difficult obstacles to overcome in the development of modern western culture. The Occident ousted its old “gods” and myths during the Enlightenment; now it is re-importing them through the uncritical adoption of exotic religious systems. Since the West is firmly convinced that the separation of state and religion must be apparent to every reasonable person, it is unwilling and unable to comprehend the politico-religious processes of the imported atavistic cultures. Fascism, for example, was a classic case of the reactivation of ancient myths.

Nearly all of the religious dogmata of Tantric Buddhism have also — with variations — cropped up in the European past and form a part of our western inheritance. For this reason it seems sensible, before we examine the history of Tibet and the politics of the Dalai Lama, to compare several maxims of Lamaist political and historical thought with corresponding conceptions from the occidental tradition. This will, we hope, help the reader better understand the visions of the “living Buddha”.

### Myth and history

For the Ancient Greeks of Homer's time, history had no intrinsic value; it was experienced as the recollection of myth. The myths of the gods, and later those of the heroes, formed so to speak those original events which were re-enacted in thousands of variations by people here on earth, and this “re-enactment” was known as history. History was thus no more and no less than the mortal imitation of divine myths. “When something should be decided among the humans,” — W. F. Otto has written of the ancient world view of the Hellenes — “the dispute must first take place between the gods” (quoted by Hübner, 1985, p. 131).

If, however, historical events, such as the Trojan War for example, developed an inordinate significance, then the boundary between myth and history became blurred. The historical incidents could now themselves become myths, or better the reverse, the myth seized hold of history so as to incorporate it and make it similar. For the ancient peoples, this “mythologizing” of history signified something very concrete — namely the direct intervention of the gods in historical events. This was not conceived of as something dark and mysterious, but rather very clear and contemporary: either the divinities appeared in visible human form (and fought in battles for instance) or they “possessed” human protagonists and “inspired” them to great deeds and misdeeds.

If human history is dependent upon the will of supernatural beings in the ancient view of things, then it is a necessary conclusion that humans cannot influence history directly, but rather only via a religious “detour”, that is, through entreating the gods. For this reason, the priests, who could establish direct contact with the transcendent powers, had much weight in politics. The ritual, the oracle, and the prayer thus had primary status in ancient societies and were often more highly

valued than the decisions of a regent. In particular, the sacrificial rite performed by the priests was regarded as the actual reason whether or not a political decision met with success. The more valuable the sacrifice, the greater the likelihood that the gods would prove merciful. For this reason, and in order to be able to even begin the war against Troy, Agamemnon let his own daughter, Iphigeneia, be ritually killed in Aulis.

Very similar concepts — as we shall demonstrate — still today dominate the archaic historical understanding of Lamaist Buddhism. Religion and history are not separated from one another in the Tibetan world view, nor politics and ritual, symbol and reality. Since superhuman forces and powers (Buddha beings and gods) are at work behind the human sphere, for Lamaism history is at heart the deeds of various deities and not the activity of politicians, army leaders and opinion makers. The characters, the motives, the methods and actions of individual gods (and demons) must thus be made answerable in the final instance for the development of national and global politics. Consequently, the Tibetan study of history is — in their own conception — always mythology as well, when we take the latter to mean the “history of the gods”.

What is true of history applies in the same degree to politics. According to tantric doctrine, a sacred ruler (such as the Dalai Lama for example) does not just command his subjects through the spoken and written word, but also conducts various internal (meditative) and external rituals so as to thus steer or at least influence his practical politics. Ritual and politics, oracular systems and political decision-making processes are united not just in the Tibet of old, but also — astonishingly indeed — still today among the Tibetans in exile. Centrally, for the Lamaist elite, “politics” means a sequence of ritual/magical activities for the fulfillment of a cosmic plan which is finally executed by the gods (of whom the Lamas are incarnations). It is for this reason that ritual life has such an important, indeed central status in a Buddhocratic state system. This is the real smithy in which the reality of this archaic society was shaped. That apparently “normal” political processes (such as the work of a “democratic” parliament or the activities of human rights commissions for instance) exist alongside, need not — as the example of the exile Tibetans demonstrates — stand in the way of the occult ritual system; rather, it could even be said to offer the necessary veil to obscure the primary processes.

### **The battle of the sexes and history**

Let us return to Homer and his times. The Trojan War vividly demonstrates how closely the history of the ancient Greeks was linked to the battle of the sexes. A number of gender conflicts together formed the events which triggered war: The decision of Paris and the vanity of the three chief goddesses (Hera, Athena, Aphrodite), the theft and the infidelity of Helen and the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. The end of the long drawn out and terrible war is also marked by bloody sexual topics: The treacherous murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra, her death at the hands of her son Orestes, the flight of Aeneas (from Troy) and his marriage to Dido (the Queen of Carthage), the suicide of the abandoned Dido and the founding of the Roman dynasties (through Aeneas).

The writer and researcher of myths, Robert Ranke Graves (1895-1985), in a study which has in the meantime received academic recognition, assembled a voluminous amount of material which adequately supports his hypothesis that hidden behind all (!) the Greek mythology and early history lies a battle of the sexes between matriarchal and patriarchal societal forms. This “subterranean” mythic/sexual current which barely comes to light, and which propels human history forwards from the depths of the subconscious, was also a fact for Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). In his comprehensive essay, *Totem und Tabu* [Totem and Taboo], he attempted to draw attention to the sexual origins of human culture.

As we shall show, this is no different for the Lamaist “writing of history”: on the basis of the sex-specific construction of the entire tantric universe (masculine, feminine, androgynous), Tibetan history also presupposes a mythologically based gender relation. Since *Vajrayana* essentially requires the suppression of the feminine principle by the masculine principle, of the woman by the

man, the history of Tibet is analogously grounded in the repression of the feminine by the masculine. Likewise, we find “female sacrifice” carried out at the center of the tantric mysteries once more in the “myth-history” of the country.

### **The sacred kingdom**

In many ancient societies the “sacred king” was regarded as the representative of the gods. Worldly and spiritual power were concentrated within this figure. His proximity to the gods was judged differently from culture to culture. In the old oriental community the kings exceeded the deputizing function and were themselves considered to be the deity. This gave them the right to rule with absolute power over their subjects. Their godly likeness was in no way contradicted by their mortality, then it was believed that the spirit of the god withdrew from the human body of the holy king at the hour of his death so as to then incarnate anew in the succeeding ruler. The history of the sacred kings was thus actually an “epiphany”, that is, an appearance of the deity in time.

In the European Middle Ages in contrast, the “sacred rulers” were only considered to be God’s *representatives* on earth, but the concept of their dual role as mortal man and divine instance still had its validity. One therefore spoke of the “two bodies of the king”, an eternal supernatural one and a transient human one.

A further characteristic of the political theology of the Middle Ages consisted in the division of the royal office which formerly encompassed both domains — so that (1) the spiritual and (2) the secular missions were conducted by two different individuals, the priest and the king, the Pope and the Emperor. Both institutions together — or in opposition to one another — decisively determined the history of Europe up until modern times.

Every criterion for the sacred kingdom is met by the Dalai Lama and his state system. His institution is not even subject to the division of powers (between priesthood and kingship) which we know from medieval Europe, but orientates itself towards the ancient/Oriental despotic states (e.g., in Egypt and Persia). Worldly and spiritual power are rolled into one. He is not the human deput’y of a Buddha being upon the Lion Throne; rather, he is — according to doctrine — this Buddha being himself. His epithet, *Kundun*, which is on everybody’s lips following Martin Scorsese’s film of the same name, means “the presence” or “precious presence”, i.e., the presence of a deity, or of a Buddha in human form. To translate “*Kundun*” as “living Buddha” is thus thoroughly justified. In *Playboy*, in answer to the question of the word’s meaning, His Holiness replied, “Precious presence. According to Tibetan tradition '*Kundun*' is a term with which I alone can be referred to. It is taken to mean the highest level of spiritual development which a being [that is, not just a person, but also a god] can attain” (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 40).

The visible presence (*Kundun*) of a god on the world political stage as the head of government of a “democratically elected parliament” may be difficult to conceive of in a western way of thinking. Perhaps the office can be better understood when we say that the Dalai Lama is strictly bound to his tantric philosophy, ritual procedures, and politico-religious ideology, and therefore possesses no further individual will. His body, his human existence, and hence also his humanism are for him solely the instruments of his divinity. This is most clearly expressed in a song the Seventh Dalai Lama composed and sang to himself:

*Wherever you go, whatever you do,  
See yourself in the form of a tantric divinity  
With a phantom body that is manifest yet empty.*  
(Mullin, 1991, p. 61)

Nonetheless, it has become thoroughly established practice in the western press to refer to the Dalai Lama as the “god-king”. Whether or not this is meant ironically can barely be decided in many cases. “A god to lay your hands on”, wrote the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in 1998 of the Tibetan

religious leader, and at the same time the *Spiegel* proclaimed that, “Ultimately, he is the Dalai Lama and the most enlightened of the enlightened on this planet, that puts things in the proper light.” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* November 1, 1998, p. 4; *Spiegel* 45/1998, p.101).

### Eschatology and politics

The history of the European Middle Ages was focused upon a single cosmic event: the Second Coming of Christ. In such an *eschatological* world view, human history is no longer a copying of myths or a playground for divine caprice (as in the Ancient Greek belief in the gods), but rather the performance of a gigantic, messianic drama played out over millennia, which opens with a perfect creation that then constantly disintegrates because of human imperfection and sin and ends in a catastrophic downfall following a divine day of judgment. At the “end of time” the evil are destroyed in a brutal cosmic war (the apocalypse) and the good (the true Christians) are saved. A Messiah appears and leads the small flock of the chosen into an eternal realm of peace and joy. The goal is called redemption and paradise.

Eschatological accounts of history are always *salvational history*, that is, in the beginning there is a transgression which should be healed. A Christian refers to this transgression as original sin. Here the healing takes place through the Resurrection and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, as well as through the resurrection from the dead of the goodly which this occasions. After this, history comes to an end and the people, freed from all suffering, enter an eternal paradise in a blissful time without history. For Christians it is primarily the Apocalypse of St. John (*The Book of Revelations*) which provides the script for this divine theater.

From a Buddhist/tantric point of view human history — and consequently the history of Tibet — is also experienced as a “salvational history”. Its eschatology is recorded in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the highest cult mystery of the Dalai Lama. The *Shambhala myth* linked with this tantra also prophesies (like the *Apocalypse of St. John*) the appearance of a warlike messiah (*Rudra Chakrin*) and the terrible final battle between good and evil. It is just that this time the good are Buddhists and the evil are primarily Moslems. After *Rudra Chakrin's* victory the total “Shambhalization” of the planet (i.e., a global Buddhocracy) awaits humanity. This is equated with an Eden of peace and joy.

A knowledge of the Shambhala vision is necessary in order to be able to assess historical events in Tibet (including the Chinese occupation) and the politics of the Dalai Lama. Every historical and practical political event must — from a Lamaist viewpoint — be assessed in the light of the final goal formulated in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (the establishment of a worldwide Buddhocracy). This also applies — according to the tantric teachings — to the evolution of humankind.

Thus, in terms of principle, the Tantric Buddhist vision resembles the traditional Christian one. In both cases a realm of bliss is found at the outset which decays due to human misdeeds and subsequently experiences a catastrophic downfall. It is then re-created through the *warlike* (!) deeds of a messianic redeemer. But in the Buddhist view this dramatic process never ends, according to cosmic laws it must be constantly repeated. In contrast to the conceptions of Christianity, the newly established paradise has no permanency, it is subject to the curse of time like all which is transient. History for Lamaism thus takes the form of the eternal recurrence of the eternally same, the ineluctable repetition of the entire universal course of events in immensely huge cycles of time. [2]

### History and mysticism

That the relationship between individuals and history may be not just an obvious, active one, but also a mystical one is something of which one hears little in contemporary western philosophy. We find such a point of view in the enigmatic statement of the German romantic, Novalis (1772-1801), for example: “The greatest secret is the person itself. The solving of this unending task is the act of world history”. [3]

In contrast, in the Renaissance such “occult” interdependencies were definitely topical. The micro/macrocasm theory, which postulated homologies between the energy body of a “divine” individual and the whole universe, was widely distributed at the time. They were also applied to history in alchemic circles.

Correspondingly, there was the idea of the *Zaddik*, the “just”, in the traditional Jewish Cabala and in Chassidism. The mission of the *Zaddik* consisted in a correct and exemplary way of life so as to produce social harmony and peace. His thoughts and deeds were so closely aligned with the national community to which he belonged that the history of his people developed in parallel to his individual fate. Hence, for example the misbehavior of a *Zaddik* had a negative effect upon historical process and could plunge his fellow humans into ruin.

Yet such conceptions only very vaguely outline the far more thorough-going relation of Buddhist Tantrism to history. A tantra master must — if he is to abide by his own ideas and his micro/macrocasmic logic — take literally the magical correspondences between his awareness and the external world. He must be convinced that he (as *Maha Siddha*, i.e., Great Sorcerer) is able to exert an influence upon the course of history through sinking in to meditation, through breathing techniques, through ritual actions, and through sexual magic practices. He must make the deities he conjures up or represents the agents of his “politics”, much more than the people who surround him.

A king initiated into the mysteries of *Vajrayana* thus controls not just his country and his subjects, but also even the course of the stars with the help of his mystic breathing. “The cosmos, as it reveals itself to be in the tantric conception”, Mircea Eliade writes, “is a great fabric of magic forces, and namely these forces can also be awakened and ordered in the human body through the techniques of mystic physiology” (Eliade, 85, p. 225).

A dependency of events in the world upon the sacred practices of initiated individuals may sound absurd to us, but it possesses its own logic and persuasive power. If, for example, we examine the history of Tibet from the point of view of tantric philosophy, then to our astonishment we ascertain that the Lamas have succeeded very well in formulating an internally consistent salvational and symbolic history of the Land of Snows. [4] They have even managed to tailor this to the person of the Dalai Lama from its beginnings, even though this latter institution was only established as a political power factor 900 (!) years after the Buddhization of the country (in the eighth century C.E.).

It is above all the doctrine of incarnation which offers a cogently powerful argument for the political continuity of the same power elite beyond their deaths. With it their power political mandate is ensured for all time. Bu the incarnations have likewise been backdated into the past so as to lay claim to politically significant “forefathers”. The Fifth Dalai Lama made extensive use of this procedure.

Thus, in order to present and to understand the Tibetan conception of history and the “politics” of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, we are confronted with the four ideas from an ancient world view described above:

1. **Tibet’s history and politics are determined by the Tibetan gods.**
2. **Tibet’s history and politics are the expression of a mythic battle of the sexes.**
3. **Tibet’s history and politics orient themselves to the eschatological plan of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.**
4. **Tibet’s history and politics are the magical achievement of a highest tantra master (the Dalai Lama), who steers the fate of his country as a *sacred king* and *yogi*.**

Even if one discards these theses on principle as fantasy, it remains necessary to proceed from them

in order to adequately demonstrate and assess the *self-concept* of Tantric Buddhism, of the Dalai Lama, the leading exile Tibetan, and the many western Buddhists who have joined this religion in recent years. Although we in no sense share the Tibetan viewpoint, we are nonetheless convinced that the “great fabric of magic forces” (which characterizes Tantrism in the words of Mircea Eliade) can shape historical reality when many believe in it.

In the following chapters we thus depict the history of Tibet and the politics of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama as a tantric project, as the emanation of divine archetypes, and as a sequence of scenes in the dramaturgy of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, just as it is also seen by Lamaists. We must therefore first of all introduce the reader to the chief gods who have occupied the political stage of the Land of Snows since the Buddhization of Tibet. Then on a metaphysical level the Lamaist monastic state is considered to be the organized assembly of numerous deities, who have been appearing in human form (as various lamas) again and again for centuries. We are confronted here with a living “theocracy”, or better, “Buddhocracy”. It is the Tibetan gods to whom Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, has made his human body available and who speak and act through him. This may be the reason why His Holiness, as he crossed the border into India on his flight from Tibet in 1959, yelled as loudly as he could, “*Lha Gyelo* — Victory to the gods!” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 168). With this cry he opened them the gateway to the world, especially to the West.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] Should a world civilization oriented to humane values wish to establish the causes of the “battle of cultures” and the current global incidence of fundamentalism, then it would be well advised to critically examine the “holy texts”, rites, mysteries, and history of the religious traditions and compare them with the requirements of a planetary, human political vision. Such research and comparison would produce sobering results. It was precisely such painful and disillusioning realizations which motivated us to write this study of Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, in whom we had invested great hopes.

[2] Traces of a cyclical image of history are also found in the thought of Oswald Spenglers (1880-1936), for whom every historical cultural epoch behaved like an organism which exhibited the phases of life of birth, childhood, youth, adulthood, old age, and death. The study of history is thus for him a biography which must be written afresh for every culture.

[3] We can find a faint echo of this mystical historical speculation in the cult of the genius of the 19th. and 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this, messiah figures and saviors are replaced by those exceptional figures whom Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) referred to as “heroes” and in whose thoughts and deeds the *Zeitgeist* is supposed to be focused. In this point of view it is not just in politicians and military leaders, but also in scientists, philosophers, or artists that the essence of history can be concentrated. For the cultural critic, Eugen Friedell (1878-1938), the spirit of a historical genius infected an entire epoch. He becomes a “god” of his period — even if he introduces rationalism, like René Descartes or dialectical materialism like Karl Marx.

[4] In the meantime the historical facts they have distorted have been taken up by numerous “respectable” scholarly works from the West. We shall go into the particulars of this.

Next Chapter:

### [1. THE DALAI LAMA: INCARNATION OF THE TIBETAN GODS](#)

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## The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 1. The Dalai Lama: Incarnation of the Tibetan Gods

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# 1. THE DALAI LAMA: INCARNATION OF THE TIBETAN GODS

The two principal divine beings who act through the person of the Dalai Lama are the Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara* (in Tibetan, *Chenrezi*), and the meditation Buddha, *Amitabha*. Spiritually, *Amitabha* is on a higher level (as a Buddha). He does not “lower” himself directly into the “god-king” (the Dalai Lama), but appears first in the form of *Avalokiteshvara*. Only *Chenrezi* then takes on the bodily form of the Dalai Lama.

### Buddha Amitabha: The sun and light deity

The meditation Buddha, *Amitabha*, rules –according to a point of doctrine of *Mahayana* Buddhism — as regent of the current age. Even the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, was considered his earthly emanation. The sun and light are assigned to him and summer is his season. The peacock, a classic animal of the sun, adorns his throne. The red color of *Amitabha*’s body also signals his solar character. Likewise, his mantra, “HRIH”, is referred to as a “sun symbol”: “It possesses not just the warmth of the sun, that is, the emotional principle of kindness and of pity — but also the brilliance, the quality of clarification, the discovery, the unmediated perception” (Govinda, 1984, p. 277). *Amitabha* is the Buddhist god of light *par excellence* and his followers thus pray to him as the “shining lord “. As the “unbounded light” he shines through the whole universe. His luminance is described in ancient texts as “a hundred thousand times greater than the radiance of gold” (Joseph Campbell, 1973, p. 315).

The opulent sun symbolism which is so closely linked to the figure of this Buddha has led several western oriented scholars to describe Buddhism in total as a solar cult. For example, the tantra researcher, Shashibhusan Dasgupta, even sees an identity between the historical Buddha (the incarnation of *Amitabha*), the *Dharma* (the Buddhist doctrine) and the Indian solar deity (*Surya*) (Dasgupta, 1946, p. 337). The *Dharma* (the teachings) are also often referred to as the “sun” in traditional Buddhist writings, since the words of Buddha “radiate like sunshine”. Sometimes even the principle of “emptiness” is identified with the sun: “*Dharma* is *Shunya* [emptiness] and *Shunya* has the form of a zero”, writes Dasgupta, “Therefore Dharma is of the shape of a zero; and as the sun is also of the shape of a zero, Dharma is identified with the sun. Moreover, Dharma moves in the void, and void is the sky, and the sun moves in the sky and hence the sun is Dharma” (Dasgupta, 1946, p. 337).

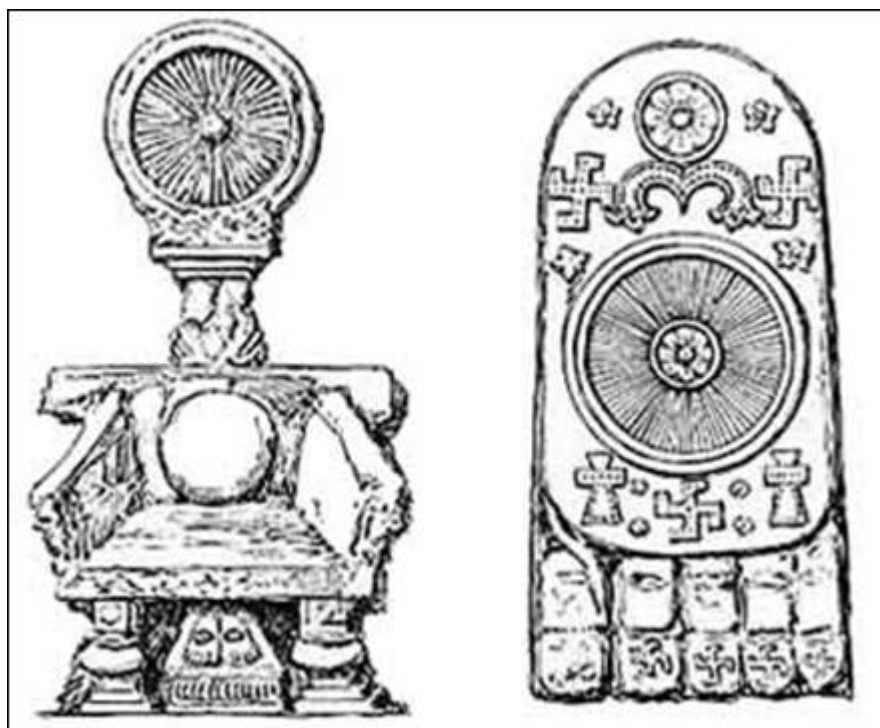
*Amitabha* and the historical Buddha are not just associated with the sun, but also with the element of “fire”. “As for the Fiery-Energy,” Ananda Coomaraswamy tells us, “ this is the element of fire present as an unseen energy in all existences, but preeminently manifested by *Arhats* [holy men] or the Buddha” (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 10).

There are a number of depictions of Gautama as a “pillar of fire” from as early as the third century B.C.E. (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 210). The column of fire is both a symbol for the axis of the world and for the human spine up which the *Kundalini* ascends. It further has a clear phallic character. A Nepalese text refers to the ADI BUDDHA as a “linga-shaped [phallic] flame” which rises from a lotus (Hazra, 1986, p. 30). This close relation of the Buddha figure to fire has induced



such discriminating authors as the Indian religious studies scholar, Ananda Coomaraswamy, to see in Shakyamuni an incarnation of *Agni*, the Indian god of fire (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 65).

Yet the power of fire is not only positively valued in Indian mythology. In the hot subcontinent, destructive forces are also evoked by sun and flame. Notorious demons, not just gods, laid claim to be descended from *Surya*, the sun god. Hence, the Indologist, Heinrich Zimmer, recounted several traditional stories in which demonic yogis reached for divine power through the generation of inner heat. He calls this fiery yogic force *tapas*, which means roughly “inner blaze”.



*Throne and Foot of the Buddha with sun symbols and swastikas*

In contrast, Lama Govinda completely represses the destructive force of the *tapas* and simply declares them to be the main principle of Buddhist mysticism: “It is the all-consuming, flaming power, the inner blaze which overwhelms everything, which has filled the religious life of the people in its thrall since the awakening of Indian thought: the power of the Tapas ... Here, Tapas is the creative principle, which functions in both the material and the spiritual [domains] ... It is 'enthusiasm', in its most lowly form a straw fire fed by blind emotion, in its highest, the flame of inspiration nourished by unmediated perception. Both have the nature of fire” (Govinda, 1991, p. 188). With this citation Govinda leaves us with no doubt that Tantric Buddhism represents a universal fire cult. [1]

Already in Vedic times fire was considered to be the cause of life. The ancient Indians saw a fire ritual in the sexual act between man and woman and compared it with the rubbing together of two pieces of wood through which a flame can be kindled. The spheres assigned to the “fire Buddha”, *Amitabha*, are thus also those of erotic passion and sexuality. Of the sexual magic fluids, the male seed is associated with him. This makes him the predestined father of Tantric Buddhism. In his hand the “fire god” holds a lotus, by which his affinity to the symbolic world of the feminine is indicated. “The Lotus lineage is that of *Amitabha*”, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama writes in a commentary upon the *Kalachakra Tantra*, “practitioners of which especially should keep the pledge of restraining from, or abandoning, the bliss of emission, even though making use of a consort” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1985, p. 229).

*Amitabha* rules as the sovereign of the western paradise, *Sukhavati*. After their deaths, upright

Buddhists are reborn here from out of a lotus flower. They all move through this hereafter in a golden body. Women, however, are unwelcome. If they have earned great merit during their earthly existence, then they are granted the right to change their sex and they are permitted to enter *Amitabha's* land after they have been incarnated as men. [2]

Apart from this, the light Buddha is worshipped as the “lord of language”. Analytic thought and distinctions also belong to his area of responsibility. This induced Lama Govinda to make him the patron of the modern (and western) sciences. He is “differentiating”, “researching” and “investigative” (Govinda, 1984, p.123).

Let us summarize then: Buddha *Amitabha* possesses the character traits of a light, fire, and sun deity. His cardinal point is the West. As founding father of the Lotus family he stands in a deep symbolic connection to sexuality and through this to Tantrism.

In the light of his qualities as “fire god”, “lord of the West”, and “patron of science”, *Amitabha* could indeed be regarded as the regent of our modern age, then the last two hundred years of western civilization and technological development have been predominantly dominated by the element of fire: electricity, light, explosions, and the modern art of war count as part of this just as much as the greenhouse effect and worldwide desertification. The great inventions — the steam engine, dynamite, the automobile, the airplane, rockets, and finally the atomic bomb — are also the handiwork of “fire”. The fiery element rules the world as never before in history.

Committed Buddhists — headed by the Dalai Lama — describe our western civilization as decadent and unbalanced, because it is no longer fair to spiritual values. But, one could say, an elementary imbalance likewise determines the myth of the “world dominion” of *Amitabha*, who as the Buddha of a single (!) element (“fire”) controls our epoch. In terms of cultural history, fire and the sun can be considered the classic patriarchal symbols, whilst the moon and water represent the feminine. Hence, *Amitabha* is also a symbol for our global androcentric culture, which, however, can only develop its complete purity when totally freed of women in the paradise of *Sukhavati*.

### **The various masks of Avalokiteshvara**

As an emanation from the right eye of his spiritual father, *Amitabha*, emerged his son, *Avalokiteshvara*, with the Tibetan name of *Chenrezi*. He is the “Bodhisattva” of our age, the “chief deity” of Tibet and the divine energy which functions directly behind the person of the Dalai Lama. There is no figure in the Buddhist pantheon who enjoys greater respect than he does. His name means “he who looks down kindly”. He is identified by his chief characteristic of mercy and compassion for all living creatures. This close linkage to emotional life has won him the deep reverence of the masses.

*Avalokiteshvara* can appear in countless forms, 108 of which are iconographically fixed. In an official prayer, he is described as a *puer aeternus* (an eternal boy):

*Generated from ten million rays,  
his body is completely white.  
His head is adorned  
and his locks reach down to his breast. [...]  
His kindly, smiling features  
are those of a sixteen year old.  
(Lange, n.d., p. 172)*

His best known and most original appearance shows him with eleven heads and a thousand arms. This figure arose — the myth would have it — after the Bodhisattva’s head split apart into countless fragments because he could no longer bear the misery of this world and the stupidity of the living creatures. Thereupon his “father”, *Amitabha*, took the remnants with him to the paradise

of *Sukhavati* and formed ten new heads from the fragments, adding his own as the tip of the pyramid. This self-destruction out of compassion for humanity and the Bodhisattva's subsequent resurrection makes it tempting to compare this Bodhisattva's tale of suffering with the Passion of Christ.

In some *Mahayana* Buddhist texts the figure of *Avalokiteshvara* is exaggerated so that he becomes an arch-god, who absorbs within himself all the other gods, even the Highest Buddha (ADI BUDDHA). He also already appears in India (as later in Tibet in the form of the Dalai Lama) as *Chakravartin*, i.e., as a “king of all kings”, as a “ruler of the world” (Mallmann, 1948, p. 104).

His believers prostrate themselves before him as the “shining lord”. In one interesting picture from the collection of Prince Uchtomskij he is depicted within a circle of flame and with the disc of the sun. His epithet is “one whose body is the sun” (Gockel, 1992, p. 21). He sits upon a Lion Throne, or rides upon the back of a lion, or wears the fur of a lion. Thus, all the solar symbols of *Amitabha* and the historical Buddha are also associated with him.



*Avalokiteshvara in the form of the Death God Yama*

In the face of this splendor of light it is all too easy to forget that *Avalokiteshvara* also has his shady side. Every Buddha and every Bodhisattva — tantric doctrine says — can appear in a peaceful and a terrible form. This is also true for the Bodhisattva of supreme compassion. Among his eleven heads can be found the terrifying head of *Yama*, the god of the dead. He and *Avalokiteshvara* form a unit. Hence, as the “king of all demons” (one of *Yama's* epithets), the “light god” also reigns over the various Buddhist hells.

*Yama* is depicted on Tibetan thangkas as a horned demon with a crown of human skulls and an aroused penis. Usually he is dancing wildly upon a bull beneath the weight of which a woman, with whom the animal is copulating, is being crushed. Fokke Sierksma and others see in this scene

an attack on a pre-Buddhist (possibly matriarchal) fertility rite (Sierksma, 1966, p. 215).

As god of the dead (*Yama*) and snarling monster *Avalokiteshvara* also holds the “wheel of life” in his claws, which is in truth a “death wheel” (a sign of rebirth) in Buddhism. Among the twelve fundamental evils etched into the rim of the wheel which make an earthly/human existence appear worthless can be found “sexual love”, “pregnancy” and “birth”.

In the world of appearances *Yama* represents suffering and mortality, birth and death. So much cruelty and morbidity is associated with this figure in the tantric imagination that he all but has to be seen as the shadowy brother of the Bodhisattva of mercy and love. Yet both Buddha beings prove themselves to be a paradoxical unit. It is self-evident according to the doctrines of Tantrism that the characteristics of *Yama* can also combine themselves with the person of the Dalai Lama (the highest incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*). This has seldom been taken into consideration when meeting with the god-king from Tibet who “looks down peacefully”.

A further striking feature of the iconography of *Avalokiteshvara* are the feminine traits which many of his portraits display. He seems, as an enigmatic being between virgin and boy with soft features and rounded breasts, to unite both sexes within himself. As it says in a poem addressed to a painter:

*Draw an Avalokiteshvara,  
Like a conch, a jasmine and a moon,  
Hero sitting on a white lotus seat [...]  
His face is wonderfully smiling.*  
(Hopkins, 1987, p. 160)



*Avalokiteshvara as Androgyne*

Shells, jasmine, and the moon are feminine metaphors. The Bodhisattva’s epithet, *Padmapani*

(lotus bearer), identifies him (just like *Amitabha*) as a member of the Lotus family and equally places him in direct connection with feminine symbolism. All over Asia the lotus is associated with the vagina. But since *Chenrezi* generally appears as a masculine figure with feminine traits, we must refer to him as an androgyne, a god who has absorbed the *gynergy* of the goddess within himself. For Robert A. Paul, he therefore assumes a “father-mother role” in Tibetan society (Paul, 1982, p. 140). The two colors in which he is graphically depicted are red and white. These correspond symbolically to the red and the white seed which are mixed with one another in the body of the tantra master.

His androgyny is most clearly recognizable in the famous mantra with which *Padmapani* (*Avalokiteshvara*) is called upon and which millions of Buddhists daily mumble to themselves: OM MANI PADME HUM. There is an extensive literature concerned with the interpretation of this utterance, from which the sexual magical ones sound the most convincing. In translation, the mantra says, “Om, jewel in the lotus, hum”. The jewel should be assigned to the masculine force and the phallus, whilst the lotus blossom is a symbol of feminine energy. The “jewel in the lotus blossom” thus corresponds to the tantric union, and, since this takes place within a male person, the principle of androgyny. The syllable OM addresses the macrocosm. HUM means “I am” and signifies the microcosm. The gist of the formula is thus: “In the union of the masculine and feminine principles I am the universe”. Anyone who knows the magic of the famous mantra “possesses control over the world” (Mallmann, 1948, p. 101). Trijang Rinpoche (1901-1981), an important teacher of the current Dalai Lama, also offers a clear and unambiguous translation “... *mani* indicates the vajra jewel of the father, *padma* the lotus of the mudra, and the letter *hum* [indicates] that by joining these two together, at the time of the basis, a child is born and at the time of the [tantric] path, the deities emanate” (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 134).

The most famous living incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* is the Dalai Lama. All the energies of the Bodhisattva are concentrated in him, his androgyny as well as his solar and fiery qualities, his mildness as well as his wrath as *Yama*, the god of the dead. Within the Tibetan doctrine of incarnation the Dalai Lama as a person is only the human/bodily shell in which *Chenrezi* (*Avalokiteshvara*) is manifest. It is — from a tantric point of view — the visions and motives, strategies and tactics of the “mild downward-looking Bodhisattva”, which determine the politics of His Holiness and thereby the fate of Tibet.

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama as the supreme Kalachakra master**

Since the Tibetan god-king acts as the supreme master of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the androgynous time god (*Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata* in one person) is likewise incarnated within him. The goal of Time Tantra is the “alchemic” production of the ADI BUDDHA. We have described in detail the genesis, “art of functioning”, and the extent of the powers of the Highest Buddha in the first part of our study, with special attention to his position as *Chakravartin*, as “world ruler”. This global power role is not currently assumed by the Dalai Lama. In contrast — the western public sometimes refers to him as the “most powerless politician on the planet”. Thus, in precisely locating his position along the evolutionary path of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, we must observe that the *Kundun* has not yet reached the spiritual/real level of an ADI BUDDHA, but still finds himself on the way to becoming a world ruler (*Chakravartin*).

All the “divine” and “demonic” characteristics of *Avalokiteshvara* (and also ultimately of *Amitabha*) mentioned above are combined by the Tibetan “god-king” as the highest *vajra* master with the *Kalachakra Tantra*. According to what is known as the *Rwa* tradition, the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* even stands at the beginning of the Buddhist doctrine of time as the “root guru” (Newman, 1985, p. 71). Now, what do we know about the performance of the *Kalachakra* system by the current incarnation of the *Chenrezi*, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama?

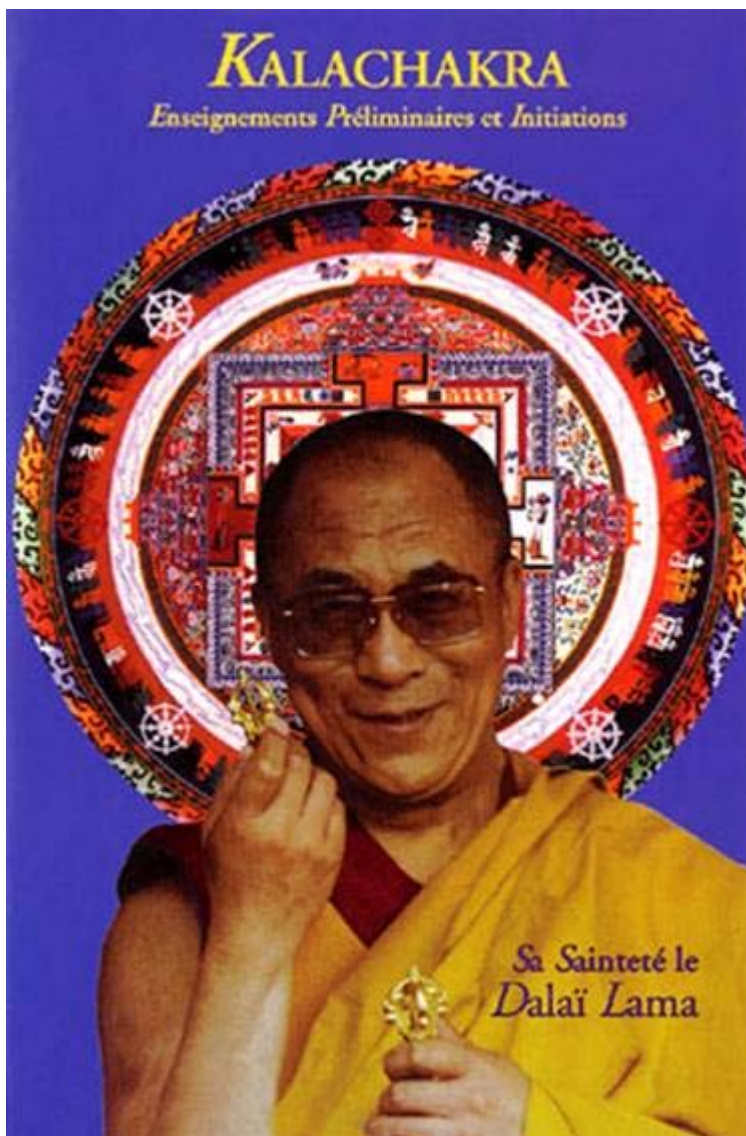
Almost nothing is known in public about the eight “highest initiations” of the Time Tantra described in the first part of our study, but all the more is known about the seven lower initiations.

They have been and continue to be conducted by His Holiness — frequently, publicly, on a grand scale and throughout the whole world. The ostentatious performance of a *Kalachakra* spectacle set in scene by the monks of the *Namgyal Institute* [3] in colorful robes is meanwhile an exotic sensation, which on each occasion attracts the attention of the world's press. Thousands, in recent years hundreds of thousands, come flocking to experience and marvel at the religious spectacle.

The *Kalachakra Tantra*, whose aggressive and imperialist character we have been able to demonstrate in detail, is referred to by the Dalai Lama without the slightest scruple as a “vehicle for world peace”: “We believe unconditionally in its ability to reduce tensions”, the god-king has said of the Time Tantra, “The initiation is thus public, because in our opinion it is suited to bringing peace, to encouraging the peace of the spirit and hence the peace of the world as well” (Levenson, 1990, p. 304).

Interested westerners, who still block out the magic-religious thought patterns of Lamaism, are presented with the *Kalachakra* ritual and the associated sand mandala as a “total work of art, in which sound and color, gesture and word are linked with one another in a many-layered, significance-laden manner” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 February 1986). For the Dalai Lama, however, an assembly of the invoked gods actually takes place during the rite.

In the year 1953 His Holiness was initiated into the *Kalachakra* rites by Ling Rinpoche for the first time. To what level is unknown to us. Profoundly impressed by the beauty of the sand mandala, the young *Kundun* fell into a state of dizziness. Shortly afterwards he spent a month in seclusion and was internally very moved during this period. In saying the prayers the words often stuck in his throat through emotion: “In hindsight I understand this situation to have been auspicious, an omen that I would conduct the *Kalachakra* initiation much more often than any of my predecessors” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 118).



*The Dalai Lama with the Kalachakra Mandala as aureole*

Strangely enough, the first initiation into the *Kalachakra Tantra* he performed himself (in 1954) was in his own words “at the wish of a group of lay women” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 119). We can only speculate as to whether this euphemistic phrase is used to disguise a *ganachakra* with eight or ten *karma mudras* (real women). Yet this is to be strongly suspected, then how in the Tibet of old where women did not have the slightest say in religious matters should a “group of lay women” of all people have come to enjoy the great privilege of motivating the nineteen-year-old hierarch to his first *Kalachakra* ceremony? In light of the strict court ceremonial which reigned in the Potala, this was for those times completely unthinkable, and we must therefore presume that we are dealing with a tactful reformulation of a tantric ritual involving yoginis.

His Holiness celebrated two further *Kalachakra* initiations in Lhasa in 1956 and 1957. In 1970 the first public initiation in exile (in Dharamsala) was staged. He himself had a dream shortly before this: “When I woke up, I knew that in the future I would perform this ritual many times. I think in my previous lifetimes I had a connection with the *Kalachakra* teaching. It's a karmic force” (Bryant, 1992, p. 112). This dream was in fact to come true in the years which followed.

In the summer of 1981, the “iron bird year” of the Tibetan calendar, the god-king granted a public *Kalachakra* initiation for the first time outside of Asia. The date and the location (Wisconsin, USA) of the initiation were drawn directly from a prophecy of the Tibetan “religious founder”,

Padmasambhava, who introduced *Vajrayana* to the Land of Snows from India in the eighth century: “When the iron bird flies and the horses roll on wheels ... the Dharma will come to the land of the Red Man” (Bernbaum, 1982, p. 33). The iron birds — in the interpretation of this vision — are airplanes, the wheeled horses are automobiles, and the land of the Red Man (the American Indians) is the United States. During the ritual a falcon with a snake in its claws is supposed to have appeared in the sky. In it the participants saw the mythic bird, *garuda*, representing the patriarchal power which destroys the feminine in the form of a snake. [4] Do we have here the image of a tantric wish according to which the West is already supposed to fall into the clutches of Tibetan Buddhism in the near future?

Not more than 1200 people took part in the first western initiation in Wisconsin. In 1983 the *Kalachakra* ceremony was performed in Switzerland and thus for the first time in Europe. Now there were already 6000 western participants. In the same year more than 300,000 people appeared at the initiation in Bodh Gaya (in India). This grandiose spectacle was declared by the press to be the “Buddhist event of the century” (*Tibetan Review*, January 1986, p. 4). Many very poor Tibetans had illegally crossed the Chinese border in order to take part in the festivities. It is certainly worth mentioning that at least fifty people died during the ritual! (*Tibetan Review*, January 1986, p. 6).

In 1991, in Madison Square Gardens in New York City, there was a further *Kalachakra* ceremony in front of 4000 participants which attracted much public attention. At the same time a sand mandala was constructed in the *Museum of Asian Art* which drew tens of thousands of visitors. By the beginning of 1998, the Dalai Lama could look back over 25 public initiations into the Time Tantra which he had conducted as the supreme *vajra* master.

#### List of Kalachakra Initiations given by the XIV Dalai Lama

S.No.	Date	Place	Attendants
1	May 1954	Norbulingka, Lhasa, Tibet	100,000
2	April 1956	Norbulingka, Lhasa, Tibet	100,000
3	March 1970	Dharamshala, India	30,000
4	May 1971	Bylakuppe, Karnataka, India	10,000
5	December 1974	Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India	100,000
6	September 1976	Leh, Ladakh, India	40,000
7	July 1981	Madison, Wisconsin, USA	1,500
8	April 1983	Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh, India	5,000
9	August 1983	Tabo, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India	10,000
10	July 1985	Rikon, Switzerland	6,000
11	December 1985	Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India	200,000
12	July 1988	Zanskar, Jammu & Kashmir, India	10,000
13	July 1989	Los Angeles, USA	3,300
14	December 1990	Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India	130,000
15	October 1991	New York, USA	3,000
16	August 1992	Kalpa, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, India	20,000
17	April 1993	Gangtok, Sikkim, India	100,000
18	July 1994	Jispa, Keylong, Himachal Pradesh, India	30,000
19	December 1994	Barcelona, Spain	3,000
20	January 1995	Mundgod, Karnataka, India	50,000



21	August 1995	Ulan Bator, Mongolia	30,000
22	June 1996	Tabo, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India	20,000
23	September 1996	Sydney, Australia	3,000
24	December 1996	Salugara, West Bengal, India	200,000
25	August 1999	Bloomington, Indiana, USA	3,500
26	August 2000	Key Monastery, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India	15,000
27	January 2002	Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India	Postponed
28	October 2002	Graz, Austria (Europe)	10,000
29	Januar 2003	Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India	200,000

The great significance which the Dalai Lama accords the *Kalachakra Tantra* and its worldwide distribution, demands that all of his political activities be interpreted in the light of the visions and intentions of the Time Tantra. The *Kalachakra Tantra* is a major political event. It is the magic metapolitical instrument with which the *Kundun* hopes to conquer the West and the rest of the world. He himself, or rather the forces and powers which operate behind him, wish(es) to become the ruler of history and time itself. [5]

### Statements of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama on sexuality and sexual magic

We know almost nothing (publicly) from the *Kundun* about the eight highest initiations in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the associated sexual magic rites. Outwardly the god-king presents a strictly asexual image. In answer to the question what he thought about sex, he replied in *Playboy*: “My goodness! You ask a 62-year-old monk who has been celibate his entire life a thing like that. I don’t have much to say about sex — other than that it is completely okay if two people love each other” (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 46). Or he resolves the delicate topic with colloquial humor, as for example when he quotes the Indian scholar, Nagarjuna, with a three-line thought on the question of erotic love:

*If one is itchy, then one scratches himself.  
Better than any number of scratches  
However, is when one does not itch at all.*  
(Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 301)

Such sayings are reminiscent of the philosophy of life of a humorous *Mahayana* Buddhist, but not that of a Tantric. Whether the *Kundun* himself conducts or has conducted sexual magic practices is a secret which is for understandable reasons not betrayed. Only through incidental remarks — the taboo topic would never be spoken about in public otherwise — can it be gauged that the Dalai Lama is completely informed about the consequences which proceed from the tantric rites.

Thus, at an event in San Francisco (in 1994) His Holiness was discussing the topics of “sexuality and Buddhism” with students. When the talk came around to the “wise fool” Drungpa Kunley, who became known through his erotic escapades, his huge male member, and through the Tibetan literature, the *Kundun* justified this figure’s wild sex life: in Drungpa we are dealing with a highly developed enlightened being, and his erotic activities — no matter how bizarre they may seem to an ordinary person — were always carried out for the benefit of all living beings. “He could”, the Dalai Lama said with a smile, “enjoy excrement and urine just like fine foods and wine” and then he joked of the modern Tibetan lamas that, “If you put into their mouth some urine, they will not enjoy it” (Arianna, Newsgroup 3). From this it can be logically concluded that every enlightened one must pass the tantric “taste test” and that contemporary lamas are not prepared to undergo this test.

At an academic seminar on dream research in Dharamsala the *Kundun* commented upon a paper

with the following sentence: “Such work with dreams by which it comes to ejaculation could be important” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996a, p. 115). Anyone who knows about the tantric seed gnosis also knows how fundamental the god-king’s interest in this topic must be. At the same meeting he chatted about orgiastic encounters as if they were a constant part of his world of experiences. A comparison of the mystic clear lights with orgasm is also self-evident for him (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996a, p. 116).

Some years later, at the „Mind and Life” conference in Dharamsala (in 1992), he spoke in great detail about tantric practices and even mentioned the offensive *Vajroli* method: “One training method that can be used as a standard of measurement of the level of one’s control entails inserting a straw into the genitals. In this practice the Yogi first draws water, and later milk, up to the straw. [Later again, we would add, the *sukra* from out of the vagina of his sexual partner] That cultivates the ability to reverse the flow during intercourse (Varela, 1997, p. 172). With a somewhat insinuating smile the Dalai Lama then explained the various typologies of the *mudras* to the western scholars who were attending: “In tantric literature, four types of women, or consorts (Skt. *mudra*) are discussed. These four types are lotus-like, deer-like, conch-shell-like, and the elephant-like.” He then joked that: “If the classification had originated in Tibet instead of India, they would have called it yak-like. These distinctions all have primarily to do with the shape of the genitals, but they also refer to differences in terms of bodily constitution. There are no such categories for men” (Varela, 1997, p. 173).

Like all priests the *Kundun*’s attitude towards marriage is benevolent and paternalistic, without granting it any special spiritual significance. “At first glance married life appears full and attractive and that of the celibate as miserable. But I believe the life of a monk is more well balanced, there are less extremes, less highs and lows. I also always tell this to my young monks and nuns as consolation” (*Zeitmagazin*, no. 44, 22 October 1998, p. 24). It is nonetheless very important to him as reproduction for the maintenance of the Tibetan race and he is not at all happy when exiled Tibetans choose marriage partners of another race. He finds it likewise repulsive when ordained monks suddenly decide to marry. As his brother Lobsang Samten told him of his marriage plans, the *Kundun* shouted at him in a reference to the Chinese repression, “Even a dog doesn’t copulate while it’s actually being beaten” (Craig, 1997, p. 260). He later excused himself for this uncontrolled outburst.

In 1997 on his journey through the USA, the Dalai Lama named oral and anal intercourse for both hetero- and homosexuals as being sexually taboo, and masturbation as well. The latter is condoned by the secret tantras when no real partner is available. Fellatio and cunnilingus are — as we have described in detail in Part 1 — even prescribed in the four highest initiations of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. But among common mortals both sexual practices are — according to a relevant sutra — punished after death by the destruction of the sexual organs in the Samghata hell. The *Kundun* declared sexual relations with a monk or a nun who has made a vow of celibacy to be especially reprehensible, naturally only when this takes place outside of the tantric rites. Likewise, the sexual act is forbidden in temples. In contrast, intercourse with a prostitute is allowed when the customer himself pays and does not receive the money from a third party.

Both male and female homosexuality are allowed — according to the *Kundun* — as long as no oral or anal contact is practiced. It was at least politically unwise mistake to have made this statement in San Francisco, the Mecca of the American gay movement. The sexual ban immediately led to the strongest protests. “Many Americans” have been disappointed, a statement from the homosexual scene said, since they “embraced Buddhism because they thought it was not nonjudgmental in sexual matters” (Peterson, Newsgroup 6). [6]

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#### Footnotes:

[1] In light of this emphasis on the solar and fiery nature which characterizes the historical Buddha, his close connection to the symbolism of snakes is puzzling, above all because snakes are associated with water and the feminine. They are known to every student of Buddhism as *nagas*, and reign as kings of the springs, brooks, streams, and lakes. In his book,

*The Sun and the Serpent*, the Englishman, C. F. Oldham, has attempted to prove that Buddhist snake worship is a solar institution. During his lifetime, Buddha already enjoyed widespread adoration as *Maha Naga*, the great serpent (Oldham, 1988, p. 179). Since he and his tribe belonged to the “sun race”, conjectures this author, the snake gods also ought to be “solar”. Among other sources, he makes reference to an old sutra, where we can read of “The lord of the overpowering serpents belonging to *Surya* [the sun god]” (Oldham, 1988, p. 66). Nonetheless, we believe Oldham’s thesis, that the Buddhist snake cult had an originally solar nature, to be a false conclusion. The close connection of heliocentric Buddhism to the sphere of the snake can therefore only be explained in that Buddha subjected the *nagas* so as to consolidate his supreme rule as patriarchal sun god with this victory. This is precisely the procedure which we also know from tantric practices, where the feminine, ignited by the masculine fire energy, ultimately serves the androcentric yogi. The ignited feminine element is, as we know, referred to as *Kundalini*, that is, *fire serpent*.

[2] The “pilgrimage” of the soul to the “pure land” of the light god has in Asia become — above all in China and Japan — a widely distributed religious belief and has led to the formation of various Buddhist schools.

[3] An institution especially established for the performance of the great public initiations of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, which is under the direct supervision of the Dalai Lama.

[4] *Garuda*, the bird of prey, is presented in Tibetan mythology as a powerful snake killer. It is the fire eagle, which feeds upon the flesh of the *nagas* (snakes). We know already from the Indian national epic, the *Mahabharata*, that it belongs to the race of the sun, and that it was a totemic figure for tribes which worshipped the sun as their highest deity. The *garuda* is also the protective animal of the Dalai Lama and is mentioned in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Does it represent the fiery masculine power over the feminine snake world? Albert Grünwedel saw it in these terms when he wrote: “We know the *garuda*-like, awful, high-flying bird of prey which tears girls [*nagis*] apart ...” (Grünwedel, 1924, vol. II, p. 68). The author is further convinced that there is talk in the *Kalachakra Tantra* of a transformation of the *nagas* into *garudas* (Grünwedel, 1924, vol. II, p. 68; *Kalachakra IV*, p. 182). Whatever one may think of Grünwedel’s interpretation, it at any rate draws attention to the tantric mystery which can be seen to sparkle behind the *garuda* myth: the transformation of feminine water energy (the snake) by masculine fire (the *garuda*), or the absorption of the moon (the snake) by the sun (the *garuda*) as the culmination of the development of patriarchal power.

[5] Perhaps his role as supreme time god has something to do with the fact that the *Kundun* has a very special fondness for taking apart, repairing, and then reassembling modern watches? A Swiss organization of exiled Tibetans sells clocks featuring the main symbol of the *Kalachakra Tantra* (the *dasakaro vasi*) and markets these via the Internet. The monk Daoxuan (596-667) had already compared Buddhism to a clock. When a Buddha appears in the world — we learn from him — then the clock also functions. If the clock does not keep the time, this means that the people no longer follow the Dharma. When Shakyamuni died, “the clockwork no longer functioned” (Forte, 1988, p. 259).

[6] In this connection, a text on homosexuality recently published by one of the most intimate of His Holiness’s western collaborators appears quite bizarre. The most recent book by Jeffrey Hopkins, currently Professor of Tibetan Studies at the University of Virginia, has the title of *Sex, Orgasm and the Mind of Clear Light: The 64 Arts of Gay Male Sex* (Hopkins, 1996). In reading through the text we naturally asked ourselves the question: Can the tantric exchange of energies also take place between men? Is a female wisdom consort necessary at all for the performance of the sexual magic practices or may it also be a male consort? The book does not offer an answer to this and must therefore, as Hopkins himself stresses, not be regarded as a tantric text. It is much more a matter of — as he himself puts it — a homosexual *Kama Sutra*, a guide to erotic amusement. Quite a number of lecherous lines are devoted to anal intercourse, which is one of the sexual taboos for His Holiness. — One text in which homosexual tantric practices are discussed by a guru is *The Dawn Horse Testament* by Da Free John, the former spiritual teacher of the American evolutionary theorist, Ken Wilber. The author approves of homosexual rites to a limited degree, but strongly emphasizes that during the sexual magic act strictly one man must play the masculine role and the other should take the feminine role (Da, 1991, p. 348). One of the men is thus used in terms of energy as a substitute woman, which only confirms the fundamentally heterosexual orientation of Tantrism.

Next Chapter:

[2. THE DALAI LAMA \(AVALOKITESHVARA\)  
AND THE DEMONESS \(SRINMO\)](#)

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**The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 2. The Dalai Lama (Avalokiteshvara) and the Demoness (Srinmo)**

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## **2. THE DALAI LAMA (AVALOKITESHVARA) AND THE DEMONESS (SRINMO)**

History as understood in the *Kalachakra Tantra* is apocalyptic salvational history, it is — as we have said — an alchemic experiment aimed at producing an ADI BUDDHA. The protagonists in this drama are no mere mortals but gods. History and myth thus form a union. If we take the philosophy of *Vajrayana* literally then all the events of the tantric performance ought to be able to be found again in the history of Tibet. The latter should therefore be interpreted as the expression of a sexual dynamic. Before we ourselves begin to search for symbolic connections and mythic fields behind the practical political facts of Tibetan history, we should ask ourselves whether the Tibetans have not of their own accord conducted such a sex specific and sexual magic interpretation of their historical experiences.

We know that the rules of the game demand two principal actors in every tantric performance, a man and a woman, or, respectively, a god and a goddess. In any case the piece is divided into three acts:

- 1. The sexual magic union of god and goddess**
- 2. The subsequent “tantric female sacrifice”**
- 3. The production of the cosmic androgyne (ADI BUDDHA)**

Let us turn our attention, then, to the individual scenes through which this cosmic theater unfolds on the “Roof of the World”. Here, the country’s myths of origin are of decisive significance, then they provide the archetypal framework from which, in an ancient conception of history, all later events may be derived.

### **The bondage of the earth goddess *Srinmo* and the history of the origin of Tibet**

The Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* is considered the progenitor of the Tibetans, he thus determines events from the very beginning. In the period before there were humans on earth, the Buddha being was embodied in a monkey and passed the time in deep meditation on the “Roof of the World”. There, as if from nowhere, a rock demoness by the name of *Srinmo* appeared. The hideous figure was a descendent of the *Srin* clan, a bloodthirsty community of nature goddesses. “Spurred on by horniness” — as one text puts it — she too assumed the form of a (female) monkey and tried over seven days to seduce *Avalokiteshvara*. But the divine Bodhisattva monkey withstood all temptations and remained untouched and chaste. As he continued to refuse on the eighth day, *Srinmo* threatened him with the following words: “King of the monkeys, listen to me and what I am thinking. Through the power of love, I very much love you. Through this power of love I woo you, and confess: If you will not be my spouse, I shall become the rock demon’s companion. If countless young rock demons then arise, every morning they will take thousands upon thousands of lives. The region of the Land of Snows itself will take on the nature of the rock demons. All other forms of life will then be consumed by the rock demons. If I myself then die as a consequence of my deed, these living beings will be plunged into hell. Think of me then, and have pity” (Hermanns, 1956, p. 32). With this she hit the bullseye. “Sexual intercourse out of compassion and for the benefit of all suffering beings” was — as we already know — a widespread “ethical” practice in *Mahayana* Buddhism. Despite this precept, the monkey first turned to his emanation father, *Amitabha*, and asked him for advice. The “god of light from the West” answered him with wise foresight: “Take the rock demoness as your consort. Your children and grandchildren will multiply. When they have finally become humans, they will be a support to the teaching”

(Hermanns, 1956, p. 32).

Nevertheless, this Buddhist evolutionary account, reminiscent of Charles Darwin, did not just arise from the compassionate gesture of a divine monkey; rather, it also contains a widely spread, elitist value judgement by the clergy, which lets the Tibetans and their country be depicted as uncivilized, underdeveloped and animal-like, at least as far as the negative influence of their primordial mother is concerned. “From their father they are hardworking, kind, and attracted to religious activity; from their mother they are quick-tempered, passionate, prone to jealousy and fond of play and meat”, an old text says of the inhabitants of the Land of Snows (Samuel, 1993, p. 222).

Two forces thus stand opposed to one another, right from the Tibetan genesis: the disciplined, restrained, culturally creative, spiritual world of the monks in the form of *Avalokiteshvara* and the wild, destructive energy of the feminine in the figure of *Srinmo*.

In a further myth, non-Buddhist Tibet itself appears as the embodiment of *Srinmo* (Janet Gyatso, 1989, p. 44). The local demoness is said to have resisted the introduction of the true teaching by the Buddhist missionaries from India with all means at her disposal, with weaponry and with magic, until she was ultimately defeated by the great king of law, Songtsen Gampo (617-650), an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* (and thus of the current Dalai Lama). “The lake in the Milk plane,” writes the Tibet researcher Rolf A. Stein, “where the first Buddhist king built his temple (the Jokhang), represented the heart of the demoness, who lay upon her back. The demoness is Tibet itself, which must first be tamed before she can be inhabited and civilized. Her body still covers the full extent of Tibet in the period of its greatest military expansion (eighth to ninth century C.E.). Her spread-eagled limbs reached to the limits of Tibetan settlement ... In order to keep the limbs of the defeated demoness under control, twelve nails of immobility were hammered into her” (Stein, 1993, p.34). A Buddhist temple was raised at the location of each of these twelve nailings.

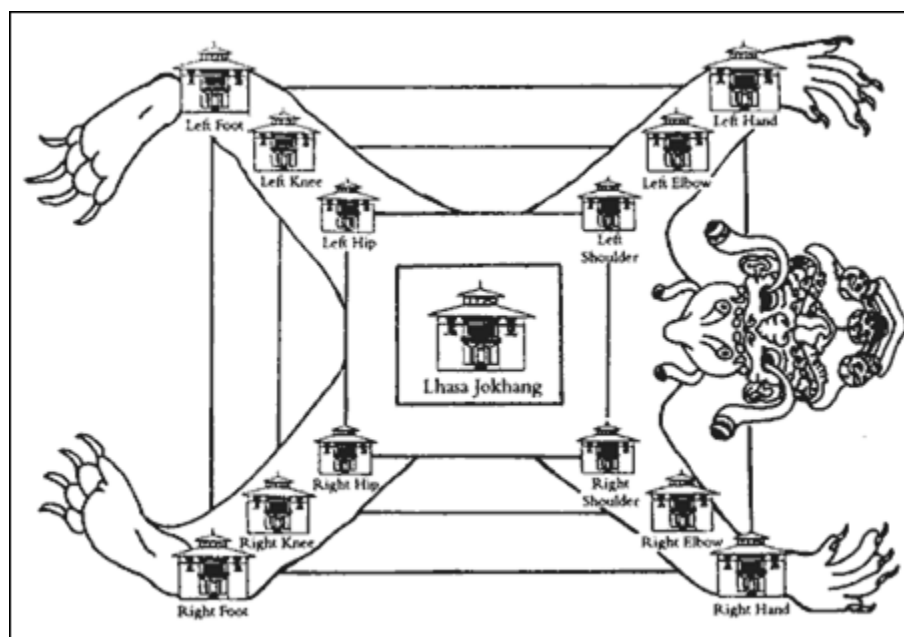
Mysterious stories circulate among the Tibetans which tell of a lake of blood under the Jokhang, which is supposed to consist of *Srinmo*'s heart blood. Anyone who lays his ear to the ground in the cathedral, the sacred center of the Land of Snows, can still — many claim — hear her faint heartbeat. A comparison of this unfortunate female fate with the subjugation of the Greek dragon, *Python*, at Delphi immediately suggests itself. *Apollo*, the god of light (*Avalokiteshvara*), let the earth-monster, *Python* (*Srinmo*), live once he had defeated it so that it would prophesy for him, and built over the mistreated body at Delphi the most famous oracle temple in Greece.

The earth demoness is nailed down with *phurbas*. These are ritual daggers with a three-sided blade and a *vajra* handle. We know these already from the *Kalachakra* ritual, where they are likewise employed to fixate the earth spirits and the earth mother. The authors who have examined the symbolic significance of the magic weapon are unanimous in their assessment of the aggressive phallic symbolism of the *phurba*.

In their view, *Srinmo* represents an archetypal variant of the Mother Earth figure known from all cultures, whom the Greeks called Gaia (*Gaea*). As nature and as woman she stands in stark contrast to the purely spiritual world of Tantric Buddhism. The forces of wilderness, which rebel against androcentric civilization, are bundled within her. She forms the feminine shadow world in opposition to the masculine paradise of light of the shining *Amitabha* and his radiant emanation son, *Avalokiteshvara*. *Srinmo* symbolizes the (historical) *prima materia*, the matrix, the primordial earthly substance which is needed in order to construct a tantric monastic empire, then she provides the *gynergy*, the feminine *élan vitale*, with which the Land of Snows pulsates. As the vanquisher of the earth goddess, *Avalokiteshvara* triumphs in the form of King Songtsen Gampo, that is, the same Bodhisattva who, as a monkey, earlier engendered with *Srinmo* the Tibetans in myth, and who shall later exercise absolute dominion from the “Roof of the World” as Dalai Lama.

Tibet's sacred center, the Jokhang (the cathedral of Lhasa), the royal chronicles inform us, thus stands over the pierced heart of a woman, the earth mother *Srinmo*. This act of nailing down is

repeated at the construction of every Lamaist shrine, whether temple or monastery and regardless of where the establishment takes place — in Tibet, India, or the West. Then before the first foundation stone for the new building is laid, the tantric priests occupy the chosen location and execute the ritual piercing of the earth mother with their phurbas. Tibet's holy geography is thus erected upon the maltreated bodies of mythic women, just as the tantric shrines of India (the *shakta pithas*) are found on the places where the dismembered body of the goddess *Sati* fell to earth.



*Srinmo with different Tibetan temples upon her body*

In contrast to her Babylonian sister, *Tiamat*, who was cut to pieces by her great-grandchild, *Marduk*, so that outer space was formed by her limbs, *Srinmo* remains alive following her subjugation and nailing down. According to the tantric scheme, her *gynergy* flows as a constant source of life for the Buddhocratic system. She thus vegetates — half dead, half alive — over centuries in the service of the patriarchal clergy. An interpretation of this process according to the criteria of the *gaia* thesis often discussed in recent years would certainly be most revealing. (We return to this point in our analysis of the ecological program of the Tibetans in exile.) According to this thesis, the mistreated “Mother Earth” (*Gaia* is the popular name for the Greek earth mother) has been exploited by humanity (and the gods?) for millennia and is bleeding to death. But *Srinmo* is not just a reservoir of inexhaustible energy. She is also the absolute Other, the foreign, and the great danger which threatens the Buddhocratic state. *Srinmo* is — as we still have to prove — the mythic “inner enemy” of Tibetan Lamaism, while the external mythic enemy is likewise represented by a woman, the Chinese goddess *Guanyin*.

*Srinmo* survived — even if it was under the most horrible circumstances, yet the Tibetans also have a myth of dismemberment which repeats the Babylonian tragedy of *Tiamat*. Like many peoples they worship the tortoise as a symbol of Mother Earth. A Tibetan myth tells of how in the mists of time the Bodhisattva *Manjushri* sacrificed such a creature “for the benefit of all beings”. In order to form a solid foundation for the world he fired an arrow off at the tortoise which struck it in the right-hand side. The wounded animal spat fire, its blood poured out, and it passed excrement. It thus multiplied the elements of the new world. Albert Grünwedel presents this myth as evidence for the “tantric female sacrifice” in the *Kalachakra* ritual: “The tortoise which *Manjushri* shot through with a long arrow ... [is] just another form of the world woman whose inner organs are depicted by the *dasakaro vasi* figure [the Power of Ten]” (Grünwedel, 1924, vol. II, p. 92).

The relation of Tibetan Buddhism to the goddess of the earth or of the country (Tibet) is also one of brutal subjugation, an imprisonment, an enslavement, a murder or a dismemberment.

Euphemistically, and in ignorance of the tantric scheme of things it could also be interpreted as a civilizing of the wilderness through culture. Yet however the relation is perceived — no meeting, no exchange, no mutual recognition of the two forces takes place. In the depths of Tibet's history — as we shall show — a brutal battle of the sexes is played out.

### **Why women can't climb the pure crystal mountain**

Even the landscape is sexualized in Tibetan folk beliefs (this too squares with the ideas of Tantrism). In mountain lakes, the water of which has taken on a red color (probably because of mercury), the lamas see the menstrual blood of the goddess *Vajravarahi*. In rivers, lakes, and springs dwell the *Lu*, who resemble our nixies. They are hostile towards we humans, yet they were nonetheless preferred as spouses by the kings of the highlands in ancient times and brought their magic abilities with them in the marriage. We learn from the Fifth Dalai Lama that they leave no corpse behind when they die.

The myths have also divided the massive snow capped peaks along sexual lines. It was hence not uncommon for particular mountains to marry and the descendants of such alliances are supposed to have grounded powerful royal houses. One of the mountain goddesses is world famous, because it rises above the other peaks of the planet as the highest mountain of all. We know her under the name of Mount Everest, the Himalayan peoples, however, pray to her as the “Mother of the Earth”, the “White Heavens Goddess”, the “White Glacier Lady”, the “Goddess of the Winds”, the “Lady of Long Life”, the “Elephant Goddess”.

In his study with the descriptive title of *Why can't women climb pure crystal mountain?*, the Tibet researcher Toni Huber describes an interesting mythic case where a mountain goddess was deprived of her power by a tantric Siddha and since then the location of her former rule may no longer be visited by women. The case concerns the Tsari, a mountain which was the seat of a powerful female deity in pre-Buddhist times. She was defeated by a yogi in the twelfth century. The brutal battle between her and the *vajra* master displays clear traits of a tantric performance. As the yogi entered the region under her control, the goddess let a series of vaginas appear by magical manipulation so as to seduce her challenger, yet the latter succeeded in warding off the magic through a brutal act of subjugation. As she then, lying on the ground, showed herself willing to sleep with her conqueror, she was at first rejected on the grounds that she was of the female sex (!). But after a while the yogi accepted her as a wisdom consort and took away all her magic powers once they had united sexually (Huber, 1994, p. 352).

From this point in time on, Tsari, which was among the most holy mountains of the highlands, became taboo for women, both for Buddhist nuns and for laity. This ban has remained in force until modern times. Groups of pilgrims who visited the mountain in the eighties sent their women back in advance. Toni Huber questioned several lamas about the significance of this misogynist custom. The majority of answers made reference to the “purity of the location” which in the view of the monks formed a geographic mandala: “Because it is such a pure abode, .... women are not allowed. ... The only reason is that women are of inferior birth and impure. There are many powerful mandalas on the mountain that are divine and pure, and women are polluting” (Huber, 1994, p. 356).

But there was also another justification for the exclusion of the female pilgrims which likewise shows how and with what presumption the androcentric power elite of the land seize possession of the formerly feminine geography: “The reason why women can't go up there is that at Tsari are lots of small, self-produced manifestations of the Buddha genitals made of stone. If you look at them they just appear ordinary, but they are actually miraculous phalluses of the Buddha, so if women go there these miracles would become spoiled by their presence, and the women would get many problems also. They would get sick and perhaps die prematurely. It is generally harmful for their health so that is why they stopped women going to the holy place in the past, for their own benefit. The problem is that women are low and dirty, thus they are too impure to go there” (Huber, 1994,

p. 357). It is no wonder that in feminist circles the future climbing of Tsari by a woman and its “re-conquest” has become a symbol for female resistance against patriarchal Lamaism.

### **Matriarchy in the Land of Snows?**

Siegbert Hummel sees remnants of a long lost maternal cult in the Tibetan female mountain deities and their attributes. These could have already reached India and the Tibetan plateau from Mediterranean regions in the late stone age (from 4000 B.C.E.). It is a matter of one of the two contrary cultural currents, which may have embedded themselves deeply in the Tibetan popular psyche thousands of years ago: “The first is lunar in character and could be connected with the Tibetan megalithic. ... Its world view is triadic, exhibits chthonic, demonic and phallicist tendencies, snake and tree cults, as well as the worship of maternal deities ... The other component is markedly solar, dualist and heaven-related, primarily nomadic. Shamanist elements, probably from an earlier solar, hunting basis, are numerous” (Hummel, 1954, p. 128).

In that he nominates the sexual discord which has kept the civilizations of the Land of Snows in suspense since the earliest times, Hummel speaks here with the vocabulary of Tantrism, probably without knowing it. In his view then, the two heavenly orbs of moon and sun already stood opposed as two polar, culture-shaping forces in pre-Buddhist Tibet. Following the solar Bon cult Tantric Buddhism has taken over the sunly role since the eighth century. In contrast, the moon cults have been — the myth of the nailing down of *Srinmo* teaches us — overthrown by the sun warriors.

According to Hummel the lunar and solar cultural currents are graphically demonstrated in the very popular *garuda* motif in Tibetan art. The *garuda* is a mythical sun-bird. Not infrequently it holds in its beak a snake, which must be assigned to the lunar, matriarchal world. There was thus a fundamental clash between the two cultures: “Since the *garuda* is thereby understood as an enemy of the snakes, it seems natural to suspect that there where the snake-killing *garuda* arose, the lunar and solar cultures encountered and opposed one another as enemies” Hummel writes (Hummel, 1954, p. 101).

There are in fact numerous historically demonstrable matriarchal elements in the old Tibetan culture. In this connection there are the still unexplained and mysterious stone circles which have been brought into connection with matriarchal cults and were already discovered by Sven Hedin on his research trips. In contrast, numerous prehistoric shrines found in caves offer us less ambiguous information. It has been clearly proven that female deities were worshipped at these chthonic sites. In this century such caves were still considered as birth channels and a visit to them was seen as an initiation and hence as a rebirth (Stein, 1988, pp. 2-4).

A further secret concerns the mythic female kingdoms which are supposed to have existed in Tibet — one in the West, another in the East, and the third in the North of the Land of Snows. The in part detailed reports about these stem from Chinese sources and may be traced back to the seventh century C.E. We learn that these realms, depicted as being very powerful, were ruled by queens who had command over a tribal council of women (Chayet, 1993, p. 51). When they died several members of court voluntarily joined the female rulers in death. The female nobles had male servants, and women were the head of the family. A child inherited its mother’s name.

On one of his first expeditions to Tibet, Ernst Schäfer encountered a matriarchal tribe who distinguished themselves through their cruelty. In his book, *Unter Räubern in Tibet* [Among Robbers in Tibet], he reports: “As we learn in Dju-Gompa, primitive matriarchy is still practiced by the wild Ngoloks. A great queen, Adjung de Jogo by name, reigns autocratically over the six main tribes that are governed by princes. As the reincarnation of a heavenly being she enjoys divine honors and at the same time is the spouse of all her tribal princes on earth. She rules with a strong hand, is pretty and clever, possesses a bodyguard of seven thousand warriors, and handles a gun like a man. Once a year Adjung de Jogo proceeds up the God-mountain with her seven thousand



men in a grand procession in order to meditate in the glacial isolation before she returns to the black tents of her mobile residence.

It is not just about the intrepid courage of the Ngoloks but also their cruelty that people tell the most terrible stories. Of all the Tibetan tribes they are supposed to have figured out the most ingenious ways of despatching their victims off to join their ancestors. Chopping off hands and splitting skulls are minor things; they can be left to the others! But sewing [people] up in fresh yak skins and letting them roast in the sun — disemboweling while alive, or launching the entrails skywards on bent rods, these are the methods that are loved in Ngolokland.

At nearly all times of the year, but especially in early fall when the marshes are dried out and the animals are best nourished, the Ngoloks undertake their large-scale plundering raids to as far as Barum-Tsaidam in the north, Sungpan in the south, and Dju-Gompa in the West. Even for Chinese merchants they are the epitome of all the terrible things that are said of the “Western barbarian country” in the Middle Kingdom. (Schäfer, 1952, pp. 164-165)

In the nineteen fifties, to the south of Bhutan a matriarchally organized tribe by the name of “Garo” still existed, the members of which were convinced that they had emigrated from a province in Tibet in prehistoric times (Bertrand, 1957, p. 41). We may also recall that in the *Shambhala* travel books of the Third Panchen Lama there is talk of regions in which only women live.

It would certainly be somewhat hasty to conclude the existence of a matriarchy across the whole Himalayas solely on the basis of the material at hand. But at any rate, the male imagination has for centuries painted the inaccessible highlands as a region under the control of female tribes and their queens.

### **The western imagination**

As early as the thirteenth century the myth of the Tibetan female kingdoms had reached Europe. Speculation about this have had a hold upon western travelers up until the present day. Likewise noteworthy is the frequent allegorical connection of Tibet to something enigmatically feminine, that is, a western imagining which is congruent with the traditional Tibetan conception. Since the nineteenth century European researchers, mountain climbers, and followers of the esoteric have enthused about the Land of Snows as if it were a woman who ought to be conquered, whose veil should be lifted, and into whose secrets one wished to “penetrate”. The Tibet researcher, Peter Bishop, has devoted a detailed study to this occidental fantasy (Bishop, 1993, p. 36).

Probably the most absurd depiction of a western encounter with the “Great Mother Tibet” can be found in the travel report of the Englishman, Harrison Forman, from the nineteen thirties. To offer the reader some amusement, but above all to show how strongly the culture of the Land of Snows can over-stimulate the masculine fantasy of a westerner, we would like to present one of Forman’s lively recounted experiences in detail.

The Briton had heard of the Abbess Alakh Gong Rri Tsang (Krisang), a living “female Buddha” who aroused his curiosity immensely. He visited her convent and was given a most friendly reception. During a tour he asked about a mysterious grotto, the entrance to which could be seen on a mountainside. The Abbess gave him a sharp look and announced she was prepared to show him the “shrine”. In that moment Forman felt a painful bout of nausea, but was nonetheless prepared to follow. Thus, after a difficult climb, they both — he and the Abbess — reached the grotto. Alakh Gong Krisang lit two torches and they entered the cave. They were met by a thick darkness, a musty smell, and dancing shadows. Squeaking bats fluttered through the stale air. The ghastly ambience made the Briton nervous and he asked himself, “A thought struck me. Good Lord! Just what *was* this woman Living Buddha? Reason struggled with emotion. This was Tibet, where millions believed in ever present evil spirits and their capriciousness” (Forman, 1936, p. 179).

Without looking back, and with a firm footstep, the Abbess proceeded further into the grotto. „Do not be afraid, my friend!”, she calmed Forman. They progressed deeper and deeper through passages filled with stalactites and stalagmites. Then they came to a space in the center of which four pyramids of human bones rose up, with a golden statue in the middle of them. The Abbess smiled as if in a “hysterical ecstasy”, writes Forman. Immobile, she stared at the golden sculpture.



*Alakh Gong Rri Tsang, the woman Grand Buddha of Druk Kurr Gomba*

And now we should let the author speak for himself: „And as I watched her, my jaw dropped. I stared as she began to disrobe. A shrug of the shoulders her and her long toga slipped to the floor. Then she loosened the silken girdle at her waist and let drop the voluminous skirt-like garment. Her other garments followed, one by one, until they formed a red pile at her feet. And I saw, what I am sure no white man ever saw before me, or ever will see again, the nude body of Alakh Gong Rri Tsang, the woman Grand Buddha of Druk Kurr Gomba. Her body was amazingly voluptuous, and, I suppose, beautiful. Her breasts stood like those of a schoolgirl, firm and round – like hemispheres of pure alabaster. Her figure was magnificent and of sinuously generous proportions. I was minded of the substantial nudes of Michelangelo and his school. And amid the ever-encircling bats she stood there – still gazing ecstatically upward” (Forman, 1936, p. 183). If we examine the photo which Forman took of the Abbess in the convent and in which she is not to be distinguished from a portly male Abbot, one is indeed most amazed at just what is supposed to be hidden beneath the clothes of the Living Buddha.

But there is better to come: „The bats had suddenly settled on her - like vultures to a feast. In a moment she was covered from head to foot. Like lustful vampires they sank their horrible libidinous beaks into her flesh and the blood began to flow from a hundred wounds” (Forman, 1936, pp. 183, 184). Forman turned to stone, but then — even in the most hopeless of situations a gentleman — he came to his senses, and began to shoot madly at the bloodsuckers with his revolver. He emptied more than seven magazines before the Abbess, to his great astonishment asked him with a smile to calm down. With a majestic gesture she reanimated the bats which he had killed. There was not the slightest trace of a wound to be seen on her body any more. „And in that moment”, Forman reports further, „had she been the loveliest woman in all the world [...] Nothing remained of the grisly scene of a few moments before to prove to me that it had ever happened at all, save the nude woman and the solid golden idol with its four guardian pyramids of human bones. Somewhere off in the blackness I could still hear faintly the obscene screaming of the hordes of bats” (Forman, 1936, p. 185). As they left the grotto, Forman commented upon the incident — typically British — with the lapidary words: „It must be the altitude!” (Forman, 1936, p. 186).

As absurd as this story may seem, it nonetheless quite exactly hits the visual world which dominates the tantric milieu, and it in no way exaggerates the often still more fantastic reports which we know from the lives of famous yogis.

### **Women in former Tibetan society**

How then is the fate of Srinmo expressed in Tibetan society? We would like to present the social role of women in old Tibet in a very condensed manner, without considering events since the Chinese occupation or the situation among the Tibetans in exile here. Their role was very specific and can best be outlined by saying that, precisely because of her inferiority the Tibetan woman enjoyed a certain amount of freedom. Fundamentally women were considered inferior creatures. Appropriately, the Tibetan word for woman can be literally translated as “lowly born”. Man, in contrast, means “being of higher birth” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 76). A prayer found widely among the women of Tibet pleads, “may I reject a feminine body and be reborn [in] a male one” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 19). The birth of a girl brought bad luck, that of a son promised happiness and prosperity.

The institution of marriage itself is definitely not one of the Buddhist virtues – the historical Buddha himself traded married life for the rough life of a pilgrim. To be blessed with children was, because of the curse which rebirth brought with it, something of a burden. Shakyamuni thus fled his father’s palace directly following the birth of his son, Rahula. With unmistakable and decisive words, Padmasambhava also expressed this anti-family sentiment: „When practicing the Dharma of liberation, to be married and lead a family life is like being restraint in tight chains with no freedom. You may wish to flee, but you have been caught in the dungeon of samsara with no escape. You may later regret it, but you have sunk into the mire of emotions, with no getting out. If you have children, they may be lovely but they are the stake that ties you to samsara” (Binder-Schmidt, 1994, p. 131).

According to the dominant teaching, women could not achieve enlightenment, and were thus considered underdeveloped. A reincarnation as a female being was regarded as a punishment. The consequence of all these weaknesses, inabilities and inferiorities was that the patriarchal monastic society paid little attention to the lives of women. They were left, so to speak, to do what they wanted. Family life was also not subject to strict rules. Marriages were solemnized without many formalities and could be dissolved by mutual consent without consulting an official institution. This disinterest of the clergy led, as we said, to a certain independence among the women of Tibet, often exaggerated by sensation-hungry western travelers. Extramarital relationships were common, especially with servants. A wife nevertheless had to remain faithful, otherwise the husband had the right to cut off her nose. Of course such privileges did not exist in the reverse situation.

The much talked about polyandry, discussed with fascination by western ethnologists, was also less of an emancipatory phenomenon than an economical necessity. A wife served two men because this spared the money for a further woman. Naturally, twice the work was expected of her. Male members of the upper strata tended in contrast toward polygyny and maintained several wives. This became quite a status symbol and having more than one wife was consequently forbidden for the lower classes. In the absence of cash, a husband could pay his debts by letting his creditors take his wife. We know of no cases of the reverse.

A liberal attitude towards women on behalf of the clergy arises out of Tantrism. Since the lamas were generally viewed to be higher entities, women and girls never resisted the wishes of the embodied deities. The Austrian, Heinrich Harrer, was amazed at the sexual freedom found in the monasteries. Likewise, the Japanese monk, Kawaguchi Eikai, wondered on his journey through Tibet about „the great beauty possessed by the young consorts of aged abbots” (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 80). A proportion of the female tantric partners may have earned a living as prostitutes after they had finished serving as *mudras*. There were many of these in the towns, and hence a saying arose according to which as many whores filled the streets of Lhasa as dogs.

But there was a married priesthood in Tibet. For members of a monastery the relaxation of the oath of celibacy was nonetheless considered an exception. These married lamas and their women primarily performed “pastoral” work in the villages. As far as we can determine, in such cases the wife was only very rarely the tantric wisdom consort of her husband. In the Sakyapa sect the great abbots were married and had children. A proper dynasty grew up out of their families. We know of precisely these powerful hierarchs that they made use not of their wives but rather of virgin girls (*kumaris*) for their rites.

The “freedom” of the Tibetan women was null and void as soon as sacred boundaries were crossed — for example the gates of the monastery, which remained closed to them. Only during the great annual festivals were they sometimes invited, but they were never permitted to participate actively in the performances. In the official mystery plays the roles of goddesses or dakinis were exclusively performed by men. Even the poultry which clucked around in the Dalai Lama’s gardens consisted solely of roosters, since hens would have corrupted the holy grounds with their feminine radiation. A woman was never allowed to touch the possessions of a lama.

The Tibetan nuns do admittedly take part in certain rites, but have in all much more circumscribed lives than those of lay women. Did not the historical Buddha himself say that they stood in the way of the development of the teaching, and long hesitate before ordaining women? He was convinced that the “daughters of Mara” would accelerate the downfall of Buddhism, even if they let their heads be shaved. Still today the rules prescribe that a nun owes the lowliest monk the greatest respect, whilst the reverse does not apply in any sense. Rather than being praised for her pious decision to lead a life in a convent, she is abused for being incapable of building up an orderly family life. Despite all these degradations, to which there have been no essential changes up to the present, the nuns have, without concern for life and limb, stood at the head of the emergent protest movement in Tibet since 1987.

### **The alchemic division of the feminine: The Tibetan goddesses Palden Lhamo and Tara**

In our explanation of Buddhist Tantrism we repeatedly mentioned the division of the feminine into a gloomy, repellant, and aggressive aspect and a bright, attractive, and mild one. The terrifying and cruel dakini is counterpointed by the sweet and blessing-giving “sky walker”. Femininity vacillates between these two extremes (the Madonna and the whore) and can be kept under control because of this inner turmoil. In the same context, we drew attention to parallels to Indian and European alchemy, where the dark part is described as the *prima materia* and the bright as the feminine elixir (*gynergy*) yearned for by the adept. Does such a splitting of the feminine also find expression in the mythical history of the Land of Snows?

*Palden Lhamo — The Dalai Lama’s protective goddess*

A monumental dark and wrathful mother *par excellence* is *Palden Lhamo*, who, like her “sister” *Srinmo*, was a wild, free matriarch in pre-Buddhist times, but then, brought under control by a *vajra* master, began to serve the “true doctrine” — but in contrast to *Srinmo* she does so actively. She is the protective deity of the Dalai Lama, the whole country, and its capital, Lhasa. This grants her an exceptionally high position in the Tibetan pantheon. The Fifth Dalai Lama was one of her greatest worshippers, the goddess is supposed to have appeared to him several times in person; she was his political advisor and confidante (Karmay, 1988, p. 35). One of her many names, which evoke both her martial and her tantric character, is „Great Warrior Deity, the Powerful Mother of the World of the Joys of the Senses” (Richardson, 1993, p. 87). After the “Great Fifth” had repeatedly recited her mantra for a while, he dreamt “that the ghost spirits in China [were] being subdued” (Karmay, 1988, p. 35). Since then she has been considered to be one of the chief enemies of Beijing.

In examining a portrait of her, one becomes convinced that *Palden Lhamo* would be among the most repulsive figures in a worldwide gallery of demons. With gnashing teeth, bulging eyes and a filthy blue body, she rides upon a wild mule. Beneath its hooves spreads a sea of blood which has flowed from the veins of her slaughtered enemies. Severed arms, heads, legs, eyes and entrails float around in it. The mule’s saddle is made from the leather of a skinned human. That would be repulsive enough! But the horror overcomes one when one discovers that it is the skin of her own (!) son, who was killed by the goddess when he refused to follow her example and adopt the Buddhist faith. In her right hand *Palden Lhamo* swings a club in the form of a child’s skeleton. Some interpreters of this scene claim that this is also the remains of her son. With her left hand the fiendess holds a skull bowl filled with human blood to her lips. Poisonous snakes are entwined all around her. [1]

Like the Indian goddess, *Kali*, she appears with a loud retinue. One can encounter her of a night on charnel fields together with her noisy flock. Just what unbridled aggression this army of female ghosts kindled in the imaginations of the monks is best shown by a poem which the lamas of the Drepung monastery sing in honor of their protective lady, *Dorje Dragmogyel*, who is one of *Palden Lhamo*’s horde:

*You glorious Dorje Dragmogyel ...  
When you are angry at your enemies,  
Then you ride upon a fiery ball of lightning.  
A cloud of flames — like that at the end of all time -  
Pours from your mouth,  
Smoke streams from your nose,  
Pillars of fire follow you.  
Hurriedly you collect clouds from the firmament,  
The rumble of thunder pierces  
through the ten regions of the world.  
A dreadful rain of meteors  
and huge hailstones hurtles down,  
And the Earth is flooded in fire and water.  
Devilish birds and owls whirl around,  
Black birds with yellow beaks float past,  
one after another.  
The circle of Mnemo goddesses spins,  
The war hordes of the demons throng  
And the steeds of the tsen spirits race galloping away.  
When you are happy,  
then the ocean beats against the sky.  
If rage fills you, then the sun and moon fall,*

*If you laugh, the world mountain collapses into dust ....*  
*You and your companions*  
*Defeat all who would harm the Buddhist teaching,*  
*And who try to disrupt the life of the monastic community.*  
*Wound all those of evil intent,*  
*And especially protect our monastery,*  
*this holy place ....*  
*You should not wait years and months,*  
*drink now the warm heart's blood of the enemies,*  
*and exterminate them in the blink of an eye.*  
 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, 34)

In our presentation of the tantric ritual we showed how the terror goddesses or dakinis, whatever form they may assume, must be brought under control by the yogi. Once subjugated, they serve the patriarchal monastic state as the destroyers of enemies. Hence, to repeat, the *vajra* master is — when he encounters the dark mother — not interested in transforming her aggression, but rather much more in setting her to work as a deadly weapon against attackers and non-Buddhists. In the final instance, however — the tantras teach us- the feminine has no independent existence, even when appears in its wrathful form. In this respect *Palden Lhamo* is nothing more than one of the many masks of *Avalokiteshvara*, or — hence -of the Dalai Lama himself.

We know of an astonishing parallel to this from the kingdom of the pharaohs. The ancient Egyptians personified the wrath of the male king as a female figure. This was known as *Sachmet*, the flaming goddess of justice with the face of a lioness (Assmann, 1991, p. 89). Since the rulers were also obliged to reign with leniency as well as justly wrath, *Sachmet* had a softer sister, the cat goddess *Bastet*. This goddess was also a characteristic of the king pictured in female form. Correspondingly, in Tibetan Buddhism the mild sister of the *Palden Lhamo* is the divine *Tara*.

Even if the dreadful demoness is in the final instance an imagining of the Dalai, this does not mean that this projection cannot become independent and one day tear herself free of him, assume her own independent form and then hit back at her hated “projection father” as an enemy. Such radical “emancipations” of Tibetan protective deities are not at all rare and the collected histories of Tibet are full of reports, where submissive servants of the lamas free themselves and attempt to revolt against their lords. Right now, the Tibetan exile community is being deeply shaken by such a rebellious protective spirit by the name of *Dorje Shugden*, who has at any rate managed to disfigure the until now completely pure image of the *Kundun* in the West with some most persistent stains. We shall return to report on this often. From *Shugden* circles also comes the suspicion that *Palden Lhamo* has failed completely as the spiritual protector of Tibet, Lhasa, and the Dalai Lama, and has delivered the country into the hands of the Chinese occupiers. Whatever opinion one may have of such speculations, the extreme aggression of the demoness and the practical political facts do not exclude such a view of the matter.

In the life story of *Palden Lhamo* her relationship to her son is particularly cruel and numinous. Why a woman who is revered as the supreme protective spirit of Tibet and the Dalai Lama must be the slaughterer of her own child, may seem monstrous even to one who has become accustomed to the atrocities of the tantras. If we interpret the case psychologically we must ask ourselves the following questions: As a mother, is *Palden Lhamo* not driven by constant horror? Is her bottomless hate not the expression of her abominable deed? Must she not in her heart be the arch-enemy of Buddhism, the cause of her infanticide?

Is this repellant cult even more murderous than it already appears? Is the goddess perhaps offered sacrifices which simultaneously appease and captivate her? Since the demoness had to slaughter the utmost which a mother can give, namely her child, for Tibetan Buddhism, the sacrifice which is to fill her with satisfaction must also be the highest which Lamaism has to offer.

In fact, the early deaths of the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Dalai Lama give rise to the question of whether a deliberately initiated sacrificial offering to *Palden Lhamo* could be involved here? All four god-kings died at an age before they were able to take over the business of government. In each case, the regents who were exercising real power until the new Dalai Lamas came of age were suspected with good reason of being the murderer. In the Tibet of old poisonings were a regular occurrence. There is even said to have been a morbid belief that whoever poisoned a highly respected man would obtain all the happiness and privileges of his victim.

These are the historical facts. But there is a mysterious event to be found in the brief biographies of the four unhappy “god-kings” which could lend their fate a deeper, symbolic meaning. We mean the visit to a temple about a hundred miles southeast of Lhasa which was dedicated to one of the emanations of *Palden Lhamo*. We must imagine such shrines (*gokhangs*), dedicated to the wrathful deities, to be a real cabinet of horrors. Stuffed full of real and magic weapons, padded out by all manner of dried human body parts, they aroused absolute repugnance among visitors from the West.

In order to test the psychological hardiness of the young *Kunduns*, at least once in their lives the children were locked in the morbid temple mentioned and probably exposed to the most terrible performances of the goddess. “Young as they were, they had insufficient knowledge to persuade her to turn away the wrath, which came so easily to her, and, accordingly, they died soon after the meeting”, Charles Bell wrote of this cruel rite of initiation (Bell, 1994, p. 159). Whatever may have taken place within this *gokhang*, the children emerged from this hell completely disturbed and were all four close to madness.

The lot of the young Twelfth was particularly tragic. His chamberlain, one of his few intimates, was caught thieving from the Potala on a large scale. He fled upon discovery of the deed, was caught up with, and killed. The body was strapped astride a horse as if it were alive. The dead man was thus led before the young *Kundun*. Before the eyes of the fifteen year old, the head, hands and feet of the wrongdoer were struck off and the trunk was tossed into a field. The god-king was so horrified by the spectacle of the body of his “best friend” that he no longer wanted to see anyone at all any more and sought refuge in speechlessness. Nevertheless, the visit to the horrifying temple of *Palden Lhamo* was still expected of him afterwards. In contrast the “Great Thirteenth” did not visit the shrine of the demoness before he was 25 years old and came away unscathed. Even the Chinese were amazed at this. We do not know if the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has ever set foot in the shrine.

If one pursues a Tibetan/tantric logic, it naturally makes sense to interpret the premature deaths of the four Dalai Lamas as sacrifices to *Palden Lhamo*, since according to tradition it is necessary to constantly palliate the terror gods with blood and flesh. The demoness’s extreme cruelty is beyond doubt, and that she desires the sacrifice of boys is revealing of her own tragic history. Incidentally, the slaughter of her son may be an indicator of an originally matriarchal sacrificial cult which the Buddhists integrated into their own system. For example, the researcher A. H. Francke has discovered rock inscriptions in Tibet which refer to human sacrifices to the great goddess (Francke, 1914, p. 21). But it could also— in light of the tantric methods — be that *Palden Lhamo*, converted to Buddhism not from conviction but because she was magically forced to the ground, was compelled by her new lords to murder her son and that she revenged herself through the killings of the young Dalai Lamas.

Even an apparently paradoxical interpretation is possible: as a female, the demoness stands in radical confrontation to the doctrine of *Vajrayana*, and she may have sold her loyalty and subjugation for the highest possible price, namely that of the sacrifice of the god-kings. Such sadomasochist satisfactions can only be understood from within the tantric scheme, but there they are — as we know — not at all seldom. Hence, if one set a limit on the sacrifice of the boys in terms of time and headcount, then they may have been of benefit to later incarnations of the god-king, specifically, that is, to the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dalai Lamas. The exceptionally long reign of the last two *Kunduns* would, according to tantric logic, support such an interpretation.

### **Tara —Tibet's Madonna**

In the mytho-historical pantheon of Tibetan Buddhism, the gentle goddess *Tara* represents the exact counterimage of the terrible *Palden Lhamo*. *Tara* is — in the words of European alchemy — the “white virgin”, the ethereal-feminine supreme source of inspiration for the adept. In precisely this sense she represents the positive feminine counterpart to the destructive *Palden Lhamo*, or hence to the earth mother, *Srinmo*. The divided image of femininity found in every phase of Indian religious history thus lives on in Tibetan culture. “Witch” and “Madonna” are the two feminine archetypes which have for centuries dominated and continue to dominate the patriarchal imagination of Tibet just like that of the west. If all the negative attributes of the feminine are collected in the witch, then all the positive ones are concentrated within the Madonna.

The *Tara* cult is probably fairly recent. Although legends recount that the worship of the goddess was brought to the Land of Snows in the seventh century by one of the women of the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo, it is historically more likely that the Indian scholar Atisha first introduced the cult in the eleventh century.

Unlike the many repellant demonic gods who attack the tormented Tibetans, *Tara* has become a place of refuge. Under her, the believers can cultivate their noble sentiments. She grants devotion, love, faith, and hope to those who call upon her. She exhibits all the characteristics of a merciful mother. She appears to people in dreams as a guardian angel. She takes care of all private interests and needs. She can be trusted with one's cares. She helps against poisonings, heals illnesses and cures obsessions. But she is also the right one to turn to for success in business and politics. Everyone prays to her as a “redemptrix”. In translation her name means “star” or “star of hope”. It can be said that outside of the monasteries she is the most worshipped divinity of the Land of Snows. There is barely a household in Tibet in which a small statue of *Tara* cannot be found.

A number of colors are assigned to her various appearances. There is a white, green, yellow, blue, even a black *Tara*. She often holds a lotus with 16 petals which is supposed to indicate that she is sixteen years old. Her body is adorned with the most beautiful jewels. In a royal seated posture she looks down mildly upon those who ask pity of her. Naturally, one gains the impression that she is not suitable for tantric sexual practices. The whole positive aspect of the motherly appears to have been concentrated within her. She is experienced by Europeans as a Madonna untouched by sexuality. This is, however, not the case, then in contrast to her occidental sister with whom she otherwise has so much in common, the white *Tara* is also a wisdom consort. [2]

Sometimes, as is also known of the European worship of Mary, her cult tips over into an undesirable (for the clergy, that is) expansion of the goddess's power which could pose a danger to the patriarchal system. *Tara* is known, for example, as the “Mother of all Buddhas”. A legend in which she refuses to appear as a man is also in circulation and is often cited these days: when she was asked by some monks whether she did not prefer a male body, she is said to have answered: “Since there is no such thing as a 'man' or a 'woman', this bondage to male and female is hollow. ... Those who wish to attain supreme enlightenment in a man's body are many, but those who wish to serve the aims of beings in a woman's body are few; therefore may I, until the world is emptied out, serve the aim of beings with nothing but the body of a woman” (Beyer, 1978, p. 65). Such statements are downright revolutionary and are in direct contradiction to the dominant doctrine that women cannot attain any enlightenment at all, but must first be reborn in a male body.

Tantric Buddhism's first protective measure against the potential feminine superiority of *Tara* is the story of her origin. Firstly, she does not have the status of a Buddha, but is only a female Bodhisattva. Her head is adorned by a small statue of *Amitabha*, an indicator that she is subject to the Highest Lord of the Light (who allows no women into his paradise) and is considered to be one of his emanations.



Furthermore, *Tara* is nothing more or less than the personified tears of *Avalokiteshvara*. One day as he looked down filled with compassion upon all suffering beings he had to weep. The tear from his left eye became the green *Tara*, that which flowed from his right became her white form. Even if, as according to some tantric schools, *Chenrezi* selects both *Taras* as wisdom consorts, they nevertheless remain his creation. He gave birth to them as androgyne, as “father-mother”.



*Green Tara*

An even cleverer taming of the goddess consists in the fact that she incarnates in the bodies of men. Countless monks have chosen *Tara* as their yiddam and then visualize themselves as the goddess in their meditative practices. “Always an in all practices, he must visualize himself as the Holy Lady, bearing in mind that the appearance is the deity, that his speech is her mantra, and that his memory and mental constructs are her knowledge” (Beyer, 1978, p. 465). Her role as the “mother of all Buddhas” is also taken on by the male meditators, who thus say the following words: “[I am] the mother who gives birth to the Conquerors and their sons; I possess all her body, speech, mind, qualities, and active functions” (Beyer, 1978, p. 449). In one of his works, Albert Grünwedel reproduces the portrait of a high-ranking Mongolian lama who is revered as an incarnation of *Tara*. Even modern western followers of Buddhism would like to see the Sixteenth Karmapa as the green *Tara*.

Like *Palden Lhamo*, *Tara* also plays a role in Tibetan *realpolitik*, then the latter is — in their own view — played out by gods, not human agents. Hence, the official opinion from out of the Potala was that the Russian Czars were supposed to be an embodiment of *Tara*. Such image transferences are naturally very well suited to exciting the global power fantasies of the lamas. Then, since the goddess arose from a tear of *Avalokiteshvara*, the Czar as *Tara* must also be a product of the Dalai Lama, the highest living incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*. Further to this there is the idea derived from the tantras that the Czar (and thus Russia) as *Tara* could be coerced via a sexual magic act.

This appears downright fantastic, but — as we know — the tantra master does use his *karma mudra* as symbols for the elements, planets, and also for countries.

In the nineteenth century the idea likewise arose that the British Queen, Victoria, was a reincarnation of *Tara*, yet on occasion *Palden Lhamo* was also nominated as being the goddess functioning behind the facade of the English Queen. It was thus more natural for the Dalai Lama to cooperate with the British or the Russians — since the Chinese had been possessed for centuries by a “nine-headed demoness” with whom it was impossible to reach an accord. The China-friendly Panchen Lama, however, saw this differently. For him, the Chinese Emperors of the Manchu dynasty, who professed to the Buddhist faith, were incarnations of the Bodhisattva, *Manjushri*, and could thus be considered as acceptable negotiators.

### Tara and Mary

A comparison of the Tibetan *Tara* with the Christian figure of *Mary* has by now become a commonplace in Buddhist circles. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama also makes liberal use of this cultural parallel with pious emotionalism. For the “yellow pontiff” *Mary* represents the *inana mudra* (the “imagined female”) so to speak of Catholicism. „Whenever I see an image of Mary,” — the *Kundun* has said — „I feel that she represents love and compassion. She is like a symbol of love. Within Buddhist iconography, the goddess *Tara* occupies a similar position” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996c, p. 83). Not all that long ago, the „god-king” undertook a pilgrimage to Lourdes and afterwards summarized his impressions of the greatest Catholic shrine to *Mary* with the following moving words. „There — in front of the cave — I experienced something very special. I felt a spiritual vibration, a kind of spiritual presence there. And then in front of the image of the Virgin *Mary*, I prayed” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996 c, p. 84).

The autobiographical book with the title of *Longing for Darkness: Tara and the Black Madonna* by the American, China Galland, reports on the attempt to incorporate the Catholic cult of *Mary* via the Tibetan cult of *Tara*. After the author’s second marriage failed, she returned to the Catholic Church and devoted herself to an excessive *Mary* worship with feministic undertones. The latter was the reason why Galland felt herself attracted above all to the black Madonnas worshipped in Catholicism. The “Black Virgin” has already been worshipped for years by feminists as an apocryphal mother deity.

One day the author encountered the Tibetan goddess, *Tara*, and the American was instantly fascinated. *Tara* struck her as a pioneer of “spiritual” women’s rights. The goddess had — this author believed — proclaimed that contrary to Buddhist doctrine enlightenment could also be attained in a female body. The author felt herself especially attracted to figure of the “green *Tara*”, whom she equates with the black *Kali* of Hinduism at one point in her book: “The darkness of this female gods comforted me. I felt like a balm on the wound of the unending white maleness tha we had deified in the West. They were the other side of everything I had ever known about God. A dark female God. Oh yes!” (Galland, 1990, p. 31).

In Galland we are thus dealing with a spiritual feminist who has rediscovered her original black mother and is seeking traces of her in every culture. In the Buddhist *Tara* cult this author thus also sees archetypal references to the many-breasted *Artemis* of Ephesus, to the Egyptian *Isis*, to the Phoenician *Alma Mater*, *Cybele*, to the Mesopotamian goddess of the underworld, *Ishtar*. Once more her trail leads from the dark *Tara* to the “black Madonnas” of Europe and America. From there the next link in the chain is the Indian terror goddess *Kali* (or *Durga*). “Was the blackness of the virgin a connecting thread of connection to *Tara*, *Kali* or *Durga*, or was it a mere coincidence?” asks Galland (Galland, 1990, p. 50). For her it was no coincidence!

With one word Galland activates the gynocentric world view which is familiar enough from the feminist literature. She sees the great goddess at work everywhere (Galland, 1993, p. 42). The universal position which she grants herself as the first creative principle is depicted unambiguously

in a poem. The author found it in a Gnostic Christian text. There a female power, who sounds “more like *Kali* than the Mother of God”, says the following words:

*For I am the first and the last.  
I am the honored and the scorned one.  
I am the whore and the holy one.  
I am the wife and the virgin*

...  
*I am the silence that ist incomprehensible*  
(quoted by Galland, 1990, p. 51)

In spite of her unmistakable pro-woman position, the feminist met her androcentric master in October 1986, who transformed her black *Kali* (or *Tara* or *Mary*) into a pliant Tantric Buddhist dakini. During her audience, for which she feverishly waited for several days in Dharamsala, she asked His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: “Did it make sense to link *Tara* and *Mary*?” — “Yes,” — the *Kundun* answered her — “*Tara* and *Mary* create a good bridge. This is a direction to go in” (Galland, 1990, p. 93).

He then told the feminist how pro-woman Tibetan Buddhism is. For example, the Sakya Lama, the second-highest-ranking hierarch of the Land of Snows, had a wife and daughter. Somewhere in Nepal there lived a 70-year-old nun who was entitled to teach the Dharma. When he was young there was a famous female hermit in the mountains of Tibet. For him, the Dalai Lama, it made no difference along the path to enlightenment whether a person had a male body or a female one. And then finally the climax: “*Tara*” — the *Kundun* said — “could actually be taken as a very strong feminist. According to the legend, she knew that there were hardly any Buddhas who had been enlightened in the form of a woman. She was determined to retain her female form and to become enlightened only in this female form. That story had some meaning in it, doesn’t it?” — he said with “an infectious smile” to Galland (Galland, 1990, p. 95).

“Smiling” is the first form of communication with a woman which is taught in the lower tantras (the *Kriya Tantra*). The next tantric category which follows is the “look” (*Carya Tantra*), and then the “touch” (*Yoga Tantra*). Galland later reported in fascination what happened to her during the audience: “He [the *Kundun*] got up out of his chair, came over to me as I stood up, and took me firmly by the arms with a laugh. The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is irrepressibly cheerful. His touch surprised me. It was strong and energetic, like a black belt in *aikido*. The physical power in his hands belied the softness of his appearance. He put his forehead to mine, then pulled away smiling and stood there looking at me, his hands holding my shoulders. His look cut through all the words exchanged and warmed me. I sensed that I was learning the most about him and that I was being given the most by him, right then, Though wat it was could not be put into words. This was the real blessing” (Galland, 1990, p. 96).

From this moment on, the entire metaphysical standpoint of the author is transformed. The revolutionary dark *Kali* becomes an obedient “sky walker” (dakini), the radical feminist becomes a pliant “wisdom consort” of Tantric Buddhism. With whatever means, the Dalai Lama succeeded in making a devout Buddhist of the committed follower of the great goddess. From now on, Galland begins to visualize herself along tantric lines as *Tara*. She interprets the legend in which the goddess offers to help her tear-father, *Avalokiteshvara* (*Tara* arose from one of the Bodhisattva’s tears), lead all suffering beings on the right path, as her personal mission.

The “initiation” by the *Kundun* did not end with this first encounter, it found its continuation later in a dream of the author’s. There Galland sees how the Dalai Lama splashes around in a washtub, completely clothed, and with great amusement. She herself also sits in such a tub. Then suddenly the *Kundun* stands up and looks at her in an evocative silence. “There was nothing between us, only pure being. It was a vivid and real exchange. — Suddenly a blue sword came out of the crown of the Dalai Lama’s head over an across the distance between us and down to the crown of my

head, all the way down my spine. I felt as though he had just transmitted some great, wordless teaching. The sword was made of blue light. I was very happy. Then he climbed into the third tub, where I was now sitting alone. We sat side by side in silence. I was on the right. Our faces were next to one another, faintly touching” (Galland, 1990, p. 168). The Dalai Lama then climbs out of the tub. She tries to persuade him to explain the situation to her, and in particular to interpret the significance of the sword. “But every time I asked him a question, he changed forms, like *Proteus*, the old man of the sea, and said nothin” (Galland, 1990, p. 169). At the end of the dream he transformed himself into a turquoise scarab which climbed the wall of the room.

Even if both of the dream’s protagonists (the Dalai Lama and China Galland) are fully clothed as they sit together in the washtub, one does not need too much fantasy to see in this scene a sexual magic ritual from the repertoire of the *Vajrayana*. The blue sword is a classic phallic symbol and reminds us of a similar example from Christian mysticism: it was an arrow which penetrated Saint Theresa of Avila as she experienced her mystic love for God. For China Galland it was the sword of light of the supreme Tibetan tantra master.

Soon after the spectacular dream initiation, the “pilgrimages” to the holy places at which the black Madonnas of Europe and America are worshipped described in her book began. Instead of *Marys* she now only sees before her western variations upon the Tibetan *Tara*. The tear (*tara*) of *Avalokiteshvara* (the Dalai Lama) becomes an overarching principle for the American woman. In the dark gypsy Madonna of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (France), in her famous black sister of Czestochowa (Poland), in the copy of the latter in San Antonio (Texas), but above all in the Madonna of Medjugorje, whom she visits in October 1988, Galland now only sees emanations of the Tibetan goddess.

Whilst she reflects upon *Mary* and *Tara* in the (former) Yugoslavian place of pilgrimage, a prayer to the Tibetan deity comes to her mind. “In it she is said to come in what ever form a person needs her to assume in order for her to be helpful. True compassion. Buddha Tara, indeed all Buddhas, are said to emanate in billions of forms, taking whatever form is necessary to suit the person. Who can say that Mary isn’t Tara appearing in a form that is useful and recognizable to the West? When the Venerable Tara Tulku [Galland’s Buddhist Guru, a male emanation of *Tara*] came [...], we spoke about this. From the Buddhist perspective, one cannot say that this isn’t possible, he assured me: ‘If there is a person who says definitely no, the Madonna is not an emanation of Tara, then that person has not understood the teaching of Buddha’. Christ could be an emanation of Buddha” (Galland, 1990, p. 311).

What lies behind this flowery quotation and Galland’s eccentric *Mary*-worship can also be referred to as the incorporation of a non-Buddhist cult by *Vajrayana*. Then *Mary* and *Tara* are both so culture-specific that a comparison of the two “goddesses” only makes sense at an extremely general level. Neither does *Tara* give birth to a messiah, nor may we imagine a *Mary* who enters sexual magic union with a Christian monk. Despite such blatant differences, Tantrism’s doctrine of emanation allows the absorption of foreign gods without hesitation, yet only under the condition that the Tibetan deity take the original place and the non-Buddhist one be derived from it. In this connection, the report of a Catholic (Benedictine) nun who participated in the *Kalachakra* initiation in Bloomington (1999). For her, the rite set off a Christian experience: “I’m Christian. Never before has that meant so much. This past month I sat at the Kalachakra Initiation Rite in Bloomington with HH the Dalai Lama as the master teacher, a tantric gure. I have never felt so Christian. [...] I was sitting in the VIP section on the stage very near the Dalai Lama. The Buddhist audience seemd like advanced practitioners. The audience was nearly 5,000 people under this one huge tent. When dharma students would know that I was a nun they’d ask me what was in my mind as the ritual progressed through the Buddhist texts, recitations, deity visualizations and gestures. At the time, I must confess, I sat with as much respect, openness and emptiness as possible. My Christain heart was simply at rest being there with ‘others’. [...] There’s no one to one correspondence with Buddhist’s rituals especially one as complex and esoteric as the Kalachakra, but there is a way that we live tha creates the same feel, the same attitude and dispositions. (Funk,.

HPI 001) The literature in which Buddhist authors present Christ as a Bodhisattva and as an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara* grows from year to year. We shall come to speak about this in the chapter on the ecumenical politics of the Dalai Lama.

### **The lament of Yeshe Tshogyal**

The tantric partner of Padmasambhava, the founding father of Tibetan Buddhism, is frequently offered as the historical example of a female figure who is supposed to have integrated all the contradictory powers of the feminine within herself. She goes by the name of Yeshe Tshogyal and is said to have achieved an independence unique in the history of female yoginis. Some authors even say (contrary to all doctrines) that she attained the highest goal of full Buddhahood. For this reason she has currently become one of the rare icons for those, primarily western, believers who keep a lookout for emancipated female figures within Tantric Buddhism.

The legend reports that Yeshe Tshogyal married the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen (742–803) at the age of thirteen. Three years later, he gave her to Padmasambhava as his *karma mudra*. Such generous gifts of women to gurus were, as we know, normal in Tantrism and taken for granted.

Yeshe Tshogyal became her master's most outstanding pupil. When she was twenty years old, he initiated her in a flame ritual. During the ceremony the guru, in the form of a terror deity „took command of her lotus throne [the vagina] with his flaming diamond stalk [the penis]“ (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 70). This showed that she had to suffer the fate of a classic wisdom consort; she was symbolically burnt up.

Later she practiced *Vajrayana* with other men and subsequently underwent a long ascetic period as an “ice virgin” in the coldest mountains of Tibet. Like the historical Buddha she was also tempted by lecherous beings, it was just that in her case these were no “daughters of Mara” but rather handsome young devils. She recognized their lures as the work of Satan and resolutely rejected them. But out of compassion she subsequently slept with all manner of men and gave „her sexual parts to the lustful” (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 71). Her devotion in love is so convincing that she could convert seven highwaymen who raped her to Buddhism.

Padmasambhava is supposed to have said to her: „The basis for realizing enlightenment is a human body. Male or female, there is no great difference. But if she develops the mind bent on enlightenment the woman's body is better” (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 71). This statement is admittedly revolutionary, but nevertheless we can hardly accept that Yeshe Tshogyal traveled an essentially different path to the countless anonymous yoginis who were “sacrificed” on the altar of Tantrism. [4]

Through constantly visions she was repeatedly urged to offer herself up completely to her master — to sacrifice her own flesh, her blood, her eyes, nose, tongue, ears, heart, entrails, muscles, bones, marrow, and her life energy. One may also begin to seriously doubt her privileged position within Tibetan Buddhism, when one hears her impressive and resigning lament at her woman's lot:

*I am a woman  
 I have little power to resist danger.  
 Because of my inferior [!] birth, everyone attacks me.  
 If I go as a beggar, dogs attack me.  
 If I have wealth and food, bandits attack me.  
 If I do a great deal, the locals attack me.  
 If I do nothing, gossips attack me.  
 If anything goes wrong, they all attack me.  
 Whatever I do, I have no chance for happiness.  
 Because I am a woman it is hard to follow the Dharma.  
 It is hard even to stay alive.*

(quoted by Gross, 1993, p. 99)

Many centuries after her earthly death, Yeshe Tshogyal became for the Fifth Dalai Lama a constant companion in his visions and advised him in his political decisions. During a meeting, “Tshogyal appears in the form of a white lady adorned with bone ornaments. She enters into union with him. The white and the red bodhicitta [seed] flow to and fro” (Karmay, 1988, p. 54). Such scenes of union with her are mentioned several times in the *Secret Visions* of the “Great Fifth”. Some of these are described so concretely that they probably concern real human *mudras* who assumed the role of Yeshe Tshogyal. Once His Holiness saw in her heart “the mandala of the Phurba [ritual dagger] deity” (Karmay, 1988, p. 67). Perhaps she wanted to remind him with this vision of the agonizing fate of *Srinmo*, the Mother of Tibet, in whose heart a ritual dagger is also stuck. In another vision she appeared together with the goddess *Candali* and three further dakinis. They danced and sang the words “Phurba is the essence of all tutelary deities.” (Karmay, 1988, p. 67).  
[5]

Even if, as is claimed by many contemporary tantra masters and feminists, Yeshe Tshogyal is supposed to be the most prominent historical representative of an “emancipated” *Vajrayana* female Buddhist, her unhappy fate shows just how degradingly and contemptuously the countless unknown and unmentioned *karma mudras* of Tibetan history must have been treated. The example she provides should be more a deterrent than a positive one, then she was more or less an instrument of Padmasambhava’s. Her current rise in prominence is exclusively a product of the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, which needs to generate counterimages to an essentially androcentric Buddhism so as to gain a foothold in the western world.

### **The mythological background to the Tibetan-Chinese conflict: Avalokiteshvara versus Guanyin**

We would now like to point out that, in the historical relationship between Tibet and China, the latter played and continues to play the feminine part, as if the sky-high mountains of the Himalayas and the Chinese river plains were a man and a woman in stand-off, as if a battle of the sexes had been being waged for centuries between “masculine” Lhasa and “feminine” Beijing. This is not supposed to imply that, in contrast to the patriarchal Land of Snows, a matriarchy has the say in China. We know full well how the “Middle Kingdom” has from the outset pursued a fundamentally androcentric politics and how nothing has changed in this regard up until the present. Hence, what we primarily wish to say here is that from a *Tibetan* viewpoint the conflict between the two countries is interpreted as a gender conflict. We hope to demonstrate in this chapter that the Dalai Lama is opposed by the threatening and ravenous “Great Female”, the terror dakini which is China and which he must conquer and subjugate along tantric lines.

The reverse cannot be so simply stated: the Chinese Emperor admittedly saw the rulers of Potala as powerful spiritual opponents, but understood himself thus only in a very few cases to be the representative of a “womanly power”. Yet such historical exceptions do exist and we would like to consider these in more detail. There is also the fact that China’s androcentric culture has been repeatedly limited and relativized by strong female elements. Real feminine influences can be recognized in Chinese mythology, in particular national philosophies (especially Taoism), and sometimes also in the politics, far more than was ever the case in the masculine Tibetan monastic empire. For example, Lao-tzu, the great proclaimer of the *Dao De Jing*, clearly stresses the feminine factor ( or rather what one understood this to be at the time) in his practical “theory of power”:

*Nothing is weaker than water,  
But when it attacks something hard  
Or resistant, then nothing withstands it,  
And nothing will alter its way.  
[...] weakness prevails*

*Over strength and [...] gentleness conquers  
The adamant [...]*

it says in the 78<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Dao De Jing*. Among Chinese Buddhists the greatest reverence is up until the present day reserved for a goddess (*Guanyin*), a female Buddha and no god. China's few yet famous/notorious female rulers in particular showed a unique tension in dealings with the kings and hierarchs of the Tibetan "Land of Snows". For this reason we shall consider these in somewhat more detail. But let us first turn to the Chinese goddess, *Guanyin*.

**China (*Guanyin*) and Tibet (*Avalokiteshvara*)**

How easily the ambivalent gender role of the male androgyne *Avalokiteshvara* could tip over into the feminine is demonstrated by "his" transformation into *Guanyin*, the "goddess of mercy", who is still highly revered in China and Japan. Originally, *Guanyin* had no independent existence, but was solely considered to be a feminine guise of the Bodhisattva (*Avalokiteshvara*). In memory of her male past she sometimes in older portrayals has a small goatee. How, where, and why the sex change came about is considered by scholars to be extremely puzzling. It must have taken place in the early Tang dynasty from the seventh century on, then before this *Avalokiteshvara* was all but exclusively worshipped in male form in China too.



*Guanyin*

There is already in the early fifth century a canon in which 33 different appearances of the "light god" are mentioned and seven of these are female. This proves that the incarnation of a Bodhisattva in female form was not excluded by the doctrine of *Mahayana* Buddhism. To the benefit of all suffering beings — it says in one text — the "redeemer" could assume any conceivable form, for

example that of a holy saying, of medicinal herbs, of mythical winged creatures, cannibals, yes, even that of women (Chayet, 1993, p. 154). But what such exceptions do not explain is why the masculine *Avalokiteshvara* was essentially supplanted and replaced by the feminine *Guanyin* in China. In the year 828 C.E. each Chinese monastery had at least one statue of the goddess. The chronicles report the existence of 44,000 figures.

There is more or less accord among orientalist that *Guanyin* is a syncretic figure, formed by the integration into the Buddhist system imported from India of formerly more powerful native Chinese goddesses. A legend recounts that *Guanyin* originally dwelled among the mortals as the king's daughter, *Miao Shan*, and that out of boundless goodness she sacrificed herself for her father. This pious tale is, however, somewhat lacking in vibrancy as the genesis of such an influential religious lady as *Guanyin*, but nonetheless interesting in that it once more offers us a report of a female sacrifice in the interests of a patriarch.

We find the suggestion often put forward by the Tibetan side, that the worship of *Guanyin* is a Chinese variant of the Tibetan *Tara* cult, similarly unconvincing, since the latter was first introduced into Tibet in the eleventh century, 400 years after the transformation of *Avalokiteshvara* into a goddess. In view of the exceptional power which the goddess enjoys in China it seems much more reasonable to see in her a descendant of the great Taoist matriarchs: the primordial mother *Niang Niang*, or the great goddess *Xi Wangmu*, or *Tianhou Shengmu*, who is worshipped as the “sea star”.

If *Avalokiteshvara* represents a “fire deity”, then *Guanyin* is clearly a “water goddess”. She is often pictured upon a rock in the sea with a water jug or a lotus flower in her hand. The “goddess on the water lily”, who sometimes holds a child in her arms and then resembles the Christian Madonna, fascinated the royal courts of Europe in the seventeenth century already, and the first European porcelain manufacturers copied her statues. Her epithets, “Empress of Heaven”, “Holy Mother”, “Mother of Mercy”, also drew her close to the cult of Mary for the West. Like *Mary* then, *Guanyin* is also called upon as the female savior from the hardships and fears of a wretched world. When worries and suffering make one unhappy, then one turns to her.

The transformation of *Avalokiteshvara* into a Chinese goddess is a mythic event which has deeply shaped the metapolitical relationship between China and Tibet. Historical relations of both nations with one another, although they both exhibit patriarchal structures, may thus be described through the symbolism of a battle of the sexes between the fire god *Chenrezi* and the water goddess *Guanyin*. What is played out between the gods also has — the tantras believe — its correspondences among mortals. Via the fate of the three most powerful female figures from China's past, we shall examine whether the tantric pattern can be convincingly applied to the historical conflicts between the two countries (Tibet and China).

### **Wu Zetian (Guanyin) and Songtsen Gampo (Avalokiteshvara)**

Following the collapse of the Han kingdom in the third century C.E., *Mahayana* Buddhism spread through China and blossomed in the early Tang period (618–c. 750). After this a renaissance of Confucianism begins which leads from the mid-ninth century to a persecution of the Buddhists. In the *Hua-yen* Buddhism of the seventh century (a Chinese form of *Mahayana* with some tantric elements), especially in the writings of Fa-Tsang, the cosmic “Sun Buddha”, *Vairocana*, is revered as the highest instance.

At the end of the seventh century, as the *Guanyin* cult was forming in China, a powerful woman and Buddhist reigned in the “Middle Kingdom”, the Empress Wu Zetian (c. 625–c. 705). Formerly a concubine of two Emperors, father and son — after their deaths Wu Zetian took, step by step and with great skill, the “Dragon Throne” in the year 683. She conducted a radical shake-up of the country's power elite. The ruling Li family was systematically and brutally replaced by members of her own Wu lineage. Nonetheless, the matriarch did not recoil from banishing her own son even



on the basis of power political concerns nor from executing other family members when these opposed her will. Her generals were engaged with varying success in the most bloody battles with the Tibetans and other bordering peoples.

Probably because she was a woman, her unscrupulous and despotic art became proverbial for later historians. The outrageousness which radiated out from this “monstrous” Grande Dame upon the Dragon Throne still echoes today in the descriptions of the historians. The German Sinologist, Otto Franke, for example, characterizes her with what is for an academic exceptionally strong emotions: “Malicious, vengeful, and cruel to the point of sadism, thus she began her career, unbridled addiction to power, insensitivity even to the natural maternal instinct, and a unquenchable desire for murder accompany her on the stolen throne, grotesque megalomania combined with religious insanity distorts her old age, childish helplessness in the face of every form of charlatanism and complete lack of judgement in administration and politics lead finally to her fall and bring the state to the edge ... A demoness in her unbridled passion, Wu Zetian allied herself with the dark figures of Chinese history” (Franke, 1961, p. 424).

Wu Zetian supported Buddhism fanatically, so as to establish it as the state religion in place of Daoism. “The Empress who takes God as her example”, as she called herself, was a megalomaniac not just about political matters but also in religious ones, especially because she let herself be celebrated as the incarnation of the Buddha *Maitreya*, of the ruler of the of the coming eon. Her she appealed to prophecies from the mouth of the historical Buddha. In the *Great Cloud Sutra* it could be read that, 700 years after his death, Shakyamuni would be reborn in the form of a beautiful princess, whose kingdom would become a real paradise. “Having planted the germs of the Way during countless *kalpas* [ages], [she as *Maitreya*] consents to the joyous exaltation by the people”, it says of the Empress in one contemporary document. (Forte, 1988, p. 122). According to other sources, Wu Zetian also allowed herself to be worshipped as the Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara*, and as the Sun Buddha, *Vairocana*.

As Buddhist she oriented herself to the *Abhidharmakosa*'s cyclical conception of the four ages of the world we have described above, and which we also find in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Thus, at end of the dark and at the dawn of the new age to come, stood this Chinese Empress in the salvational figure of the Buddha *Maitreya*. Her chiliastic movement, which she led as a living Buddhist messiah, had no small following among the people, yet came into hefty conflict with established Buddhism and the Confucian powers at court, above all because this savior was also a woman.

From the Buddhist teachings Wu Zetian also adopted the political doctrine of the *Chakravartin*, the wheel turner who reigns over the entire globe. She would lead her people, we may read in a prophesy, by “turning the golden wheel” (Forte, 1988, p.122). One of her titles was “The Golden Wheel of Dominion Turning God-Emperor”. (Franke, 1961, p. 417). But even this was not enough for her. Two years later she intensified her existing epithet and let herself be known as “The Holy God-Emperor Surpassing The Former Golden Wheel Turning God-Emperor” (Franke, 1961, p. 417). The “golden wheel”, along with the other appropriate emblems of the *Chakravartin* were hung in her hall of audience.

So as to visibly demonstrate and symbolically buttress her control of the world, she ordered the entire kingdom to be covered with a network of state temples. Each temple housed a statue of the Sun Buddha (*Vairocana*). All of these images were considered to be the emanations of a gigantic *Vairocana* which was assembled in the imperial temple of the capital and in which the Empress allowed herself to be worshipped.

Among the sacred buildings erected at her command was to be found what was referred to as a time tower (*tiantang*). According to Antonino Forte, the first ever mechanical clock was assembled there. The discovery of a “time machine” (the clock) is certainly one of the greatest cultural achievements in the history of humankind. Nevertheless we today see such an event only from its technical and quantitative side. But for people with an ancient world view this “mechanical” clock was of far greater significance. With its construction and erection a claim was made to the

symbolic and real control over time as such. Hence, following the assembly of the *tiantang* (time tower), Wu Zetian allowed herself to be worshipped as the living time goddess.

Alongside the “time tower” she built a huge metal pillar (the so-called “heavenly axis”). This was supposed to depict Mount Meru, the center of the Buddhist universe. Just as the *tiantang* symbolized control over time, the metallic “heavenly axis” announced the Empress’s control of space. Correspondingly her palace was also considered to be the microcosmic likeness of the entire universe. She declared her capital, Liaoyang, to be not just the metropolis of China, but also the domicile of the gods. *Space* and *Time* were thus, at least according to doctrine, firmly in Wu Zetian’s hands.

It will already have occurred to the reader that the religious/political visions of Wu Zetian correspond to the spirit of the *Kalachakra Tantra* in so many aspects that one could think it might have been a direct influence. However, this ruler lived three hundred years before the historical publication date of the Time Tantra. Nevertheless, the influence of *Vajrayana* (which has in fact been found in the fourth century in India) cannot be ruled out. Hua-yen Buddhism, from the ideas of which the Empress derived her philosophy of state, is also regarded as “proto-tantric” by experts: “Thus the Chou-Wu theocracy [of the Empress] is the form of state in China which comes closest to a tantric theocracy or Buddhocracy: the whole world is considered as the body of a Buddha, and the Empress who rules over this sacramentalized political community is considered to be the highest of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 630). [6]

Although no historical connection between the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the “proto-tantric” world view of Wu Zetian can be proved, striking parallels in the history of ideas and symbols exist. For example, alongside the claim to the “world throne” as *Chakravartin*, the implied control over time and space, we find a further parallel in Wu Zetian’s grab for the two heavenly orbs (the sun and moon) which is characteristic of the Time Tantra. She let a special Chinese character be created as her own name which was called “sun and moon rising up out of the emptiness” (Franke, 1961, p. 415).

But the final intentions of the two systems are not compatible. The Empress Wu Zetian is hardly likely to have striven towards the Buddhocracy of an androcentric Lamaism. In contrast, it is probable that gynocentric forces were hidden behind her Buddhist mask. For example, she officially granted her female (!) forebears bombastic titles and epithets of “Mother Earth” (Franke, 1961, p. 415). In the patriarchal culture of China this *feminist* act of state was perceived as a monstrous blasphemy. Hence, with reference to this naming, we may read in a contemporary historical critique that, “such a confusion of terms as that of Wu had not been experienced since records began” (Franke, 1961, p. 415).

The unrestrained ruler usurped for herself all the posts of the masculine monastic religion. In her hunger for power she even denied her femininity and let herself be addressed as “old Buddha lord” — an act which even today must seem evilly presumptuous for the androcentric Lamaists. At any rate it was seen this way by an exile Tibetan historian who, a thousand years after her death, portrayed the Chinese Empress as a monstrous, man-eating dragon obsessed with all depravities. “The Empress Wu,” K. Dhondup wrote as recently as 1995 in the *Tibetan Review*, “one of the most frightening and cruel characters to have visited Chinese history, awakened her sexual desire at the ripe old age of 70 and pursued it with such relentless zeal that the hunger and voracity of her sexual fulfillment into her nineties became the staple diet of street whispers and gossips, and the powerful aphrodisiacs that she medicated herself gave her youthful eyebrows ...” (*Tibetan Review*, January 1995, p. 11).

Did Wu Zetian stand in religious and symbolic competition with the cosmic ambitions of the ruler of the great Tibetan kingdom of the time? We can only speculate about that. Aside from the fact that she was involved in intense wars with the dreaded Tibetans, we know only very little about relations between the “world views” of the two countries at the time of her reign. It is, however, of

interest for our “symbolic analysis” of inner-Asian history that the Lamaist historians posthumously declared the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo, who died forty years before the reign of Wu Zetian in the year 650, a *Chakravartin*. It was Songtsen Gampo (617-650) — the reader will recall — who as the incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* nailed the mother of Tibet (*Srinmo*) to the ground with *phurbas* (ritual daggers) so as to build the sacred geography of the Land of Snows over her.

Behind the life story of Wu Zetian shines the archetypal image of *Guanyin* as the female, Chinese opponent to the male, Tibetan *Avalokiteshvara*. She herself pretended to be the incarnation of a Buddha (*Vairocana* or *Maitreya*), but since she was a female it is quite possible that she was the historical phenomenon which occasioned *Avalokiteshvara*'s above-mentioned sex change into the principal goddess of Chinese Buddhism (*Guanyin*).

At any rate Songtsen Gampo and Wu Zetian together represent the cosmic claims to power of *Avalokiteshvara* and *Guanyin*. We can regard them as the historical projections of these two archetypes. Their metapolitical competition is currently completely overlooked in the conflict between the two countries (China and Tibet), which leads to a foreshortened interpretation of the Tibetan/Chinese “discordances”. In the past the mythical dimensions of the struggle between the “Land of Snows” and the “Middle Kingdom” have never been denied by the two parties; it is just the western eye for “realpolitik” cannot perceive it.

Wu Zetian was not able to realize her Buddhist gynocentric visions. In the year 691 the *tiantang* (time tower) and the clock within it were destroyed in a “terrible” storm. Her reign was plunged into a dangerous crisis, then, as several influential priests claimed, this “act of God” showed that the gods had rejected her. But she retained sufficient power and political influence to be able to reassemble the tower. However, in 694 this new *Tiantang* was also destroyed, this time by fire. The court saw a repetition of the divine punishment in the flames and concluded that the imperial religious claim to power had failed. Wu Zetian had to relinquish her messianic title of “Buddha *Maitreya*” from then on.

#### **Ci Xi (Guanyin) and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (Avalokiteshvara)**

One thousand years later, the cosmological rivalry between China (*Guanyin*) and Tibet (*Avalokiteshvara*) was tragically replayed in the tense relation between the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Empress Dowager Ci Xi (1835-1908).

Ci Xi appeared on the political stage in the year 1860. Like her predecessor, Wu Zetian, she started out as a noble-born concubine of the Emperor, and even as a seventeen year old she had worked her way up step by step through the hierarchy of his harem and bore the sole heir to the throne. The imperial father, Emperor Xian Feng, died shortly after the birth, and the ambitious mother of the new son of heaven took over the business of governing the country until he came of age, and *de facto* beyond that. When her son died suddenly at the age of 18 she adopted her nephew, who ascended the Dragon Throne as Emperor Guangxu but likewise remained completely under her influence until his death.

Officially, Ci Xi supported Confucianism, but privately, like many members of the Manchu dynasty (1644-1911) before her, she felt herself attracted to the Lamaist doctrine. She was well-versed in the canonical writings, wrote Buddhist mystery plays herself, and had these performed by her eunuchs. Her apartments were filled with numerous Buddha statues and she was a passionate collector of old Lamaist temple flags. Her favorite sculpture was a jade statue of *Guanyin* given to her by a great lama. She saw herself as the earthly manifestation of this goddess and sometimes dressed in her robes. „Whenever I have been angry, or worried over anything,” she said to one of her ladies in waiting, „by dressing up as the Goddess of Mercy it helps me to calm myself and to play the part I represent ... by having a photograph taken of myself dressed in this costume, I shall be able to see myself as I ought to be at all times” (Seagrave, 1992., p. 413).



*Ci Xi and attendants*

Such dressings-up were in no sense purely theatrical, rather Ci Xi experienced them as sacred performances, as rituals during which the energy of the Chinese water goddess (*Guanyin*) flowed into her. She publicly professed herself to be a Buddhist incarnation and likewise affected the male title of “old Buddha lord” (*lao fo yeh*), a label which became downright vernacular. We are thus dealing with a gynocentric reversal of the androgynous *Avalokiteshvara* myth here, as in the case of the Empress Wu Zetian. *Guanyin*, the Chinese goddess of mercy, makes an exclusive claim for masculine control, and thus has, within the body of a woman, the gender of a male Buddha at her disposal. In the imperialist, patriarchal West, Ci Xi was, as the American historian Sterling Seagrave has demonstrated, the victim of a hate-filled, defamatory, sensationalist press who insinuated she was guilty of every conceivable crime. „The notion,” Seagrave writes, „that the corrupt Chinese were dominated by a reptilian woman with grotesque sexual requirements tantalized American men” (Seagrave, 1992, p. 268). Just like her predecessor, Wu Zetian, she became a terrible „dragoness”, a symbol of aggressive femininity which has dominated masculine fantasies for thousands of years: „By universal agreement the woman who occupied China’s Dragon Throne was indeed a reptile. Not a glorious Chinese dragon — serene, benevolent, good-natured, aquarian — but a cave-dwelling, fire-breathing Western dragon, whose very breath was toxic. A dragon lady” (Seagrave, 1992, p. 272).

Thus, in mythological terms the two Bodhisattvas, *Avalokiteshvara* and *Guanyin*, met anew in the figures of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Empress Dowager. From the moment Ci Xi realized her claim to power the two historical figures thus faced one another in earnest competition and a

discord which extended far beyond questions of practical politics. The chief imperial eunuch, Li Lien Ying, foresaw this conflict most clearly and warned Ci Xi several times against meeting the Tibetan god-king in person. He even referred to an acute mortal danger for both the Empress and her adoptive son, the Emperor Guangxu. The following words are from him or another courtier: “The great lama incarnations are the spawn of hell. They know no human emotion when matters concern the power of the Yellow Church” (Koch, 1960, p. 216).

But Ci Xi did not want to heed such voices of warning and peremptorily required the visit of the Hierarch from the “roof of the world”, so as to discuss with him the meanwhile internationally very complex question of Tibet. Only after a number of failed attempts and many direct and indirect threats was she able to motivate the mistrustful and cautious prince of the church to undertake the troublesome journey to China in the year 1908.

The reception for the Dalai Lama was grandiose, yet even at the start there were difficulties when it came to protocol. Neither of the parties wanted with even the most minor gesture to make it known that they were subject to the other in any way whatsoever. In the main, the Chinese maintained the upper hand. It was true that the Hierarch from Lhasa was spared having to kowtow, then after lengthy negotiations it was finally agreed that he would only have to perform those rituals of politeness which were otherwise expected of members of the imperial family — an exceptional privilege from Beijing’s point of view, but from the perspective of the god-king and potential world ruler an extremely problematic social status. Did the Thirteenth Dalai Lama revenge himself for this humiliation?

On October 30, Ci Xi and Guangxu staged a banquet in the “Hall of Shining Purple”. The Dalai Lama was already present when the Emperor cancelled at the last minute due to illness. Three days later, on the occasion of her 74<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Empress Dowager requested that the ecclesiastical dignity conduct for her the “Ceremony for the Attainment of Long Life” in the “Throne Hall of Zealous Government”. This came to pass. The Dalai Lama offered holy water and small cakes which were supposed to grant her wish for a long life. Afterwards tea was served and then Ci Xi distributed her gifts. At midday she personally formulated an edict in which she expressed her thanks to the Dalai Lama and promised to pay him an annuity of 10,000 taels. Additionally he was to be given the title of “Sincerely Obedient, through Reincarnation More Helpful, Most Excellent through Himself Existing Buddha of the Western Heavens”.

This gift and the bombastic title were a silk-clad provocation. With them Ci Xi did not at all want to honor the Dalai Lama, rather, she wished in contrast to demonstrate Tibet’s dependency upon the “Middle Kingdom”. For one thing, by being granted an income the god-king was degraded to the status of an imperial civil servant. Further, in referring to the incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* as a “Sincerely Obedient Buddha”, she left no doubt about to whom he was in future to be obedient. Just how important such “clichés” were for the participants is shown by the reaction of the American envoy present, who interpreted the granting of the title as marking the end of the Dalai Lama’s political power. The latter protested in vain against the edict and “his pride suffered terribly” (Mehra, 1976, p. 20). All of this took place in the world of political phenomena.

From a metaphysical point of view, however, as *Guanyin* Ci Xi wanted to make the powerful *Avalokiteshvara* her servant. The actual “match of the gods” took place on the afternoon of the same day (November 3) during a festivity to which the “Obedient Buddha” was once again invited by Her Imperial Highness. Ci Xi, as the female “old Buddha lord” dared to appear before the incarnation of the humiliated fire god, *Avalokiteshvara* (the Thirteenth Dalai Lama), in the costume of the water goddess *Guanyin*, surrounded by dancing Bodhisattvas and sky walkers played by the imperial eunuchs. There was singing, laughter, fooling around, boating, and enormous enjoyment. There had been similar such “divine” appearances of the Empress Dowager before, but in the face of the already politically and religiously degraded god-king from Tibet, the mocked patriarchal arch-enemy, the triumphal procession of *Guanyin* became on this occasion a spectacular and

provocative climax.

The Empress Dowager probably believed herself to be protected from any attacks upon her health by the longevity ceremony which she had cajoled from the Dalai Lama the day before. In the evening, however, she began to feel unwell, and became worse the next day. Forty-eight hours later the Dalai Lama came to the Empress and handed her a statuette of the “Buddha of Eternal Life” (a variant of *Avalokiteshvara*) with the instruction that she erect it over the graves of the emperors in China’s east. Prince Chong, although he objected strongly because of premonition, was with harsh words entrusted by Ci Xi to do so nonetheless. When he returned to the imperial palace on November 13, the female “old Buddha lord” felt herself to be in a good mood and was fit again, but the Emperor (her adoptive son) now lay dying and passed away the next day. He had been prone to illness for years, but the fact that his death was so sudden was also found most mysterious by his personal doctors and hence they did not exclude the possibility that he had been poisoned. [7]

But the visit of His Holiness brought still more bad luck for the imperial family, just as the chief eunuch, Li Lien Ying, had prophesied. On November 15, one day after the death of the regent, the Empress Dowager Ci Xi suffered a severe fainting fit, recovered for a few hours, but then saw her end drawing nigh, dictated her parting decree, corrected it with her own hand and died in full possession of her senses.

It should be obvious that the sudden deaths of the Emperor and his adoptive mother immediately following one another gave rise to wild rumors and that all manner of speculations about the role and presence of the Dalai Lama were in circulation. Naturally, the suspicion that the “god-king” from Tibet had acted magically to get his cosmic rival out of the way was rife among the courtiers, well aware of tantric ideas and practices. On the basis of the still to be described voodoo practices which have been cultivated in the Potala for centuries, such a suspicion is also definitely not to be excluded, but rather is probable. At any rate, as *Avalokiteshvara* the Hierarch likewise represents the death god *Yama*. Even the current, Fourteenth Dalai Lama sees — as we shall show — with pride a causal connection between a tantric ritual he conducted in 1976 and the death of Mao Zedong. Even if one does not believe in the efficacy of such magical actions, one must concede an amazing synchronicity in these cases. They are also, at least for the Tibetan tradition, a taken-for-granted cultural element. The Lamaist princes of the church have always been convinced that they can achieve victory over their enemies via magic rather than weapons.

What is nonetheless absolutely clear from the events in Beijing is the result, namely the triumph of *Avalokiteshvara* over *Guanyin*, the patriarch destroying the matriarch. Perhaps *Guanyin* had to lose this metaphysical battle because she had not understood the fine details of energy transfers in Tantrism? As Ci Xi she had grasped masculine power, as water goddess, fire, and then in her superhuman endeavors she allowed herself to be set alight by the flames of ambition. Perhaps she played the role of the ignited *Candali* (of the “burning water”), without knowing that it was the tantra master from the Land of Snows who had set her alight ?

But the Dalai Lama’s political plans did not work out at all. The new Regency held him in Beijing until he agreed to the Chinese demand that Tibet be recognized as a province of the Chinese Empire. England and Russia has also given the Chinese an undertaking that they would not interfere in any way in their relations with Tibet, so as to avoid a conflict with each other. Only in 1913, two years after the final disempowerment of the Manchu dynasty (1911) did it come to a Tibetan declaration of independence, and that with an extremely interesting justification. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama issued a proclamation which said literally that the Manchu throne, which had been occupied by the legal Emperor as “world ruler” (*Chakravartin*), was now vacant. For this reason the Tibetan had no further obligations to China and worldly power now automatically devolved to him, the Hierarch in the Potala — reading between the lines, this means that he himself now performs the functions of a *Chakravartin* (Klieger, 1991, p. 32).

### **Jiang Qing (Guanyin) and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (Avalokiteshvara)**

There is an amazing repetition of the problematic relation of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (*Avalokiteshvara*) to the Empress Dowager Ci Xi (*Guanyin*) in the 1960s. We refer to the relation of Jiang Qing (1913–1991), the wife of Mao Zedong, to His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. To this day the *Kundun* remains convinced that the chairman of the Communist Party of China was not completely informed about the vandalistic events in Tibet in which the “Red Guard” ravaged the monasteries of the Land of Snows, and that he probably would not have approved of them. He sees the Chinese attacks against the Lamaist clergy as primarily the destructive work of Jiang Qing. Mao’s companion did in fact drive the rebellion the young to a peak without regard for her own party or the populace, significantly worsening the chaos in the whole country. In this assessment the Tibetan god-king agrees, completely unintentionally, with the official criticism from contemporary China: “During the cultural revolution the counter-revolutionary clique around ... Jiang Qing helped themselves to the left error under concealment of their true motives, and thus deliberately kicked at the scientific theories of Marxism-Leninism as well as the thoughts of Mao Zedong. They rejected the proper religious politics which the Party pursued directly following the establishment of the PR China. Thereby they completely destroyed the religious work of the Party” — it says in a Chinese government document from 1982 (MacInnis, 1993, p. 46).

In these contemporary events, so significant for the history of the Land of Snows, the feminine also appears- in accordance with the tantric pattern and the androcentric viewpoint of the Dalai Lama — as the radical and hate-filled destructive force which (like an uncontrollable “fire woman”) wants to destroy the Lamaist monastic state. Then in the view of the Tibetans in exile the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is regarded as the beginning of the “cultural genocide” which is supposed to have threatened Tibet since this time. Not without bitterness, the current god-king thus notes that the Red Guard gave Mao’s wife the chance, “to behave like an Empress” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 267).

In the case of Jiang Qing it is nevertheless not as easy to see her as an incarnation of *Guanyin* and an opponent of *Avalokiteshvara* (the Dalai Lama) as it is with Ci Xi, who deliberately took on this divine role. With her Marxist-Leninist orientation, the Communist Jiang Qing can only unconsciously or semiconsciously have become a “vessel” of the Chinese water goddess. Publicly, she projected an atheist image — at least from a western viewpoint. But this fundamentally anti-religious attitude must — more and more historians are coming to agree — be exposed as a pretence. Maoism was — as we shall later discuss at length — a deeply religious, mythic movement, located totally within the tradition of the Chinese Empire. The Dalai Lama’s suspicion that Jiang Qing felt like an Empress is thus correct.

Incidentally, she did so quite consciously, then she openly compared herself to the Empress Wu Zetian, who — as we have shown — tried as a female Buddha to seize control of the world, and who symbolically preempted the ideas of the *Kalachakra Tantra* in the construction of a time tower. Jiang Qing also wanted to seize the time wheel of history. In accordance with the Chinese predilection for all manner of ancestral traditions, she (the Communist) had clothes made for her in the style of the old Tang ruler (Wu Zetian).

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**“Jiang Qing, who had previously taken little interest in Chinese history, became an avid student of the career of Wu [Zetian] and the careers of other great women near the throne. Her personal library swelled with books on the subject. Teams of writers from her fanatically loyal faction scurried to prepare articles showing that Empress Wu, until then generally regarded as a lustfull, power-hungry shrew, was ‘anti-Confucian’ and hence ‘progressive’. ‘Women can become emporer,’ Jiang would say to her staff members. ‘Even under communism there can be a woman ruler.’ She remarked to Mao’s doctor that England was not feudal as China because it was ‘often ruled by queens.’” (Ross, 1999, p. 273) - “Jiang Qing was deeply interested in the ideas and methods of Emperess Dowager Ci Xi. But it was impossible for her to praise Ci Xi publicly because ultimately Empress Dowager Ci Xi failed to keep the West at bay and because she was too vivid a part of the *ancien régime* that the Communist Party had gloriously buried.” (Ross, 1999, p. 27)**

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But can we conclude from Jiang Qing's preference for the imperial form of power that she is an incarnation of *Guanyin*? On the basis of her own view of things, we must probably reject the hypothesis. But if — like the Buddhist Tantrics — we accept that deities represent force fields which can be embodied in people, then such an assumption seems natural. The only question is whether it is in every case necessary that such people deliberately summon the gods or whether it is sufficient when their spirit and energy “inspire” the people in their possession to act. What counts in the final instance for a Tantric is a convincing symbolic interpretation of political events: The mythic competition between China and Tibet, between the Chinese Emperor and the Dalai Lama, between the Empress Wu Zetian and the Tibetan kings, between the Empress Dowager Ci Xi and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, all give the conflict between the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Jiang Qing a metapolitical meaning and render it comprehensible within a tantric scheme of things. The parallels between these conflicts are so striking that from an ancient viewpoint they can without further ado been seen as the expression of a primordial, divine scenario, the dispute between *Avalokiteshvara* and *Guanyin* over the world throne of the *Chakravartin*.

Before we in conclusion compare the religious-political role of the three “Empresses” with one another, we would like to once more emphasize that it is not us who see in China a matriarchal power which opposes a patriarchal Tibet. In contrast — we plan in the rest of this study to report several times upon Chinese androcentrism. What we nonetheless wish to convey is the fact that from a Lamaist/tantric viewpoint the Chinese-Tibetan conflict is perceived as a battle of the sexes. Tantrism does not just sexualize landscapes, the elements, time, and the entire universe, but likewise politics as well.

From a Chinese (Taoist, Confucian, or Communist) viewpoint this may appear completely different. But we must not overlook that two of the female rulers we have introduced were fanatic (!) Buddhists with tantric (Ci Xi), or proto-tantric (Wu Zetian) ideas. Both will thus have perceived their political relationship to Tibet through *Vajrayana* spectacles, so to speak.

Wu Zetian let herself be worshipped as an incarnated Buddha and a Buddhist messiah. Her religious-political visions display an astonishing similarity to those of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, although this was first formulated several centuries later. As *Chakravartin* she stood in mythically irreconcilable opposition to the Tibetan kings, who, albeit later (in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), were entitled to the same designation. Admittedly, one cannot speak of her as an incarnation of *Guanyin*, since the cult of the Chinese goddess first crystallized out in her time. But there are a number of indications that she was the historical individual in whom the transformation of *Avalokiteshvara* into *Guanyin* took place. She was — in her own view — the first “living Buddha” in female form, as is likewise true of *Guanyin*.

Most unmistakably, *Guanyin* is “incarnated” in Ci Xi, since the Empress Dowager openly announced herself to be an embodiment of the goddess. There are many indications that the Chinese autocrat was deeply familiar with the secrets of Lamaist Tantrism. She must therefore have seen her encounter with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as an elevated symbolic game for which in the end she had to pay for with her life.

With Jiang Qing, the statement that she was a incarnation of *Guanyin* is no longer so convincing. The fanatical Communist was no follower of Buddha like her tow predecessors and maintained an atheist image. But in her “culturally revolutionary” decisions and “proletarian” art rituals, in her contempt for all clergy, she acted and thought like a “raging goddess” who revolted with hate and violence against patriarchal traditions. Her radical nature made her into an avenging Erinnye (or an out-of-control dakini) in a tantric “match of the gods” (as the Tantrics saw history to be). There is no doubt that high-ranking Tibetan lamas interpreted the historical role of Jiang Qing thus. All three “Empresses” failed with their politics and religious system.

**Wu Zetian had to officially renounce her title as “Coming Buddha”. After her death,**



**Confucianism regained its power and began a countrywide persecution of the Buddhists.**

**Ci Xi died during the visit of her “arch-enemy” (the Thirteenth Dalai Lama). Within a few years of her death the reign of the Manchu dynasty was over (1911).**

**Jiang Qing was condemned to death by her own (Communist) party as a “left deviationist”, and then pardoned. Even before she died (in 1991), the Maoist regime of “the Red Sun” had collapsed once and for all.**

Starting once more from a tantric view of things, one can speculate as to whether all three female historical figures (who as incarnations of *Guanyin* are to be assigned to the element of “water”) had to suffer the fate of a “fire woman”, a *Candali*. Then in the end, like the *Candali*, they founder in their own flames (political passion). All three, although staunch opponents of a purely men-oriented Buddhism, deliberately grasped the religious images and methods of the patriarchally organized world. Wu Zetian and Ci Xi let themselves be addressed with a male title as “old Buddha lord”; Jiang Qing drove all feminine, erotic elements out of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and issued the young women of the Red Guard with male uniforms. In light of the three Chinese “Empresses” the thought occurs that an emancipatory women’s movement cannot survive when it seizes and utilizes the androcentric power symbols and attitudes for itself. We turn to a consideration of these thoughts in the chapter which follows.

#### **Feminism and Tantric Buddhism**

Once the majority of the high-ranking Tibetan lamas had to flee the Land of Snows from the end of the 1950s and then began to disseminate Tantric Buddhism in the West, they were willingly or unwillingly confronted with modern feminism. This encounter between the women’s movement of the twentieth century and the ancient system of the androcentric monastic culture is not without a certain delicacy. In itself, one would have to presume that here two irreconcilable enemies from way back came together and that now “the fur would fly”. But this unique relation — as we shall soon see — took on a much more complicated form. Yet first we introduce a courageous and self-confident woman from Tibetan history, who formulated a clear and unmistakable rejection of Tantric Buddhism.

#### ***Tse Pongza — the challenger of Padmasambhava***

Shortly after Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche), the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, entered the “Land of Snows”, a remarkable woman became his decisive opponent. It was no lesser figure than Tse Pongza, the principal wife of the Tibetan king, Trisong Detsen (742–803), and the mother of the heir apparent. The ruler had brought the famous *vajra* master into the country from India in order to weaken the dominant Bon religion and the nobility. With his active assistance the old priesthood (of the Bon) were banished and the cult was suppressed by drastic measures. A proportion of the Bonpo (the followers of Bon) succumbed to the pressure and converted, another division fled the country, some were decapitated and their bodies thrown into the river. Yet during the whole period of persecution Tse Pongza remained a true believer in the traditional rites and tried by all means to drive back the influence of Guru Rinpoche.

To throw a bad light on her steadfastness, later Buddhist historians accused her of acting out of unrequited love, because Padmasambhava had coldly rejected her erotic advances. Whatever the case, the queen turned against the new religion with abhorrence. “Put an end to these sorcerers” — she is supposed to have said — “... If these sort of things spread, the people’s lives will be stolen from them. This is not religion, but something bad!” (Hermanns, 1956, p. 207). The following open and pointed rejection of Tantrism from her has also been preserved:

***What one calls a kapala is a human head placed upon a stand;  
What one calls basuta are spread-out entrails,***

*What one calls a leg trumpet is a human thighbone  
What one calls the 'Blessed site of the great field'  
is a human skinlaid out.  
What one calls rakta is blood sprinkled upon sacrificial pyramids,  
What one calls a mandala are shimmering, garish colors,  
What one calls dancers are people who wear garlands of bones.  
This is not religion, but rather the evil, which India has taught Tibet.  
(Hoffmann, 1956, p. 61)*

With great prophetic foresight Tse Pongza announced: “I fear that the royal throne will be lost if we go along with the new religion” (Hoffmann, 1956, p. 58). History proved her right. The reign of the Yarlung dynasty collapsed circa one hundred years after she spoke these words (838) and was replaced by small kingdoms which were in the control of various Lamaist sects. But it was to take another 800 years before the worldly power of the Tibetan kings was combined with the spiritual power of Lamaism in the institution of the Dalai Lama, and a new form of state arose which was able to survive until the present day: the *tantric Buddhocracy*.

As far as we are aware, Tse Pongza, the courageous challenger of the Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava), has not yet been discovered as a precursor by feminism. In contrast, there is not a feminist text about Tibetan Buddhism in which great words are not devoted to the obedient servant of the guru, Yeshe Tsogyal (the contemporary of Tse Pongza and her counterpole). Such writings are also often full of praise for Padmasambhava. This is all the more surprising, because the latter — as the ethnologist and psychoanalyst, Robert A. Paul, has convincingly demonstrated and as we shall come to show in detail — must be regarded as a sexually aggressive, women and life-despising cultural hero.

#### *Western feminism*

We can distinguish four groups in the modern western debate among women about tantric/Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan history:

1. **The supporters, who have unconditionally subjected themselves to the patriarchal monastic system.**
2. **The radical feminists, who strictly reject it and unconditionally damn it.**
3. **Those women who strive for a fundamental reform so as to attain a partnership with equal rights within the Buddhist doctrine.**
4. **The feminists who have penetrated the system so as to make the power methods developed in Tantrism available for themselves and other women, that is, who are pursuing a gynocentric project.**

Outside of these groups one individual towers like a monolith and is highly revered and called as a witness by all four: Alexandra David-Neel (1868–1969). At the start of this century and under the most adventurous conditions, the courageous French woman illegally traversed the Tibetan highlands. She was recognized by the Tibetans as a female Lama and — as she herself notes — revered as an incarnation from the “Genghis Khan race”. (quoted by Bishop, 1989, p. 229).

In 1912 she stood before the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as the first western woman to do so. Despite her fascination with Tibet and her in depth knowledge of the Lamaist culture she never allowed herself to become completely captivated or bewitched. When it appeared there would be a second audience with His Holiness, the Frenchwoman, the daughter of a Calvinist father and a Catholic mother, said : “I don't like popes. I don't like the kind of Buddhist Catholicism over which he presides. Everything about him is affected, he is neither cordial nor kind” (Batchelor, 1994, p. 311).

Alexandra David-Neel had both a critical and an admiring attitude towards Lamaism and the tantric

teachings. She was also repulsed by the dirty and degrading conditions under which the people of Tibet had to live, and thus approved of the Chinese invasion of 1951. On the other hand, she was so strongly attracted to Tibetan Buddhism that she proved to be its most eager and ingenious student. We are indebted to her for the keenest insights into the shady side of the Lamaist soul. Today the author, who lived to be over 100, has become a feminist icon.

Let us now take a closer look at the four orientations of women towards Lamaism described above:

1. The supporting group first crystallized out of a reaction to the other three positions mentioned. It has solely one thing in common with a “feminist” stance, namely that it’s proponents dare to speak out in matters of religion, which was very rarely permitted of Tibetan women in earlier times. The group forms so to speak the female peace-keeping force of patriarchal Buddhism. Among its members are authors such as Anne Klein, Carole Divine, Pema Dechen Gorap, and others. Their chief argument against the claim that women are oppressed in *Vajrayana* is that the teaching is fundamentally sexually neutral. The Dharma is said to be neither masculine nor feminine, the sexes forms of appearance in an illusionary world. Karma Lekshe Tsomo, a Buddhist nun of western origin, thus reacts to modern radical feminist current with the following words of rejection: “A growing number of women and also some men feel the need to identify enlightenment with a feminine way. I reject the idea that enlightenment can be categorized into gender roles and identified with these at all. ... Why should the awareness be so intensely bound to a form as the genitals are?” (quoted by Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 11). With regard to the social situation of women in the Tibet of old, the authors of the first group proclaim, in comparison with those in other Asian countries they enjoyed the greatest freedoms.

2. The discrimination against the female sex in all historical phases of Buddhism is, however, so apparent that it has given rise to an extensive, in the meantime no longer surveyable, literature of feminist critiques, which very accurately and without holding back unmask and indict the system at all levels. For early Buddhism, it is above all Diana Y. Paul who has produced a sound and significant contribution. Her book, *Women in Buddhism*, has become a standard work in the meantime.

The sexual abuse of women in the modern Buddhist centers of the West has been made public by, among others, the American, Sandy Boucher. In many of these feminist critiques social arguments — one the one side an androcentric hierarchy, on the other the oppressed woman — are as frequent as theological and philosophical ones.

The points which the neo-shaman and Wicca Witch, Starhawk, brings against the Buddhist theory of suffering seem to us to be of such value that we would like quote them at length. Starhawk sees herself as a representative of the witch (Wicca) movement, as a feminist dakini: “Witchcraft does not maintain, like the First Truth of Buddhism, that 'all life is suffering'. On the contrary, life is a thing of wonder. The Buddha is said to have gained this insight [about suffering] after his encounter with old age, disease and wealth. In the Craft [i.e., the witch movement], old age is a natural and highly valued part of the cycle of life, the time of greatest wisdom and understanding. Disease, of course, causes misery but it is not something to be inevitably suffered: The practice of the Craft was always connected with the healing arts, with herbalism and midwifery. Nor is death fearful: It is simply the dissolution of the physical form that allows the spirit to prepare for new life. Suffering certainly exists in life — it is part of learning. But escape from the wheel of Birth and Death is not the optimal cure, any more than *hara-kiri* is the best cure of menstrual cramps.” (quoted by Gross, 1993, p. 284).

This radical feminist critique naturally also extends to *Vajrayana*: the cynical use of helpless girls in the sexual magic rituals and the exploitation of patriarchal positions of power by the tantric gurus stand at the center of the “patriarchal crimes”. But the alchemic transformation of feminine energy into a masculine one and the “tantric female sacrifice”, both of which we discussed so extensively in the first part of our study, are up until now not a point of contention. We shall soon

see why.

3. The authors Tsultrim Allione, Janice Willis, Joana Macy, and Rita M. Gross can be counted among the third “reform party”. The latter of these believes it possible that a new world-encompassing vision can develop out of the encounter between feminism and Buddhism. She thus builds upon the critical work of the radical feminists, but her goal is a “post-patriarchal Buddhism”, that is, the institutionalization of the equality of the sexes within the Buddhist doctrine (Gross, 1993, p. 221). This reform should not be imposed upon the religious system from outside, but rather be carried through in “the heart of traditional Buddhism, its monasteries and educational institutions” (Gross, 1993, p. 241). Rita Gross sees this linkage with women as a millennial project, which is supposed to continue the series of great stages in the history of Buddhism.

For this reason she needs no lesser metaphor to describe her vision than the “turning of the wheel”, in remembrance of Buddha’s first sermon in Benares where, with the pronouncement of the *Four Noble Truths*, he set the “wheel of the teaching” in motion. If, as is usual in some Buddhist schools, one sees the first turning as the “lesser vehicle” (*Hinayana*), the second as the “great vehicle” (*Mahayana*), and the third as Tantrism (*Tantrayana*), then one could, like Gross, refer to the connection of Buddhism and feminism as the “fourth vehicle” or the fourth turning of the wheel. “And with each turning,” this author says, “we will discover a progressively richer and fuller basis for reconstructing androgynous [!] Buddhism” (Gross, 1993, p. 155). Many of the fundamental Buddhist doctrines about emptiness, about the various energy bodies, about the ten-stage path to enlightenment, about emanation concepts would be retained, but could now also be followed and obeyed by women. But above all the author places weight on the ethical norms of *Mahayana* Buddhism and gives these a family-oriented twist: compassion with all beings, thus also with women and children, the linking of family structures with the *Sangha* (Buddhist community), the sacralization of the everyday, male assistance with the housework, and similar ideas which are drawn less from Buddhism as from the moderate wing of the women’s movement.

Like the Italian, Tsultrim Allione, Gross sees it as a further task of hers to seek out forgotten female figures in the history of Buddhism and to reserve a significant place for them in the historiography. She takes texts like the *Therigatha*, in which women in the *Hinayana* period already freely and very openly discussed their relationship to the teachings, to be proof of a strong female presence within the early phase of Buddhism. It is not just the lamas who are to blame for the concealment of “enlightened women”, but also above all the western researchers, who hardly bothered about the existence of female adepts.

She sees in Buddhist Tantrism a technique for overcoming the gender polarity, in the form of an equality of rights of course. One can say straight out that she has not understood the alchemic process whereby the feminine energy is sucked up during the tantric ritual. Like the male traditionalists she seizes upon the image of an androgyny (not that of a gynandry), of which she erroneously approves as a “more sexually neutral” state.

4. Fourthly, there are those women who wish to reverse the complex of sexual themes in Buddhism exclusively for their own benefit. The American authors, Lynn Andrews and, above all, Miranda Shaw, can be counted among these. In her book, *Passionate Enlightenment — Women in Tantric Buddhism*, she speaks openly of a “gynocentric” perspective on Buddhism (Shaw, 1994, p. 71). Shaw thus stands at the forefront of western women who are attempting to transform the tantric doctrine of power into a feminist intellectual edifice. With the same intentions June Campbell subtitles her highly critical book, *Traveller in Space*, as being “In Search of Female Identity in Tibetan Buddhism”. She too renders tantric practices, which she learned as the pupil of the Kagyu master, Kalu Rinpoche, over many years, useful for the women’s movement. Likewise one can detect in the German Tibetologist, Adelheid Herrmann-Pfand’s study about the dakinis the wish to detect female alternatives within the tantric scheme of things.

But of all of these Miranda Shaw has the most radical approach. We shall therefore concentrate our

attention upon her. Anybody who reads her impassioned book must gain the impression that it concerns the codification of a matriarchal religion to rival *Vajrayana*. All the feminine images which are to be found in Tantrism are reinterpreted as power symbols of the goddess. The result is a comprehensive world view governed by a feminine arch-deity. We may recall that such a matriarchal viewpoint need not differ essentially from that of an androcentric Tantric. He too sees the substance of the world as feminine and believes that the forces which guide the universe are the energies of the goddess. Only in the final instance does the *vajra* master want to have the last say.

For this reason the “tantric” feminists can without causing the lamas any concern reach into the treasure chest of *Vajrayana* and bring forth the female deities stored there, from the “Mother of all Buddhas”, the “Highest Wisdom”, the goddess “Tara”, to all conceivable kinds of terror dakinis. These formerly Buddhist female figures — the nurturing and protective mother, the helper in times of need, and the granter of initiations — apparently stand at the center of a new cult. Shaw can rightly draw attention to numerous cases in which women were inducted into the secrets of Tantrism as the dakinis of *Maha Siddhas*. It was they who equipped their male pupils with magic abilities. Their powers, the legends teach us, vastly exceeded those of the men. The tantra texts are also said to have originally been written by women. The ranks of the 84 official *Maha Siddhas* (great Tantrics) at any rate include four women, one of whom, Lakshminkara, is considered to be the founder of a teaching tradition of her own. In the more recent history of *Vajrayana* as well, “enlightened women” crop up again and again: the yoginis Niguma, Yeshe Tshogyal, Ma gcig, and others.

As evidence for the hypothesized power of women in Buddhist Tantrism the feminist side likes to parade the *Candamaharosana Tantra* with those passages in it in which the man is completely subordinate to the dictates of the woman. But the hymn to the goddess quoted in the following is still no more a sequence in the tantric inversion process, despite its depiction of the servitude of the male lover: as usual, in this case too it is not the female deity but rather the central male who is the victor in the guise of a guru. Here are the words, which the goddess addresses to her partner:

*Place my feet upon your shoulders and  
Look me up and down  
Make the fully awakened scepter (Phallus)  
Enter the opening in the center of the lotus (Vagina)  
Move a hundred, thousand, hundred thousand times  
in my three-petaled lotus  
of swollen flesh.*

(Shaw, 1994, pp. 155-156)

Shaw comments upon this erotic poem with the following revealing sentences: “The passage reflects what can be called a ‘female gaze’ or gynocentric perspective, for it describes embodiment and erotic experience from a female point of view. ... [The man] is instructed not to end the worship until the woman is fully satisfied. Only then is he allowed to pause to revive himself with food and wine — after serving the woman and letting her eat first, of course! Selfish pleasure-seeking is out of the question for him, for he must serve and please his goddess” (Shaw, 1994, p. 156). But the tantra is in fact dedicated to a wrathful and extremely violent male deity and differs from other texts solely in that the adept has set himself the difficult exercise of being completely sexually subordinate to the woman so as to then — in accordance with “law of inversion” — be able to celebrate an even greater victory over the feminine and his own passions. The woman’s role as dominatrix, which Shaw proudly cites, must also be seen as an ephemeral moment along the masculine way to enlightenment.

Yet Miranda Shaw sees things differently. For her it was women who invented and introduced Tantrism. They had always been the bearers of secrets. Thus nothing in the tantras must be changed in the coming “age of gynandry” other than that the texts once more lay the foundations for the supremacy of the woman, so that she can take up her former tantric post as teacher and grasp anew

the helm which had slipped from her hands. From now on the man has to obey once more: “Tantric texts”, Shaw says, “specify what a man has to do to appeal to, please and merit the attention of a woman, but there are no corresponding requirements that a woman must fulfill” (Shaw, 1994, p. 70). At another point we may read that, “the woman may also see her male partner as a deity in certain ritual contexts, but his divinity does not carry the same symbolic weight. She is not required to respond to his divinity with any special deference, respect, or supplication or to render him service in the same way that he is required to serve her.” (Shaw, 1994, p. 47). In place of the absolute god, the absolute goddess now strides across the cosmic stage alone and seizes the long sought scepter of world dominion.

Such feminist rapprochements with *Vajrayana* Buddhism, however, prove on closer inspection to walk right into a well-disguised tantric trap. Precisely in the moment where the modern emancipated woman believes she has freed herself from the chains of the patriarchal system, she becomes without noticing even more deeply entangled in it. This effect is caused by the tantric “law of inversion”. As we know, within the logic of this law, the yogini must be elevated to a goddess before her defeat and domination at the hands of the guru, and the *vajra* master is under no circumstances permitted to recoil if she comes at him in a furious and aggressive form. In contrast, he is — if he takes the “law of inversion” seriously — downright obliged to “set fire to” the feminine, or better, to bring it to explosion. The hysterical terror dakinis of the rituals are just one of the indicators of the “inflaming” of female emotions during the initiations. In our analysis of the feminine inner fire (the *Candali*) as a further example, we showed how the “fire woman” ignited by the yogi stands in radical confrontation to him who has set fire to her, since she is supposed to burn up all of his bodily aggregates. On the astral plane the tantra master likewise uses the *feminine* “apocalyptic fire” (*Kalagni*) to reduce the cosmos to smoking rubble. The aggressively feminine, which can find its social expression in the form of radical gynocentric feminism, is thus a part of the tantric project. Who better represents a flaming, wrathful, dangerous goddess than a feminist, who furiously turns upon the fundamental principles of the teaching (the *Dharma*)?

If we consider the feminist craving for fire as an element of power in the work of such a prominent figure as the American cultural researcher Mary Daly, then the question arises whether such radical women have not been outwitted by the Tibetan yogis into doing their work for them. Daly even demands a “pyrogenetic ecstasy” for the new women and calls out to her comrades: „Raging, Racing, we take on the task of Pyrognomic Naming of Virtues. Thus lightning, igniting the Fires of Impassioned Virtues, we sear, scorch, singe, char, burn away the demonic tidy ties that hold us down in the Domesticated State, releasing our own Daimons/Muses/Tidal Forces of creation ... Volcanic powers are unplugged, venting Earth’s Fury and ours, hurling forth Life-lust, like lava, reviving the wasteland, the World” (Daly, 1984, p. 226). Such an attitude fits perfectly with the patriarchal strategy of a fiery destruction of the world such as we find in the Buddhist *Kalachakra Tantra* and likewise in the Christian *Book of Revelations*. In their blind urge for power, the “pyromaniac” feminists also set Mother Earth, whom they claim to rescue, on fire. In so doing they carry out the apocalyptic task of the mythic Indian doomsday mare, from whose nostrils the apocalyptic fire (*Kalagni*) streams and who rises up out of the depths of the oceans. They are thus unwilling chess pieces in the cosmic game of the ADI BUDDHA to come.

Let us recall Giordano Bruno’s statements about one of the fundamental features of a manipulator: the easiest person to manipulate is the one who believes he is acting in his own egomaniac interests, whilst he is in fact the instrument of a magician and is fulfilling the wishes of the latter. This is the “trick” (*upaya*) with which the yogi dazzles the fearsome feminine, the “evil mother”, and the dark *Kali*. The more they gnash their razor-sharp teeth, the more attractive they become for the tantra master. According to the “law of inversion” they play out a necessary dramaturgical scene on the tantric stage. As magic directors, the patriarchal yogis are not only prepared for an attack by radical feminism, but have also made it an element in their own androcentric development. Perhaps this is the reason why Miranda Shaw was allowed to conduct her studies in Dharamsala with the explicit permission of the Dalai Lama.

There are internal and external reasons for this unconscious but effective self-destruction of radical feminism. Externally, we can see how in contest with patriarchy they grasp the element of fire, which is also seen as a synonym of the term “power” by the followers of the great goddess. The element of water as the feminine counterpart to masculine fire plays a completely subordinate role in Daly’s and Shaw’s visions. Thus the force under which the earth already suffers is multiplied by the fiery rage of these women. *Avalokiteshvara* and *Kalachakra* are — as we have shown — fire deities, i.e., they feed upon fire even if or even precisely because it is lit by “burning” women.

The internal reason for the feminist self-destruction lies in the unthinking adoption of tantric physiology by the women. If such women practice a form of yoga, along the lines Miranda Shaw recommends, then they make use of exactly the same techniques as the men, and presume that the same energy conditions apply in their bodies. They thus begin — as we have already indicated — to destroy their female bodies and to replace it with a masculine structure. This is in complete accord with the Buddhist doctrine. Thanks to the androcentric rituals her femininity is dissolved and she becomes in energy terms a man.

Between March 30 and April 2, 2000, representatives from groups three and four convened in Cologne, Germany at a women-only conference. Probably without giving the matter much thought, the Buddhist journal *Ursache & Wirkung* [Cause and Effect] ran its report on the meeting at which 1200 female Buddhists participated under the title of “Göttinnen Dämmerung” [Twilight of the Goddesses] — which with its reference to the *götterdämmerung* signified the extinction of the goddesses (*Ursache & Wirkung*, No. 32, 2/2000).

Now whether the yogis can actually and permanently maintain control over the women through their “tricks” (*upaya*) is another question. This is solely dependent upon their magical abilities, over which we do not wish to pass judgement here. The texts do repeatedly warn of the great danger of their experiments. There is the ever-present possibility that the “daughters of *Mara*” see through the tricky system and plunge the lamas into hell. *Srinmo*, the fettered earth mother, may free herself one day and cruelly revenge herself upon her tormentors, then she too has meanwhile become a central symbol of the gynocentric movement. Her liberation is part of the feminist agenda. „One senses a certain pride”, we can read in the work of Janet Gyatso, „in the description of the presence of the massive demoness. She reminds Tibetans of fierce and savage roots in their past. She also has much to say to the Tibetan female, notably more assertive than some of her Asian neighbours, with an independent identity, and a formidable one at that. So formidable that the masculine power structure of Tibetan myth had to go to great lengths to keep the female presence under control. [... *Srinmo*] may have been pinned and rendered motionless, but she threatens to break loose at any relaxing of vigilance or deterioration of civilization” (Janet Gyatso, 1989, p. 50, 51).

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the question of women's rights**

The relationship of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to the female sex appears sincere, positive, and uninhibited. Leaving the tantric goddesses aside, we must distinguish between three categories of women in his proximity: 1. Buddhist nuns; 2. Tibetan women in exile; 3. Western lay women.

#### ***Buddhist nuns***

At the outset of our study we described the extremely misogynist feelings Buddha Shakyamuni exhibited towards ordained female Buddhists. In a completely different mood, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama succeeded in becoming a figure of hope for all the women assembled at the first international conference of Buddhist nuns in 1987 in Bodh Gaya (India). It was the *Kundun* and not a nun (*bhiksuni*) who launched proceedings with his principal speech. It surely had a deep symbolic/tantric significance for him that he held his lecture inside the local *Kalachakra* temple. There, in the holiest of holies of the time god, the rest of the nuns’ events also took place, beginning each time with a group meditation. It is further noteworthy that it was not just representatives of Tibetan Buddhism who turned to the god-king as the advocate of their rights at the conference but also the nuns of other Buddhist schools. [8]

In his speech the *Kundun* welcomed the women's initiative. First up, he spoke of the high moral and emotional significance of the mother for human society. He then implied that according to the basic principles of *Mahayana* Buddhism, no distinction between the sexes may be made and that in *Tantrayana* the woman must be accorded great respect. The only sentence in which the *Kundun* mentioned Tantrism in his speech was the following: "It is for example considered an infringement when tantra practitioners do not bow down before women or step around them during their accustomed practice of the yoga [in their meditations]" (Lekshe Tsomo, 1991, p. 34). The Buddhist women present would hardly have known anything about real women (*karma mudras*) who participate in the sexual magic practices, about the ceremonial elevation of the woman by the lama so as to subsequently absorb her *gynergy*, or about the "tantric female sacrifice".

The Dalai Lama continued his speech by stressing the existence of several historical yoginis in the Indian and Tibetan traditions in order to prove that Buddhism has always offered women an equal chance. In conclusion he drew attention to the fact that the negative relationship to the female sex which could be found in so many Buddhist texts are solely *socially* conditioned.

When the decisive demand was then aired, that women within the Buddhist sects be initiated as line-holders so that they would as female gurus be entitled to initiate male and female pupils, the *Kundun* indicated with regret that such a *bhiksuni* tradition does not exist in Tibet. However, as it can be found in China (Hong Kong and Taiwan), it would make sense to translate the rules of those orders and to distribute them among the Tibetan nuns. In answer to the question — "Would they [then] be officially recognized as *bhiksunis* [female teachers]?" — he replied evasively — "Primarily, religious practice depends upon one's own initiative. It is a personal matter. Now whether the full ordination were officially recognized or not, a kind of social recognition would at any rate be present in the community, which is extremely important" (Lekshe Tsoma, 1991, p. 246). But he himself could not found such a tradition, since he saw himself bound to the traditional principles of his orders (the *Mulasarvastivada* school) which forbade this, but he would do his best and support a meeting of various schools in order to discuss the *bhiksuni* question. Ten years later, in Taiwan, where the "Chinese system" is widespread, there had indeed been no concrete advances but the *Kundun* once again had the most progressive statement ready: "I hope", he said to his listeners, "that all sects will discuss it [the topic] and reach consensus to thoroughly pass down this tradition. For men and women are equal and can both accept Buddha's teachings on an equal basis." (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 13).

Big words — then the reformation of the repressive tradition of nuns dictated to by men is fiercely contested within Lamaism. But even if in future the *bhiksunis* are permitted to conduct rituals and are recognized as teachers in line with the Chinese model, this in no way affects the tantric rites, which do not even exist within the Chinese system and which downright celebrate the discrimination against women as a cultic mystery.

### *Tibetan women in exile*

As far as their social and political position is concerned, much has certainly changed for the Tibetan women in exile in the last 35 years. For example, they now have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate. Nonetheless, complaints about traditional mechanisms of suppression in the families are a major topic, which thanks to the support of western campaigners for women's rights do not seldom reach a wider public. Nonetheless, here too the *Kundun* plays the reformer and we earnestly believe that he is completely serious about this, then he has had for many years been able to experience the dedication, skillfulness, and courage of many women acting for his concerns. All Tibetan women in exile are encouraged by the *Kundun* to participate in the business of state. The Tibetan Women's Association, extremely active in pursuing societal interests, was also founded with his support.

Despite these outwardly favorable conditions, progress towards emancipation has been very slow. For example, the three permanent seats reserved for women in the parliament in exile could not be



filled for a long period, simply because there were no candidates. (There are 130,000 Tibetans living in exile.) This has improved somewhat in the meantime. In 1990 the *Kundun* induced his sister, Jetsun Pema, to be the first woman to take up an important office in government. In 1996 eight women were elected to the public assembly.

Sometimes, under the influence of the western feminism, the question of women's rights flares up fiercely within the exile Tibetan community. But such eruptions can again and again be successfully cut off and brought to nothing through two arguments:

1. The question of women's rights is of secondary nature and disrupts the national front against the Chinese which must be maintained at all costs. Hence, the question of women's rights is a topic which will only become current once Tibet has been freed from the Chinese yoke.
2. The chief duty of the women in exile is to guarantee the survival of the Tibetan race (which is threatened by extinction) through the production of children.

### *The Kundun's encounters with western feminism*

In the West the Dalai Lama is constantly confronted with emancipation topics, particularly since no few female Buddhists originally hailed from the feminist camp or later — the wave has just begun — migrated to it. As in every area of modern life, here too the god-king presents an image of the open-minded man of the world, liberal and in recent times even verbally revolutionary. In 1993, as critical voices accusing several lamas of uninhibited excessive and degrading sexual behavior grew louder, he took things seriously and promised that all cases would be properly investigated. In the same year, a group of two dozen western teachers under the leadership of Jack Kornfield met and spoke with His Holiness about the meanwhile increasingly precarious topic of "sexual abuse by Tibetan gurus". The *Kundun* told the Americans to "always let the people know when things go wrong. Get it in the newspapers themselves if needs be" (Lattin, Newsgroup 17).

In 1983, at a congress in Alpach, Austria, His Holiness came under strong feminist fire and was attacked by the women present. One of the participants completely overtaxed him with the statement that, "I am very surprised that there is no woman on the stage today, and I would have been very glad to see at least one woman sitting up there, and I have the feeling that the reason why there are no female Dalai Lamas is simply that they are not offered enough room" (Kakuska, 1984, p. 61). Another participant at the same meeting abused him for the same reasons as "Dalai Lama, *His Phoniness!*" (Kakuska, 1984, p. 60).

The *Kundun* learned quickly from such confrontations, of which there were certainly a few in the early eighties. In an interview in 1996, for example, he described with a grin the goddess *Tara* as the "first feminist of Buddhism" (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996b, p. 76). In answer to the question as to why Shakyamuni was so disdainful of women, he replied: „2500 years ago when Buddha lived in India he gave preference to men. Had he lived today in Europe as a blonde male he would have perhaps given his preference to women" (*Tibetan Review*, March 1988, p. 17). His Holiness now even goes so far as to believe it possible that a future Dalai Lama could be incarnated in the form of a woman. "In theory there is nothing against it" (*Tricycle*, 1995, V (1), p. 39; see also Dalai Lama XIV, 1996b, p. 99). In 1997 he even enigmatically prophesied that he would soon appear in a female form: "The next Dalai Lama could also be a girl!" (*Tagesanzeiger*, June 27, 1995).

According to our analysis of Tantrism, we must regard such charming flattery of the female sex as at the very least a non-committal, albeit extremely lucrative embellishment. But they are more likely to be a deliberately employed manipulation, so as to draw attention away from the monstrosities of the tantric ritual system. Perhaps they are themselves a method (*upaya*) with which to appropriate the "gynergy" of the women so charmed. After all, something like that need not only take place through the sexual act. There are descriptions in the lower tantras of how the yogi can obtain the feminine "elixir" even through a smile, an erotic look or a tender touch alone.

It has struck many who have attended a teaching by the Dalai Lama that he keeps a constant and

charming eye contact with women from the audience, and is in fact discussed in the internet: “Now it is quite possible”, Richard P. Hayes writes there regarding the “flirts” of the *Kundun*, “that he was making a fully conscious effort to make eye-contact with women to build up their self-esteem and sense of self-worth out of a compassionate response to the ego crushing situations that women usually face in the world. It is equally possible that he was unconsciously seeking out women's faces because he finds them attractive. And it could well be the he finds women attractive because they trigger his Anima complex in some way” (Hayes, Newsgroup 11). Hayes is right in his final sentence when he equates the female *anima* with the tantric *maha mudra* (the “inner woman”). With his flirts the *Kundun* enchants the women and at the same time drinks their “gynergy”.

The role of women in the sacred center of Tibetan Buddhism can only change if there were to be a fundamental rejection of the tantric mysteries, but to date we have not found the slightest indication that the *Kundun* wants to terminate in any manner his androcentric tradition which at heart consists in the sacrifice of the feminine.

Nevertheless, he amazingly succeeds in awakening the impression — even among critical feminists — that he is essentially a reformer, willing and open to modern emancipatory influences. It seems the promised changes have only not come about because, as the victim of a traditional environment, his hands are tied (Gross, 1993, p. 35). This pious wishful notion proves nothing more than the fascination that the great “manipulator of erotic love” from the “roof of the world” exercise over his female public. His charming magic in the meantime enables him to enthuse and activate a whole army of women for his Tibetan politics in the most varied nations of the world.

### *The “Ganachakra” of Hollywood*

Relaxed and carefree, with a certain spiritual sex appeal, the *Kundun* enjoys all his encounters with western women. As the world press confirms, the “modest monk” from Dharamsala counts as one of the greatest charmers among the current crop of politicians and religious leaders. „Any woman”, Hicks and Chogyam write in their biography of the Dalai Lama, „who has had been fortunate enough ton be granted an audience will tell you what a charming host he is” (Hicks and Chogyam, 1990, p. 66). But Alexandra David-Neel had a completely different opinion of his previous incarnation, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, whom she described as stiff, obsessed by power, and heartless.

Just as a major film star is surrounded by enthusiastic fans, so too the Dalai Lama — at a higher level — attracts a crowd of enthusiastic male and female film stars. The proportion of world-famous actresses and singers in his “retinue” has notably increased in the meantime, and among them are to be found many of the most well-known faces: Sharon Stone, Anja Kruse, Uma Thurman, Christine Kaufmann, Sophie Marceau, Tina Turner, Doris Dörrie, Koo Stark, Goldie Hawn, Meg Ryan, Shirley MacLaine and a number of others count among them. “Even Madonna has ‘come out’ spiritually”, the *Spiegel* reflects, “The 'Material Girl' soon possibly a Tibet sister?” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). “In Hollywood the leader of Tibet is currently revered like a god”, writes *Playboy* (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 44).

But what motivates these international celebrities to join the *Kundun* and his tantric Buddhist teachings with such enthusiasm? We shall speak later about the male stars who are followers in particular, and thus in this section caste a glance at the famous women who have adopted the Buddhist faith in recent years. *Bunte*, a high-circulation German magazine, has attempted to identify the female stars’ motives for their change of faith. Alongside the usual descriptions of peace, calm, and quiet, we can also read the following:

“More and more women are turning to Buddhism, both in Europe and America. And when you look at them, you might think: hello, looks like she’s had a facelift? — No, it’s the teaching of Buddha which is making her desirable and attractive. Buddhism ... gives them peace — and peace is the basis of the harmony from which alone erotic love can grow. ... In the great religions of the world people, in particular women, are constantly under siege: from commandments, bans, taboos,

guilt complexes and mystic visions of purgatory, Judgment Day, and hell. But Buddhism does not threaten, does not punish, does not damn. ... And then — the “boss”: Buddha is no invisible, punitive, wrathful or even loving god. He is a visible person ... a person, who has found his way and is therefore constantly smiling in likenesses of him. But you don't have to pray to him — you're supposed to follow him. For women, Buddha is not the omnipotent patriarch in heaven, but rather a living guru [!]. This makes him especially appealing to women. In Buddhism women do not have to deny their sensuality”. Goldie Hawn, Hollywood sex comedian, rapturously claims, “I meditate and I feel sexy, I am sexy”. Anja Kruse, a German film star, enthuses that through Buddhism she has “gained more positive energy and erotic radiance”. The singer Laurie Andersen believes “ Buddhism is so antiauthoritarian that it is attractive”. The actress Shirley MacLaine knows that “You learn that you are also god” (all quotations are from *Bunte*, no. 46, November 6, 1997, pp. 20ff.).

The manipulation of the feminine sense of the erotic can hardly be better demonstrated than through such articles. Here, the whole misogynist history of Buddhism is transformed into its precise opposite with a few snappy words. This is only one of the deceptions, however. The other is the fact that according to such statements Buddhism holds the *dolce vita* of the “rich and the beautiful” to be an elevated “spiritual” goal. “For Christians and Moslems”, it says further in *Bunte*, “paradise beckons from the beyond. Celebrities already have it on earth — completely in accord with the beliefs of Buddhism” (*Bunte*, no. 46, November 6, 1997, p. 22). The historical Buddha's rejection of the comforts of life — an important dogma for his salvational way — is turned into its blatant opposite here: Buddhism, the stars would like us to believe, means luxury and complete independence.

This is deliberate and very successful manipulation. The western press is certainly not responsible for this alone. In that the Tibetan lamas further intensify the egocentricity and the secret wishes of the celebrity women and guarantee their fulfillment through Buddhism, they bring them under their control with a similar method (*upaya* = trick) to that with which they elevate the *karma mudras* (real women) to goddesses in their tantric rituals. Who as woman would not reach out for the offers which are promised them, according to *Bunte*, by the monks in orange robes: “Buddhism is eternal life. If one is lucky, eternal youth as well” (*Bunte*, no. 46, November 6, 1997, p. 22).

In light of the hells, the taboos, the day of judgement, the homelessness, the apocalyptic battle, the absolute obedience, the unconditional worship of the gurus, the patriarchal authority, the disdain for women and for life and much more of the like, with which the “true” doctrine is traditionally weighed down, the temptations offered by *Bunte* magazine are purely illusory, especially when we consider the harsh discipline and the strictness which must be borne in the Buddhist lamaseries. Perhaps one of the most famous Buddha legends has now been reversed: A future Buddha who wishes to attain enlightenment will no longer be tempted by the “daughters of *Mara*” (the daughters of the devil), rather, the “daughters of *Mara*” (the female stars of Hollywood) who are prepared to step out along the path to enlightenment are tempted by Buddha (the Dalai Lama). It only remains to hope that they like the historical Shakyamuni succeed in seeing through the sweet and charming “devil ghost” of the “sincere” and smiling *Kundun*.

If we adopt a tantric viewpoint then we may not rule out that all these famous women have in a most sublime manner been made a part of the worldwide *Kalachakra project* by the lamas. They form — if we may exaggerate slightly — a kind of symbolic *ganachakra* which is supposed to support the apotheosis of the Dalai Lamas (*Avalokiteshvara*) into the ADI BUDDHA. With the example of the pop singer Patty Smith we would like to demonstrate how finely and “cleverly” feminine energies can be steered by the *Kundun* in the meantime.

### *Patty Smith and the Dalai Lama*



Already unconventional to the point of radicalism in her youth, a great fan of the *poètes maudits* — Arthur Rimbaud, Federico Garcia Lorca, Jean Genet, William S. Burroughs and others, Patti Smith grew up in the *Factory* of Andy Warhol, where she learned her “antiauthoritarian” attitude to life. Anarchist and libertarian, she built a career upon a repertoire which opposed every social norm. *Outside of society is where I want to be* is the name of one of her most famous pieces. In the eighties her spouse and several of her closest friends died suddenly, which affected her deeply. In order to overcome her pain she turned to Tibetan Buddhism. She remembered having wept and prayed as a twelve-year-old girl at the fate of the Dalai Lama. But she first met the god-king in September 1995 in Berlin and was spellbound: “I learned quite a bit from that man”, she later said, “he had to be constantly putting things into balance” (*Shambhala Sun*, July 1996).

The antiauthoritarian Patti Smith had met her master, in the face of the smiling *Kundun* she would hardly have thought that she had before her a pontiff whose history, ideology and visions opposed all of her libertarian and anarchic freedoms as their exact opposite. No — like a compliant *mudra* this social rebel bowed to the omnipotent tantra master, without asking where he came from, who he is, or where he is headed. In a poem she wrote about His Holiness she shows how unconditionally she as a woman submits to the divine guru and coming ADI BUDDHA. It opens with the lines

*May I be nothing  
but the peeling of a lotus  
papering the distance  
for You underfoot*

In this poem the entire sexual magic dramaturgy of Tantrism is played out in an extremely fine way. “Peeling” can suggest “peeling off” in the sense of “stripping naked so as to make love”. The “lotus” is a well-known symbol for the “vagina”. *Underfoot* also connotes being “under (his) control”. Patti Smith, the social rebel and poet of freedom has become an obedient dakini of the Tibetan god-king.

All these beautiful singers and actresses have forgotten or never even known about the heart of their nailed down sister, *Srinmo*, which still bleeds beneath the Jokhang (the sacred center of Tibetan Buddhism). The lamentations of the Tibetan earth mother, waiting to be rescued and freed from the daggers which nail her down, do not reach the ears of the unknowing film stars. Also forgotten are all the anonymous girls who over the course of centuries have had to surrender their feminine energies to the tantric clergy, so that the latter could construct its powerful Buddhocracy. *Palden Lhamo*, who still rides through a sea of boiling blood, driven by the terrible trauma of having murdered her son, is forgotten. The apocalyptic future which threatens us all if we follow the way to *Shambhala* is forgotten. These women — as many say of them — believe they have escaped the Christian churches and the “white pontiff” but have run directly into the net (in Sanskrit: *tantra*) of the “yellow pontiff”.

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**Footnotes:**

[1] A terrible sister of the *Palden Lhamo* is the goddess *Ekajati*, the “Protector of the Mantra”. One-eyed and with only one tooth she dances on bodies covered in scratches, swinging a human corpse in one hand, and placing a human heart in her mouth with the other. As adornment she wears a chain of skulls. She is a kind of war goddess and is thus also worshipped under the name of “Magic Weapon Army”.

[2] But *Tara* like all Tibetan Buddhas and Bodhisattvas also has her terrible side. If this breaks out, she is known as the red *Kurukulla*, who dances upon corpses and holds aloft various weapons. A rosary of human bones hangs around her neck, a tiger skin covers her hips. In this form she is often surrounded by several wild dakinis. She is invoked in her cruel form to among other things destroy political opponents.

*I prostrate to She crowned by a crescent moon  
Her head ornament dazzlingly bright  
From the hair-knot Buddha Amitabha  
Constantly beams forth streams of light.*

(Dalai Lama I, 1985, p. 130)

we can read in a poem to the wrathful *Tara* by the first Dalai Lama. Above all it is the Sakyapa sect who worships her in this wrathful form. She is considered to be the specific protective patroness of this order. It is most revealing that the “flesh-eating and horny” rock demoness, *Srinmo*, who seduced *Avalokiteshvara* and with him parented the Tibetan people, is also supposed to be an embodiment of *Tara*.

[3] To see *Mary* the Mother of God as an emanation of *Tara* is not historically justified; rather, the opposite would be more likely the case since the *Tara* cult is more recent than the cult of *Mary*. It was first introduced to Tibet in the eleventh century C.E. by the scholar Atisha.

[4] How closely enmeshed Yeshe Tshogyal was with the tantric dakini cult is revealed by the scenario of her “being called to her maker”. They are no angels to bring her to paradise following her difficult life, rather “huge flocks of flesh-eating dakinis, a total of twelve different types, who each consume a part of her human body: breath takers, flesh eaters, blood drinkers, bone biters, and so forth — followed by beasts of prey” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, pp. 460, 461). Then spirits and demons appear. The queen of the night sings a song in honor of the yogini’s merits. This goes on for some nine days until she disappears as a blue light into a rainbow on the tenth day and leaves her ghostly flock to its sorrow.

[5] The names and life stories of a number of other yoginis from Tibetan history are known, and these biographies can be read in a book by the Italian, Tsultrim Allione. All these “practicing” women form so much of an exception in the total culture of Tibet that they primarily act to confirm the misogynist rule. The current intensive engagement with them is solely due to western feminism which is eagerly endeavoring to “win back” the tantric goddesses. Hence we refrain from presenting the Tibetan yoginis individually. In a detailed analysis of their lives we would at any rate have to return again and again to the tantric exploitation mechanisms which we described in the first part of our analysis.

[6] *Hua-yen* Buddhism, which propagates a Buddhocratic/totalitarian state structure, today enjoys special favor among American academics. The two religious studies scholars, Michael von Brück and Whalen Lai, see it as a none too fruitful yet exotic playing around, and in fact recommend turning instead to the “totalistic paradigm” of the Dalai Lama, which is said to be the living model of a Buddhocratic idea. This recommendation is meant in a thoroughly positive manner: “Yet *Hua-yen* is n longer a living tradition. ... This does not mean that a totalistic paradigm *could* not be repeated,” — and now one would think that the two western authors were about to pronounce a warning. But no, the opposite is the case — “but it seems more sensible to seek this in the *Tibetan Buddhist tradition*, then the Tibetan Buddhists have a living memory of a real 'Buddhocracy' and a living Dalai Lama who leads the people as religious *and* political leadership figure” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 631).

[7] In connection with the relationship between the retention of semen and tantric power obsessions which we have dealt with at length in our book, it is worth mentioning that the weak willed Guangxu suffered from constant ejaculations. Every stress, even loud noises, made him ejaculate.

[8] In Bodh Gaya the nuns who attended founded the so-called *Sakyadhita* movement (“Daughters of Buddha”). This has in the meantime led to an international organization representing women from over 26 countries.

Next Chapter:

### [3. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE TIBETAN BUDDHOCRACY](#)

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The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 3. The Foundations of the Tibetan Buddhocracy

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### 3. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE TIBETAN BUDDHOCRACY

The cult drama of Tibetan/Tantric Buddhism consists in the constant taming of the feminine, the demoness. This is heralded already in the language. The Tibetan verb *dulwa* has the following meanings: to tame, subjugate, conquer, defeat; and sometimes: to kill, destroy; but also: to cultivate the land, civilize a nation, convert to Buddhism, bring up, discipline. Violent conquest and cultural activities thus form a unit for the Lamaist. The chief task of the Tibetan monastic state consists in the taming of wilderness (wild nature), the “heathen” barbarians, and the women. In tantric terminology this corresponds with the method (*upaya*) with which the feminine wildness (*Candali* or *Srinmo*) is defeated. Parallel to this, state Buddhism and social anarchy stand opposed to one another as enemies since the beginning of Tibetan history — they conduct their primordial struggle in the political, social, philosophical, divine, and cosmic arenas. Even though they battle to the bitter end, they are nonetheless — as we shall see — dependent upon one another.

#### The history of Buddhist state thought

The fundamental attitude of the historical Buddha was anarchist. Not only did he leave his family behind, the king’s son also laid aside all offices of state. With the founding of the Buddhist community (the *sangha*), he assumed that this was a purely spiritual union which was ethically far superior to worldly institutions. The *sangha* formed the basic pattern for an ideal society, whilst the secular state was constantly receiving karmic stains through its worldly business. For this reason the relationship between the two institutions (the *sangha* and the state) was always tense and displayed many discordances which had arisen even earlier — in the Vedic period — between *kshatriyas* (warriors and kings) and *brahmins* (priests).

However, the anti-state attitude of the Buddhists changed in the third century B.C.E. with the seizure of power by of the Emperor Ashoka (who ruled between 272–236 B.C.E.) Ashoka, a ruler from the Maurya dynasty, had conquered almost the entire Indian subcontinent following several terrible campaigns. He converted to Buddhism and set great store by the distribution of the religion of Shakyamuni throughout the whole country. In accordance with the teaching, he forbade animal sacrifices and propagated the idea of vegetarianism.

His state-political status is not entirely clear among the historians, then a number of contradictory documents about this are extant. In one opinion he and the whole state submitted to the rule of the *sangha* (the monastic community) and he let his decisions be steered by them. According to another document, he himself assumed leadership of the community and became a *sangharaja* (both king and supreme commander of the monastic community). The third view is the most likely — that although he converted to the Buddhist faith he retained his political autonomy and forced the monastic community to obey his will as emperor. In favor if this view is the fact that it was he

who summoned a council and there forced through his “Buddhological” ideas.

Up until today the idea of the just “king of peace” has been celebrated in the figure of Ashoka, and it has been completely overlooked that he confronted the *sangha* with the problem of state power. The Buddhist monastic community was originally completely non-coercive. Following its connection with the state, the principle of nonviolence necessarily came into conflict with the power political requirements this brought with it. For example, the historical Buddha is said to have had such an aversion to the death penalty that he offered himself as a substitute in order to save the life of a criminal. Ashoka, however, who proclaimed an edict against the slaughter of animals, did not renounce the execution of criminals by the state.

Whether during his lifetime or first due to later interpretations — the Emperor was (at any rate after his demise) declared to be a *Chakravartin* (world ruler) who held the “golden wheel” of the *Dharma* (the teaching) in his hands. He was the first historical Bodhisattva king, that is, a Bodhisattva incarnated in the figure of a worldly ruler. In him, worldly and spiritual power were united in one person. Interestingly he established his spiritual world domination via a kind of “cosmic sacrifice”. Legend tells how the Emperor came into possession of the original Buddha relic and ordered this to be divided into 84,000 pieces and scattered throughout the entire universe. Wherever a particle of this relic landed, his dominion spread, that is, everywhere, since at that time in India 84,000 was a symbolic number for the cosmic whole. [1] This pious account of his universal sovereignty rendered him completely independent of the Buddhist *sangha*.

In the *Mahayana Golden Shine Sutra*, a few centuries after Ashoka, the coercive power of the state is affirmed and presented as a doctrine of the historical Buddha. With this the anarchic period of the *Sangha* was finally ended. By 200 C.E. at the latest, under the influence of Greco-Roman and Iranian ideas, the Buddhist concept of kingship had developed into its fully autocratic form which is referred to by historians as “Caesaropapism”. An example of this is provided by King Kanishka from the Kushana dynasty (2nd century C.E.) In him, the attributes of a worldly king and those of a Buddha were completely fused with one another. Even the “coming” Buddha, *Maitreya*, and the reigning king formed a unit. The ruler had become a savior. He was a *contemporary* Bodhisattva and at the same time the appearance of the *coming* Buddhist messiah who had descended from heaven already in this life so as to impart his message of salvation to the people. (Kanishka cultivated a religious syncretism and also used other systems to apotheosize his person and reign.)

### **The Dalai Lama and the Buddhist state are one**

Tibet first became a centralized ecclesiastical state with the Dalai Lama as its head in the year 1642. The priest-king had the self-appointed right to exercise absolute power. He was *de jure* not just lord over his human subjects but likewise over the spirits and all other beings which lived “above and beneath the world”. One of the first western visitors to the country, the Briton S. Turner, described the institution as follows: “A sovereign Lama, immaculate, immortal, omnipresent and omniscient is placed at the summit of their fabric. [!] He is esteemed the vice regent of the only God, the mediator between mortals and the Supreme ... He is also the center of all civil government, which derives from his authority all influence and power” (quoted by Bishop, 1993, p. 93).

Turner, who knew nothing about the secrets of Tantrism, saw the Dalai Lama as a kind of bridge (*pontifex maximus*) between transcendence and reality. He was for this author the governor for and the image of Buddha, his majesty appeared as the pale earthly reflection of the deity. This is, however, too modest! The Dalai Lama does not *represent* Buddha on earth, nor is he an intermediary, nor a reflection — he is the complete deity himself. He is a *Kundun*, that is, he is the presence of Buddha, he is a “living Buddha”. For this reason his power and his compassion are believed to be unbounded. He is world king and Bodhisattva rolled into one.

The Dalai Lama unites spiritual and worldly power in one person — a dream which remained

unfulfilled for the popes and emperors of the European Middle Ages. [2] According to doctrine, the *Kundun* is the visible form (*nirmanakaya*) of this comprehensive divine power in time; he exists as the earthly appearance of the time god, *Kalachakra*; he is the supreme “lord of the wheel of time”. For this reason he was handed a golden wheel as a sign of his omnipotence at his enthronement. He is prayed to as the “ruler of rulers”, the “victor” and the “conqueror”. Even if he himself does not wield the sword, he can still order others to do so, and oblige them to go to war for him.

There was just as little distinction between power-political and religious organization in the Tibet of old as in the Egypt of the Pharaohs. As such, every action of the Tibetan god-king, regardless of how mundane it may appear to us, was (and is) religiously grounded and holy. The monastic state he governs was (and is) considered to be the earthly reflection of a cosmic realm. In essence there was (and is) no difference between the supernatural order and the social order. The two vary only in their degree of perfection, then the *ordo universalis* (universal order) which is apparent in this world is marred only by flaws due to the imperfection of humanity (and not due to any imperfection of the *Kundun*). Anarchy, disorder, revolt, famine, disobedience, defeat, expulsion are a matter of the deficiencies of the age, but never incorrect conduct by the god-king. He is without blemish and only present in this world in order to instruct people in the *Dharma* (the Buddhist doctrine).

### *The state as the microcosmic body of the Dalai Lama*

Ashoka, the first Buddhist Emperor, was considered to be the incarnation of a Bodhisattva and probably as that of a *Chakravartin* (world ruler). His role as the highest bearer of state office was, however, not of a tantric nature. Fundamentally, he acted like every sacred king before him. His decisions, his edicts, and his deeds were considered holy — but he did not govern via control of his inner microcosmic energies. The pre-tantric *Chakravartin* (e.g., Ashoka) controlled the cosmos, but the tantric world ruler is (e.g., the Dalai Lama) the cosmos itself. This equation of macrocosmic procedures and microcosmic events within the mystic body of the tantric hierarch even includes his people. The tantra master upon the Lion Throne does not just represent his people, rather — to be precise — he *is* them. The oft-quoted phrase “I am the state” is literally true of him.

He controls it — as we have described above- through his inner breath, through the movement of the ten winds (*dasakaro vasi*). His two chief metapolitical activities consist of the rite and the bodily control with which he secretly steers the cosmos and his kingdom. The political, the cultic, and his mystic physiology are inseparable for him. In his energy body he plays out the events virtually, as in a computer, in order to then allow them to become reality in the world of appearances.

The tantric Buddhocracy is thus an interwoven total of cosmological, religious, territorial, administrative, economic, and physiological events. Taking the doctrine literally, we must thus assume that Tibet, with all its regions, mountains, valleys, rivers, towns, villages, with its monasteries, civil servants, aristocrats, traders, farmers, and herdsmen, with all its plants and animals can be found anew in the energy body of the Dalai Lama. Such for us seemingly fantastic concepts are not specifically Tibetan. We can also find them in ancient Egypt, China, India, even in medieval Europe up until the Enlightenment. Thus, when the *Kundun* says in 1996 in an interview that “my proposal treats Tibet as something like one human body. The whole Tibet is one body”, this is not just intended allegorically and geopolitically, but also tantrically (*Shambhala Sun*, archives, November, 1996). Strictly interpreted, the statement also means: Tibet and my energy body are identical with one another.

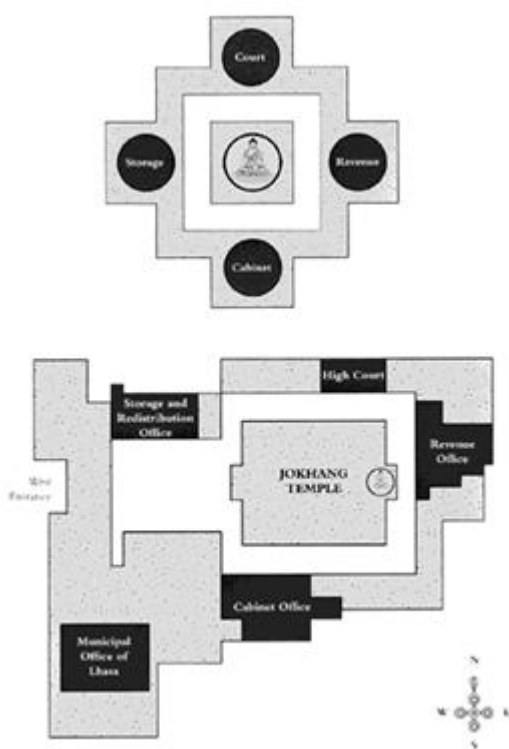
Tibet on the other hand is a microcosmic likeness of the sum of humanity, at least that is how the Tibetan National Assembly sees the matter in a letter from the year 1946. We can read there that “there are many great nations on this earth who have achieved unprecedented wealth and might, but there is only one nation which is dedicated to the well-being of humanity and that is the religious land of Tibet, which cherishes a joint spiritual and temporal system” (Newsgroup 12).



### *The mandala as the organizational form of the Tibetan state*

There is something specific in the state structure of the historical Buddhocracy which distinguishes it from the purely pyramidal constitution of Near Eastern theocracies. Alone because of the many schools and sub-schools of Tibetan Buddhism we cannot speak of a classic leadership pyramid at the pinnacle of which the Dalai Lama stands. In order to describe in general terms the Buddhocratic form of state, S. J. Tambiah introduced a term which has in the meantime become widespread in the relevant literature. He calls it “galactic politics” or “mandala politics” (Tambiah, 1976, pp. 112 ff.) What can be understood by this?

As in a solar system, the chief monasteries of the Land of Snows orbit like planets around the highest incarnation of Tibet, the god-king and world ruler from Lhasa, and form with him a living mandala. This planetary principle is repeated in the organizational form of the chief monasteries, in the center of which a tulku likewise rules as a “little” *Chakravartin*. Here, each arch-abbot is the sun and father about whom rotate the so-called “child monasteries”, that is, the monastic communities subordinate to him. Under certain circumstances these can form a similar pattern with even smaller units.



*Mandala-pattern of the tibetan government (above) and the corresponding government offices around the Jokhang-Temple (below)*

A collection of many “solar systems” thus arises which together form a “galaxy”. Although the Dalai Lama represents an overarching symbolic field, the individual monasteries still have a wide ranging autonomy within their own planet. As a consequence, every monastery, every temple, even every Tulku forms a miniature model of the whole state. In this idealist conception they are all “little” copies of the universal *Chakravartin* (wheel turner) and must also behave ideal-typically like him. All the thoughts and deeds of the world ruler must be repeated by them and ideally there should be no differences between him and them. Then all the planetary units within the galactic model are in harmony with one another. In the light of this idea, the frequent and substantial disagreements within the Tibetan clergy appear all the more paradox.

Lhasa, Tibet’s capital, forms the cosmic center of this galaxy. Two magnificent city buildings symbolize the spiritual and worldly control of the Dalai Lama: The *cathedral* (the Jokhang temple) his priesthood; the *palace* (the Potala) his kingship. The Fifth Dalai Lama ordered the construction of his residence on the “Red Mountain” (*Potala*) from where the Tibetan rulers of the Yarlung dynasty once reigned, but he did not live to see its magnificent completion. Instead of laying a foundation stone, the god-king had a stake driven into the soil of the “red mountain” and summoned the wrathful deities, probably to demonstrate here too his power over the earth mother, *Srinmo*, whose nailed down heart beats beneath the Jokhang.

Significantly, a sanctuary in southern India dedicated to *Avalokiteshvara* was known in earlier times as a “Potala”. His Tibetan residence, which offers a view over all of Lhasa, was a suitably high place for the “Lord who looks down from above” (as the name of the Bodhisattva can be translated). The Potala was also known as the “residence of the gods”.

Tibet is also portrayed in the geometric form of a Mandala in the religious political literature.

„While it demonstrates hierarchy, power relations, and legal levels”, writes Rebecca Redwood French, „the Mandala ceaselessly pulsates with movement up, down and between its different parts” (Redwood French, 1995, p. 179).

### *The mchod-yon relationship to other countries*

What form does the relationship of a *Chakravartin* from the roof of the world to the rulers of other nations take in the Tibetan way of looking at things? The Dalai Lama was (and is) — according to doctrine — the highest (spiritual) instance for all the peoples of the globe. Their relationship to him are traditionally regulated by what is known as the *mchod-yon* formula.

With an appeal to the historical Buddha, the Tibetans interpret the *mchod-yon* relation as follows:

1. The sacred monastic community (the *sangha*) is far superior to secular ruler.
2. The secular ruler (the king) has the task, indeed the duty, to afford the *sangha* military protection and keep it alive with generous “alms”. In the *mchod-yon* relation “priest” and “patron” thus stood (and stand) opposed, in that the patron was obliged to fulfill all the worldly needs of the clergy.

After Buddhism became more and more closely linked with the idea of the state following the Ashoka period, and the “high priests” themselves became “patrons” (secular rulers), the *mchod-yon* relation was applied to neighboring countries. That is, states which were not yet really subject to the rule of the priest-king (e.g., of the Dalai Lama) had to grant him military protection and “alms”. This delicate relation between the Lamaist Buddhocracy and its neighboring states still plays a significant role in Chinese-Tibetan politics today, since each of the parties interprets them differently and thus also derives conflicting rights from it.

The Chinese side has for centuries been of the opinion that the Buddhist church (and the Dalai Lama) must indeed be paid for their religious activities with “alms”, but only has limited rights in worldly matters. The Chinese (especially the communists) thus impose a clear division between state and church and in this point are largely in accord with western conceptions, or they with justification appeal to the traditional Buddhist separation of *sangha* (the monastic community) and politics (Klieger, 1991, p. 24). In contrast, the Tibetans do not just lay claim to complete political authority, they are also convinced that because of the *mchod-yon* relation the Chinese are downright obliged to support them with “alms” and protect them with “weapons”. Even if such a claim is not articulated in the current political situation it nonetheless remains an essential characteristic of Tibetan Buddhocracy. [3]

Christiaan Klieger has convincingly demonstrated that these days the entire exile Tibetan economy functions according to the traditional *mchod-yon* (priest-patron) principle described above, that is, the community with the monks at its head is constantly supported by non-Tibetan institutions and individuals from all over the world with cash, unpaid work, and gifts. The Tibetan economic system has thus remained “medieval” in emigration as well.

Whether the considerable gifts to the Tibetans in exile are originally intended for religious or humanitarian projects no longer plays much of a role in their subsequent allocation. „Funds generated in the West as part of the religious system of donations,” writes Klieger, „are consequently transformed into political support for the Tibetan state” (Klieger, 1991, p. 21). The formula, which proceeds from the connection between spiritual and secular power, is accordingly as follows: whoever supports the politics of the exile Tibetans also patronizes Buddhism as such or, vice versa, whoever wants to foster Buddhism must support Tibetan politics.

### **The feigned belief of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in western democracy**

However authoritarian and undemocratic the guiding principles of the Buddhist state are, these days (and in total contrast to this) the Fourteenth Dalai Lama exclusively professes a belief in a

western democratic model. Now, is the *Kundun's* conception of democracy a matter of an seriously intended reform of the old feudal Tibetan relations, a not yet realized long-term political goal, or simply a tactical ploy?

Admittedly, since 1961 a kind of parliament exists among the Tibetans in exile in which the representatives of the various provinces and the four religious schools hold seats as members. But the “god-king” still remains the highest government official. According to the constitution, he cannot be stripped of his authority as head of state and as the highest *political* instance. There has never, Vice President Thubten Lungring has said, been a majority decision against the Dalai Lama. The latter is said to have with a smile answered a western journalist who asked him whether it was even possible that resolutions could be passed against him, “No, not possible” (Newsgroup 13).

Whenever he is asked about his unshakable office, the *Kundun* always repeats that this absolutist position of power was thrust upon him against his express wishes. The people emphatically demanded of him that he retain his role as regent for life. With regard to the charismatic power of integration he is able to exercise, this was certainly a sensible political decision. But this means that the exile Tibetan state system still remains Buddhocratic at heart. Nonetheless, this does not prevent the *Kundun* from presenting the constitution finally passed in 1963 as being “based upon the principles of modern democracy”, nor from constantly demanding the separation of church and state (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993b, p. 25; 1996b, p. 30).

In the course of its 35-year existence the exile Tibetan “parliament” has proved itself to be purely cosmetic. It was barely capable of functioning and played a completely subordinate role in the political decision-making process. The “first ever democratic political party in the history of Tibet” as it terms itself in its political platform, the *National Democratic Party of Tibet* (NDPT), first saw the light of day in the mid nineties. Up until at least 1996 the “people” were completely uninterested in the democratic rules of the game (*Tibetan Review*, February 1990, p. 15). Politics was at best conducted by various pressure groups — the divisive regional representations, the militant *Tibetan Youth Association* and the senior abbots of the four chief sects. But ultimately decisions (still) lay in the hands of His Holiness, several executive bodies, and the members of three families, of whom the most powerful is that of the *Kundun*, the so-called “Yabshi clan”.

The same is true of the freedom of the press and freedom of speech in general. “The historian Wangpo Tethong,” exiled Tibetan opponents of the Dalai Lama wrote in 1998, “whose noble family has constantly occupied several posts in the government in exile, equates democratization in exile with the ‘propagation of an ideology of national unity’ and ‘religious and political unification’. This contradicts the western conception of democracy” (Press release of the Dorje Shugden International Coalition, February 7, 1998; translation). The sole (!) independent newspaper in Dharamsala, with the name of *Democracy* (in Tibetan: *Mangtso*), was forced to cease publication under pressure from members of the government in exile. In the *Tibet News*, an article by Jamyang Norbu on the state of freedom of the press is said to have appeared. The author summarizes his analysis as follows: “Not only is there no encouragement or support for a free Tibetan press, rather there is almost an extinguishing of the freedom of opinion in the Tibetan exile community” (Press release of the Dorje Shugden International Coalition, February, 7, 1998).

The Tibetan parliament in exile and the democracy of the exiled Tibetans is a farce. Even Thubten J. Norbu, one of the Dalai Lama’s brothers, is convinced of this. When in the early nineties he clashed fiercely with Gyalo Thondop, another brother of the *Kundun*, over the question of foreign affairs, the business of government was paralyzed due to this dispute between the brothers (*Tibetan Review*, September 1992, p. 7). The 11<sup>th</sup> parliamentary assembly (1991), for instance, could not reach consensus over the election of a full cabinet. The parliamentary members therefore requested that His Holiness make the decision. The result was that of seven ministers, two belonged to the “Yabshi clan”, that is, to the *Kundun's* own family: Gyalo Thondop was appointed chairman of the council of ministers and was also responsible for the “security” department. The Dalai Lama’s

sister, Jetsun Pema, was entrusted with the ministry of education.

In future, everything is supposed to change. Nepotism, corruption, undemocratic decisions, suppression of the freedom of the press are no longer supposed to exist in the new Tibet. On June 15, 1988, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama announced to the European Parliament in Strasbourg that upon his return a constitutional assembly would be formed in the Land of Snows, headed by a president who would possess the same authority as he himself now enjoyed. Following this there would be democratic elections. A separation of church and state along western lines would be guaranteed from the outset in Tibet. There would also be a voluntary relinquishment of some political authority vis-à-vis the Chinese. He, the Dalai Lama, would recognize the diplomatic and military supremacy of China and be content with just the „fields of religion, commerce, education, culture, tourism, science, sports, and other non-political activities” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 234).

But despite such spoken professions, the national symbols tell another tale: With pride, every Tibetan in exile explains that the two snow lions on the national flag signify the union of spiritual and worldly power. The Tibetan flag is thus a visible demonstration of the Tibetan Buddhocracy. Incidentally, a Chinese *yin yang* symbol can be found in the middle. This can hardly be a reference to a royal couple, and rather, is clearly a symbol of the androgyny of the Dalai Lama as the highest tantric ruler of the Land of Snows. All the other heraldic features of the flag (the colors, the flaming jewels, the twelve rays, etc.), which is paraded as the coat of arm of a democratic, national Tibet, are drawn from the royalist repertoire of the Lamaist priesthood.

The *Strasbourg Declaration* of 1989 and the renunciation of autonomy it contains are sharply criticized by the *Tibetan Youth Congress* (TYC), the *European Tibetan Youth Association*, and the Dalai Lama’s elder brother, Thubten Norbu. When the head of the *Tibetan Youth Congress* came under strong attack because he did not approve of the political decisions of the *Kundun*, he defended himself by pointing out that the Dalai Lama himself had called upon him to pursue this hard-line stance — probably so as to have the possibility of distancing himself from his *Strasbourg Declaration* (Goldstein, 1997, p. 139).

This political double game is currently intensifying. Whilst the god-king continues to extend his contacts with Beijing, the TYC’s behavior is increasingly vocally radical. We have become too nonviolent, too passive, declared the president of the organization, Tseten Norbu, in 1998 (Reuters, Beijing, June 22, 1998). In the countermove, since Clinton’s visit to China (in July 1998) the Dalai Lama has been offering himself to the Chinese as a peacemaker to be employed against his own people as the sole bulwark against a dangerous Tibetan radicalism: “The resentment in Tibet against the Chinese is very strong. But there is one [person] who can influence and represent the Tibetan people [he means himself here]. If he no longer existed the problem could be radicalized” he threatened the Chinese leadership, of whom it has been said that they want to wait out his death in exile (*Time*, July 13, 1998, p. 26).

Whatever happens to the Tibetan people in the future, the Dalai Lama remains a powerful ancient archetype in his double function as political and spiritual leader. In the moment in which he has to surrender this dual role, the idea, anchored in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, of a “world king” first loses its visible secular part, then the *Chakravartin* is worldly and spiritual ruler at once. In this case the Dalai Lama would exercise a purely spiritual office, which more or less corresponds to that of a Catholic Pope.

How the *Kundun* will in the coming years manage the complicated balancing act between religious community and nationalism, democracy and Buddhocracy, world dominion and parliamentary government, priesthood and kingship, is a completely open question. He will at any rate — as Tibetan history and his previous incarnations have taught us — *tactically* orient himself to the particular political constellations of power.

### *The democratic faction*

Within the Tibetan community there are a few exiled Tibetans brought up in western cultures who have carefully begun to examine the ostensible democracy of Dharamsala. In a letter to the *Tibetan Review* for example, one Lobsang Tsering wrote: „The Tibetan society in its 33-years of exile has witnessed many scandals and turmoils. But do the people know all the details about these events? ... The latest scandal has been the 'Yabshi vs. Yabshi' affair concerning the two older brothers of the Dalai Lama. [*Yabshi* is the family name of the Dalai Lama's relatives.] The rumours keep on rolling and spreading like wildfire. Many still are not sure exactly what the affair is all about. Who are to blame for this lack of information? Up till now, anything controversial has been kept as a state secret by our government. It is true that not every government policy should be conducted in the open. However, in our case, nothing is done in the open” (*Tibetan Review*, September 1992, p. 22). [4]

We should also take seriously the liberal democratic intentions of younger Tibetans in the homeland. For instance, the so-called Drepung Manifesto, which appeared in 1988 in Lhasa, makes a refreshingly critical impression, although formulated by monks: „Having completely eradicated the practices of the old society with all its faults,” it says there. „the future Tibet will not resemble our former condition and be a restoration of serfdom or be like the so-called ‘old system’ of rule a succession of feudal masters or monastic estates.” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 127). Whether such statements are really intended seriously is something about which one can only speculate. The democratic reality among the Tibetans in exile gives rise to some doubts about this.

It is likewise a fact that the protest movement in Tibet, continually expanding since the eighties, draws together everyone who is dissatisfied in some way, from upright democrats to the dark monastic ritualists for whom any means is acceptable in the quest to restore through magic the power of the Dalai Lama on the “roof of the world”. We shall return to discuss several examples of this in our chapter *War and Peace*. Western tourists who are far more interested in the occult and mystic currents of the country than in the establishment of a “western” democracy, encourage such atavisms as best they can.

For the Tibetan within and outside of their country, the situation is extremely complicated. They are confronted daily with professions of faith in western democracy on the one hand and a Buddhocratic, archaic reality on the other and are supposed to (the *Kundun* imagines) decide in favor of two social systems at once which are not compatible with one another. In connection with the still to be described *Shugden* affair this contradiction has become highly visible and self-evident.

Additionally, the Tibetans are only now in the process of establishing themselves as a nation, a self-concept which did not exist at all before — at least since the country has been under clerical control. We have to refer to the Tibet of the past as a *cultural community* and not as a *nation*. It was precisely Lamaism and the predecessors of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who now sets himself at the forefront of the Tibetan *Nation*, who prevented the development of a real feeling of national identity among the populace. The “yellow church” advocated their Buddhist teachings, invoked their deities and pursued their economic interests — yet not those of the Tibetans as a united people. For this reason the clergy also never had the slightest qualms about allying themselves with the Mongolians or the Chinese against the inhabitants of the Land of Snows.

### **The “Great Fifth”: Absolute Sun King of Tibet**

Historians are unanimous in maintaining that the Tibetan state was the ingenious construction of a single individual. The golden age of Lamaism begins with Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) and also ends with him. The saying of the famous historian, Thomas Carlyle, that the history of the world is nothing other than the biography of great men may be especially true of him. None of his successors have ever achieved the same power and visionary force as the “Great Fifth”. They are in fact just the weak transmission of a very special energy which was gathered together in his person in the seventeenth century. The spiritual and material foundations which he laid have shaped the image of Tibet in both East and West up until the

present day. But his *practical political* power, limited firstly by various Buddhist school and then also by the Mongolians and Chinese, was not at all so huge. Rather, he achieved his transtemporal authority through the adroit accumulation of all *spiritual* resources and energies, which he put to service with an admirable lack of inhibition and an unbounded inventiveness. With cunning and with violence, kindness and brutality, with an enthusiasm for ostentatious magnificence, and with magic he organized all the significant religious forms of expression of his country about himself as the shining center. Unscrupulous and flexible, domineering and adroit, intolerant and diplomatic, he carried through his goals. He was statesman, priest, historian, grammarian, poet, painter, architect, lover, prophet, and black magician in one — and all of this together in an outstanding and extremely effective manner.

The *grand siècle* of the “Great Fifth” shone out at the same period in time as that of Louis XIV (1638–1715), the French sun king, and the two monarchs have often been compared to one another. They are united in their iron will to centralize, their fascination for courtly ritual, their constant exchange with the myths, and much more besides. The Fifth Dalai Lama and Louis XIV thought and acted as expressions of the same temporal current and in this lay the secret of their success, which far exceeded their practical political victories. If it was the concept of the seventeenth century to concentrate the state in a single person, then for both potentates the saying rings true: *l'état c'est moi* (“I am the state”). Both lived from the same divine energy, the all-powerful sun. The “king” from Lhasa also saw himself as a solar “fire god”, as the lord of his era, an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*. The year of his birth (1617) is assigned to the “fire serpent” in the Tibetan calendar. Was this perhaps a cosmic indicator that he would become a master of high tantric practices, who governed his empire with the help of the *kundalini* (“fire serpent”)?

In the numerous visions of the potentate in which the most important gods and goddesses of *Vajrayana* appeared before him, tantric unions constantly took place. For him, the transformation of sexuality into spiritual and worldly power was an outright element of his political program. Texts which he himself wrote describe how he, absorbed by one such exercise by a divine couple, slipped into the vagina of his wisdom consort, bathed there “in the red and white *bodhicitta*” and afterwards returned to his old body blissful and regenerated (Karmay, 1988, p. 49).

Contemporary documents revere him as the “sun and moon” in one person. (Yumiko, 1993, p. 41). He had mastered a great number of tantric techniques and even practiced his ritual self-destruction (*chod*) without batting an eyelid. Once he saw how a gigantic scorpion penetrated into his body and devoured all his internal organs. Then the creature burst into flames which consumed the remainder of his body (Karmay, 1988, p. 52). He exhibited an especial predilection for the most varied terror deities who supported him in executing his power politics.

The Fifth Dalai Lama was obsessed by the deliriums of magic. He saw all of his political and cultural successes as the result of his own invocations. For him, armies were only the executive organs of prior tantric rituals. Everywhere, he — the god upon the Lion Throne — perceived gods and demons to be at work, with whom he formed alliances or against whom he took to the field. Every step that he took was prepared for by prophecies and oracles. The visions in which *Avalokiteshvara* appeared to him were frequent, and just as frequently he identified with the “fire god”. With a grand gesture he dissolved the whole world into energy fields which he attempted to control magically — and he in fact succeeded. The Asia of the time took him seriously and allowed him to impose his system. He reigned as *Chakravartin*, as world ruler, and as the *Adi Buddha* on earth. Chinese Emperors and Mongolian Khans feared him for his metaphysical power.

One might think that his religious emotionalism was only a pretext, to be employed as a means of establishing real power. His sometimes sarcastic, but always sophisticated manner may suggest this. It is, however, highly unlikely, then the divine statesman had his occult and liturgical secrets written down, and it is clear from these records that his first priority was the control of the symbolic world and the tantric rituals and that he derived his political decisions from these.

His *Secret Biography* and the *Golden Manuscript* which he wrote (Karmay, 1988) were up until most recently kept locked away and were only accessible to a handful of superiors from the Gelugpa order. These two documents — which may now be viewed— also reveal the author to be a grand sorcerer who evaluated anything and everything as the expression of divine plans and whose conceptions of power are no longer to be interpreted as secular. There is no doubting that the “Great Fifth” thought and acted as a deity completely consciously. This sort of thing is said to be frequent among kings, but the lord from the roof of the world also possessed the energy and the power of conviction to transform his tantric visions into a reality which still persists today.

### **The predecessors of the Fifth Dalai Lama**

The organizational and disciplinary strength of the Gelugpa (“Yellow Hat”) order formed the Fifth Dalai Lama’s power base, upon which he could build his system. Shortly after the death of Tsongkhapa (the founder of the “Yellow Hats”) his successors adopted the doctrine of incarnation from the Kagyupa sect. Hence the chain of incarnated forebears of the “Great Fifth” was fixed from the start. It includes four incarnations from the ranks of the Gelugpas, of whom only the last two bore the title of *Dalai Lama*, the first pair were accorded the rank posthumously.

The chain begins with Gyalwa Gendun Drub (1391–1474) , a pupil of Tsongkhapa and later the First Dalai Lama. He was an outstanding expert on, and higher initiand into, the *Kalachakra Tantra* and composed several commentaries upon it which are still read today. His writings on this topic, even if they never attain the methodical precision and canonical knowledge of his teacher, Tsongkhapa, show that he practiced the tantra and sought bisexuality in “the form of *Kalachakra* and his consort” (Dalai Lama I, 1985, p. 181).

His androgynous longings are especially clear in the hymns with which he invoked the goddess *Tara* so as to be able to assume her feminine form: “Suddenly I appear as the holy Arya Tara, whose mind is beyond samsara” he writes. “My body is green in color and my face reflects a warmly serene smile ... attained to immortality, my appearance is that of a sixteen-year-old-girl” (Dalai Lama I, 1985, pp. 135, 138).

This appearance as the goddess of mercy did not, however, restrain him from following a pretty hard line in the construction of the legal system. He determined that prisons be constructed in all monasteries, where some of his opponents lost their lives under inhuman circumstances. The penal system which he codified was intransigent and cruel. Days without food and whippings were a part of this, just like the cutting off of the right hand in cases of theft or the death penalty for breach of the vows of celibacy, insofar as this took place outside of the tantric rituals. His severity and rigor nonetheless earned him the sympathy of the people, who saw him as the arm of a just and angry god who brought order to the completely deteriorated world of the monastic clergy.

The title *Dalai Lama* first appears during the encounter between the arch-abbot of Sera, *Sonam Gyatso* (1543–1588) and the Mongolian Khan, Altan. The prince of the church (later the Third Dalai Lama) undertook the strenuous journey to the north and visited the Mongols in the year 1578 at their invitation. He spent a number of days at the court of Altan Khan, initiated him into the teachings of the Buddha and successfully demonstrated his spiritual power through all manner of sensational miracles. One day the prince of the steppes appeared in a white robe which was supposed to symbolize love, and confessed with much feeling to the Buddhist faith. He promised to transform the “blood sea” into a “sea of milk” by changing the Mongolian laws. Sonam Gyatso replied, “You are the thousand-golden-wheel-turning *Chakravartin* or world ruler” (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 89).

It can be clearly gathered from this apotheosis that the monk conceded secular authority to the successor of Genghis Khan. But as an incarnated Buddha he ranked himself more highly. This emerges from an initiatory speech in which one of Altan's nephews compares him to the moon, but addresses the High Lama from the Land of Snows as the omnipotent sun (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p.

88). But the Mongol prince called his guest “Dalai Lama”, a somewhat modest title on the basis of the translation usual these days, “Ocean of Wisdom”. Robert Bleichsteiner also translates it somewhat more emotionally as “Thunderbolt-bearing World Ocean Priest”. The god-king of Tibet thus bears a Mongolian title, not a Tibetan one.

At the meeting between Sonam Gyatso and Altan Khan there were surely negotiations about the pending fourth incarnation of the “Dalai Lama” (Yonten Gyatso 1589–1617), then he appeared among the Mongols in the figure of a great-grandchild of Khan’s. Bleichsteiner refers to this “incarnation decision” as a “particularly clever chess move”, which finally ensured the control of the “Yellow Hats” over Mongolia and obliged the Khans to provide help to the order (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 89). The Mongolian Fourth Dalai Lama died at the age of 28 and did not play a significant political role.

This was taken over by the powerful Kagyupa sect (the so-called “Red Hats”) at this stage in time. The “Red Hats” recruited their members exclusively from national (Tibetan) forces. They had attacked Sonam Gyatso’s (the III Dalai Lama’s) journey to the Mongols as treason and were able to continually expand their power political successes so that by the 1630s the Gelugpa order was only savable via external intervention.

Thus, nothing seemed more obvious than that the “Great Fifth” should demonstratively adopt the Mongolian title “Dalai Lama” so as to motivate the warlike nomadic tribes from the north to occupy and conquer Tibet. This state political calculation paid off in full. The result was a terrible civil war between the Kagyupas and the followers of the prince of Tsang on the one side and the Gelugpas and the Mongol leader Gushri Khan on the other.

If the records are to be trusted, the Mongol prince, Gushri Khan, made a gift of his military conquests (i.e., Tibet) to the Fifth Dalai Lama and handed over his sword after the victory over the “Red Hats”. This was not evaluated symbolically as a pacifist act, but rather as the ceremonial equipping of the prince of the church with secular power. Yet it remains open to question whether the power-conscious Mongol really saw this symbolic act in these terms, then *de jure* Gushri Khan retained the title “King of Tibet” for himself. The “Great Fifth” in contrast, certainly interpreted the gift of the sword as a gesture of submission by the Khan (the renunciation of authority over Tibet), then *de facto* from now on he managed affairs like an absolute ruler.

### *The Secret Biography*

The Fifth Dalai Lama took his self-elevation to the status of a deity and his magic practices just as seriously as he did his real power politics. For him, every political act, every military operation was launched by a visionary event or prepared for with a invocatory ritual. Nevertheless, as a Tantric, the dogma of the emptiness of all being and the nonexistence of the phenomenal world stood for him behind the whole ritual and mystic theater which he performed. This was the epistemological precondition to being able to control the protagonists of history just like those of the spiritual world. It is against this framework that the “Great Fifth” introduces his autobiography (*Secret Biography*) with an irony which undermines his own life’s work in the following verses:

*The erudite should not read this work, they will be embarrassed.  
It is only for the guidance of fools who revel in fanciful ideas.  
Although it tries frankly to avoid pretentiousness,  
It is nevertheless corrupted with deceit.  
By speaking honestly on whatever occurred, this could be taken to be lies.*

*As if illusions of Samsara were not enough,  
This stupid mind of mine is further attracted  
To ultra-illusory visions.  
It is surely mad to say that the image of the Buddha's compassion  
Is reflected in the mirror of karmic existence.*



*Let me now write the following pages,  
Though it will disappoint those who are led to believe  
That the desert-mirage is water,  
As well as those who are enchanted by folk-tales,  
And those who delight in red clouds in summer.”*

(Karmay, 1988, p. 27)

Up until recent times the *Secret Biography* had not been made public, it was a secret document only accessible to a few chosen. There is no doubting that the power-obsessed “god-king” wanted to protect the extremely intimate and magic character of his writings through the all-dispersing introductory poem. One of the few handwritten copies is kept in the Munich State Library. There it can be seen that the Great Fifth nonetheless took his “fairy tales” so seriously that he marked the individual chapters with a red thumbprint.

Everything about Tibet which so fascinates people from the West is in collected in the multilayered character of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Holiness and barbarism, compassion and *realpolitik*, magic and power, king and mendicant monk, splendor and modesty, war and peace, megalomania and humility, god and mortal — the pontiff from Lhasa was able to simplify these paradoxes to a single formula and that was himself. He was for an ordinary person one of the incomprehensibly great, a contradiction made flesh, a great solitary, upon whom in his own belief the life of the world hung. He was a mystery for the people, a monster for his enemies, a deity for his followers, a beast for his opponents. This ingenious despot is — as we shall later see — the highest example for the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

#### *The regent Sangye Gyatso*

The Fifth Dalai Lama did not need to worry about a successor, because he was convinced that he would be reincarnated in a child a few days after his death. Yet with wise foresight the time between his rebirth and his coming of age needed to be organized. Here too, the “Great Fifth”’s choice was a brilliant piece of power politics. As „regent” he decided to appoint the lama Sangye Gyatso (1653–1705) and equipped him with all the regalia of a king already in the last years of his life. He seated him upon the broad throne of the fearless lion as the executor of two duties, one worldly and one religious, which are appropriate to a great *Chakravartin* kingship, as a lord of heaven and earth (Ahmad, 1970, p. 43). The Dalai Lama thus appointed him world ruler until his successor (who he himself was) came of age. It was rumored with some justification that the regent was his biological son (Hoffmann, 1956, p. 176).

In terms of his abilities, Sangye Gyatso must be regarded not just as a skilled statesman, rather he was also the author of a number of intelligent books on such varied topics as healing, law, history, and ritual systems. He proceeded against the women of Lhasa with great intolerance. According to a contemporary report he is said to have issued a command that every female being could only venture into public with a blackened face, so that the monks would not fall into temptation.

So as to consolidate his threatened position during the troubled times, he kept the demise of his “divine father” (the Fifth Dalai Lama) secret for ten years and explained that the prince of the church remained in the deepest meditation. When in the year 1703 the Mongolian prince, Lhazang, posed the never completely resolved question of power between Lhasa and the warrior nomads and himself claimed regency over Tibet, an armed conflict arose.

The right wing of the Mongol army was under the command of the martial wife of the prince, Tsering Tashi. She succeeded in capturing the regent and carried out his death sentence personally. If she was a vengeant incarnation of *Srinmo* in the “land of the gods”, then her revenge also extended to the coming Sixth Dalai Lama, over whose fate we report in a chapter of its own.

### **The successors of the “Great Fifth”: The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dalai Lamas**

The Seventh and Eighth Dalai Lamas only played a minor role in the wider political world. As we have already reported, the four following god-kings (The Ninth to the Twelfth Dalai Lamas) either died an early death or were murdered. It was first the so-called “Great Thirteenth” who could be described as a “politician” again. Although in constant contact with the modern world, Thubten Gyatso, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1874–1933), thought and acted like his predecessor, the “Great Fifth”. Visions and magic continued to determine political thought and activity in Tibet after the boy moved into the Potala amid great spectacle in July 1879. In 1894 he took power over the state. Shortly before, the officiating regent had been condemned because of a black magic ritual which he was supposed to have performed to attack the young thirteenth god-king, and because of a conspiracy with the Chinese. He was thrown into one of the dreadful monastery dungeons, chained up, and maltreated him till he died. A co-conspirator, head of a distinguished noble family, was brought to the Potala after his deeds were discovered and pushed from the highest battlements of the palace. His names, possessions and even the women of his house were then given to a favorite of the Dalai Lama’s as a gift.

In 1904 the god-king had to flee to Mongolia to evade the English who occupied Lhasa. Under pressure from the Manchu dynasty he visited Beijing in 1908. We have already described how the Chinese Emperor and the Empress Dowager Ci Xi died mysteriously during this visit. He later fell out with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama with the Panchen Lama, [5] who cooperated with the Chinese and was forced to flee Tibet in 1923. The “Great Thirteenth” conducted quite unproductive fluctuating political negotiations with Russia, England, and China; why he was given the epithet of “the Great” nobody really knows, not even his successor from Dharamsala.

An American envoy gained the impression that His Holiness (the Thirteenth Dalai Lama) „cared very little, if at all, for anything which did not affect his personal privileges and prerogatives, that he separated entirely his case from that of the people of Tibetan, which he was willing to abandon entirely to the mercy of China” (Mehra, 1976, p.20) When we recall that the institution of the Dalai Lama was a Mongolian arrangement which was put through in the civil war of 1642 against the will of the majority of the Tibetans, such an evaluation may well be justified.

As an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*, the thirteenth hierarch also (like the “Great Fifth”) saw himself surrounded less by politicians and heads of state than by gods and demons. David Seyfort Ruegg most astutely indicates that the criteria by which Buddhists in positions of power assess historical events and personalities have nothing in common with our western, rational conceptions. For them, “supernatural” forces and powers are primarily at work, using people as bodily vessels and instruments. We have already had a taste of this in the opposition between the god-king as an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* and *Guanyin* in the form of the Empress Dowager Ci Xi. Further examples in the coming chapters should show how magic and politics, war and ritual are also interwoven here.

Now what is the situation with regard to these topics and the living Fourteenth Dalai Lama? Has his almost 40--year exposure to western culture changed anything fundamental in the traditional political understanding? Is the current god-king free of the ancient, magical visions of power of his predecessors? Let us allow him to answer this question himself: in adopting the position of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the *Kundun* explained in an interview in 1997, “I am supposed to follow what he did” (Dalai Lama, HPI 006). As a consequence we too are entitled to accredit the Fourteenth Dalai Lama with all the deeds and visions of the great fifth hierarch and to assess his politics according to the criteria of his famous exemplar.

### **Incarnation and power**

Lamaism’s particular brand of controlling power is based upon the doctrine of incarnation. Formerly (before the Communist invasion) the incarnation system covered the entire Land of Snows like a network. In Tibet, the monastic incarnations are called “tulku”. Tulku means literally

the “self-transforming body”. In Mongolia they are known as “chubilganes”. There were over a hundred of these at the end of the nineteenth century. Even in Beijing during the reign of the imperial Manchus there were fourteen offices of state which were reserved for Lamaist tulkus but not always occupied.

The Tibetan doctrine incarnation is often misunderstood. Whilst concepts of rebirth in the West are dominated by a purely individualist idea in the sense that an individual progresses through a number of lifetimes on earth in a row, a distinction is drawn in Tibet between three types of incarnation:

1. When the incarnation as the emanation of a supernatural being, a Buddha, Bodhisattva, or a wrathful deity. Here, incarnation means that the lama in question is the embodiment of a deity, just as the Dalai Lama is an embodiment of *Avalokiteshvara*. The tulku lives from the spiritual energies of a transcendent being or, vice versa, this being emanates in a human body.
2. When reincarnation arises through the initiatory transfer from the master to the sadhaka, that is, the “root guru” (represented by the master) and the deities who stand behind him embody themselves in his pupil.
3. When it concerns the rebirth of a historical figure who reveals himself in the form of a new born baby. For example, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is also an incarnation of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

The first and third concepts of incarnation do not necessarily contradict one another, rather they can complement each other, so that a person who has already died and deity can simultaneously be embodied in a person. But come what may, the deity has priority and supreme authority. It seems obvious that their bodily continuity and presence in this world is far better ensured by the doctrine of incarnation than by a natural line of inheritance. In a religious system in which the person means ultimately nothing, but the gods who stand behind him are everything, the human body only represents the instrument through which a higher being can make an appearance. From the deity’s point of view a natural reproduction would bring the personal interests of a family into conflict with his or her own divine ambitions.

The incarnation system in contrast is impersonal, anti-genetic, and anti-aristocratic. For this reason the monastic orders as such are protected. through the rearing of a “divine” child it creates for itself the best conditions for the survival of its tradition, which can no longer be damaged by incapable heirs, family intrigues, and nepotism.

On a more fundamental symbolic level, the doctrine of incarnation must nevertheless be seen as an ingenious chess move against the woman’s monopoly on childbirth and the dependence of humanity upon the cycle of birth. It makes things “theoretically” independent of birth and the woman as the Great Mother. That mothers are nonetheless needed to bring the little tulkus into the world is not significant from a Buddhological point of view. The women serve purely as a tool, they are so to speak the corporeal cradle into which the god settles down in the form of an embryo. The conception of an incarnated lama (*tulku*) is thus always regarded as a supernatural procedure and it does not arise through the admixture of the male and female seed as is normal. Like in the Buddha legend, where the mother of the Sublime One is made pregnant in a dream by an elephant, so too the mother of a Tibetan tulku has visions and dreams of divine entities who enter into her. But the role of the “wet nurse” is taken over by the monks already, so that the child can be suckled upon the milk of their androcentric wisdom from the most tender age.

The doctrine of reincarnation was fitted out by the clergy with a high grade symbolic system which cannot be accessed by ordinary mortals. But as historical examples show, the advantages of the doctrine were thoroughly capable of being combined now and again with the principle of biological descent. Hence, among the powerful Sakyapas, where the office of abbot was inherited within a family dynasty, both the chain of inheritance and the precepts of incarnation were observed.

Relatives, usually the nephews of the heads of the Sakyapa order, were simply declared to be tulkus.

Let us consider the Lamaist “lineage tree” or “spiritual tree” and its relation to the tulku system. Actually, one would assume that the child recognized as being a reincarnation would already possess all the initiation mysteries which it had acquired in former lives. Paradoxically, this is however not the case. Every Dalai Lama, every Karmapa, every tulku is initiated “anew” into the various tantric mysteries by a master. Only after this may he consider himself a branch of the “lineage tree” whose roots, trunk, and crown consist of the many predecessors of his guru and his guru’s guru. There are critics of the system who therefore claim with some justification that a child recognized as an incarnation first becomes the “vessel” of a deity after his “indoctrination” (i.e., after his initiation).

The traditional power of the individual Lamaist sects is primarily demonstrated by their lineage tree. It is the idealized image of a hierarchic/sacred social structure which draws its legitimation from the divine mysteries, and is supposed to imply to the subjects that the power elite represent the visible and time transcending assembly of an invisible, unchanging meta-order. At the origin of the initiation tree there is always a Buddha who emanates in a Bodhisattva who then embodies himself in a *Maha Siddha*. The roaming, wild-looking founding yogis (the *Maha Siddhas*) are, however, very soon replaced in the generations which follow by faceless “civil servants” within the lineage tree; fantastic great sorcerers have become uniformed state officials. The lineage tree now consists of the scholars and arch-abbots of the lama state.

### **The “Great Fifth” and the system of incarnation**

Historically, for the “yellow sect” (the Gelugpa order) which traditionally furnishes the Dalai Lama, the question of incarnation at first did not play such a significant role as it did, for example, among the “Red Hats” (Kagyupa). The Fifth Dalai Lama first extended the system properly for his institution and developed it into an ingenious political artifact, whose individual phases of establishment over the years 1642 to 1653 we can reconstruct exactly on the basis of the documentary evidence. The “Great Fifth” saw himself as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*. The embodiment of the Tibetan “national god” was until then a privilege claimed primarily by the Sakyapa and Kagyupa orders but not by the Gelugpa school. Rather, their founder, Tsongkhapa, was considered to be an emanation of the Bodhisattva *Manjushri*, the “Lord of Transcendental Knowledge”. In contrast, already in the thirteenth century the Karmapas presented themselves to the public as manifestations of *Avalokiteshvara*.

An identification with the Tibetan “national god” and first father, *Chenrezi (Avalokiteshvara)*, was, so to speak, a mythological precondition for being able to rule the Land of Snows and its spirits, above all since the subjugation and civilization of Tibet were associated with the “good deeds” of the Bodhisattva, beginning with his compassionate, monkey union with the primal mother *Srinmo*. Among the people too, the Bodhisattva enjoyed the highest divine authority, and his mantra, *om mani padme hum*, was recited daily by all. Hence, whoever wished to rule the Tibetans and govern the universe from the roof of the world, could only do so as a manifestation of the fire god, *Chenrezi*, the controller of our age.

The “Great Fifth” was well aware of this, and via a sophisticated masterpiece of the manipulation of metaphysical history, he succeeded in establishing himself as *Avalokiteshvara* and as the final station of a total of 57 previous incarnations of the god. Or was it — as he himself reported — really a miracle which handed him the politically momentous incarnation list? Through a *terma* (i.e., a rediscovered text written and hidden in the era of the Tibetan kings) which he found in person, his chain of incarnations was apparently “revealed” to him.

Among the “forebears” listed in it many of the great figures of Tibetan history can be found — outstanding politicians, ingenious scholars, master magicians, and victorious military leaders. With

this “discovered” or “concocted” document of his, the “Great Fifth” could thus shore himself up with a political and intellectual authority which stretched over centuries. The list was an especially valuable legitimation for his sacred/worldly kingship, since the great emperor, Songtsen Gampo, was included among his “incarnation ancestors”. In his analysis of the introduction of the *Chenrezi* cult by His Holiness, the Japanese Tibetologist, Ishihama Yumiko, leaves no doubt that we are dealing with a power-political construction (Yumiko, 1993, pp. 54, 55).

Now, which entities were — and, according to the Fifth Dalai Lama’s theory of incarnation, still are — seated upon the golden Lion Throne? First of all, the fiery Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara*, then the androgynous time turner, *Kalachakra*, then the Tibetan warrior king, *Songtsen Gampo*, then the Siddha versed in magic, *Padmasambhava* (the founder of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet), and finally the Fifth Dalai Lama himself with all his family forebears. This wasn’t nearly all, but those mentioned are the chief protagonists, who determine the incarnation theater in Tibet. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, as the successor of the “Great Fifth” also represents the above-mentioned “divinities” and historical predecessors.

In an assessment of the Buddhocratic system and the history of Tibet, the power-political intentions of the two main gods (*Avalokiteshvara* and *Kalachakra*) must therefore be examined and evaluated in the first place so as to deduce the intentions of the currently living Dalai Lama on this basis. “It is impossible”, the Tibetologist David Seyfort Ruegg writes, “to draw a clear border between the 'holy and the 'profane', or rather between the spiritual and the temporal. This is most apparent in the case of the Bodhisattva kings who are represented by the Dalai Lamas, since these are both embodiments of *Avalokiteshvara* ... and worldly rulers” (Seyfort Ruegg, 1995, p. 91).

If we assume that the higher the standing of a spiritual entity, the greater his power is, we must pose the question of why in the year 1650 the Fifth Dalai Lama confirmed and proclaimed the first Panchen Lama, Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen (1567–1662), his former teacher, as a incarnation of *Amitabha*. For indeed, *Amitabha*, the “Buddha of unending light”, is ranked higher in the hierarchy than the Bodhisattva who emanates from him, *Avalokiteshvara*. This decision by the extremely power conscious god-king from Lhasa can thus only be understood when one knows that, as a meditation Buddha, *Amitabha* may not interfere in worldly affairs. According to doctrine, he exists only as a principle of immobility and is active solely through his emanations. Even though he is the Buddha of our age, he must nevertheless leave all worldly matters to his active arm, the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*. Through such a division of responsibilities, a contest between the Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama could never even arise.

Nevertheless, the Panchen Lamas have never wanted to fall into line with the nonpolitical role assigned to them. In contrast — they have attempted by all available means to interfere in the “events of the world”. Their central monastery, Tashi Lhunpo, became at times a stronghold in which all those foreign potentates who had been rebuffed by the Potala found a sympathetic ear. While negotiations were conducted with the Russians and Mongolians in Lhasa at the start of last century, Tashi Lhunpo conspired with the English and Chinese. Thus, the statesmanly autonomy of the Panchen Lama has often been the cause of numerous and acrid discordances with the Dalai Lama which have on several occasions bordered on a schism.

### **The sacred power of the Tibetan kings and its conferral upon the Dalai Lamas**

So as to legitimate his full worldly control, it seemed obvious for the “Great Fifth” to make borrowings from the symbolism of sacred kingship. The most effective of these was to present himself as the incarnation of significant secular rulers with the stated aim of now continuing their successful politics. The Fifth Dalai Lama latched onto this idea and extended his chain of incarnations to reach the divine first kings from prehistoric times.

But, as we know, these were in no sense Buddhist, but rather fostered a singular, shamanist-influenced style of religion. They traced their origins to an old lineage of spirits who had

descended to earth from the heavenly regions. Through an edict of the Fifth Dalai Lama they, and with them the later historical kings, were reinterpreted as emanations from “Buddha fields”. As proof of this, alongside a document “discovered” by the resourceful hierarch, a further “hidden” text (*terma*), the *Mani Kabum*, is cited, which an eager monk is supposed to have found in the 12th century. In it the three post powerful ruling figures of the Yarlung dynasty are explained to be emanations of Bodhisattvas: Songtsen Gampo (617–650) as an embodiment of *Avalokiteshvara*, Trisong Detsen (742–803) as an emanation of *Manjushri*, and Ralpachan (815–883) as one of *Vajrapani*. From here on they are considered to be bearers of the Buddhist doctrine.

After their Buddhist origins had been assured, the Tibetan kings posthumously took on all the characteristics of a world ruler. As *Dharmarajas* (kings of the law) they now represented the cosmic laws on earth. Likewise the “Great Fifth” could now be celebrated as the most powerful secular king reborn (Songtsen Gampo, who was likewise an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*) and through this could combine the *imperium* (worldly rule) with the *sacerdotium* (spiritual power). This choice legitimated him as national hero and supreme war lord and permitted a fundamental reform of the Lamaist state system which S. J. Tambiah refers to as the “feudalization of the church”.

The great military commander and tribal chief, Songtsen Gampo (617–650), who during his reign forged the highlands into a state of unprecedented size, was thus included into the Buddhist pantheon. Still today we can find impressive depictions of the feared warlord — usually in full armor, and flanked by his two chief wives, the Chinese Wen Cheng, and the Nepalese Bhrikuti.

The king is said to have commanded a force of 200,000 men. His conduct of war was considered extremely barbaric and the “red faces”, as the Tibetans were known by the surrounding peoples, spread fear and horror across all of central Asia. The extent to which Songtsen Gampo was able to extend his imperium roughly corresponds to the territory over which the Fourteenth Dalai Lama today still claims as his dominion. Hence, thanks to the “Great Fifth” the geopolitical dimensions were also adopted from the sacred kingship.

From the point of view of a tantric interpretation of history, however, the greatest deed of this ancient king (Songtsen Gampo) was the nailing down of the earth mother, *Srinmo*, and the staking of her heart beneath the holiest of holies in the land, the Jokhang temple. The “Great Fifth”, as a confirmed ritualist, would surely have considered the “mastering of the demoness” as the cause of Songtsen Gampo’s historical successes. Almost a thousand years later he too would precede almost every political and military decision with a magic ritual.

One day, it is said, Songtsen Gampo appeared to him in a dream and demanded of him that he manufacture a golden statue of him (the king) in the “style of a *Chakravartin*” and place this in the Jokhang temple. When, in the year 1651, the “Great Fifth” visited locations at which the great king was once active, according to the chronicles flowers began to rain from the skies there and the eight Tibetan signs of luck floated through the air.

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the question of incarnation**

On July 6, 1935, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was born as the child of ordinary people in a village by the name of Takster, which means, roughly, “shining tiger”. In connection with our study of the topic of gender it is interesting that the parents originally gave the boy a girl’s name. He was called *Lhamo Dhondup*, that is, “wish fulfilling goddess”. The androgyny of this incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* was thus already signaled before his official recognition.

The story of his discovery has been told so often and spectacularly filmed in the meantime that we only wish to sketch it briefly here. After the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the then regent (Reting Rinpoche) saw mysterious letters in a lake which was dedicated to the protective goddess *Palden Lhamo*, which together with other visions indicated that the new incarnation of the

god-king was to be found in the northeast of the country in the province of Amdo. A search commission was equipped in Lhasa and set out on the strenuous journey. In a hut in the village of Takster a small boy is supposed to have run up to one of the commissioners and demanded the necklace of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama which he held in his hands. The monk refused and would only give him it if the child could say who he was. “You are a lama from Sera!”, the boy is said to have cried out in the dialect which is only spoken in Lhasa. [6] Afterwards, from the objects laid out before him he selected those which belonged to his predecessor; the others he laid aside. The bodily examination performed on the child also revealed the necessary five features which distinguish a Dalai Lama: The imprint of a tiger skin on the thigh; extended eyelashes with curved lashes; large ears; two fleshy protuberances on the shoulders which are supposed to represent two rudimentary arms of *Avalokiteshvara*; the imprint of a shell on his hand.

For understandable reasons the fact that a Chinese dialect was spoken in the family home of His Holiness is gladly passed over in silence. The German Tibet researcher, Matthias Hermanns, who was doing field work in Amdo at the time of the discovery and knew the family of the young *Kundun* well, reports that the child could understand no Tibetan at all. When he met him and asked his name, the boy answered in Chinese that he was called “Chi”. This was the official Chinese name for the village of Takster (Hermanns, 1956, p. 319). Under difficult circumstances the child arrived in Lhasa at the end of 1939 and was received there as *Kundun*, the living Buddha. Already as an eight year old he received his first introduction into the tantric teachings.

Every little tulku who is separated from his family at a tender age misses the motherly touch. For the Fourteenth Dalai Lama this role was taken over by his cook, Ponpo by name. Not at the death of his mother, but rather at the demise of his substitute mother, Ponpo, the *Kundun* cried bitter tears. “He fed me,” he said sadly, “most mammals consider the creature that feeds them as the most important in their lives, That was the way I felt about Ponpo. I knew my teachers were more important than my cook, but emotionally the strongest bond was with him” (Craig, 1997, p. 326).

In a discussion which the Dalai Lama later conducted with academics, he showed a keen interest in the maternal warmth and tender touching of the child as an important element in the development of personality. He became reflective as one (female ) speaker explained that the absence of such bodily contact in childhood could result in serious psychic damage to the person affected (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995, p. 319).

All young tulkus must do without all motherly contact in the purely masculine society of the monasteries and this may be an unspoken psychological problem for the whole Lamaist system. The Tibetan guru, Chögyam Trungpa has unintentionally captured this longing for contact with the family in the moving words of his „defiant poem”, *Nameless Child*: „Suddenly,” it says there „a Suddenly, a luminous child without a name comes into being. ... In the place where metal birds croak instantaneously born child can find no name... Because *he has no father*, the child has no family line. He has never tasted milk because *he has no mother*. He has no one to play with because *he has no brother and sister*. Having no house to live in, he has no crib. Since *he has no nanny*, he has never cried. There is no civilization, so he has no toys. ... Since there is no point of reference, *he has never found a self*” (quoted and Italics by June Campbell, 1996, p. 88). The poem is supposed to glorify the “instantaneously born child”, but it more resembles the despairing cry of a being who had to renounce the joys of childhood because it was tantrically turned into the vessel of a deity.

### **The introduction of the doctrine of incarnation to the West**

These days, the West is downright fascinated by the idea of reincarnation. In the last twenty years it has like lightning seized the awareness of millions. A large percentage of north Americans today believe in rebirth. Books upon the topic have become legion in the meantime. People are also fascinated by the idea that in the figure of a Tibetan lama they are face to face with a real “deity”. Thus, the concept of being reborn has become a powerful instrument in the Lamaist conquest of the

West. Earlier, a few Europeans had already formed the idea that they were the reincarnation of former Tibetans or Mongolians. In theosophical circles such speculative incarnations were *en vogue*. A Tibetan lama also drew Alexandra David-Neel's attention to the fact that she came from the race of Genghis Khan.

In 1985 it was discovered that the honorable Lama Yeshe had incarnated as the child of two Spanish parents. His Holiness commented upon the spectacular event in the following words: "[Buddhism] also provides many different methods to practice, understand and meditate, so it has the attraction of the supermarket. So the fact that Lama Yeshe, whose main work was in the West, should be born in Spain, seems quite logical. Actually there are quite a few western reincarnated lamas now" (Mackenzie, 1992, p. 155).

The idea of western reincarnations is also cultivated by Bernardo Bertolucci's film, *Little Buddha*. The plot involves a lama who simultaneously embodies himself in a white boy from Seattle and, amazingly, in a girl as well.

An amusing anecdote, likewise from the world of film, brought the Tibetan doctrine of incarnation into discredit a little. Namely, the famous Aikido fighter and actor Steven Seagal announced he was the reincarnation of an important lama (*Chung-rag Dorje*), who had live several centuries earlier and had made his name as a treasure hunter (*terton*). [7] It was not at all the case that Seagal had arbitrarily adopted his former identity, rather he was able to appeal to the confirmation of Penor Rinpoche, the head of the Nyingmapa school. This "revelation" raised many questions and some confusion among western Buddhists. There was speculation on the Internet as to whether Seagal had purchased the "incarnation title", whether this was not an act of religious political propaganda designed to exploit the actor's popularity, and much more. For others the incident was more embarrassing, since Seagal appeared in monastic robes shortly after his recognition. When he was in Bodh Gaya in India at the beginning of the year 1997, he sat down upon the place where the historical Buddha experienced enlightenment, "giving his blessings to hundreds of baffled Tibetan monks" (*Time*, September 8, 1997, p. 65).

The action films in which Seagal plays the lead are considered the most brutal of the genre. "Scenes in which he rams a knife through his opponent's ear into his brain or tears out his larynx", says the journalist H. Timmerberg, "captivate through their apparent authenticity. He fights dispassionately, one could say he fights coldly, and when he kills neither hate nor anger are to be read in his eyes, at best contempt and a trace of amusement. Precisely the eyes of a killer, or the look of a Samurai. It could be both" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin* No. 28, July 16, 1999). Timmerberg also characterizes the star as "a grand master in the art of killing". Admittedly, in his last two film to Seagal has made an effort to appear a bit more well-mannered, but it is not his religious obligations which have compelled him to do so. At least, this was the opinion of his master, Penor Rinpoche: "Some people think Steven Seagal cannot be a true Buddhist because he makes brutal films. This is not the case. Such films are pure entertainment and have nothing to do with that which is true and important. In the view of Buddhism compassionate beings reincarnate in every kind of life so as to help their fellow people. Seen thus, of course a holy person can be an action star" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin* No. 28, July 16, 1999). Penor further informed the surprised journalist that tulkus (the reincarnations of high lamas) liked to watch vampire films.

At the major *Kalachakra* event conducted this year (1999) by the Dalai Lama in Bloomington (USA), Seagal was the shooting star. He is said to have donated a meal for over a thousand participants there. This time Richard Gere, the "god-king's" second big draw, was not head of the celebrity bill. In fact, the two Buddhist stars cannot stand one another.

Such a sensational and liberal spread of incarnations in the West could, however, be of harm to the whole idea in future. The system has after all not just its strengths but also its weaknesses, which lie above all in the minority of the incarnated child, of whom one does not know exactly what will later happen with him, and who remains incapable of acting until his coming of age. Appointments



by the Dalai Lama would probably be a much more effective means of ensuring his centralist power. In fact, there are for this reason discussions in the circles surrounding him about whether the reincarnation of monks is at all sensible. It would be better to give up the whole tulku system, Dahyb Kyabgö Rinpoche wrote in the *Tibetan Review*, since it has led to an uncontrollable inflation in the number of monastic reincarnations (*Tibetan Review*, July 1994, p. 13).

At times the *Kundun* has also speculated in public about whether it would not be politically more clever to name a successor rather than embodying himself anew. But he has not committed himself. At a conference of 350 tulkus in the year 1989 he announced that he would under no circumstance reincarnate in the territory under the control of the Chinese (*Tibetan Review*, January 1989, p. 5).

In all, the Dalai Lama is interested in a well-functioning incarnation elite, very small in number, which would be combined with an effective system of appointments. He knows that an overly liberal expansion or even a democratization of the idea of incarnation would completely undermine its exclusivity. Appointments and initiations by a guru are thus basically more important to him, but he would never want to give up the system as such, which exercises so a bewitching hold over the western imagination.

His answer to the question of whether he himself will reincarnate as Dalai Lama once more has for years been the same statement: “Should the Tibetan people still want a Dalai Lama after my death then a new Dalai Lama will also come. I shall at any rate not attempt to influence this decision in any manner. If my people should in the next years decide to make an end to old traditions, then one must accept that” (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 44).

We must leave it to the judgment of our readers how seriously they take such a “democratic” solution to the question of tradition by the Tibetan Buddhocrats. That the gods bow to the will of the people is completely new, at least in the history of Tibet. But at any rate we shall not have to do without the “precious presence” (Tibetan: *Kundun*) of His Holiness in our next incarnations, even if he no longer appears in the form of a Dalai Lama. At the end of his interview with *Playboy* which we have already quoted from on a number of occasions, he gives his readers the following parting thought: “For as long as the cosmos exists, and as long as there are living creatures, I will be present here so as to drive out the suffering of the world” (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 44).

### **The various orders of Tibetan Buddhism**

Three of the four main schools which determined the religious life of Tibet were all formed in the period from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14th century: The Sakyapa, the Kagyupa and the Gelugpa. The Nyingmapa in contrast has been in existence since the start of the ninth century. All four “sects” are still today the most important pillars of tantric culture. It was the ingenious work of the “Great Fifth” to like an alchemist distill the spiritual and political essence out of all the traditional orders and to impressively assimilate these into his institution as “Dalai Lama” — a power-political act, which is currently being repeated by his incarnation, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

#### ***The Gelugpa order***

The “Great Fifth” came from the Gelugpa order. Of all the Tibetan schools the so-called “Yellow Hats” were the most tightly organized. Their founder, the outstanding scholar Tsongkhapa (1357–1419), had begun with a moral campaign against the decline of the teaching and the dissolution in the monasteries. He forbade the consumption of intoxicating liquors, demanded the strict observance of celibacy, insisted upon a rigorous work discipline, improved the dress code and reformed the daily liturgy. Towards the end of his life he succeeded in arresting the general decadence in the various schools through the establishment of a new order. In keeping with his program, this was called *Gelugpa*, that is, “Followers of the path of virtue”. Although there were precursors, in the final instance Tibetan Buddhism has the “virtuous” to thank for its Buddhocratic/clerical structure. The three “most scholarly” monasteries of the highlands belong to

the “yellow church”: Ganden, Drepung, and Sera. These “three jewels” of the spirit accommodated thousands of monks over centuries and were considered the most powerful religious and political institutions in the country alongside the Potala, the residence of the Dalai Lama, and Tashi Lhunpo, the seat of the Panchen Lama.

Like no other school, the “Yellow Hats” can be talked about as being scholastic. They possessed the best libraries, the best educational system, the most stringent training program. What they lacked was the fantasy and the often picturesque wildness of the other orders. The Gelugpas have not produced a single original work, but saw their mission rather as solely to study the already codified Buddhist texts, to prepare commentaries on these, and, in most cases, to learn them by heart. Even the sixteen volumes of Tsongkhapa’s writings are commentaries upon the canonized literature found in the *Kanjur* (“translations of the word” of Buddha) and the *Tanjur* (“translation of the textbooks”). The strength of the Gelugpas thus lay not in their creativity, but rather in their superior political and organizational talents which they combined with the teachings of the tantras in an extremely effective manner. Despite his “puritanical” politics which earned him the title of the Tibetan Luther, Tsongkhapa was an outstanding expert in and commentator upon the tantric secret writings, especially the *Kalachakra* teachings. His pupils continued this tradition with extensive works of their own. This made the Gelugpa order a stronghold of the Time Tantra.

Tsongkhapa was “puritanical” only in the sense that he demanded absolute discipline and iron-clad rules in the performance of the sexual magic rites and in determining that they could only be conducted by celibate monks. Although he became an object of emotional reverence after his death, because of their precision and systematicity his commentaries upon the sacred love techniques seem especially cold and calculating. They are probably only the product of his imagination, then he himself is supposed to have never practiced with a real *karma mudra* (wisdom consort) — yet he wrote extensively about this. He saw in the tantric exercises an extremely dangerous but also highly effective practice which ought only be conducted by a tiny clerical elite after traversing a lengthy and laborious graduated path. The broad mass of the monks thus fell further and further behind in the course of the academic and subsequent tantric training, eventually forming the extensive and humble “lower ranks”.

It lay — and still lies — in the logic of the Gelugpa system to produce a small minority of intensively schooled scholars and an even smaller number of tantric adepts, whose energies are in the end gathered together in a single individual. The entire monastic “factory” is thus, in the final instance, geared to the production of a single omnipotent Buddhist deity in human form. In accordance with the metapolitical intentions of the *Kalachakra* teachings which, being its highest tantra, form the main pillar of the Gelugpa order, it must be the time god himself who rules the world as a patriarchal *Chakravartin* in the figure of the Dalai Lama. In the final instance, he is the ADI BUDDHA.

Although the *institution* of the Dalai Lama did not yet exist when the Gelugpa order was founded, its essence was already in place. Hence the “virtuous” built the “Asian Rome” (Lhasa) step by step, with the “yellow pontiff” (the *Kundun*) at its head. Thanks to their organizational talents they soon controlled the majority of central Asia. From the banks of the Volga and the Amur, from the broad steppes of inner Asia to the Siberian tundra, from the oases of the Tarim Basin, from the imperial city of Beijing, from the far Indian river valleys came streams of pilgrims, envoys, and tributary gifts to the god-king in Lhasa. Even his opponents recognized him as a spiritual force towering over all.

### *The Kagyupa order*

Whilst the Gelugpas began cooperating with the Mongolians very early on and regarded these as their protective power, we can more or less call the Kagyupas, with the Karmapa at their head, the national Tibetan forces (at least up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century). The first Dalai Lama was already caught up in military skirmishes with the “Red Hats” (Kagyupa). 150 years later and with the support of

Prince Tsangpa, they had extended their power so far that the Gelugpas had good reason to fear for their lives and possessions. In the 1730s Tsangpa seized Lhasa and handed the holy temple, the Jokhang, over to the priests of the “Reds”. Even the powerful Gelugpa monastery of Drepung fell to his onslaught. In the course of these battles an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the Fifth Dalai Lama is said to have been carried out. In his stead, however, his biological mother was murdered.

In his hour of need the “Great Fifth” succeeded in forming an alliance with Gushri Khan (1582–1654), the chief of the Oirat Mongols. The Khan descended upon the “Land of Snows” with a force tens of thousands strong. A bloody “civil war” ensued, in which two admittedly worldly rulers, the king of the Tsang and Gushri Khan, faced one another on the open field, but behind whom, however, were hidden the real forces of the two most powerful monastic hierarchs in the country, the “Dalai Lama” and the “Karmapa”, the most influential religious leader within the circle of the Red Hats.

This civil war concerned more than worldly power. According to the tantric obsessions which drove both parties, the battle was for the world throne and control over the spirit of the times. (The “Red Hats” also practiced the *Kalachakra Tantra*.) During the conflict, the Dalai Lama visited the Ganden monastery and there above an altar saw the huge, grinning, and black face of a demon with many human heads flying into its gaping maw. He interpreted this vision as signaling final victory over the Kagyupas.

In accord with the laws of his ancestors, Gushri Khan intervened with ruthless violence. Through him, the interior of Tibet was, according to one of the “Red’s” documents, “turned into a land of hungry ghosts, like the Domains of the Lord of Death” (Bell, 1994, p. 125). We recall that as a incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* the Dalai Lama also represents the god of death, *Yama*.

The Mongol ordered that the leaders of the opposing force be sewn into fur sacks and drowned. In the year 1642, after much fierce resistance, the red order was finally defeated. Many Kagyupas were driven from their monasteries which were then turned into Yellow Hat sites, as had been the case in reverse before. A mass flight was the result. Sections of the defeated Red Hats emigrated to Sikkim and to Bhutan and joined forces with the local dynasties there.

Yet, being an intelligent despot the “Great Fifth” did not give in to a desire for revenge. He knew from history that the various Kagyupa factions did not form a united front. Hence, after his control had been secured he covered some of them with great honors, thus splitting their ranks. But he even went a step further. Namely, he invaded the mysteries of the Red Hats by taking over from them the “national” Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara* (*Chenrezi*), as his personal incarnation god. This usurpation was — as we have already shown — a political master stroke.

### *The Nyingmapa order*

Because of his wild lifestyle, the founder of the Nyingmapa, the half-mythic yogi and magician, Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche), was thought to be a dubious character by the Gelugpas. Even today, the name “Guru Rinpoche” provokes strong defensive reactions among some “Yellow Hats”. But the Fifth Dalai Lama adopted a completely different attitude in this case. Not only did he indicate that Padmasambhava was, as an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara*, an earlier incarnation of his, but he also felt himself to be almost magnetically attracted to the tantric practices which Guru Rinpoche had employed to gain control over the Land of Snows. The achievements of the king, Songtsen Gampo, in the military political domain are outstripped by those of Guru Rinpoche on a metapolitical/magical level. We shall return later to discuss the unconventional yogi’s deeds of conquest in detail.

Padmasambhava (eighth century) is the founding hero and the icon of the Nyingmapas, the oldest of the Buddhist schools. They elevated the sorcerer (*Siddha*) to such a high status that he was sometimes even ranked higher than the historical Buddha. Although the “Old”, as the Nyingmapas

are known, had the patina of the original about them (they were the first), over the course of the centuries they nevertheless managed to draw the worst reputation of all upon themselves. As wandering beggars, unkempt and restless, they roamed Tibet, were considered licentious in sexual matters, and supplemented their alms through the sale of all manner of dubious magical pieces. The depravity and anarchy they cultivated, through which they expressed their contempt for the world (of *samsara*), nevertheless fostered their reputation as powerful magicians among the superstitious populace. In general they were not unpopular with ordinary people because (unlike the tightly organized monasteries of the other sects) they rarely demanded taxes or forced labor.

Their attitude towards the pre-Buddhist Bon cult and remnants of ancient shamanism was extremely relaxed, so that many unorthodox elements flowed into the religious practices of the Nyingmapa. For example, alongside the classic tantras they practiced the so-called *Dzogchen* method in which enlightenment can be achieved without lengthy preparations and graded progression. Sometimes they were mocked as vagrants, at others they were feared as powerful sorcerers. But it was above all the strict and “puritanical” Gelugpas who punished the “Old” with detestation and great contempt.

Here too, the “Great Fifth” felt and acted at complete odds to the dominant opinion among his own order. His own teacher had been an important Nyingmapa and he had been informed about their “heretical” writings in great detail. With great success he put to use the *terma* doctrine (concerning the discovery of old mystic texts) fostered in this school. But above all his especial interest was captured by the magic practices of the order, and *Golden Manuscript* which he wrote is an ingenious compendium of barbaric spells such as are taught by the Nyingmapas.

### *The Sakyapa Order*

The “Great Fifth” learned his grand politics and the subtleties of diplomacy from the Sakyapas who, as powerful ecclesiastical princes, had cooperated with the Mongolians and the Chinese between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14th century.

Like every school of Tibetan Buddhism, the Sakyapas were also tantric ritualists. 150 years after the founding of the first monastery (in 1073) the order had developed into one of the most influential institutions in Tibet at that time. Within it the foundations were laid for a “modern political science” which welded together the administration of state and international relations, transpersonal energy fields (the Tibetan “gods”) and the sexual magic ritual system into a single discipline — a combination which exerted a lifelong attraction over the Fifth Dalai Lama.

According to legend, one of the most important abbots of the monastery, the influential Sakya Pandita (1182–1251), is said to have been in correspondence with Genghis Khan. All that has been historically verified, however, is that almost two decades after the death of the great military leader, in the year 1244, he traveled to Mongolia so as to successfully establish Buddhism there as the state religion. In gratitude, Godan Khan appointed him vice regent of the Land of Snows.

This historic alliance was so important to the “Great Fifth” who lived 400 years later that he without ado declared himself to be an incarnation of Sakya Pandita’s nephew and successor, the similarly gifted statesman, Phagspa Lama (1235-1280). The latter’s meeting with Kublai Khan (1260–1294) shortly before the Mongol prince seized the Chinese throne was legendary. The future Emperor was so impressed by the knowledge and rhetoric of the lama that he adopted the Buddhist faith and even let himself be initiated into the *Hevajra Tantra*.

The “Great Fifth” correctly saw this historical encounter as a corner-stone of world politics which dovetailed perfectly into the foundations of his own global vision. He hence simply declared the conversations between himself and the Mongolian potentate, Gushri Khan, which took place in the year 1637 and which concerned the defeat of the Kagyupa order, to be the “incarnatory” continuation of the dialog which commenced in 1276 between Kublai Khan and the then powerful

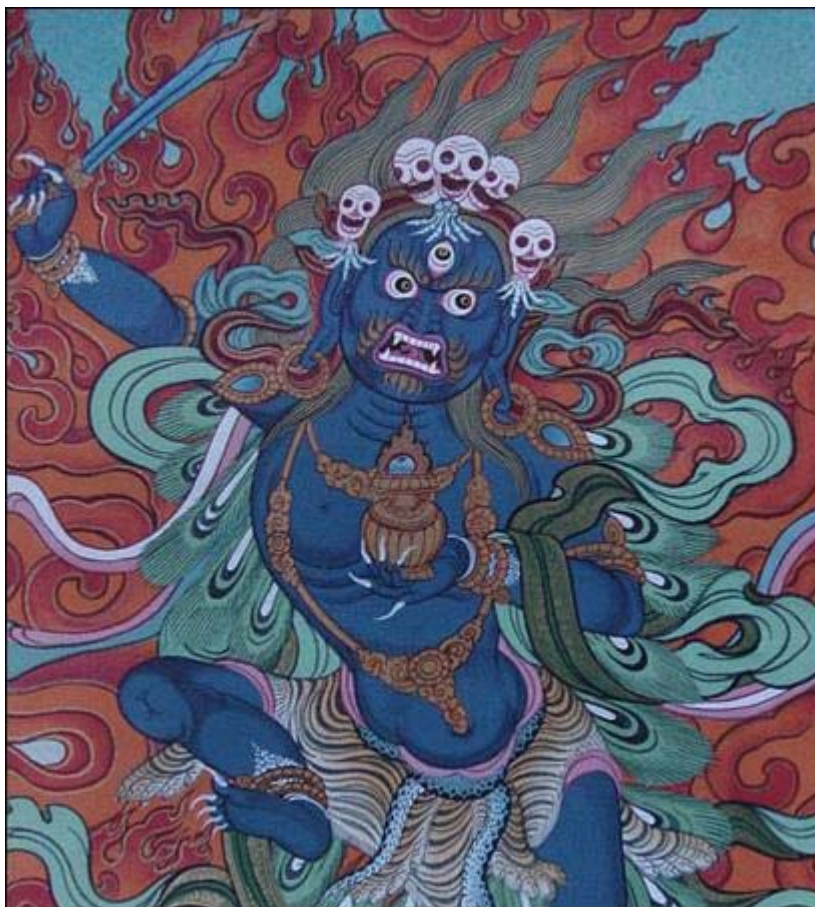
Phagspa Lama and continued afresh in the year 1578 between the Third Dalai Lama and Altan Khan. During the meeting with the god-king (the Fifth Dalai Lama), Gushri Khan is supposed to have recalled their previous joint “incarnation meetings” (as Kublai Khan and Phagspa Lama and as the Third Dalai Lama and Altan Khan). This example shows, how politics was conducted across the centuries. Death no longer played a role in these political events which were so important for Asia.

#### *The Jonangpa order*

The no longer extant school (up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century) of the Jonangpas was a small but powerful offshoot of the Sakyapa order. During the “civil war” between the Gelugpas and the Kagyupas its followers allied themselves with the king of the Tsang (the “Red Hat” alliance). They were therefore branded as heretics by the “Great Fifth” and *de facto* destroyed. This is all the more surprising since an abbot of the school, the famous historian Taranatha (1575–1634), was asked by the parents of the Fifth Dalai Lama to name their child. However, it demonstrates once more the unsentimental, uncompromising manner in which the god-king pursued his political goals. He ordered that the printing plates of the sect (i.e., their writings) be sealed and incorporated the order’s funds along with the majority of its monks into the Gelugpa system. It is of interest that at that stage this school was the prime specialist in matters concerning the *Kalachakra Tantra*, to which Taranatha also devoted a number of writings. Perhaps a cause for the conflict can also be found here, then there can be no doubt that the “Great Fifth” took the cosmic power system of the Time Tantra literally and laid exclusive claim to it.

#### *The Bon religion*

The eclectic on the Lion Throne (the Fifth Dalai Lama) was also not at all ill-disposed towards the pre-Buddhist Bon religion. *Avalokiteshvara* appeared to him in a vision and called upon him “to invite Bonpos often to carry out rituals which ensure the prosperity of the country.” (Karmay, 1988, p. 64). This liaison is not quite as paradoxical as it may appear at first glance. Admittedly, the Bon priests had been fiercely persecuted as the exact opposite of Buddhism since time immemorial- over the centuries they had been reviled as the practitioners of black magic, the sacrificers of animals, the worshippers of demons. This negative Tibetan evaluation has been shared by many western researchers up until of late. However, more recent studies have shown that the Bon religion was closer to Buddhism than was previously thought. It is not — as is often erroneously believed — the original, shamanist religion of the highlands.



**Bon – Dharmapala (Yeshe Walmo)**

Just like the Indian Buddhist gurus at a later time, the first Bonpos were brought into the country (in the sixth century, probably from Persia). They brought with them a marked doctrine of light unknown in Tibet, which is reminiscent of the *Amitabha* cult. They worshipped *Shen Rab*, a supernatural being who exhibits many of the criteria of an *Avalokiteshvara*, as a messianic savior. The Bon also believed in the existence of an inaccessible mythical kingdom, *Olmolungring*, which shares essential traits with *Shambhala*. The doctrine of emanation was likewise as familiar to them as a well-organized priesthood. They were even well versed in tantric practices and other yoga doctrines. The Tibetan lama Namkhai Norbu suspected that the famous Dzogchen meditation practice, through which enlightenment can be reached directly without intermediary stages, could be traced back to them. Both religions (that of the Buddhists and that of the Bonpos) worship the swastika as a cult symbol, but the widespread belief that the Bon followers only used the left-armed “evil” hooked cross and the Buddhist Tantrics the right-armed “good” one as a symbol is untrue.

Since the Bon religion was able to continue to exist following the Buddhization of the Land of Snows (since the seventh century) despite extreme persecution, the historians have until now assumed that it took on many Buddhist elements so as to protect itself from pursuit. This is sure to have been the case here and there. But, it is becoming ever clearer on the basis of newly discovered documents that the original Bon cult possessed “Buddhist” elements from the outset, indeed, some important authors — such as David Snellgrove for example — even talk of a “heterodox” Buddha doctrine which penetrated the highlands via Persia and united with the local shamanist religion there. Where there is a real difference is in the approval of animal and occasional human sacrifices in the Bon cult. But then even this is supposed to be not entirely foreign to the tantric rites. There was thus no need for the “Great Fifth” to fear contact with the religion of the “black hat magicians”, as the Bonpo are sometimes called. His own system could only be strengthened through their “integration”.

Through his politics of integration the Fifth Dalai Lama demonstratively revealed that he saw himself as the ruler of all sects and all Tibetans, and that he was not striving to achieve absolute hegemony for the “yellow order” (the Gelugpas), but rather the unrestricted sovereignty of his own institution. Where the “Yellow Hats” were always wanting that the other schools be reduced to second or third-order powers; the Fifth Dalai Lama in contrast aspired to a situation where all schools equally bowed down before him as the supreme tantra master. Tensions with his own order were also preordained for another reason. Traditionally, the Gelugpas supplied the regent to the god-king who, once the “living Buddha” (*Kundun*) attained his majority, had to abdicate and renounce his power.

Let us summarize once more: It was the “Great Fifth”’s political intention to establish a Buddhocratic system in Tibet with the institution of the Dalai Lama at its helm. To achieve this he required all the material and spiritual resources of the country. From the Gelugpas he took the discipline, organizational talent, administrative skill, reasons of state, and learning; from the Kagyupas the doctrine of incarnation, his incarnation god *Avalokiteshvara*, and his national roots; from the Nyingmapas the ritual magic; from the Sakyapas the diplomatic skill; from the Jonangpas a well-organized *Kalachakra* system; and from the Bonpos the support of those ecclesiastical forces which had primarily propagated the idea of the ancient, sacred kingship, an idea which was vital for the establishment of the world throne on the Potala.

According to the laws of the micro/macrocosmic conceptual world in which the Fifth Dalai Lama lived, he must have seen in his power politics a symbolic act which encompassed the entire cosmos: Once he had achieved absolute control over the Land of Snows (the microcosm), then, homologously, as *Chakravartin* he also had power over the whole world (the macrocosm). He ingeniously understood how to bundle together all the spiritual energies of the country within his person and the institution of the Dalai Lama which he occupied. He collected the most potent extracts from schools of every orientation and mixed them together in his magic cauldron into a potion of power, the consumption of which was supposed to grant him control over the universe.

Through his political application of the doctrine of incarnation, the fifth *Kundun* could with aplomb draw upon all the important political figures of Tibetan history and employed these as marionettes in his cosmic theaters. He made the tantric idea the driving force of his age. It was not him as a person, but rather the gods he invoked, especially *Avalokiteshvara* and *Kalachakra*, the time god, who were the organizing principle, the creative, the one true thing, the ADI BUDDHA.

### **Unification of the Tibetan Buddhist orders under the absolute reign of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama**

It is almost uncanny how exactly the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has continued and intensified the integrative politics of his ingenious, unscrupulous, and highly revered predecessor from the 17<sup>th</sup> century which was aimed at strengthening his own position of power, only this time truly on a global scale. It is primarily the *Kalachakra Tantra* which serves as his most effective means of bringing the various sects into line. In the meantime each of the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism is committed to the Time Tantra and offers small scale *Kalachakra* initiations all around the world. On the official *Kalachakra homepage* in the Internet ([www.kalachakra.com](http://www.kalachakra.com)), the following “Dharma masters” are presented with photos as the most prominent contemporary “WARRIORS” of the time wheel:

1. **Dalai Lama (Gelugpa)**
2. **Gelek Rinpoche (Gelugpa)**
3. **Chögyam Trungpa (Kagyupa)**
4. **Namkhai Norbu (Nyingmapa)**
5. **Jamgon Kongtrul (Kagyupa)**
6. **Minling Terchen Rinpoche (Nyingmapa)**
7. **Sharmapa Rinpoche (Kagyupa)**

8. **Tai Situ Rinpoche (Kagyupa)**
9. **Thrangu Rinpoche (Kagyupa)**
10. **Tsem Tulku (Gelugpa)**
11. **Zurman Garwang Rinpoche (Kagyupa)**
12. **Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche (Nyingmapa)**
13. **Sakya Trizin (Sakyapa)**
14. **Dzongsar Khyentse (Nyingmapa)**
15. **Sogyal Rinpoche (Rime Tradition)**
16. **Tulku Urgyen (Nyingmapa)**
17. **Gelek Rinpoche (Gelugpa)**
18. **Kalsang Rinpoche (Kagyupa)**
19. **Nan Huai Chin (Kagyupa and Chan)**
20. **Rev Shen Yan (?)**
21. **Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (Bon)**
22. **Thrinly Norbu Rinpoche (Nyingmapa)**
23. **Tsoknyi Rinpoche (Kagyupa)**
24. **Lama Choedak (Sakyapa)**
25. **Ani Choying Drohna (Arya Tara School)**

It is immediately apparent from this summary that of the 25 high lamas who publicly represent the *Kalachakra Tantra*, there is only four Gelugpa masters. This is astounding indeed.

His unique exiled situation allows the fourteenth *Kundun* to set himself up as the head of all the schools even more than the “Great Fifth”. This is not just true on the level of practical politics as head of state, but also in the initiatory system. Hence His Holiness allowed himself to be initiated into all the significant lineages of the various sects. In 1986 a Nyingmapa teacher initiated him into his tradition. His Holiness also received a tantric initiation at the hands of the highest master of the Sakyapa sect. It was a Nyingmapa lama, Lopon Tsechu Rinpoche, who in 1994 presided over the erection of the first, thirteen-meter high *Kalachakra* stupa in the West (in Spain).

Traditionally, the Gelugpas were the only ones who had any real influence on the affairs of state — primarily through the position of the “regents”, who were selected from their ranks and conducted the business of state until the Dalai Lamas came of age. In the face of a superior *Kundun*, the “Yellow Hats” are now set on the same level as the other sects. Their privileges have disappeared. „Today the activities of His Holiness the Dalai Lama serve the whole world and all of Tibetan Buddhism as well as the indigenous Bön faith impartially”, an official statement from Dharamsala says, „The inclinations of the Gelug monasteries to continue to link themselves with the government, even administratively, causes damage and obstacles rather than benefit and support for His Holiness and the exile government” (*Tibetan Review*, July 1994, p. 12).

The god-king’s claim to spiritually and politically represent all sects has, just as in the past with the “Great Fifth”, in recent times led to a spirited protest movement amidst the ranks of his own order (Gelugpa), whose power is reduced by this. From this wing, the *Kundun* is accused of creating a “religious hotchpotch” or his personal ambitions are even openly designated. “According to my understanding”, writes Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, a bitter opponent of the god-king from his own ranks (he is an ordained Gelugpa monk), “the Dalai Lama’s main wish is to integrate the four Tibetan traditions into one. The leaders of the other traditions will gradually disappear, leaving him alone as head of Tibetan Buddhism. In this way he will be able to control all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism. In the beginning this plan was rejected by the leaders of Sakya, Kagyu and Nyingma Traditions, while the Gelugpa remained neutral. Later, the Dalai Lama changed his approach. He is now trying to destroy the practice of *Dorje Shugden* and change the Gelug tradition, while at the same time developing a close relationship with the other traditions, especially the Nyingmapa. Gradually he hopes to fulfill his wishes in this way” (Gyatso, Newsgroup 7).



According to Kelsang Gyatso, the *Kundun* is supposed to have held a number of meetings with the head abbots of the four main schools in the early 1960s at which he proposed uniting the sects under his leadership. This proposal was rejected. The Sakyapa, Kagyupa, and Nyingmapa then joined together in 13 exile-Tibetan establishments so as to protect themselves from the imposition of the Dalai Lama's will. The leader of all 13, Gongtang Tsultrim, was murdered under mysterious circumstances. To date the murder case has still not been solved (Sky Warrior, Newsgroup 18).

It has in the meantime become established practice that for all incarnations of great lamas, regardless of sect, the *Kundun's* confirmation is sought as the final word. This was not the case in the past. Free from any competition, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama outshines all other hierarchs from the Land of Snows. Even his often abrasive political/religious rivalry with the pro-China Panchen Lama no longer exists, since the latter died in 1989.

The *Rime* movement, which began in the 19th century and has as its goal a united church in which all schools are absorbed (retaining certain individual features), is also a boon to the absolutism of the god-king. Even the Bon priests in exile have in the meantime recognized the *Kundun* as their *de facto* authority. Like his predecessor from the 17th century (the "Great Fifth"), he maintains good contacts with them and prays in their monasteries.

"The Dalai Lama", one of his Buddhist opponents polemicizes, "tries to teach everything: Kagyu, Nyingma, Sakya, Gelugpa, Bonpo, and recently he even gave teachings on Christianity! Later may be he will teach on Sufism, Hinduism, Shamanism and so on. What is his motivation here? It is clear to me that his motivation is to gather as many disciples as possible from all these different traditions. In this way he will become their root guru and thereby gain more power and control" (Sky Warrior, Newsgroup 18). Hence, his followers celebrate him not just as the "supreme spiritual and worldly leader of six million Tibetans", but likewise as the "Head of Buddhists World Wide" (Ron, Newsgroup 14). In a resolution of the *Tibetan Cholsum Convention*, of which representatives from all (!) organizations of Tibetans in exile are members and which was held from August 27 to 31, 1998, it says: "He [The Dalai Lama] is the Captain of Peace in the world; he is the overall head of all Buddhist traditions on this earth; he is the master acclaimed by all the religious traditions of the world".

### **The "Karmapa affair"**

A spectacular example of how the *Kundun* is able to turn the divisions within the other sects to his advantage is offered by the so-called "Karmapa affair". The turbulent events played out between various factions within the Kagyupa sect since the start of the nineties have included radical confrontations and court cases, violent brawls and accusations and counter-accusations of murder.

The cause of this un-Buddhist disagreement was that in the search for the 17<sup>th</sup> incarnation of the new Karmapa, the leader of the Kagyupa, two principal candidates and their proponents confronted one another — on the one side, Situ Rinpoche and Gyaltsab Rinpoche, who advocated a youth in Tibet, on the other, Shamar Rinpoche, who proposed a boy in India. Shortly before the decision, a third abbot, Jamgon Kongtrol Rinpoche, whose voice would have been very influential in the choice, was the victim of a mysterious fatal car accident. Shortly afterwards, the remaining parties accused one another of having brought about the death of Jamgon Kongtrol via magical manipulation. Brawls between the two monastic factions and bloody heads resulted in India, shots were even exchanged, so that the Indian police were forced to intervene (Nesterenko, 1992).

Situ Rinpoche advocated a Sino-Tibetan boy (Urgyen Trinley) as his Karmapa candidate, who also had the support of the *Kundun* and the Tibetan government in exile. Shamar Rinpoche, however, presented his own Karmapa (Thaye Dorje) to the public in Delhi on March 17, 1994. Since that time a great rift has divided the Kagyupa lineage, affecting the numerous groups of western believers as well. Superficially, one could gain the impression that Situ Rinpoche represented the Asian, and Shamar Rinpoche the Euro-American segment of the Red Hat followers. However,

closer inspection proves this to be an erroneous picture, then Shamar Rinpoche has established a notable power base in the kingdom of Bhutan and Situ Rinpoche also has many supporters for his candidate in the West. There are no small number of groups who would like to mediate between the two rivals. But one knows full well what is at stake for the Kagyupa lineage in this fundamental difference. At the end of an open letter by “neutral” Red Hat abbots is to read, that if the differences continue then it is certain that no side will emerge as the 'winner' or the 'loser'. The sole loser will be the Karmapa Kagyupa lineage as a whole (*Tibetan Review*, October 1993, p. 8).



*The two Karmapas: Ugyen Trinley Dorje (l) and Thinley Thaye Dorje (r)*

But this split among the Kagyupa is useful for the Dalai Lama. Since the dawn of Tibetan history the Karmapa has been the main opponent of the *Kundun* and has already been involved in military conflicts with Lhasa on several occasions. He was his major enemy in the Tibetan civil war described above.

This rivalry did not end with the flight of both hierarchs from Tibet. From the outset (since the end of the sixties) the Kagyupa sect have been incomparably more popular in the West than the orthodox Yellow Hats: the Red Hats were considered to be young, dynamic, uncomplicated, informal, and cosmopolitan. The unconventional appearances of the Kagyu tulku, Chögyam Trungpa, who in the seventies completely identified himself with the artistic avant-garde of Europe and America also set an example for many other masters of the sect. Up until the mid-eighties, Western pupils of Buddhism in any case preferred the red order. Here, in their view, an autonomous counterforce, independent of rigid traditions, was emerging, at least this was how the Kagyupas outwardly presented themselves. They developed into a powerful opponent of the Gelugpa, who likewise attempted to attract proselytes in the West. Among others, this would be one of the reasons why the *Kundun* allied himself with “detested” China in supporting Situ Rinpoche’s candidate, *Ugyen Trinley*, who is resident in the Tsurphu monastery on Chinese territory.

But in the meantime the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has succeeded in binding the Kagyupa (Situ and Gyaltsab lineages) so strongly to himself that it seemed more sensible to place the young Karmapa under his direct control. At first, Ugyen Trinley appeared to function completely as the Chinese intended. In October 1995, the former nomadic boy was the guest of honor during the national holiday celebrations in Beijing and conversed with important Chinese government leaders. The national press corps reported at length on his subsequent journey through China, organized for the young hierarch with much pomp and circumstance. He is supposed to have exclaimed “Long live the People’s Republic of China!”

It is noteworthy that Beijing is attempting less and less to explain the history and basic doctrines of Tibetan Buddhism and is instead deliberately and with more or less success establishing and encouraging a “competing Lamaism” or “alternative Lamaism” directed against the politics of the

Dalai Lama. The most powerful incarnation supported by China is undoubtedly the young Eleventh Panchen Lama, about whom we will come to report later. On January 17, 2000, the *South China Morning Post* reported that the Chinese had discovered a reincarnation of Reting Rinpoche who had died in February 1997. The two-year-old boy was given a Buddhist name and ordained in front of a stupa in the Jokhang Temple (in Lhasa). The ceremony took place in the presence of Chinese party officials. Reting Rinpoche is considered to be one of the few lamas who in the event of the Dalai Lama's death could assume the regency until his reincarnation came of age. It is obvious that the "China-friendly Lamaism" is setting a completely new tone in the relationship between the two powers (China and the Tibetans in exile).

China is waiting for the charismatic leader to die, and the Dalai Lama has had to think seriously about the issue of succession, not just of his own reincarnation, but also the individual who as regent will represent his state and religion whilst he is still a minor. The successful and purposeful policy of integration which the Kundun has been pursuing for years within the context of the individual schools makes it possible that upon his death a Kagyupa hierarch could also take on the task of representing all the sects just as the chief of the Gelugpas (the Dalai Lama) de facto does. At any rate these are speculations being discussed in the Western press. *Time Magazine* says of Ugyen Trinley, "He has the potential to become a leading figure for the next generation, just as the Dalai Lama is for the current one. ... What counts today is one who embodies the Tibetan religious identity and the national claims – and can be a focus for Western sympathy. If the Karmapa continues to show the courage and charisma which he has shown up until now, then he could make an excellent symbol of the resistance to the occupation of Tibet by China" (January 24, 1999; retranslation).

The current incarnation issue brings the undisguised power interests of all involved out into the light of day. [8] And these have a long tradition. For example, the power political competition between the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Sixteenth Karmapa is the reason why the rumor has persisted in western Kagyupa circles that the *Kundun* used magic practices to murder the Karmapa (*Tibetan Review*, August 1987, p. 21).

This "accusation of murder" calls to mind not just the Tibetan civil war but also another mysterious incident. After the death of the Fifteenth Karmapa (in 1922), a powerful Gelugpa minister wanted to push through the recognition of his own son as the next incarnation of the Kagyupa hierarch against the will of the Red Hats. This autocratic decision was ratified by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the monks of the Tsurphu monastery were forced against their will to accept the Yellow Hats' boy. But it did not take long before the child inexplicably fell to his death from the roof of a building. There was never an explanation of the "accident", at any rate it was of benefit to the genuine candidate of the Red Hats, who was now recognized as the Sixteenth Karmapa.

Incidentally, the official chronicles of the Gelugpas accuse the tenth incarnation of Shamar Rinpoche, of having incited the Nepalese to war against Lhasa in the 18th century. Thereupon his assets were either seized or razed to the ground. A subsequent reincarnation of the great abbot was not accepted by the Yellow Hats. „Merit was becoming less and less!“, the Sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa has commented upon this period. „There was much political interference. Black was becoming white. The real was becoming unreal. At that time it was not practicable to have any Sharmapa recognized or enthroned. Everything was kept secret" (Nesterenko, 1992, p. 8). Not until the year 1964, following a lengthy meditation and on the basis of dreams, did the Fourteenth Dalai Lama permit the official reinstatement of the Shamarpa lineage. The *Kundun* should have known that according to his own doctrine history repeats itself and that old conflicts do not just flare up afresh, rather, the laws governing incarnation determine that time and again the same individuals stand opposed to one another (in this case the Shamarpa *versus* the Dalai Lama).

Accordingly the relations between the god-king and the Nepalese are very tense once again. Nepal has over many years established good contacts with its neighbor, China, and currently (1998) has a "communist" government. Tibetan refugees are constantly expelled from the country. In the past

there were several armed conflicts between the Royal Nepalese Army and Tibetan underground fighters (ChuShi GangDrug).

Accusations against The Dalai Lama and the Gelugpas of imposing their will upon the “red sect” (the Kagyupa) and attempting to split them are also heard from government circles in the kingdom of Bhutan. The so-called “Switzerland of the Himalayas” and its ruling house (who today are in cooperation with the Shamarpa) traditionally belong to the Kagyupa school, and have therefore had in part very serious disputes with Lhasa for hundreds of years. The Yellow Hat monasteries and their abbots, which have been tolerated in the country as refugee settlements since the sixties, are accused by the Bhutanese of nothing less serious than the politically motivated murder of the Prime Minister, Jigme Dorji, (in 1964) and a long-planned revolt in order to seize control of the country.

In this, the “Yellow Hats” are supposed to have attempted to liquidate the Bhutanese heir to the throne. Alongside one of the king’s mistresses who was under the influence of the Gelugpas, the Dalai Lama’s brother, Gyalo Thondrup, is also supposed to be involved in this assassination attempt, discovered before it could be carried through. In the light of such accusations it is immediately apparent why the Bhutanese have backed Shamar Rinpoche’s decision in the dispute about the new Karmapa, and reject Ugyen Trinley, the candidate of Situ Rinpoche ratified by Dharamsala, as a marionette of the Dalai Lama.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] We are obviously dealing with a Buddhaization of a Vedic myth of origin here, according to which the universe arose from the self-dismemberment of the first human, Prajapati.

[2] The philosophers and theologians of the European Middle Ages developed a “two body theory” of sacred kingship. The scholars drew a distinction between the mortal and mundane body of a king and an eternal royal meta-body. This was fundamentally independent of its human appearance. After the death of the body which had served as his residence he withdrew from this so as to then be reincarnated in the successor of the old king. This model corresponds broadly with the Tibetan Buddhist doctrine of incarnation.

[3] The *mchod-yon* relation to China is also interpreted as the relation pertaining between the sun and the moon by the Lamaist side. Hence we can read in a text from the 17th century that the potentates from Beijing and Lhasa stood opposed to one another as sun and moon, where the Dalai Lama occupied the throne of the sun (Klieger, 1991, p. 45). As the moon the feminine and thus subordinate role is assigned to the Emperor in this classification.

[4] In the *Tibetan Review*, the public relations advertisement for the West, even the shallow dualism „Tibet — good and China — bad” is seen as a problem in one article: „Tibet is the embodiment of the powers of the holy; China is the embodiment of the powers of the demonic; Tibetans are superhuman, Chinese are subhuman. In this Orientalist logic of oppositions, China must be debased in order for Tibet to be exalted; in order for there to be a spiritual and enlightened Orient, there must be a demonic and despotic Orient „ (*Tibetan Review*, May 1994, p. 18).

[5] Following the Dalai Lama the second highest authority in the Gelugpa sect.

[6] Sera is the monastery to which the regent belonged.

[7] As we have already mentioned, such “treasures” (*terma*) are understood to be secret doctrines hidden by dakinis or the “founder of the religion”, Padmasambhava. Many years later they are discovered by chosen individuals and then put into practice.

[8] Tangible material interests also play their role in the “Karmapa affair”. The assets of the Rumtek monastery, the main western monastery of the Karmapa, are being claimed by Dharamsala (i.e., by the *Kundun*) because it is an object of contention between Situ and Shamar Rinpoche who both lay claim to the monastery for their respective candidates.

Next Chapter:

#### [4. SOCIAL REALITY IN ANCIENT TIBET](#)

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### The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 4. Social Reality in Ancient Tibet

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## 4. SOCIAL REALITY IN ANCIENT TIBET

Just how casual the Tibetans in exile are in dealing with scholarly works on their history and social reality in ancient Tibet is shown by an example from the *Tibetan Review*, the English-language mouthpiece for the exile community. In April 1991, the renowned American historian Melvyn C. Goldstein could publish an article in which he presented for discussion a picture of Tibetan history that contradicted the official line from Dharamsala. In the subsequent debate a Tibetan scholar candidly admitted that Goldstein's investigations were so well documented „that he is probably correct in his analysis” — and then the Tibetan continues, „But his presentation has succeeded in deeply offending most Tibetans” (*Tibetan Review*, January 1992, p. 18).

Thus, among the exile Tibetan community, historical truths lead not to a self-critical stance towards their own history, but rather one was insulted and thus believed oneself justified in repudiating Goldstein's works and denigrating them as Chinese propaganda. (See above all Phintso Thondon's article in the May 1991 issue of *Tibetan Review*). Goldstein's reply to the attacks against him addresses what exactly is to be held of the freedom of opinion among Tibetans in exile: „Mr. Thondon seems to believe that anything which criticizing or contradicting Tibetan nationalist rhetoric coming out of Dharamsala and Tibetan Support Groups must be pro-Chinese. His 'rejoinder', therefore, clearly sets out to discredit - *a priori* - my findings and observations by creating the impression I have a pro-Chinese bias. In using tactics resembling those of the McCarthy era in the US, Mr. Thondon takes sentences out of context, distorts meanings, and worse yet, imputes meanings, that were not there. His response represents the darkest and most unpleasant side of the Tibetan exile movement” (*Tibetan Review*, September 1991, p. 18)

One can safely assume that official statements from Dharamsala will defame as communist propaganda *every* historical analysis of Tibet which strives for neutrality. To give a further example, we quote their reaction to A. Tom Grunfeld's well-researched book, *The Making of Modern Tibet*. „This book”, a review in the *Tibetan Review* says, „can only be considered a sophisticated presentation of Peking's version of events. Although a lot of material is included in the book which is often overlooked by pro-Tibetan, and the author has evidently made an attempt to be impartial [!],his Sinocentric and Marxist seen to be so extreme that he is quite unable to master them” (*Tibetan Review*, July 1989, p. 13).

### The western image of Tibet

Western observers have in the meantime become more and more blind to the shadowy sides of the Tibetan monastic state. In countless recent books and publications the Tibet of old is depicted as a peaceful state, a sanctuary of calm, the heart of compassion, an ecological oasis, an island of wisdom, a refuge of knowledge, a home of the blissful — in short as a lost earthly paradise, inhabited by enlightened, peace-loving people and mysterious, shining gods. As early as the 1940s, Marco Pallis praised the Tibetans as “one of the earth's most civilized peoples” (quoted by Bishop, 1989, p. 231). “All the residents of Lhasa, rich and poor, high and low, are peaceful”, we can read in a contemporary report. “Even the beggars of Lhasa have only to ply their trade for some time in the morning to get enough food for the day. In the evening they are all nicely drunk. The people of Lhasa were physically relaxed, mentally contented and happy. The food of the city is also nutritious. No one has to strive to make a living. Life takes care of itself, as a matter of course. Everything is splendid” (quoted by Craig, 1997, pp.86-87).

The *Kundun* also knows to only report only the most positive aspects of the past of the Land of Snows: “The continuing influence of Buddhism produced a society of peace and harmony. We enjoyed freedom and contentment” (*Panorama* no. 553, November 20, 1997, p. 2). Or at another point: “A poor Tibetan had little cause to envy or be hostile towards the rich lord of his estate, then he knew that everybody harvested what he had sown in his earlier lives. We were quite simply happy” (*Panorama* no. 553, November 20, 1997, p. 2). This image of a poor, deeply religious, pure, and blissfully happy Tibet has meanwhile become fixed in the consciousness of millions.

It has become a favored topic in, amongst other things, the esoteric literature, but above all in the American film industry. The actor Brad Pitt, who played the role of the German teacher of the Dalai Lama, Heinrich Harrer, in a melodramatic story (*Seven years in Tibet*), came to the following conclusion once the film had been shot: “Look at the Tibetans, how poor they are in material terms. And then look at them, how happy and peaceful they are, and their attitude to life with which they go their way. This is simply fantastic. It gets under your skin. It is the hearts of the people which make Tibet into Shangri-La, into paradise. In America this has become a real movement” (*Panorama* no. 553, November 20, 1997, p. 1).

Such glorifications have spread like wildfire in recent years. “The result is a one-sidedly bright image of spiritual purity”, writes Tibet researcher Peter Bishop. “Many contemporary western studies go to the great length to avoid confronting the shadow side of Tibetan spirituality. One can often encounter a sociological naiveté that stands in stark contrast to claims of scientific scrutiny” (Bishop, 1993, p. 73).

In contrast, among the majority of the earlier travelers, the Tibet of old made a deeply negative impression, at least with respect to its social situation, which are these days all too readily dismissed as imperialist arrogance and European racism, although identical criticisms of social conditions were also articulated by admirers of Tibetan culture. Alexandra David-Neel, for example, was just as repelled by the general misery of the country as by the corruption of the priestly caste. Even such a fanatic devotee of the *Kalachakra Tantra* as Nicholas Roerich complained about the general decadence in the Tibet of the time.

Likewise, Heinrich Harrer does not paint a rosy picture of Lhasa in the forties, but rather depicts the land as an unjust albeit fascinating anachronism. In his world famous travelogue, *Seven Years in Tibet*, the German mentor of the young Dalai Lama writes: “The power of the monks in Tibet is unique and can only be compared to a strict dictatorship. They keep a mistrustful eye on every influence from outside which could threaten their power. They themselves are clever enough to not believe in the limitlessness of their strength, but would punish anyone who expressed doubts about this” (Harrer, 1984, p. 71).

Dozens of such assessments like that of the “Dalai Lama’s best friend” can be found in the early literature on Tibet. Many visitors prior to the year 1959 report that dictatorial decisions, the arbitrary use of power, brainwashing and paranoid belief in demons, spiritual control and crawling servility, bitterest poverty and oriental wealth, slavery, serfdom, hunger, diseases, a lack of any hygiene, alcoholism, cruel punishments, torture, political and private murder, fear and violence, theft, robbery, and mutual mistrust were everyday features of the kingdom of the Dalai Lamas. The *Chakravartin* from Lhasa ruled over a vale of tears.

Of course, these negative conditions in no way exclude the possibility that the Land of Snows also had oases of peace, equanimity, erudition, joy, helpfulness, noble-mindedness, or whatever all the Buddhist virtues may be. But what is peculiar about the current image of Tibet is that it only stresses its bright sides and simply denies and represses its shady side.

### **The social structure of former Tibet**

For centuries, the education system, the administration of finances, jurisdiction, and the police lay in the hands of monastic officials. Bureaucracy and sacredness have long been compatible in Asia. Hence we are familiar from the Chinese example with a boring Confucian heaven of civil servants, inhabited by heavenly emperors and their ministers, mandarins, scribes and administrators. Such images are also known in Tibet. We may recall how bureaucratic the administrative structure of the wonderland of *Shambhala* was even imagined to be.

The clerical administration functioned well for as long as it concerned the immediate affairs of a monastery. But it could hardly cope with all the state and social political divisions of the highlands. Western researchers who visited Tibet in the 19th and 20th centuries thus encountered a completely inflexible administration: decision-making processes stretched out over weeks, ignorance and timidity dominated the incapable civil service and nowhere could be anything be attained without bribery. [1]

The social structure of the Tibet of old in no way corresponded to an ideal-typical model of happy individuals it is so often depicted as being. Alongside the omnipresent clergy, the country was ruled by circa 150 to 300 “secular” families. Different groups were distinguished among the aristocracy. The highest stratum traced their ancestry to the old Tibetan kings, then followed the members of the Dalai Lamas’ families. These were ennobled simultaneously with the enthronement of the new god-king. Every family in the country was proud to have a monk as a son. For aristocrats, however, it sufficed that the novice spend just one night in the monastery in order to — for an appropriate fee — be considered ordained. Equipped with the considerable privileges of a lama he could then return home.

The absolute majority of the sedentary population were the “serfs” of a wealthy ruling elite, and saddled with high taxes. The lives of these Tibetans was hard and frugal, they were badly nourished and the medical services now praised in the West were largely unsuccessful. Forms of slavery were known up until the twentieth century — something which is denied these days by the Tibetans in exile. As in India there was a caste of untouchables. Among these were to be counted beggars, prostitutes, blacksmiths (!), fishermen, musicians and actors. In many parts of the country members of these stigmatized groups were not even permitted to become monks.

In contrast, the nomads preserved a relative autonomy, in relation to both the clergy and Chinese or Mongolian invaders. This was even true of their customs and traditions. For example, the killing of animals — strictly forbidden in Buddhism — was normal practice among them. The monks in Lhasa — none of them vegetarians — had the animals slaughtered by Muslim butchers who thus brought the bad karma from the killings down upon themselves, then the consumption of meat is not a “sin” for the Tibetans, but the slaughter of animals decidedly is. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, himself a meat-eater for “reasons of health”, nevertheless campaigns constantly (in the West) for a vegetarian lifestyle.

On the basis of the doctrine of karma, the privileged strata of the Tibet of old saw their advantages as a reward for previous good deeds in past lives. Anyone born into the lower castes had a badly led past life to blame for this and was marked from the outset as a former villain. Such degrading judgments are still prevalent among the Tibetans in exile. Rebecca Redwood French reports on a case, for example, where a child who made strange noises and threw a picture of the Dalai Lamas to the ground was recognized as the reincarnation of a dog (Redwood French, 1995). One can imagine how easily such classifications could lead to a general social arrogance and the abuse of power.

### **Tibetan criminal law**

On the basis of a western orientation towards democracy and human rights, we would have to describe the Tibet of old as a totalitarian state. The legal system was for three hundred years unchangingly based upon the *Ganden Podrang Codex* which was commissioned by the “Great Fifth”. Yet criminal law was already codified in the thirteenth century by the Sakyapa sect. It displayed a strong Mongolian influence, was derived from the *Yasa* (statute-book) of Genghis Khan, and, like the penal system of the European Middle Ages, was extremely cruel. Bizarre mutilations like blindings, the cutting off of limbs or tearing out of tongues, deliberately allowing people to freeze to death, the pillory, shackling, yoking, lifelong imprisonment in damp pits all count as common punishments up until the 20th century, even after the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had introduced a number of moderation’s. In 1940, a British envoy still saw „all over Tibet [...] men who had been deprived of an arm or a leg for theft” (Grunfeld, 1996, p.24).



Since Buddhism fundamentally forbade the killing of a living creature, criminals were often tortured to the point of death and then left to fend for themselves. If they now died of the consequences this was purely a matter of their own karma. These days the power elite in Dharamsala maintains an embarrassed silence about such inhuman acts and brushes them aside as Chinese propaganda; western observers of the Tibet of old and their reports are considered to be

prejudiced and examples of European arrogance. It is truly astonishing how this obscuration of their own dreadful past by the lamas in the West has succeeded. And there is a lot of authentic photographic evidence; a public whipping, which took place in the middle of Lhasa in 1950 was reproduced in the American magazine, *Life*, for example (*Life*, November 13, 1950, pp. 130–136).

The punishment of criminal delinquents was by no means confined to this world, rather the monks condemned people to millions (!) of years in the most dreadful hells, more grotesque and sadistic even than their counterparts in the Christian Middle Ages. Voltaire’s cry of “Remember your cruelties”, by which he primarily meant the politics of the Christian clergy and with which he launched his struggle for human rights, ought to be heard in Dharamsala as well!

Equality before the law varied in Tibet according to social status and wealth. For a murder, one had to pay a so-called “life tax” (*mistong*) to the surviving dependents and could thus avoid criminal prosecution. According to a statement from one of the current Dalai Lama’s brothers, this practice was still being followed in the mid-twentieth century. The price was naturally related to the status



of the victim. Hence, in the fifties the life of a high monastic official was worth between US \$8,000 and \$10,000. (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 24). For the murder of a woman from the lower castes, 10 Liang (about 11 ounces) of silver was to be paid.

### **Clerical commerce**

The Buddhist clergy was also commercially active and the most important monasteries were regarded as significant trading centers. The lamas even dealt in credit. Production was mostly devotional objects which the monks usually manufactured themselves: holy images, statuettes of gods, amulets, and similar things. As services, soothsaying, astrology, and the performance of all manner of rituals were offered for sale. A further source of income was mendicancy. Bands of monks were dispatched through the country to collect donations. They often returned with great cargoes. The rent for a domestic cell within a monastery had to be paid by the monk's relatives. If this was not possible, then the novice had to earn his keep. Franz Michael thus referred to the Tibetan monastery as a „private, profit-making, ‘capitalist’ enterprise. It was capitalist in the sense that the manager's [the administrator of the monastery] aim was clearly and admittedly to make the greatest possible profit for its owner, the incarnation [of the abbot]“ (Michael, 1982, p. 49).

The Lamaist dispensaries bloomed splendidly. The excreta (stools and urine) of higher tulkus were manufactured into pills and sold as valuable medicines. The supreme palliative was of course the excrement of the “living Buddha” (*Kundun*). When the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was staying in China, his chamberlain collected his excrement daily in a golden pot so as to then send it to Lhasa to be manufactured into a medication (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 22).

Traditional Tibetan medicine, now on offer worldwide, and which the western admirers claim can cure cancer, had to be content with less success in its home country. The majority of the population suffered from sexual diseases. Smallpox was widespread and even the Thirteenth Dalai Lama fell victim to it.

### **Political intrigue**

There is no question that the lamas constantly employed their charismatic religious aura to amass worldly power and to generate personal grandeur. “The original Buddha teaching”, Matthias Hermanns writes, “of the ‘flight from worldly life’ was transformed into the Machiavellian principle of unrestrained, moral-free power politics” (Hermanns, 1956, p. 372). Only the monks would never have called it this. It was a part of their ruling ideology to present every expression, no matter how secular and decadent, as the decision of a deity.

An important instrument of Tibetan power politics was the political intrigue. This is admittedly a universal phenomenon, but in Tibet it developed such a high status because the worldly resources available to the lamas were barely adequate to the task of controlling central Asia. Above all there was only a rudimentary army. Hence, time and again it was necessary to seek armed allies, or to play armed opponents off against one another. The great abbots, regents and Dalai Lamas have made extensive use of these strategies over the course of history. They were masters of the game of political intrigue and were for this reason as much feared by the Chinese emperors as the Mongolian Khans.

Poison and assassinations dominated even the internal Lamaist scene. Not all “living Buddhas” reached the age at which they could govern. As we have already described above, the four divine children (the Ninth to Twelfth Dalai Lamas) fell victim to powerful cliques within the clerical establishment. The great abbots were especially feared because of their magical abilities which they employed against their enemies. Alongside the authority of state, magic was the other significant control mechanism of which constant use was made. It played a more important role at an elevated political level than the bureaucratic administration and international diplomacy.

### **More recent developments in the historical image**

The marked differences of opinion in the assessment of the Land of Snows and its culture are not just a product of the western imagination, but must likewise be explained in terms of a gaping disparity between Lamaism's own ideal-typical claims and an "underdeveloped" social reality. A devout Tibetan Buddhist tends to have his eyes fixed upon the ideals of his doctrine (Dharma) and to be blind to the social realities of his country. This is almost always true when the Tibet of old is concerned. As Tantric, the "law of inversion" also grants him the possibility of seeing all that is bad and imperfect in his surroundings as the formative material for the work of spiritual transformation, then according to logic of inversion *Vajrayana* makes the base social reality into an element of the becoming whole, into the *prima materia* of the tantric experiment.

It goes without saying that the lamas thankfully adopted the western ideal-world vision of a peaceful and spiritual Tibet. They combined this with images of paradise from their own, Buddhist mythology and added historical events from the times of the Tibetan kings to the mix. The result was the picture of a society in which all people had lived happily since time immemorial, with a smile on their face night and day. All the needs of a meaningful human existence could be filled in the Tibet of old; nothing was lacking. Everyone respected all others. Humans, animals, and nature lived together peacefully with respect. The ecological balance was assured. The Tibetan kings ruled like goodly fathers and the ecclesiastical princes followed in their stead. Then came the Chinese military with guns and artillery, enslaved the people, tortured the priests, destroyed the culture and planned to totally exterminate the Tibetan race.

With such or similar images, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has up until most recently largely succeeded in implanting the image of a pure, noble, humane, ecological, spiritually highly developed Tibet, this stronghold against materialism and inhumanity, in the awareness of the world's public. Even the German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, normally extremely critical of such matters, becomes rapturous: "Tibet as a symbol of the good, as the last stronghold of spirituality, where wisdom and harmony are preserved, while the world lies in darkness and chaos: Has the 'Roof of the World' become a projection of all our longings? What is the secret behind the western fascination with this distant land, its religion and its god-king?" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 110).

But under the pressure of the vehement critique of the history of the country which has been building since 1996, and which can table indisputable evidence, in Dharamsala one is also becoming more careful of unrestrainedly glorifying the Tibet of old. For this reason the Dalai Lama ever more often now employs the handy formula that Tibet, like all nations, has its good sides and its bad sides; the future will, however, only stress the good. That is more or less all. Hence, the shadows which cast their pall over the history of the Land of Snows are only referred to in very general terms — roughly in the sense that where there is much light there is also much darkness.

It is not our task here to offer an assessment of the improvements much praised by the Chinese which they claim to have brought to the medieval country. We personally believe that in social terms the Tibetan people today live better than they did under the rule of Lamaism. But we in no sense mean by this that the current social situation in the Land of Snows is ideal. We hold many of the accusations and criticisms leveled at Beijing's "minority politics" by the Tibetans in exile to be thoroughly relevant. It can also not be denied that resistance to China is today growing among the Tibetans and that it primarily makes use of religious arguments. Like everywhere in the world, there has also been a religious renaissance on "roof of the world" since the mid-eighties. We see a problem in this Lamaist revival, not in the Tibetan democracy movement. What is peculiar and confusing about the political situation is, however, that the clerical revival itself very successfully pretends to be the democracy movement, and manipulates the awareness of both the Tibetans and the West with this deception.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] On a spiritual plane this bureaucracy corresponded to a meticulously detailed regulation of the monasteries and a dry scholasticism which often resulted in hair-splitting and a unending process of commentary upon the original texts. Thus commentaries upon the commentaries upon the commentaries on

a particular Tantra arose . The Tibetan pleasure in the eternal repetition of the same formulas, the untiring circling of the same topics had led to the invention of the prayer mill — a unique construction which most vividly demonstrates how mechanistic and stereotyped this religion was. This was a metal cylinder, which was rotated for hours by hand by believers, usually with the mantra *om mani padme hum* on their lips.

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[5. BUDDHOCRACY AND ANARCHY: CONTRADICTIONARY OR COMPLEMENTARY?](#)

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 The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 5

The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 5. Buddhocracy and anarchy: contradictory or complementary?

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## 5. BUDDHOCRACY AND ANARCHY: CONTRADICTIONARY OR COMPLEMENTARY?

[The grand sorcerers \(Maha Siddhas\)](#)

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The totalitarian Lamaist state (the Tibetan Buddhocracy), headed by its absolute ruler, the Dalai Lama, was — as contradictory as this may at first appearance seem to be — only one of the power-political forces which decisively shaped the history of Tibet. On the other side we find all the disintegrative and anti-state forces which constantly challenged the clerical sphere as dangerous opponents. As we shall soon see, within the whole social structure they represented the forces of *anarchy*: „Thus, Tibetans understand power both“, writes Rebecca Redwood French, „as a highly centralized, rigidly controlled and hierarchically determined force and as a diffuse and multivalent force“ (Redwood French, 1995, p. 108). What are these „diffuse and multivalent“ forces and how

does the „highly centralized ... and hierarchically determined” Buddhist state deal with them?

The powers which rebelled against the established monastic order in the Tibet of old were legion — above all the all-powerful *nature* of the country. Extreme climatic conditions and the huge territory, barely developed in terms of transport logistics, rendered effective state control by the lamas only partially realizable. But the problems were not just of the factual kind. In addition, from the Tibetan, animist point of view, the wilds of nature are inhabited by countless gods, demons, and spirits, who must all be brought under control: the *lu* — water spirits which contaminate wells and divert rivers; the *nyen* — tree spirits that cause illnesses, especially cancer; the *jepo* — the harmful ghosts of bad kings and lamas who broke their vows; the black *dü* — open rebels who deliberately turn against the Dharma; the *mamo*, also black — a dangerous breed of witches and harpies; the *sa* — evil astral demons; and many others. They all posed a daily threat for body and soul, life and possession in the Tibet of old and had to be kept in check through constant rituals and incantations. This animist world view is still alive and well today despite Chinese communist materialism and rationalism and is currently experiencing an outright renaissance.

But it was not enough to have conquered and enchained (mostly via magic rituals) the nature spirits listed. They then required constant guarding and supervision so that they did resume their mischief. Even the deities known as *dharmapalas*, who were supposed to protect the Buddhist teachings, tended to forget their duties from time to time and turn against their masters (the lamas). This “omnipresence of the demonic” kept the monks and the populace in a constant state of alarm and caused an extreme tension within the Tibetan culture.

On the *social* level it was, among other things, the high degree of criminality which time and again provoked Tibetan state Buddhism and was seen as subversive. The majority of westerners traveling in Tibet (in the time before the Chinese occupation) reported that the brigandry in the country represented a general nuisance. Certain nomadic tribes, the Khampas for example, regarded robbery as a lucrative auxiliary income or even devoted themselves to it full-time. They were admittedly feared but definitely not despised for this, but were rather seen as the heroes of a robber romanticism widespread in the country. To go out without servants and unarmed was also considered dangerous in the Lhasa of old. One lived in constant fear of being held up.

In terms of *popular culture*, there were strong currents of an original, anarchist (non-Buddhist) shamanism which coursed through the whole country and were not so easily brought under the umbrella of a Buddhist concept of state. The same was true of the Nyingmapa sect, whose members had a very libertarian and vagabond lifestyle. In addition, there were the wandering yogis and ascetics as further representatives of “anarchy”. And last not least, the great orders conducted an unrelenting competitive campaign against one another which was capable of bringing the entire state to the edge of chaos. If, for example, the Sakyapas were at the high point of their power, then the Kagyupas would lay in wait so as to discover their weaknesses and bring them down. If the Kagyupas seized control over the Land of Snows, then they would be hampered by the Gelugpas with help from the Mongolians.

The Lamaist state and anarchy have always stood opposed to one another in Tibetan history. But can we therefore say that Buddhism always and without fail took on the role of the state which found itself in constant conflict with all the *non-Buddhist* forces of anarchy? We shall see that the social dynamic was more complex than this. Tantric Buddhism is itself — as a result of the lifestyle which the tantras require — an expression of “anarchy”, but only partially and only at times. In the final instance it succeeds in combining both the authoritarian state and an anarchic lifestyle, or, to put it better, in Tibet (and now in the West) the lamas have developed an ingenious concept and practice through which to use anarchy to shore up the Buddhocracy. Let us examine this more closely through a description of the lives of various tantric “anarchists”.

### **The grand sorcerers (Maha Siddhas)**

The anarchist element in the Buddhist landscape is definitely not unique to Tibet. The founding father, Shakyamuni himself, displayed an extremely anti-state and antisocial behavior and later required the same from his followers.

Instead of taking up his inheritance as a royal ruler, he chose homelessness; instead of opting for his wife and harem, he chose abstinence; instead of wealth he sought poverty. But the actual “anarchist” representatives of Buddhism are the 84 grand sorcerers or *Maha Siddhas*, who make up the legendary founding group of *Vajrayana* and from whom the various lineages of Tibetan Buddhism are traced. Hence, in order to consider the origins of the anti-state currents in Tibetan history, we must cast a glance over the border into ancient India.

All of the stories about the *Maha Siddhas* tell of the spectacular adventures they had to go through to attain their goal of enlightenment (i.e., the ritual absorption of *gynergy*). Had they succeeded in this, then they could refer to themselves as “masters of the *maha mudra*”. The number of 84 does not correspond to any historical reality. Rather, we are dealing with a mystical number here which symbolizes perfection in several Indian religious systems. Four of the *Maha Siddhas* were women. They all lived in India between the eighth and twelfth centuries.

The majority of these grand sorcerers came from the lower social strata. They were originally fishermen, weavers, woodcutters, gardeners, bird-catchers, beggars, servants, or similar. The few who were members of the higher castes — the kings, brahmins, abbots, and university lecturers — all abandoned their privileges so as to lead the life of the mendicant wandering yogis as “drop-outs”. But their biographies have nothing in common with the pious Christian legends — they are violent, erotic, demonic, and grotesque. The American, Keith Dowman, stresses the rebellious character of these unholy holy men: „Some of these Siddhas are iconoclasts, dissenters, anti-establishment rebels. [...] Obsessive caste rules and regulations in society and religious ritual as an end in itself, were undermined by the siddhas’ exemplary free living” (Dowman, 1985, pp. 2). Dowman explicitly refers to their lifestyle as „spiritual anarchism” which did not allow of any control by institutionalism (Dowman, 1985, p. 3).



*Ling-tsang Gyalpo – a great Nyingma Phurba Master*

The relationship with a woman so as to perform the sexual magic rites with her was at the core of every Siddha's life. Whether king or beggar, they all preferred girls from the lower castes — washer-women, prostitutes, barmaids, dancing girls, or cemetery witches.

The grand sorcerers' clothes and external appearance was also in total contradiction to the image of the Buddhist monks. They were demonically picturesque. With naked torsos, the *Maha Siddhas* wore a fur loincloth, preferably that of a beast of prey. Huge rings hung from their ears and about their necks swung necklaces of human bone. In contrast to the ordained *bhiksus* (monks) the grand sorcerers never shaved their heads, instead letting their hair grow into a thick mane which they bound together above their heads in a knot. Their style more resembled that of the Shivaite yogis and it was difficult to recognize them as traditional followers of Gautama Buddha. Many of the *Maha Siddhas* were thus equally revered by both the Shivaite and the Buddhists. From this the Indologist, Ramachandra Rao, concludes that in the early phase of Tantrism the membership of a particular religious current was in no way the deciding criterion for a yogi's world view, rather, it was the tantric technique which made them all (independent of their religious affiliation) members of a single esoteric community (Ramachandra Rao, 1989, p. 42).

The *Maha Siddhas* wanted to provoke. Their "demonic nihilism" knew no bounds. They shocked people with their bizarre appearance, were even disrespectful to kings and as a matter of principle did the opposite of what one would expect of either an "ordinary" person or an ordained *Mahayana* monk. It was a part of their code of honor to publicly represent their mystic guild through completely unconventional behavior. Instead of abstinence they enjoyed brandy, rather than peacemakers they were ruffians. The majority of them took mind-altering drugs. They were dirty and unkempt. They collected alms in a skull bowl. Some of them proudly fed themselves with

human body parts which lay scattered about the crematoria. We have reported upon their erotic practices in detail in the first part of our study, and likewise upon their boundless power fantasies which did not shy at any crime. Hence, the magic powers (*siddhis*) were at the top of their wish list, even if it is repeatedly stressed in the legends that the “worldly” *siddhis* were of only secondary importance. Telepathy, clairvoyance, the ability to fly, to walk on water, to raise the dead, to kill the living by power of thought — they constantly performed wonders in their immediate environs so as to demonstrate their superiority.

But how well can this “spiritual anarchism” of the *Maha Siddhas* be reconciled with the Buddhist conception of state? In his basic character the Siddha is an opponent all state hierarchies and every form of discipline. All the formalities of life are repugnant to him — marriage, occupation, position, official accolades and recognition. But this is only temporarily valid, then once the yogi has attained a state of enlightenment a wonderful and ordered world arises from this in accordance with the law of inversion. Thanks to the sexual magic rites of Tantrism the brothel bars have now become divine palaces, nauseating filth has become diamond-clear purity, stinking excrement shining pieces of gold, horny hetaeras noble queens, insatiable hate undying love, chaos order, anarchy the absolute state. The monastic state is, as we shall show in relation to the “history of the church” in Tibet, the goal; the “wild life” of the *Maha Siddhas* in contrast is just a transitional phase.

For this reason we should not refer to the tantric yogi not simply as a “spiritual anarchist” as does Keith Dowman, nor as a “villain”. Rather, he is a disciplined hero of the “good”, who dives into the underworld of erotic love and crime so as to stage a total inversion there, in that he transforms everything negative into its positive. He is no libertarian free thinker, but rather an “agent” of the monastic community who has infiltrated the red-light and criminal milieu for tactic spiritual reasons. But he does not always see his task as being to transform the whores, murderers and manslaughterers into saints, rather he likewise understands it as being to make use of their aggression to protect and further his own ideas and interests.

### **The anarchist founding father of Tibetan Buddhism: Padmasambhava**

The most famous of all the great magicians of Tibet is, even though he is not one of the 84 *Maha Siddhas*, the Indian, Padmasambhava, the “Lotus Born”. The Tibetans call him *Guru Rinpoche*, “valuable teacher”. He is considered to be not just an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara* (like the Dalai Lama) but is himself also, according to the doctrine of the “Great Fifth”, a previous incarnation of the Tibetan god-king. The reader should thus always keep in mind that the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama is accountable for the wild biography of *Guru Rinpoche* as his own former life.

Legend tells of his wondrous birth from a lotus flower — hence his name (*padma* means ‘lotus’). He appeared in the form of an eight-year-old boy “without father or mother”, that is, he gave rise to himself. The Indian king Indrabhuti discovered him in the middle of a lake, and brought the lotus boy to his palace and reared him as a son. In the iconography, Padmasambhava may be encountered in eight different forms of appearance, behind each of this a legend can be found. His trademark, which distinguishes him from all other Tibetan “saints”, is an elegant “French” goatee. He holds the *kathanga*, a rod bearing three tiny impaled human heads, as his favorite scepter. His birthplace in India, Uddiyana, was famed and notorious for the wildness of the tantric practices which were cultivated there.

Around 780 C.E. the Tibetan king, Trisong Detsen, fetched Padmasambhava into Tibet. The political intentions behind this royal summons were clear: the ruler wanted to weaken the power of the mighty nobles and the caste of the Bon priests via the introduction of a new religion. Padmasambhava was supposed to replace at court the Indian scholar, Shantarakshita, (likewise a Buddhist), who had proved too weak to assert himself against the recalcitrant aristocracy.

Guru Rinpoche, in contrast, was already considered to be a tantric superman in Uddiyana. He

demanded his own weight in gold bars of the king as his fee for coming. When he finally stood before Trisong Detsen, the king demanded that he demonstrate his respect with a bow. Instead of doing so, Guru Rinpoche sprayed lightning from his fingertips, so that it was the king who sank to his knees and recognized the magician as the appropriate ally with whom to combat the Bon priests, likewise skilled in magic things. The guru was thus bitterly hated by these and by the nobles, even the king's ministers treated him with the greatest hostility imaginable.



*Statue of Padmasambhava*

The saga has made Padmasambhava the founding father of Tibetan Buddhism. His life story is a fantastic collection of miracles which made him so popular among the people that he soon enjoyed a greater reverence than the historical Buddha, whose life appeared sober and pale in comparison. Reports about Guru Rinpoche and his writings are drawn primarily from the *termas* (treasures) already mentioned above, which, it is claimed, he himself hid so that they would come to light centuries later.

From a very young age the boy already stood out because of his abnormal and violent nature. He killed a sleeping baby by throwing a stone at it and justified this deed with the pretense that the child would have become a malignant magician who would have harmed many people in his later life. Apart from his royal adoptive father, Indrabhuti, no-one accepted this argument, and several people attempted to bring him to justice. At the urgings of a minister he was first confined to a palace by soldiers. Shortly afterward the guru appeared upon the roof of the building, naked except for a "sixfold bone ornament", and with a *vajra* and a trident in his hands. The people gathered rapidly to delight in the odd spectacle, among them one of the hostile ministers with his wife and son. Suddenly and without warning Padmasambhava's *vajra* penetrated the brain of the boy and the trident speared through the heart of the mother fatally wounding both of them.

The pot boiled over at this additional double murder and the entire court now demanded that the wrongdoer be impaled. Yet once again he succeeded in proving that the murder victims had earned their violent demise as the just punishment for their misdeeds in earlier lives. It was decided to refrain from the death penalty and to damn Padmasambhava instead. Thereupon a troupe of dancing dakinis appeared in the skies leading a miraculous horse by the halter. Guru Rinpoche mounted it and vanished into thin air. Acts of violence were to continue to characterize his future life.



As much as he was a master of tantric erotic love, he decisively rejected the institution of marriage. When Indrabhuti wanted to find him a wife, he answered by saying that women were like wild animals without minds and that they vainly believed themselves to be goddesses. There were, however, exceptions, as well hidden as a needle in a haystack, and if he would have to marry then he should be brought such an exception. After many unsuccessful presentations, Bhasadhara was finally found. With her he began his tantric practices, so that “the mountains shook and the gales blew”.

The marriage did not last long. Like the historical Buddha, Guru Rinpoche turned his back on the entertaining palace life of his adoptive father and chose as his favorite place to stay the crematoria of India. He was in the habit of meditating there, and there he held his constant rendezvous with terrible-looking witches (dakinis). One document reports how he dressed in the clothes of dead and fed upon their decomposing flesh (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 195). He is supposed to have visited a total of eight cemeteries in order to there and then fight out a magical initiation battle with the relevant officiating dakinis.

His most spectacular encounter was definitely the meeting with *Guhya Jnana*, the chief of the terror goddesses, one of the appearances of *Vajrayogini*. She lived in a castle made of human skulls. When Padmasambhava reached the gates he was unable to enter the building, despite his magic powers. He instructed a servant to inform her mistress of his visit. When she returned without having achieved anything he tried once more with all manner of magic to gain entry. The girl laughed at him, took a crystal knife and slit open her torso with it. The endless retinue of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas appeared within her insides. “I am just a servant”, she said. Only now was Padmasambhava admitted.

*Guhya Inana* sat upon her throne. In her hands she held a double-ended drum and a skull bowl and was surrounded by 32 servant girls. The yogi bowed down with great respect and said, “Just as all Buddhas through the ages had their gurus, so I ask you to be my teacher and to take me on as your pupil” (Govinda, 1984, p. 226). Thereupon she assembled the whole pantheon of gods within her breast, transformed the petitioner into a seed syllable and swallowed him. Whilst the syllable lay upon her lips she gave him the sacrament of *Amitabha*, whilst he rested in her stomach he was initiated into the secrets of *Avalokiteshvara*. After leaving her lotus (i.e., vagina) he received the sacraments of the body, the speech, and the spirit. Only now had he attained his immortal *vajra* body.

This scene also grants the feminine force an outstanding status within the initiation process. But there are several versions of the story. In another account it is Padmasambhava who dissolves *Vajrayogini* within his heart. Jeffrey Hopkins even describes a tantra technique in which the pupil imagines himself to be the goddess so as to then be absorbed by his teacher who visualizes himself as *Guru Rinpoche* (Hopkins, 1982, p. 180).

Without doubt, Padmasambhava’s relationship with Yeshe Tshogyal, the *karma mudra* given to him by Indrabhuti, and with Princess Mandavara, the reincarnation of a dakini, display a rare tolerance. Thus within the tradition both yoginis were able to preserve a certain individuality and personality over the course of centuries — a rare exception in the history of *Vajrayana*. For this reason it could be believed that Padmasambhava had shown a revolutionary attitude towards the woman, especially since the statement often quoted here in the West is from him: “The basis for realizing enlightenment is a human body. Male or female — there is no great difference. But if she develops the mind bent on enlightenment, a woman's body is better” (Gross, 1993, p. 79).

But how can this comment, which is taken from a *terma* from the 18<sup>th</sup> century (!), be reconciled with the following statement by the guru, which he is supposed to have offered in answer to Yeshe Tshogyal’s question about the suitability of women for the tantric rituals? „Your faith is mere platitude, your devotion insincere, but your greed and jealousy are strong. Your trust and

generosity are weak, yet your disrespect and doubt are huge. Your compassion and intelligence are weak, but your bragging and self-esteem are great. Your devotion and perseverance are weak, but you are skilled at misguiding and distorting Your pure perception and courage is small” (Binder-Schmidt, 1994 p. 56).

Yet this comment is quite harmless! The “demonic” *Guru Rinpoche* also exists — the aggressive butcher of people and serial rapist. There is for instance a story about him in circulation in which he killed a Tibetan king and impregnated his 900 wives so as to produce children who were devoted to the Buddhist teaching. In another episode from his early life he was attacked out of the blue by dakinis and male dakas. The story reports that “he [then] kills the men and possesses the women” (R. Paul, 1982, p. 163). Robert A. Paul thus sees in Padmasambhava an intransigent, active, phallic, and sexist archetype whom he contrasts with *Avalokiteshvara*, the mild, asexual, feminized, and transcendent counterpole. Both typologies, Paul claims, determine the dynamic of Tibetan history and are united within the person of the Dalai Lama (R. Paul, 1982, p. 87).

Many of the anecdotes about *Guru Rinpoche* which are in circulation also depict him as a boastful superman. He paid for his beer in a tavern by holding the sun still for two days for the female barkeeper. This earned him not just the reputation of a sun-controller but also the saga that he had invented beer in an earlier incarnation. His connection to the solar cults is also vouched for by other anecdotes. For instance, one day he assumed the shape of the sun bird, the *garuda*, and conquered the *lu*, the feminine (!) water spirits. Lightning magic remained one of his preferred techniques, and he made no rare use of it. An additional specialty was to appear in a sea of flames, which was not difficult for him as an emanation of the “fire god”, *Avalokiteshvara*. His *siddhis* (magic powers) were thought to be unlimited; he flew through the air, spoke all languages, knew every magic battle technique, and could assume any shape he chose. Nonetheless, all these magical techniques were not sufficient for him to remain the spiritual advisor of Trisong Detsen for long. The Bon priests and the king’s wife (Tse Pongza) were too strong and Guru Rinpoche had to leave the court. Yet this was not the end of his career. He moved north in order to do battle with the unbridled demons of the Land of Snows. The rebellious spirits, usually local earth deities, constantly blocked his path. Yet without exception all the “enemies of the teaching” were defeated by his magic powers. The undertaking soon took on the form of a triumphal procession.

It was Guru Rinpoche’s unique style to never destroy the opponents he defeated but rather to demand of them a threefold gesture of submission: 1. the demons had to symbolically offer up to him their life force or “heart blood”; 2. they had to swear an oath of loyalty; and 3. they had to commit themselves to fighting for instead of against the Buddhist teachings in future. If these conditions were met then they did not need to abandon their aggressive, bloodthirsty, and extremely destructive ways. In contrast, they were not freed from their murderous fighting spirit and their terrifying ugliness but instead from then on served Tantric Buddhism as it terrible protective deities, who were all the more holy the more cruelly they behaved. The Tibetan Buddhist pantheon was thus gradually filled out with all imaginable misshapen figures, whose insanity, atrocities, and misanthropy were boundless. Among them could be found vampires, cannibals, executioners, ghouls (horrifying ghosts), and sadists. Guru Rinpoche and his later incarnations, the Dalai Lamas, were and still are considered to be the undisputed masters of this cabinet of horrors, who they regally command from their lotus throne.

His victory over the daemonic powers was sealed by the construction of a three-dimensional mandala, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. *Samye* symbolized nothing less than a microcosmic model of the tantric world system, with Mount Meru at its center. The inaugurating ceremony conducted by Padmasambhava was preceded by the banishment of all venomous devils. Then the earth goddess, *Srinmo*, was nailed down, in that Guru Rinpoche drove his *phurba* (ritual dagger) into the ground with a ceremonial gesture. Among those present at this ritual were 50 beautifully adorned girls and boys with vases filled with valuable substances. During the subsequent construction works the rebellious spirits repeatedly tried to prevent the completion of the temple and at night tore down what had been achieved during the day. But here too, the guru understood

how to tame the nightly demons and then make construction workers of them.

In the holiest of holies of Samye there could be found a statue of *Avalokiteshvara* which was said to have arisen of itself. Apart from this, the monastery had something of an eerie and gloomy air about it. The saga tells of how once a year Tibet's terror gods assembled on the roofs of the monastery for a cannibalistic feast and a game of dice in which the stakes were human souls. On these days all the oracle priests of the Land of Snows were said to have fallen into a trance as if under the instruction of a higher power. Because of the microcosmic significance of Samye, its protective god is the *Red Tsiu*, a mighty force in the pandemonium of the highlands. "He possesses red locks, his body is surrounded by a glory of fire. Shooting stars fly from his eyes and a great hail of blood falls from his mouth. He gnashes his teeth. ... He winds a red noose about the body of an enemy at the same time as he thrusts a lance into the heart of another" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 224).

A puzzling red-brown leather mask also hung in the temple, which showed the face of a three-eyed wrathful demon. Legend tells that it was made from clotted human blood and sometimes becomes alive to the horror of all. Alongside the sacred room of the *Red Tsiu* lay a small, ill-lit chamber. If a person died, said the monks, then his soul would have to slip through a narrow hole into this room and would be cut to pieces there upon a chopping block. Of a night the cries and groans of the maltreated souls could be heard and a revolting stench of blood spread through the whole building. The block was replaced every year since it had been worn away by the many blows.

*Guru Rinpoche*, the former incarnation of the Dalai Lama, was a explosive mixture of strict ascetic and sorcerer, apostle and adventurer, monk and vagabond, founder of a culture and criminal, mystic and eroticist, lawmaker and mountebank, politician and exorcist. He had such success because he resolved the tension between civilization and wildness, divinity and the daemonic within his own person. For, according to tantric logic, he could only defeat the demons by himself becoming a demon. For this reason Fokke Sierksma also characterizes him as an uninhibited usurper: "He was a conqueror, obsessed by lust of power and concupiscence, only this conqueror did not choose the way of physical, but that of spiritual violence, in accordance with the Indian tradition that the Yogin's concentration of energy subdues matter, the world and gods" (Sierksma, 1966, p. 111).

The orthodox Gelugpas also pull the arch magician to pieces in general. For example, one document accuses him of having devoted himself to the pursuit of women of a night clothed in black, and to drink of a day, and to have described this decadent practice as "the sacrifice of the ten days" (Hoffmann, 1956, p. 55).

It was different with the Fifth Dalai Lama — for him *Guru Rinpoche* was the force which tamed the wilds of the Land of Snows with his magic arts, as had no other before him and none who came after. As magic was likewise for the "Great Fifth" the preferred style of weapon, he could justifiably call upon *Padmasambhava* as his predecessor and master. The various guises of the guru which appeared before the ruler of the Potala in his visions are thus also numerous and of great intensity. In them *Padmasambhava* touched his royal pupil upon the forehead a number of times with a jewel and thus transferred his power to him. *Guru Rinpoche* became the "house prophet" of the "Great Fifth" — he advised the hierarch, foretold the future for him, and intervened in the practical politics from beyond, which fundamentally transformed the history of Tibet (through the establishment of the Buddhist state) almost 900 years after his death.

The "Emperor" *Songtsen Gampo* and the "Magician-Priest" *Padmasambhava*, the principal early heroes of the Land of Snows, carried within them the germ of all the future events which would determine the fate of the Tibetans. Centuries after their earthly existence, both characters were welded together into the towering figure of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The one represented worldly power, the other the spiritual. As an incarnation of both the one and the other, the Dalai Lama was also entitled and able to exercise both forms of power. Just how close a relationship he brought the

two into is revealed by one of his visions in which Guru Rinpoche and King Songtsen Gampo swapped their appearances with lightning speed and thus became a single person. A consequence of the Dalai Lama's strong identification with the arch-magician was that his chief yogini, Yeshe Tshogyal, also appeared all the more often in his envisionings. She became the preferred *inana mudra* of the "Great Fifth".

Under the rule of Trisong Detsen (who fetched Padmasambhava into Tibet) the famous Council of Lhasa also took place. The king ordered the staging of a large-scale debate between two Buddhist schools of opinion: the teachings of the Indian, Kamalashila, which said that the way to enlightenment was a graded progression and the Chinese position, which demanded the immediate, spontaneous achievement of enlightenment, which suddenly and unexpectedly unfolded in its full dimensions. The representative of the spontaneity doctrine was Hoshang Mahoyen, a master of Chinese Chan Buddhism. In Lhasa the Indian doctrine of stages was at the end of a two-year debate victorious. Hoshang is said to have been banished from the land and some of his followers were killed by the disciples of Kamalashila. But the Chinese position has never completely disappeared from Tibetan cultural life and is again gaining respectability. It is quite rightly compared to the so-called Dzogchen teaching, which also believes an immediate act of enlightenment is possible and which is currently especially popular in the West. For example, the important abbot, Sakya Pandita, attacked the Dzogchen practices because they were a latter-day form of the Chinese doctrine which had been refuted at the Council of Lhasa. In contrast the unorthodox Nyingmapa had no problem with the "Chinese way". These days the Tibetan lama, Norbu Rinpoche, who lives in Italy, appeals explicitly to Hoshang.

Of its nature, the Dzogchen teaching stands directly opposed to state Buddhism. It dissolves all forms at once and it would not be exaggerating if we were to describe it as "spiritual anarchism". The political genius of the Fifth Dalai Lama, who knew that a Buddhocracy is only sustainable if it can integrate and control the anarchic elements, made constant use of the Dzogchen practice (Samuel, 1993, p. 464). Likewise the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama is said to have been initiated into this discipline, at any rate he counts Dzogchen masters among his most high ranking spiritual intimates.

It is also noteworthy that in feminist circles the famous Council of Lhasa is evaluated as the confrontation between a fundamentally masculine (Indian) and a feminine (Chinese) current within Tibetan Buddhism (Chayet, 1993, pp. 322-323).

### **From anarchy to the discipline of the order: The Tilopa lineage**

The reason the *Maha Siddha* Tilopa (10th century) is worthy of our special attention is because he and his pupil Naropa are the sole historical individuals from the early history of the *Kalachakra Tantra* who count among the founding fathers of several Tibetan schools and because Tilopa's life is exemplary of that of the other 83 "grand sorcerers".

According to legend, the Indian master is said to have reached the wonderland of *Shambhala* and received the time doctrines from the reigning Kalki there. After returning to India, in the year 966 he posted the symbol of the *dasakaro vasi* (the "Power of Ten") on the entrance gates of the monastic university of Nalanda and appended the following lines, already quoted above: "He, that does not know the chief first Buddha (*Adi-Buddha*), knows not the *circle of time* (*Kalachakra*). He, that does not know the circle of time, knows not the exact enumeration of the divine attributes. He that does not know the exact enumeration of the divine attributes, knows not the supreme intelligence. He, that does not know the supreme intelligence, knows not the tantrica principles. He, that does not know the tantrica principles, and all such, are wanderers in the orb *transmigratos*, and are out of the way of the supreme triumphator. Therefore *Adi-Buddha* must be taught by every true Lama, and every true disciple who aspires to liberation must hear them" (Körös, 1984, pp. 21-22).

While he was still a very young child, a dakini bearing the 32 signs of ugliness appeared to Tilopa

and proclaimed his future career as a *Maha Siddha* to the boy in his cradle. From now on this witch, who was none other than *Vajrayogini*, became the teacher of the guru-to-be and inducted him step by step in the knowledge of enlightenment. Once she appeared to him in the form of a prostitute and employed him as a servant. One of his duties was to pound sesame seeds (*tila*) through which he earned his name. As a reward for the services he performed, *Vajrayogini* made him the leader of a *ganachakra*.

Tilopa always proved to be the androgynous sovereign of the gender roles. Hence he one day let the sun and the moon plummet from heaven and rode over them upon a lion, that is, he destroyed the masculine and feminine energy flows and controlled them with the force of *Rahu* the darkener. At another point, in order to demonstrate his control over the gender polarity, he was presented as the murderer of a human couple “who the beat in the skulls of the man and the woman” (Grünwedel, 1933, p. 72).

Another dramatic scene tells of how dakinis angrily barred his way when he wanted to enter the palace of their head sorceress and cried out in shrill voices: “We are flesh-eating dakinis. We enjoy flesh and are greedy for blood. We will devour your flesh, drink of your blood, and transform your bones into dust and ashes” (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 207). Tilopa defeated them with the gesture of fearlessness, a furious bellow and a penetrating stare. The witches collapsed in a faint and spat blood. On his way to the queen he encountered further female monsters which he hunted down in the same manner. Finally, in the interior of the palace he met *Inana Dakini*, the custodian of tantric knowledge, surrounded by a great retinue. But he did not bow down before her throne, and sank instead into a meditative stance. All present were outraged and barked at him in anger that before him stood the “Mother of all Buddhas”. According to one version — which is recounted by Alexandra David-Neel — Tilopa now roused himself from his contemplation, and, approaching the queen with a steady gait, stripped her of her clothes jewelry and demonstrated his male superiority by raping her before the assembled gaze of her entire court (Hoffmann, 1956, p. 149).

Tilopa’s character first becomes three dimensional when we examine his relationship with his pupil, Naropa. The latter first saw the light of the world in the year of the masculine fire dragon as the son of a king and queen. Later he at first refused to marry, but then did however succumb to the will of his parents. The marriage did not last long and was soon dissolved. Naropa offered the following reason: “Since the sins of a woman are endless, in the face of the swamp mud of deceptive poison my spirit would take on the nature of a bull, and hence I will become a monk” (Grünwedel, 1933, p. 54). His young spouse agreed to the divorce and accepted all the blame: “He is right!”, she said to his parents, “I have endless sins, I am absolutely without merit ... For this reason and on these grounds it is appropriate to put an end to [the union of] us two” (Grünwedel, 1933, p. 54). Afterwards Naropa was ordained as a monk and went on to become the abbot of what was at the time the most important of the Buddhist monastic universities, Nalanda.

Nevertheless, one day the ecclesiastical dignitary renounced his clerical privileges just as he had done with his royal ones and roamed the land as a beggar in search of his teacher, Tilopa. He had learned of the latter’s existence from the dakini with the 32 markings of ugliness (*Vajrayogini*). While he was reading the holy texts in Nalanda, she cast a threatening shadow across his books. She laughed at him derisively because he believed he could understand the meaning of the tantras by reading them.

After Naropa had with much trouble located his master, a grotesque scene, peerless even in the tantric literature, was played out. Tilopa fooled his pupil with twelve horrific apparitions before finally initiating him. On the first occasion he appeared as a foul-smelling, leprous woman. He then burnt fish that were still alive over a fire in order to eat them afterwards. At a cemetery he slit open the belly of a living person and washed it out with dirty water. In the next scene the master had skewered his own father with a stake and was in the process of killing his mother held captive in the cellar. On another occasion Naropa had to beat his penis with a stone until it spurted blood. At another time Tilopa required of him that he vivisect himself.

In order to reveal the world to be an illusion, the tantra master had his pupil commit one crime after another and presented himself as a dastardly criminal. Naropa passed every test and became one of the finest experts and commentators on the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

One of his many pupils was the Tibetan, Marpa (1012-1097). Naropa initiated him into the secret tantric teachings. After further initiations from burial ground dakinis, whom Marpa defeated with the help of Tilopa who appeared from the beyond, and after encountering the strange yogi, Kukkuri ("dog ascetic"), he returned from India to his home country. He brought several tantra texts back with him and translated these into the national language, giving him his epithet of the "translator". In Tibet he married several women, had many sons and led a household. He is said to have performed the tantric rites with his head wife, Dagmema. In contrast to the yoginis of the legendary *Maha Siddhas*, Dagmema displays very individualized traits and thus forms a much-cited exception among the ranks of female Tibetan figures. She was sincere, clever, shrewd, self-controlled and industrious. Besides this she had independent of her man her own possessions. She cared for the family, worked the fields, supervised the livestock and fought with the neighbors. In a word, she closely resembled a normal housewife in the best sense.

A monastic interpretation of Marpa's "ordinary" life circumstances reveals, however, how profoundly the anarchist dimension dominated the consciousness of the yogis at that time: Marpa's "normality" was not considered a good deed of his because it counted as moral in the dominant social rules of the time, but rather, in contrast, because he had taken the most difficult of all exercises upon himself in that he realized his enlightenment in the so despised "normality". "People of the highest capacity can and should practice like that" (Chökyi, 1989, p. 143). Effectively this says that family life is a far greater hindrance to the spiritual development of a tantra master than a crematorium. This is what Marpa's pupil, Milarepa, also wanted to indicate when he rejected marriage for himself with the following words: "Marpa had married for the purpose of serving others, but ... if I presumed to imitate him without being endowed with his purity of purpose and his spiritual power, it would be the hare's emulation of the lion's leap, which would surely end in my being precipitated into the chasm of destruction" (R. Paul, 1982, p. 234)

Marpa's pragmatic personality, especially his almost egalitarian relationship with his wife, is unique in the history of Tibetan monasticism. It has not been ruled out that he conceived of a reformed Buddhism, in which the sex roles were supposed to be balanced out and which strove towards the normality of family relationships. Hence, he also wanted to make his successor his son, who lost his life in an accident, however. For this reason he handed his knowledge on to Milarepa (1052–1135), who was supposed to continue the classic androcentric lineage of the *Maha Siddhas*.

Milarepa's family were maliciously cheated by relatives when he was in his youth. In order to avenge himself, he became trained as a black magician and undertook several deadly acts of revenge against his enemies. According to legend his mother is supposed to have spurred him on here. In the face of the unhappiness he had caused, he saw the error of his ways and sought refuge in the Buddhist teachings. After a lengthy hesitation, Marpa took him on as a pupil and increased his strictness towards him to the point of brutality so that Milarepa could work off his bad karma through his own suffering. Time and again the pupil had to build a house which his teacher repeatedly tore down. After Milarepa subsequently meditated for seven nights upon the bones of his dead mother (!), he attained enlightenment. In his poems he does not just celebrate the gods, but also the beauty of nature. This "natural" talent and inclination has earned him many admirers up until the present day.

Like his teacher, Marpa, Milarepa is primarily revered for his humanity, a rare quality in the history of *Vajrayana*. There is something so realistic about Marpa's arbitrariness and the despair of his pupil that they move many believers in Buddhism more than the phantasmagoric cemetery scenes we are accustomed to from the *Maha Siddhas* and Padmasambhava. For this reason the ill treatment of Milarepa by his guru counts among the best-known scenes of Tibetan hagiography.

Yet after his initiation events also became fantastic in his case. He transformed himself into all manner of animals, defeated a powerful Bon magician and thus conquered the mountain of Kailash. But the death of this superhuman is once again just as human as that of the Buddha Shakyamuni. He died after drinking poisoned milk given him by an envious person. The historical Buddha passed away at the age of 80 after consuming poisoned pork.

Milarepa's sexual life oscillated between ascetic abstinence and tantric practices. There are several misogynous poems by him. When the residents of a village offered the poet a beautiful girl as his bride, he sang the following song:

*At first, the lady is like a heavenly angel;  
The more you look at her, the more you want to gaze.  
Middle-aged, she becomes a demon with a corpse's eyes;  
You say one word to her and she shouts back two.  
She pulls your hair and hits your knee.  
You strike her with your staff, but back she throws a ladle....  
I keep away from women to avoid fights and quarrels.  
For the young bride you mentioned, I have no appetite.*  
(Stevens, 1990, p. 75)

The yogi constantly warned of the destructive power of women, and attacked them as troublemakers, as the source of all suffering. Like all the prominent followers of Buddha he was exposed to sexual temptations a number of times. Once a demoness caused a huge vagina to appear before him. Milarepa inserted a phallus-like stone into it and thus exorcised the magic. He conducted a *ganachakra* with the beautiful Tserinma and her four sisters.

Milarepa's pupil, Gampopa (1079–1153), drew the wild and anarchic phase of the Tilopa lineage to a close. This man with a clear head who had previously practiced as a doctor and became a monk because of a tragic love affair in which his young wife had died, brought with him sufficient organizational talent to overcome the antisocial traits of his predecessors. Before he met Milarepa, he was initiated into the Kadampa order, an organization which could be traced back to the Indian scholar, Atisha, and already had an statist character. As he wanted to leave them to take the yogi poet (Milarepa) as his teacher, his brethren from the order asked Gampopa, : “Aren't our teachings enough?” When he nonetheless insisted, they said to him: “Go, but [do] not abandon our habit.” (Snellgrove, 1987, vol. 2, p. 494). Gampopa abided by this warning, but likewise he took to heart the following critical statement by Milarepa: “The Kadampa have teachings, but practical teachings they have not. The Tibetans, being possessed by evil spirits, would not allow the Noble Lord (Atisha) to preach the Mystic Doctrine. Had they done so, Tibet would have been filled with saints by this time” (Bell, 1994, p. 93).

The tension between the rigidity of the monastic state and the anarchy of the *Maha Siddhas* is well illustrated by these two comments. If we further follow the history of Tibetan Buddhism, we can see that Gampopa abided more closely to the rules of his original order and only let himself be temporarily seduced by the wild life of the “mountain ascetic”, Milarepa. In the long term he is thus to be regarded as a conqueror of the anarchic currents. Together with one of his pupils he founded the Kagyupa order.

The actual chief figure in the establishment of the Tibetan monastic state was the above-mentioned Atisha (982–1054). The son of a prince from Bengal already had a marriage and nine children behind him before he decided to seek refuge in the *sangha*. Among others, Naropa was one of his teachers. In the year 1032, after several requests from the king of Guge (southern Tibet), he went to the Land of Snows in order to reform Buddhism there. In 1050, Atisha organized a council in which Indians also participated alongside many Tibetan monks. The chief topic of this meeting was the “Re-establishment of religion in Tibet”.

Under Tantrism the country had declined into depravity. Crimes, murders, orgies, black magic, and lack of discipline were no longer rare in the *sangha* (monastic community). Atisha opposed this with his well-organized and disciplined monastic model, his moral rectitude and his high standard of ethics. A pure lifestyle and true orderly discipline were now required. The rules of celibacy applied once more. An orthodoxy was established, but Tantrism was in no sense abolished, but rather subjected to maximum strictness and control. Atisha introduced a new time-keeping system into Tibet which was based upon the calendar of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, through which this work became exceptionally highly regarded.

Admittedly there is a story which tells of how a wild dakini initiated him in a cemetery, and he also studied for three years at the notorious Uddiyana from whence Padmasambhava came, but his lifestyle was from the outset clear and exact, clean and disciplined, temperate and strict. This is especially apparent in his choice of female yiddam (divine appearance), *Tara*. Atisha bought the cult of the Buddhist “Madonna” to Tibet with him. One could say he carried out a “Marianization” of Tantric Buddhism. *Tara* was essentially quite distinct from the other female deities in her purity, mercifulness, and her relative asexuality. She is the “spirit woman” who also played such a significant role in the reform of other androcentric churches, as we can see from the example provided by the history of the Papacy.

At the direction of his teacher, Atisha’s pupil Bromston founded community of Kadampas whom we have already mentioned above, a strict clerical organization which later became an example for all the orders of the Land of Snows including the Nyingmapas and the remainder of the pre-Buddhist Bonpos. But in particular it paved the way for the victory march of the Gelugpas. This order saw itself as the actual executors of Atisha’s plans. With it the nationalization of Tibetan monasticism began. This was to reach its historical high point in the institutionalization of the office of the Dalai Lama.

### **The pre-planned counterworld to the clerical bureaucracy: Holy fools**

The archetype of the anarchist *Maha Siddha* is primarily an Indian phenomenon. Later in Tibet it is replaced by that of the “holy fools”, that is, of the roaming yogis with an unconventional lifestyle. While the “grand sorcerers” of India still enjoyed supreme spiritual authority, before which abbots and kings had to bow, the holy fools only acted as a social pressure valve. Everything wild, anarchic, unbridled, and oppositional in Tibetan society could be diverted through such individuals, so that the repressive pressure of the Buddhocracy did not too much gain the upper hand and incite real and dangerous revolts. The role of the holy fools was thus, in contrast to that of the *Maha Siddhas*, planned in advance and arranged by the state and hence a part of the absolutist Buddhocracy. John Ardussi and Lawrence Epstein have encapsulated the principal characteristics of this figure in six points:

1. **A general rejection of the usual social patterns of behavior especially the rules of the clerical establishment.**
2. **A penchant for bizarre clothing.**
3. **A cultivated non-observance of politeness, above all with regard to respect for social status.**
4. **A publicly proclaimed contempt for scholasticism, in particular a mockery of religious study through books alone.**
5. **The use of popular poetic forms, of mimicry, song, and stories as a means of preaching.**
6. **The frequent employment of obscene insinuations (Ardussi and Epstein, 1978, pp. 332–333).**

These six characteristics do not involve a true anarchist rejection of state Buddhism. At best, the holy fools made fun of the clerical authorities, but they never attacked these as such.

The roaming yogis primarily became famous for their completely free and uninhibited sexual



morals and thus formed a safety valve for thousands of abstinent monks living in celibacy, who were subjected to extreme sexual pressure by the tantric symbolism. What was forbidden for the ordained monastery inmates was lived out to the full by the vagabond “crazy monks”: They praised the size of their phallus, boasted about the number of women they had possessed, and drifted from village to village as sacred Casanovas. Drukpa Kunley (1455–1529) was the most famous of them. He sings his own praises in a lewd little song:

*People say Drukpa Kunley is utterly mad  
In Madness all sensory forms are the Path!  
People say Drukpa Kunley's organ is immense  
His member brings joy to the hearts of young girls!*  
(quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 77)

Kunley's biography begins with him lying in bed with his mother and trying to seduce her. As, after great resistance, she was prepared to surrender to her son's will, he, a master of tantric semen retention, suddenly springs up and leaves her. Amazingly, this uninhibited outsider was a member of the strict Kadampa order — this too can only be understood once we have recognized the role of the fool as a paradoxical instrument of control.

### **An anarchist erotic: The Sixth Dalai Lama**

At first glance it may appear absurd to include the figure of the Sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso (1683-1706), in a chapter on “Anarchism and Buddhocracy”, yet we do have our reasons for doing so. Opinions are divided about this individual: for those who are sympathetic towards him, he counts as a rebel, a popular hero, a *poète maudit*, a Bohemian, a romantic on the divine throne, an affectionate eroticist, as clever and attractive. The others, who view him with disgust, hold him to be a heretic and besmircher of the Lion Throne, reckless and depraved. Both groups nonetheless describe him as extremely apolitical.

He became well-known and notorious above all through his love poems, which he dedicated to several attractive inhabitants of Lhasa. Their self-ironic touch, melancholy and subtle mockery of the bureaucratic Lamaist state have earned them a place in the literature of the world. For example, the following five-line poem combines all three elements:

*When I'm at the Potala Monastery  
They call me the Learned Ocean of Pure Song;  
When I sport in the town,  
I'am known as the Handsome Rogue who loves Sex!*  
(quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 78)

The young “poet prince” stood in impotent opposition to the reigning regent, Sangye Gyatso (1653-1705), who claimed the power of state for himself alone. The relationship between the two does not lack a certain piquancy if, following Helmut Hoffmann, one assumes that the regent was the biological son of the “Great Fifth” and thus stood opposed to the Sixth Dalai Lama as the youthful incarnation of his own father. Nevertheless, this did not prevent him from treating the young “god-king” as a marionette in his power play with the Chinese and Mongolians. When the Dalai Lama expressed own claim to authority, his “sinful activities” were suddenly found to be so offensive that his abdication was demanded.

Oddly enough the sixth *Kundun* accepted this without great pause, and in the year 1702 decided to hand his spiritual office over to the Panchen Lama; his worldly authority, however, which he *de jure* but never *de facto* exercised, he wanted to retain. This plan did not come to fruition, however. A congregation of priests determined that the spirit of *Avalokiteshvara* had left him and appointed an opposing candidate. In the general political confusion which now spread through the country, in which the regent, Sangye Gyatso, lost his life, the 24-year-old Sixth Dalai Lama was also

murdered. Behind the deed lay a conspiracy between the Chinese Emperor and the Mongolian Prince, Lhabsang Khan. Nonetheless, according to a widely distributed legend, the “god-king” was not killed but lived on anonymously as a beggar and pilgrim and was said to have still appeared in the country under his subsequent incarnation, the Seventh Dalai Lama.

Western historians usually see a tragic aesthete in the figure of the poet prince, who with his erotic lines agreeably broke through the merciless power play of the great lamas. We are not entirely convinced by this view. In contrast, in our view Tsangyang Gyatso was all but dying to attain and exercise worldly power in Tibet, as was indeed his right. It is just that to this end he did not make use of the usual political means, believing instead that he could achieve his goal by practicing sexual magic rites. He firmly believed in what stood in the holy texts of the tantras; he was convinced that could gain power over the state via “sexual anarchy”.

The most important piece of information which identifies him as a practicing Tantric is the much-quoted saying of his: „Although I sleep with a woman every night, I never lose a drop of semen” (quoted by Stevens, 1990, p. 78). With this statement he not only justified his scandalous relationships with women; he also wanted to express the fact that his love life was in the service of his high office as supreme *vajra* master. One story tells of how, in the presence of his court, he publicly urinated from the platform roof of the Potala in a long arc and was able to draw his urine back into his penis. Through this performance he wanted to display the evidence that in his much-reproached love life he behaved correctly and in accordance with the tantric codex, indeed that he had even mastered the difficult draw-back technique (the *Vajroli* method) needed in order to appropriate the female seed (Schulemann, 1958, p. 284). It is not very difficult to see from the following poem that his rendezvous were for him about the absorption of the male-female fluids.

*Glacier-water (from) 'Pure Crystal Mountain'*  
*Dew-drops from (the herb) 'Thunderbolt of Demonic Serpent'*  
*(Enriched by) the balm of tonic elixir;*  
*(Let) the Wisdom-Enchantress(es)*  
*be the liquor-girl(s):*  
*If you drink with a pure commitment*  
*Infernal damnation need not be tasted.*  
(see Sorensen, 1990, p. 113)

Other verses of his also make unmistakable references to sexual magic practices (Sorensen, 1990, p. 100). He himself wrote several texts which primarily concern the terror deity, *Hayagriva*. From a tantric point of view his “seriousness” would also not have been reduced by his getting involved with barmaids and prostitutes, but rather in contrast, it would have been all but proven, because according to the law of inversion, of course, the highest arises from the most lowly. He is behaving totally in the spirit of the Indian *Maha Siddhas* when he sings:

*If the bar-girl does not falter,*  
*The beer will flow on and on.*  
*This maiden is my refuge,*  
*and this place my haven.*  
(Stevens, 1990, p. 78, 79)

He ordered the construction of a magnificently decorated room within the Potala probably for the performance of his tantric rites and which he cleverly called the “snake house”. In his external appearance as well, the “god-king” was a *Vajrayana* eccentric who evoked the long-gone magical era of the great Siddhas. Like them, he let his hair grow long and tied it in a knot. Heavy earrings adorned his lobes, on every finger he wore a valuable ring. But he did not run around naked like many of his role-models. In contrast, he loved to dress magnificently. His brocade and silk clothing were admired by Lhasa’s *jeunesse dorée* with whom he celebrated his parties.

But these were all just externals. Alexandra David-Neel's suspicion is obviously spot on when she assumes: "Tsangyang Gyatso was apparently initiated into methods which in our terms allow or even encourage a life of lust and which also really signified dissipation for anyone not initiated into this strange schooling" (Hoffmann, 1956, 178, 179).

We know that in the tantric rituals the individual *karma mudras* (wisdom girls) can represent the elements, the stars, the planets, even the divisions of time. Why should they not also represent aspects of political power? There is in fact such a "political" interpretation of the erotic poems of the Sixth Dalai Lama by Per K. Sorensen. The author claims that the poetry of the god-king used the erotic images as allegories: the "tiger girl" conquered in a poem by the sixth *Kundun* is supposed to symbolize the clan chief of the Mongols (Sorensen, 1990, p. 226). The "sweet apple" or respectively the "virgin" for whom he reaches out are regarded as the "fruits of power" (Sorensen, 1990, p. 279). Sorensen reinterprets the "love for a woman" as the "love of power" when he writes: "We shall tentatively attempt to read the constant allusion to the girl and the beloved as yet a hidden reference to the appropriation of real power, a right of which he [the Sixth Dalai Lama] was unjustly divested by a despotic and complacent Regent, who in actual fact demonstrated a conspicuous lack of interest in sharing any part of the power with the young ruler" (Sorensen, 1990, p. 48).

But this is a matter of much more than allegories. A proper understanding of the tantras instantly makes the situation clear: the Sixth Dalai Lama was constantly conducting tantric rituals with his girls in order to attain real power in the state. In his mind, his *karma mudras* represented various energies which he wanted to acquire via his sexual magic practices so as to gain the power to govern which was being withheld from him. If he composed the lines

*As long as the pale moon  
Dwells over the East Mountain,  
I draw strength and bliss  
From the girl's body  
(Koch, 1960, p. 172)*

- then this was with power-political intentions. Yet some of his lines are of such a deep melancholy that he probably was not able to always keep up his tantric control techniques and had actually fallen deeply in love. The following poem may indicate this:

*I went to the wise jewel, the lama,  
And asked him to lead my spirit.  
Often I sat at his feet,  
But my thoughts crowded around  
The image of the girl.  
The appearance of the god  
I could not conjure up.  
Your beauty alone stood before my eyes,  
And I wanted to catch the most holy teaching.  
It slipped through my hands, I count the hours  
Until we embrace again.  
(Koch, 1960, p. 173)*

### **A tantric history of Tibet**

The following, Seventh Dalai Lama (1708-1757) was the complete opposite of his predecessor. Until now no comparisons between the two have been made. Yet this would be worthwhile, then whilst the one represented wildness, excess, fantasy, and poetry, his successor relied upon strict observance, bureaucracy, modesty, and learning. The tantric scheme of anarchy and order, which the "Great Fifth" ingeniously combined within his person, fell apart again with both of his

immediate successors. Nothing interested the Seventh Dalai Lama more than the state bureaucratic consolidation of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. He commissioned the Namgyal Institute, which still today looks after this task, with the ritual performance of the external time doctrine. Apart from this he introduced a *Kalachakra* prayer into the general liturgy of the Gelugpa order which had to be recited on the eighth day of every Tibetan month. We are also indebted to him for the construction of the *Kalachakra* sand mandala and the choreography of the complicated dances which still accompany the ritual.

Anarchy and state Buddhism thus do not need to contradict one another. They could both be coordinated with each other. Above all, the “Great Fifth” had recognized the secret: the Land of Snows was to be got the better of through pure statist authority, it had to be controlled tantrically, that is, the chaos and anarchy had to be integrated as part of the Buddhocracy. Applied to the various Tibetan religious schools this meant that if he were to succeed in combining the puritanical, bureaucratic, centralizing, disciplined, industrious, and virtuous qualities of the *Gelugpas* with the libertarian, phantasmagorical, magic, and decentralizing characteristics of the *Nyingmapas*, then absolute control over the Land of Snows must be attainable. All the other orders could be located between these two extremes.

Such an undertaking had to achieve something which in the views of the time was impossible, then the *Gelugpas* were a product of a radical critique of the sexual dissolution and other excesses of the *Nyingmapas*. But the political-religious genius of the Fifth Dalai Lama succeeded in this impossible enterprise. The self-disciplined administrator upon the Lion Throne preferred to see himself as Padmasambhava (the root guru of the *Nyingmapas*) and declared his lovers to be embodiments of Yeshe Tshogyal (Padmasambhava’s the wisdom consort). Tibet received a ruler over state and anarchy.

The political mythic history of the Land of Snows thus falls into line with a tantric interpretation. At the beginning of all the subsequent historical events stands the shackling of the chaotic earth goddess, *Srinmo*, by the king, Songtsen Gampo, (the conquest of the *karma mudra* by the yogi). Through this, the power of the masculine method (*upaya*) over the feminine wisdom (*prajna*) invoked in the sexual magic ritual precedes the supremacy of the state over anarchy, of civilization over wilderness, of culture over nature. The English anthropologist, Geoffrey Samuel, thus speaks of a synthesis which arose from the dialectic between anti-state/anarchist and clerical/statist Buddhism in Tibet, and recognizes in this interrelationship a unique and fruitful dynamic. He believes the Tibetan system displays an amazingly high degree of fluidity, openness, and choice. This is his view of things.

But for us, Samuel is making a virtue of necessity. We would see it exactly the other way around: the contradiction between the two hostile extremes (anarchy and the state) led to social tensions which subjected Tibetan society to an ongoing acid test. One has to be clear that the tantric scheme produces a culture of extreme dissonance which admittedly sets free great amounts of energy but has neither led historically to a peaceful and harmonic society to the benefit of all beings nor can do so in the future.

Samuel makes a further mistake when he opposes clerical *state* Buddhism to wild *tantric* Buddhism as equal counterpoles. We have shown often enough that the function of control (*upaya*) is the more important element of the tantric ritual, more important and more steadfast than the temporary letting loose of wild passions. Nevertheless the contradiction between wildness (feminine chaos) and taming (masculine control) remains a fundamental pattern of every sexual magic project — this is the reason that (“controlled”) anarchy is a part of the Tibetan “state theology” and thus it was never, neither for Atisha nor Tsongkhapa, the two founding fathers of state Buddhism, a question of whether the tantras should be abolished. In contrast, both successfully made an effort to strengthen and extend the control mechanisms within the tantric rites.

If the “political theology” of Lamaism applies the tantric pattern to Tibetan society, then — from a

metaphysical viewpoint — it deliberately produces chaos to the point of disintegration so as to *ex nihilo* establish law and order anew. *Internally*, the production of chaos takes place within the mystic body of the yogi via the unchaining of the all-destroying *Candali*. Through this *internal* fragmentation the yogi is completely “freed” of his earthly personality so as to be re-created as the emanation of the spiritual horde of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and protective deities who are at work behind all reality.

This inverted logic of the tantras corresponds on an *outwardly* level to the production of anarchy by the Buddhist state. The roaming “holy fools”, the wild lives of the grand sorcerers (*Maha Siddhas*), the excesses of the founding father, Padmasambhava, the still to be described institution of the Tibetan “scapegoats” and the public debauchery during the New Year’s festivities connected with this, yes, even the erotic games of the Sixth Dalai Lama are such anarchist elements, which stabilize the Buddhocracy in general. They must — following the tantric laws — reckon with their own destruction (we shall return to this point in connection with the “sacrifice” of Tibet), then it legitimates itself through the ability to transform disorder into order, crime into good deeds, decline and fall into resurrection. In order to implement its program, but also so as to prove its omnipotence, the Buddhist Tantric state — deliberately — creates for itself chaotic scenarios, it cancels law and custom, justice and virtue, authority and obedience in order to, after a stage of chaos, re-establish them. In other words it uses revolution to achieve restoration. We shall soon see that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama conducts this interplay on the world stage.

It nonetheless remains to be considered that the authority of Tibetan state Buddhism has not surmounted the reality of a limited dominion of monastic orders. There can be no talk of a *Chakravartin’s* the exercise of power, of a world ruler, at least not in the visible world. From a historical point of view the institution of the Dalai Lama remained extremely weak, measured by the standards of its claims, unfortunately all but powerless. Of the total of fourteen Dalai Lamas only one is can be described as a true potentate: the “Great Fifth”, in whom the institution actually found its beginnings and whom it has never outgrown. All other Dalai Lamas were extremely limited in their abilities with power or died before they were able to govern. Even the Thirteenth, who is sometimes accorded special powers and therefore also referred to as the “Great”, only survived because the superpowers of the time, England and Russia, were unable to reach agreement on the division of Tibet. Nonetheless the institution of the god-king has exercised a strong attraction over all of Central Asia for centuries and cleverly understood how to render its field of competence independent of the visible standards of political reality and to construct these as a magic occult field of forces of which even the Emperor of China was nervous.

### **"Crazy wisdom" and the West**

Already in the nineteen twenties, the voices of modern western, radical-anarchist artists could be heard longing for and invoking the Buddhocracy of the Dalai Lama. “O Grand Lama, give us, grace us with your illuminations in a language our contaminated European minds can understand, and if need be, transform our Mind ...” (Bishop, 1989, p. 239). These melodramatic lines are the work of Antonin Artaud (1896-1948). The dramatist was one of the French intellectuals who in 1925 called for a “surrealist revolution”. With his idea of the “theater of horrors”, in which he brought the representation of ritual violence to the stage, he came closer to the horror cabinet of Buddhist Tantrism than any other modern dramatist. Artaud’s longing for the rule of the Dalai Lama is a graphic example of how an anarchist, asocial world view can tip over into support for a “theocratic” despotism. [1]

There was also a close connection between Buddhism and the American “Beat Generation”, who helped decisively shape the youth revolts of the sixties. The poets Jack Kerouac, Alan Watts, Gary Snyder, Allan Ginsberg, and others were, a decade earlier, already attracted by Eastern teachings of wisdom, above all Japanese Zen. They too were particularly interested in the anarchic, ordinary-life despising side of Buddhism and saw in it a fundamental and revolutionary critique of a mass society that suppressed all individual freedom. “It is indeed puzzling”, the German news magazine

*Der Spiegel* wondered in connection with Tibetan Buddhism, “that many anti-authoritarian, anarchist and feminist influenced former ‘68ers’ [members of the sixties protest movements] are so inspired by a religion which preaches hierarchical structures, self-limiting monastic culture and the authority of the teacher” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 121).

Alan Watts (1915-1973) was an Englishman who met the Japanese Zen master and philosopher, Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, in London. He began to popularize Suzuki’s philosophy and to reinterpret it into an unconventional and anarchic “lifestyle” which directed itself against the American dream of affluence.

Timothy Leary, who propagated the wonder drug LSD around the whole world and is regarded as a guru of the hippie movement and American subculture, made the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* the basis of his psychedelic experiments. [2]

Already at the start of the fifties Allen Ginsberg had begun experimenting with drugs (peyote, mescaline, and later LSD) in which the wrathful tantric protective deities played a central role. He included these in his “consciousness-expanding sessions”. When he visited the Dalai Lama in India in 1962, he was interested to know what His Holiness thought of LSD. The Kundun replied with a counter-question, however, and wanted to find out whether Ginsberg could, under influence of the drug, see what was in a briefcase that was in the room. The poet answered yes, the case was empty. It was! (*Shambhala Sun*, July 1995).

The Tibetan Lama Dudjom Rinpoche, the then leader of the Nyingmapa, later explained the emptiness of all things to him. When Ginsberg asked him for advice about how he should deal with his LSD horror trips, the Rinpoche answered, “If you see something horrible, don’t cling to it, and if you see something beautiful, don’t cling to it” (*Shambhala Sun*, July 1995). This statement became the life-maxim of the beat poets.

In Sikkim in 1962, Ginsberg participated in the Black Hat ceremony of the Karmapa and at that early stage met the young Chögyam Trungpa. Ten years later (1972) he was quoting radical poems together with him at spectacular events. At these “readings” both “Buddha poets” lived out their anarchist feelings to the full, with Lama Trungpa usually being drunk.

It demonstrates his ingenious instinct for mental context that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, when asked whether he ever meditated by Ginsberg, who was in revolt against the state and every form of compulsion, answered, “No, I don’t have to” (*Tricycle*, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 6). In contrast, we have learned from other interviews with His Holiness that he spends four hours meditating every morning, as is proper for a good Buddhist monk. The *Kundun* thus has the appropriate answer ready for whatever the spiritual orientation of his conversation partner may be. Through this he succeeds in making himself popular everywhere.

His nonchalance on this occasion in contrast to the in other contexts strongly emphasized meditative discipline is congruent with Ginsberg’s fundamentally anarchist and anti-authoritarian attitudes. In turn, the latter’s unconventional escapades are compatible with the Tibetan archetype of the “holy fool”. For this reason, Ginsberg also explained his poems to be an expression of “crazy wisdom”, a phrase which soon proved to be a mark of quality for the anti-conventional attitude of many Tibetan lamas in the West.

Within the tantric system of logic, the god-king did not need to fear the chaotic and anti-bourgeois lifestyle of the sixties or its anarchic leaders. Indeed, all the *Maha Siddhas* had been through a wild phase before their enlightenment. The Beat Generation represented an almost ideal starting substance (*prima materia*) for the divine alchemist upon the Lion Throne to experiment with, and he was in fact successful in “ennobling” many of them into propagandists for his Buddhocratic vision.

From the beginning of his artistic career, the famous and unconventional German conceptual artist, Joseph Beuys, saw himself as an initiate of a shamanist/Tartar tradition. He justified his renowned works in felt, a material used primarily by the Mongolian nomads, with his affinity to the culture and religion of the peoples of the steppes. A number of meetings between him and the Dalai Lama occurred, which — without it being much discussed in public — were of decisive significance for the development of the artist's awareness.

In Amsterdam in 1990 famous artists like Robert Rauschenberg and John Cage met with His Holiness. The painter, Roy Lichtenstein, and Philip Glass the composer are also attracted to Buddhism. In 1994 together with the Czech president and former writer, Vaclav Havel, the *Kundun* amused himself over the erotic poems of his anarchist predecessor, the Sixth Dalai Lama.

The god-king is even celebrated in the pop scene. Major stars like David Bowie, Tina Turner, and Patty Smith openly confess their belief in the Buddha's teachings. Monks from the Namgyal monastery, which is especially concerned with the *Kalachakra Tantra*, perform at pop festivals as exotic interludes.

But — as we know — anarchist Buddhism is always only the satyric foreplay to the idea of the Buddhocratic state. Just as wild sexuality is transformed into power in *Vajrayana*, indeed forms the precondition for any power at all, so the anarchist art scene in the West forms the raw material and the transitional phase for the establishment of a totalitarian Buddhocracy. We can observe such a sudden change from anti-authoritarian anarchy into the concept and ideas of an authoritarian state within the person of Chögyam Trungpa, who in the course of his career in the USA has transformed himself from a Dharma freak into a mini-despot with fascistoid allures. We shall later present this example in more detail.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] In 1946 Artaud made a renewed about-face and composed a new pamphlet against the Dalai Lama. In it he attacked the Tibetan clergy as swine, revolting idiots, the cause of syllogism, logic, hysterical mysticism, and dialectic. He accused the lamas of being a warehouse “full of opium, heroin, morphine, hashish, narde, nutmeg, and other poisons” (quoted by Brauen, 2000, p. 92).

[2] See: Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alpher, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

Next Chapter:

### [6. REGICIDE AS LAMAISM'S MYTH OF ORIGIN AND THE RITUAL SACRIFICE OF TIBET](#)

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## The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 6. Regicide as Lamaism’s myth of origin and the ritual sacrifice of Tibet

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# 6. REGICIDE AS LAMAISM’S MYTH OF ORIGIN AND THE RITUAL SACRIFICE OF TIBET

In the first part of our study we described the “tantric female sacrifice” as the central cultic mystery of Tibetan Buddhism. To recap, in the sacrifice feminine energies (*gynergy*) are absorbed in the interests of the androcentric power ambitions of a yogi. The general principle behind this “energy theft”, namely to increase one’s own energy field via the life force of an opponent, is common to all ancient societies. In very “primitive” tribal cultures this “transfer” of life energy was taken literally and one fed upon his slaughtered enemies. The idea that the sacrificer benefited from the strengths and abilities of his sacrifice was a widely distributed topos in the ancient culture of Tibet as well. It applied not just to the sexual magic practices of Tantrism but rather controlled the entire social system. As we shall see, Lamaism sacrificed the Tibetan kingship out of such an ancient way of seeing things, so as to appropriate its energies and legitimate its own *worldly* power.

### Ritual regicide in the history of Tibet and the Tibetan “scapegoat”

The kings of the Tibetan Yarlung dynasty (from the 7th to the start of the 9th centuries C.E.) derived their authority from a divine origin. This was not at all Buddhist and was only reinterpreted as such after the fact. What counted as the proof of their Buddhist origin was a “secret text” (*mani kabum*) first “discovered” by an eager monk 500 years later in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In it the three most significant Yarlung rulers were identified as emanations of Bodhisattvas: Songtsen Gampo (617–650) as an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*, Trisong Detsen (742–803) as an embodiment of *Manjushri*, and Ralpachan (815–838) as one of *Vajrapani*. Their original, pre-Buddhist myth of origin, in which they were descended from an old race of gods from the heavenly region, was thereby forgotten. From now on in a Lamaist interpretation of history, the kings represented the Buddhist law on earth as *dharmarajas* (“law kings”).

Thanks to older, in part contemporary, documents (from the 8th century) from the caves of Dunhuang, we know that the historical reality was more complex. The Yarlung rulers lived and governed less as strict Buddhists, rather they played the various religious currents in their country off against one another in order to bolster their own power. Sometimes they encouraged the Bon belief, sometimes the immigrant Indian yogis, sometimes the Chinese Chan Buddhists, and sometimes their old shamanist magic priests. Of the various rites and teachings they only took on those which squared with their interests. For example, Songtsen Gampo, the alleged incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*, permitted human and animal sacrifices at the ratification of contracts and his own burial as was usual in the Bon tradition but strictly condemned by the Buddhists.

Alone the penultimate king of the dynasty, Ralpachan, can be regarded as a convicted, even fanatical adherent of Buddhism. This is apparent from, among other things, the text of a law he enacted, which placed the rights of the monks far above those of ordinary people. For example, whoever pointed a finger at one of the ordained risked having it cut off. Anyone who spoke ill of the teaching of the Buddha would have his lips mutilated. Anyone who looked askance at a monk had his eyes poked out, and anyone who robbed one had to repay twenty-five times the worth of the theft. For every seven families in the country the living costs of one monk had to be provided. The ruler totally subjected himself to the religious prescriptions and is said to have joined a *Sangha* (monastic community). It is not surprising that he was murdered in the year 838 C.E. after pushing through such a harsh regime.



### *The murder of King Langdarma*

It is just as unsurprising that his brother, Langdarma, who succeeded him on the throne, wanted to reverse the monastic despotism which Ralpachan had established. Langdarma was firmly resolved to work together with the old Bon forces once again and began with a persecution of the Buddhists, driving them out or forcing them to marry. All their privileges were removed, the Indian yogis were hunted out of the country and the holy texts (the tantras) were burned. For the lamas Langdarma thus still today counts as the arch-enemy of the teaching, an outright incarnation of evil.

But his radical anti-Buddhist activity was to last only four years. In the year 842 his fate caught up with him. His murderer rode into Lhasa upon a white horse blackened with coal and swathed in a black cloak. *Palden Lhamo*, the dreadful tutelary deity of the later Dalai Lamas, had commanded the Buddhist monk, Palgyi Dorje, to “free” Tibet from Langdarma. Since the king thought it was a Bon priest who had called upon him, he granted his murderer an audience. Beneath his robes Palgyi Dorje had hidden a bow and arrow. He knelt down first, but while he was still getting up he shot Langdarma in the chest at close range, fatally wounding him, and crying out: “I am the demon Black Yashe. When anybody wishes to kill a sinful king, let him do it as I have killed this one” (Bell, 1994, p. 48). He then swung himself onto his horse and fled. Underway he washed the animal in a river, so that its white coat reappeared. Then he reversed his black coat which now likewise became white. Thus he was able to escape without being recognized.

Up until the present day official Tibetan history legitimates this “tyrannicide” as a necessary act of desperation by the besieged Buddhists. In order to quiet a bad conscience and to bring the deed into accord with the Buddhist commandment against any form of killing, it soon became evaluated as a gesture of compassion: In being killed, Langdarma was prevented from collecting even more bad karma and plunging ever more people into ruin. Such “compassionate” murders, which — as we shall see — were part of Tibetan state politics, avoided using the word “kill” and replaced it with terms like “rescue” or “liberate”. “To *liberate* the enemy of the doctrine through compassion and lead his consciousness to a better existence is one of the most important vows to be taken in tantric empowerment”, writes Samten Karmay (Karmay, 1988, p. 72). In such a case all that is required of the “rescuer” is that at the moment of the act of killing he wish the murdered party a good rebirth (Beyer, 1978, pp. 304, 466; Stein, 1993, p. 219).

### *The sacred murder*

But all of this does not make the murder of King Langdarma an exceptional historical event. The early history of Tibet is full of regicides (the murder of kings); of the eleven rulers of the Yarlung dynasty at least six are said to have been killed. There is even a weight of opinion which holds that ritual regicide was a part of ancient Tibetan cultural life. Every regent was supposed to be violently murdered on the day on which his son became able to govern (Tucci, 1953, p. 199f.).

But the truly radical and unique aspect to the killing of Langdarma is the fact that with him the sacred kingship, and the divine order of Tibet associated with it, finally reached its end. Through his murder, the sacrifice of secular rule in favor of clerical power was completed, both really and symbolically, and the monks’ Buddhocracy thus took the place of the autocratic regent. Admittedly this alternative was first fully developed 800 years later under the Fifth Dalai Lama, but in the interim not one worldly ruler succeeded in seizing power over all of Tibet, which the great abbots of the various sects had divided among one another.

Ritual regicide has always been a major topic in anthropology, cultural studies, and psychoanalysis. In his comprehensive work, *The Golden Bough*, James George Frazer declared it to be the origin of all religions. In his essay, *Totem and Taboo*, Sigmund Freud attempts to present the underhand and collective killing of the omnipotent patriarchal father by the young males of a band of apes as the founding act of human culture, and sees every historical regicide as a repetition of this misdeed. The arguments of the psychoanalyst are not very convincing; nevertheless, his basic idea, which sees an act of violence and its ritual repetition as a powerful cultural performance, has continued to

occupy modern researchers.

The immense significance of the regicide becomes clear immediately when it is recalled that the ancient kings were in most cases equated with a deity. Thus what took place was not the killing of a person but of a god, usually with the melodramatic intent that the ritually murdered being would be resurrected or that another deity would take his place. Nonetheless, the deed always left deep impressions of guilt and horror in the souls of the executors. Even if the real murder of a king only took place on a single occasion, the event was ineradicably fixed in the awareness of a community. It concentrated itself into a generative principle. By this, René Girard, in his study of *The Violence and the Sacred*, means that a “founding murder” influences all the subsequent cultural and religious developments in a society and that a collective compulsion to constantly repeat it arises, either symbolically or for real. This compulsive repetition occurs for three reasons: firstly because of the guilt of the murderers who believe that they will be able to exorcise the deed through repetition; secondly, so as to refresh one’s own strengths through those which flow from the victim to his murderers; thirdly as a demonstration of power. Hence a chain of religious violence is established, which, however, becomes increasingly “symbolized” the further the community is removed from the original criminal event. In place of human sacrifices, the burning of effigies now emerges.

### *The cham dance*

The murder of King Langdarma was also later replaced by a symbolic repetition in Tibet. The lamas repeat the crime in an annually performed dance mystery, the *ham dance*. There are particular sequences which depend upon the location and time, and each sect has its own choreography. There are always several historical and mythical events to be performed. But at the heart of this mystery play there always stands the ritual sacrifice of an “enemy of the religion” for whom Langdarma furnishes the archetype.

As it is a ritual, a cham performance can only be carried out by ordained monks. It is also referred to as the “dance of the black hats” in remembrance of the black hat which the regicide, Palgyi Dorje, wore when carrying out his crime and which are now worn by several of the players. Alongside the Black Hat priests a considerable number of mostly zoomorphic-masked dancers take part. Animal figures perform bizarre leaps: crows, owl, deer, yak, and wolf. *Yama*, the horned god of the dead, plays the main role of the “Red Executioner”.

In the center of a outdoor theater the lamas have erected a so-called *lingam*. This is an anthropomorphic representation of an enemy of the faith, in the majority of cases a likeness of King Langdarma. Substitutes for a human heart, lungs, stomach and entrails are fashioned into the dough figure and everything is doused in a red blood-like liquid. Austine Waddell claims to have witnessed on important occasions in Lhasa that real body parts are collected from the Ragyab cemetery with which to fill the dough figure (Waddell, 1991, p. 527).



*Yama – the death god as Cham dancer*

Afterwards, the masked figures dance around the *lingam* with wild leaps to the sounds of horns, cymbals, and drums. Then *Yama*, the bull-headed god of the dead, appears and pierces the heart, the arms and legs of the figure with his weapon and ties its feet up with a rope. A bell tolls, and *Yama* begins to lop off the victim's limbs and slit open his chest with his sword. Now he tears out the bloody heart and other internal organs which were earlier placed inside the *lingam*. In some versions of the play he then eats the "flesh" and drinks the "blood" with a healthy appetite.

In others, the moment has arrived in which the animal demons (the masked dancers) fall upon the already dismembered *lingam* and tear it apart for good. The pieces are flung in all directions. Assistant devils collect the scattered fragments in human skulls and in a celebratory procession bring them before *Yama*, seated upon a throne. With a noble gesture he takes one of the bloody pieces and calmly consumes it before giving the rest free for general consumption with a hand signal. At once, the other mystery players descend and try to catch hold of something. A wild free-for-all now results, in which many pieces of the *lingam* are deliberately thrown into the crowded audience. Everybody grabs a fragment which is then eaten.

In this clearly cannibalist scene the clerical cham dancers want to appropriate some of the life energy of the royal victim. Here too, the ancient idea that an enemy's powers are transferred to oneself through killing and eating them is the barely concealed intention. Thus every cham performance repeats on an "artistic" level the political appropriation of secular royal power by

Lamaism. But we must always keep in mind that the distinction between symbol and reality which we find normal does not exist within a tantric culture. Therefore, King Langdarma is sacrificed together with his secular authority at every cham dance performance. It is only all too understandable why the Fifth Dalai Lama, in whose person the entire worldly power of the Tibetan kings was concentrated for the first time, encouraged the cham dance so much.

Why is the victim and hence the “enemy of the religion” known as the *lingam*? As we know, this Sanskrit word means “phallus”. Do the lamas want to put to service the royal procreative powers? The psychoanalyst, Robert A. Paul, offers another interesting interpretation. He sees a “symbolic castration” in the destruction of the *lingam*. Through it the monks demonstrate that the natural reproductive process of birth from a woman represents an abortive human development. But when applied to the royal sacrifice this symbolic castration has a further, power-political significance: it symbolizes the replacement of the dynastic chain of inheritance — which follows the laws of reproduction and presupposes the sexual act — by the incarnation system.

In his fieldwork, Robert A. Paul also observed how on the day following a cham performance the abbot and his monks dressed as dakinis and appeared at the sacrificial site in order to collect up the scattered remains and burn them in a fire together with other objects. Since the “male” lamas conduct this final ritual act in the guise of (female) “sky walkers”, it seems likely that yet another tantric female sacrifice is hidden behind the symbolic regicide.

#### *The substitute sacrifice*

The sacrifice of a *lingam* was a particular specialty of the Fifth Dalai Lama, which he had performed not just during the cham dance but also used it, as we shall soon see, for the destruction of enemies. We are dealing with a widely spread practice in Tibetan cultural life. On every conceivable occasion, small pastry figurines (*torma* or *bali*) were created in order to be offered up to the gods or demons. Made from tsampa or butter, they were often shaped into anthropomorphic figures. One text requires that they be formed like the “breasts of Dakinis” (Beyer, 1978, p. 312). Blood and pieces of meat, resins, poisons, and beer were often added. In the majority of cases substitutes were used for these. Numerous Tibet researchers are agreed that the sacrifice of a *torma* involves the symbolic reconstruction of a former human sacrifice (Hermann, Hoffmann, Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Paul, Sierksma, Snellgrove, and Waddell).

Now there are several views about what the offering of a substitute sacrifice signifies. For example, all that is evil, even one’s own bad features, can be projected onto the *torma* so as to then be destroyed. Afterwards, the sacrificer feels cleansed and safe from harmful influences. Or the sacrifice may be offered up for the demons to devour, whether to render them favorable or to avert them from harming a particular individual. Here we are dealing with the *bali* ritual codified by the Fifth Dalai Lama. The purpose of the ceremony consists in hampering the dakinis or other malignant spirits from taking a sick or dying person with them into their domain. So that the patient is not tempted by them, a lama depicts the land of the dakinis in a truly terrible light and portrays its female inhabitants as monsters:

*They consume warm human flesh as food  
They drink warm human blood as a beverage  
They lust to kill and work to dismember  
There is not a moment in which they cease to battle and fight.*  
And the addressee is then abjured:  
*Please do not go to such a country,  
stay in the homeland of Tibet!*  
(Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 463)

With this, the soul of the sick person has indeed been deterred, but the dakinis who wanted to seize him or her have not yet been satisfied. For this reason the texts recommend a substitute sacrifice. The female cannibals are offered a *bali* pyramid consisting of a skull, torn-off strips of skin, butter

lamps filled with human fat, and various organs floating in a strong-smelling liquid made from brain, blood and gall. This is supposed to assuage the greed of the “sky walkers” and distract them from the sick person (Herrmann-Pfand, 1992, p. 466).

### **The Tibetan “scapegoat”**

The anthropologist, James George Frazer, likewise draws a connection between ritual regicide and the symbolic sacrificial rites practiced by many peoples at the beginning of a year. The past year, represented by the old ruler, is sacrificed, and the new year celebrates its entry in the figure of a young king. In the course of time the reigning kings were able to escape this rite, deeply anchored in human history, by setting up substitutes upon whom the ritual violence could be let out. Such sacrificial substitutes for the king were attributed with all kinds of negative features like illnesses, weaknesses, barrenness, poverty, and so on, so that these would no longer be a burden on the community following the violent death of the substitute.

This role of a human “scapegoat” during the Tibetan New Year’s feast (*Monlam*) was taken on by a person who bore the name of the “king of impurity”, “ox demon”, or “savior king”. Half of his face was painted white and the other half black, and he was dressed in new clothes. He then took to the streets of Lhasa, swinging a black yak’s tail as a scepter, to collect offerings and to appropriate things which appealed to him. Many also gave money, but the former owners invested all of these objects with every misfortune with which they might reckon in the future.

This continued for several days. At a pre-arranged time the “ox demon” appeared in front of Lhasa’s cathedral, the Jokhang. There a monk from the Drepung monastery was waiting for him in a magnificent robe. In the scene which was now played out he represented the Dalai Lama. First up there was a violent battle of words in which the scapegoat mocked the Buddhist teachings with a sharp tongue. Thereupon the pretend Dalai Lama challenged him to a game of dice. If the “king of impurity” were to win, the disastrous consequences for the whole country would have been immense. But preparations had been made to ensure that this did not happen, then he had a die which displayed a one on every face, whilst his opponent always threw a six. After his defeat the loser fled from the town on a white horse. The mob followed him as far as it could, shooting at him with blanks and throwing stones. He was either driven into the wilderness or taken prisoner and locked in one of the horror chambers of the Samye monastery for a time. It was considered a good omen if he died.

Even if he was never deliberately killed, he often paid the highest price for his degrading treatment. Actually his demise was expected, or at least hoped for. It was believed that scapegoats attracted all manner of rare illnesses or died under mysterious circumstances. If the expelled figure nonetheless save his skin, he was permitted to return to Lhasa and once again take on the role.

Behind the “scapegoat ritual” — an event which can be found in ancient cultures all the world — there is the idea of purification. The victim takes on every repulsiveness and all possible besmirchment so as to free the community of these. As a consequence he must become a monster which radiates with the power of darkness. According to tradition, the community has the right, indeed the duty, to kill or drive off with an aggressive act this monster who is actually nothing more than the repressed shadowy side of his persecutors. The sacrificers are then freed of all evil, which the scapegoat takes to its death with him, and society returns to a state of original purity. Accordingly, the ritual power applied is not a matter of self-interest, but rather a means of attaining the opposite, social peace and an undisturbed state. The scapegoat — René Girard writes — has to “take on the evil power in total so as to transform it via his death into benevolent power, into peace and fruitfulness. ... He is a machine which changes the sterile and contagious power into positive cultural values” (Girard, 1987, pp. 143, 160).



*The scapegoat of Gyantse, adorned with animal intestines*

Yet it is not just an annual psycho-purification of Lamaism which is conducted through the Tibetan Monlam feast, but also the collective cleansing of the historical defilement which bleeds as a deep wound in the subconscious of the monastic state. The driving off or killing of the scapegoat is, just like the cham dance, a ritual of atonement for the murder of King Langdarma. In fact, numerous symbolic references are made to the original deed in the scenario of the festivities. For example, the “ox demon” (one of the names for the scapegoat) appears colored in black and white and flees on a white horse just like the regicide, Palgyi Dorje. The “ox” was also Langdarma’s totem animal. During the feast, from a mountain where the grave of the apostate king could be found, units of the Tibetan Artillery fired off three cannon, two of which were called the “old and the young demoness”. “Since the Dalai Lamas are actually, in a broad historical sense, beneficiaries of Palgyi Dorje’s [Langdarma’s murderer] crime,” the ethnologist Robert A. Paul writes, “we may suppose that part of the purpose of the annual scapegoat ritual is to allow the guilt for that act to be expressed through the figure of the Ox-demon; and then to reassert the legitimacy of the Dalai Lama’s reign by demonstrating his ability to withstand this challenge to his innocence” (R. Paul, 1982, p. 296).

Authors like James George Frazer and Robert Bleichsteiner are even of the opinion that the “king of impurity” in the final instance represents the Dalai Lama himself, who indeed became the “illegitimate” successor of the killed regent as the worldly ruler of Tibet. “The victim in older times was certainly the king himself,” Bleichsteiner informs us, “who was offered up at the beginning of a new epoch as atonement and guarantee for the well-being of the people. Hence the lamaist priest-kings were also considered to be the atoning sacrifice of the New Year ... “ (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 213). It also speaks in favor of this thesis that in early performances of the rite the substitute was required to be of the same age as the god-king and that during the ceremony a doll which represents the Dalai Lama is carried along (Richardson, 1993, p. 64). The evil, dark,

despotic, and unfortunate shadow of the hierarch would then be concentrated in the scapegoat, upon whom the populace and the hordes of monks let loose could let out their rage.

Then, once the “Great Fifth” had institutionalized the celebrations, anarchy reigned in Lhasa during the period of the New Year’s festivities: 20,000 monks from the most varied monasteries had *cart blanche*. Everything which was normally forbidden was now permitted. In bawling and wildly gesticulating groups the “holy” men roamed the streets. Some prayed, others cursed, yet others gave vent to wild cries. They pushed each other around, they argued with one another, they hit each other. There were bloody noses, black eyes, battered heads and torn clothes. Meditative absorption and furious rage could each become the other in an instant. Heinrich Harrer, who experienced several feasts at the end of the forties, describes one of them in the following words: “As if awakened from a hypnosis, in this instant the tens of thousands plunge order into chaos. The transition is so sudden that one is stunned. Shouting, wild gesticulation ... they trample one another to the ground, almost murder each other. The praying [monks], still weeping and ecstatically absorbed, become enraged madmen. The monastic soldiers begin their work! Huge blokes with padded shoulders and blackened faces — so that the deterrent effect is further enhanced. They ruthlessly lay into the crowd with their staffs. ... Howling, they take the blows, but even the beaten return again. As if they were possessed by demons” (Harrer, 1984, p. 142).

The Tibetan feast of Monlam is thus a variant upon the paradoxes we have already examined, in which, in accordance with the tantric law of inversion, anarchy and disorder are deliberately evoked so as to stabilize the Buddhocracy in total. During these days, the bottled- up anti-state aggressions of the subjects can be completely discharged, even if only for a limited time and beneath the blows of the monastic soldiers’ clubs.

It was once again the “Great Fifth” who recognized the high state-political value of the scapegoat play and thus made the New Year’s festival in the year 1652 into a special state occasion. From the Potala, the “seat of the gods”, the incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* could look down smiling and compassionately at the delirium in the streets of Lhasa and at the sad fate of his disgraceful *doppelganger* (the scapegoat).

The scapegoat mechanism can be considered part of the cultural heritage of all humanity. It is astonishingly congruent with the tantric pattern in which the yogi deliberately produces an aggressive, malicious fundamental attitude in order to subsequently transform it into its opposite via the “law of inversion”: the poison becomes the antidote, the evil the cure. We have indicated often enough that this does not at all work out to plan, and that rather, after practicing the ritual the “healing priests” themselves can become the demons they ostensibly want to drive out.

Summarizing, we can thus say that, over and above the “tantric female sacrifice”, Tibetan Buddhism has made all possible variants of the symbolic sacrifice of humans an essential element of its cultural life. This is also no surprise, then the whole tantric idea is fundamentally based upon the sacrifice of the human (the person, the individual, the human body) to the benefit of the gods or of the yogi. At least in the imaginations of the lamas there are various demons in the Tibetan pantheon who perform the sacrificial rites or to whom the sacrifices are made. The fiends thus fulfill an important task in the tantric scenario and serve the teaching as tutelary deities (*dharmapalas*). As reward for their work they demand still more human blood and still more human flesh. Such cannibal foods are called *kangdza* in Tibetan. They are graphically depicted as dismembered bodies, hearts that have been torn out, and peeled skins in ghastly thangkas, which are worshipped in sacred chambers dedicated to the demons themselves. *Kangdza* means “wish-fulfilling gifts”, unmistakably indicating that people were of the opinion that they could fulfill their greatest wishes through human sacrifices. That this really was understood thus is demonstrated by the constant use of parts of human corpses in Tibetan magic, to which we devote the next chapter.

### **Ritual murder as a current issue among exile Tibetans**

The terrible events of February 4, 1997 in Dharamsala, the Indian seat of government of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, demonstrate that ritual human sacrifice among the Tibetans is in no way a thing of the past but rather continues to take place up until the present day. According to the police report on that day six to eight men burst into the cell of the 70-year-old lama, Lobsang Gyatso, the leader of the Buddhist dialectic school, and murdered him and two of his pupils with numerous stab wounds. The bloody deed was carried out in the immediate vicinity of the Dalai Lama's residence in a building which forms part of the Namgyal monastery. The Namgyal Institute is, as we have already mentioned on a number of occasions, responsible for the ritual performance of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The world press — in as far as it reported the crime at all — was horrified by the extreme cruelty of the murderers. The victims' throats had been slit and according to some press reports their skin had been partially torn from their bodies (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1997, No. 158, p. 10). There is even a rumor among the exile Tibetan community that the perpetrators had sucked out the victims' blood in order to use it for magical purposes. All this took place in just under an hour.

The Indian criminal police and the western media were united in the view that this was a matter of a ritual murder, since money and valuable objects, such as a golden Buddha which was to be found there for example, were left untouched by the murderers. The “mouthpiece” for the Dalai Lama in the USA, Robert Thurman, also saw the murder as a ritual act: “The three were stabbed repeatedly and cut up in a way that was like exorcism.” (*Newsweek*, May 5, 1997, p. 43).

In general the deed is suspected to have been an act of revenge by followers of the protective deity, *Dorje Shugden*, of whom Lobsang Gyatso was an open opponent. But to date the police have been unable to produce any real evidence. In contrast, the *Shugden* followers see the murders as an attempt to marginalize them as criminals by the Dalai Lama. (We shall discuss this in the next chapter.)

As important as it may be that the case be solved, it is not of decisive significance for our analysis who finally turns out to have committed the deed. We are under any circumstances confronted with an event here, in which the tantric scheme has become shockingly real and current. The ritual murders of 4 February have put a final end to the years of “scientific” discussion around the question of whether the calls to murder in the tantras (which we have considered in detail in the first part of this study) are only a symbolic directive or whether they are to be understood literally. Both are the case. On this occasion, this has even been perceived in the western press, such as, for example, when the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* asks: “Exorcist ritual murders? Fanatics even in the most gentle of all religions? For many fans of Buddhism in the West their happy world falls a part.” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1997, No. 158, p. 10). It nonetheless remains unclear which metaphysical speculations were involved in the bloody rite of February 4.

### **The ritual sacrifice of Tibet**

In dealing with the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese, the otherwise most “mystical” lamas prefer to argue in exclusively western and non-mythological terms. There is talk of breaches of human rights, international law, and “cultural genocide”. If, however, we consider the subjugation of the Land of Snows and the exodus of the Dalai Lama from a symbolic/tantric viewpoint, then we reach completely different conclusions.

Primarily, as we have extensively demonstrated, a politically oriented tantra master (especially if he practices the *Kalachakra Tantra* as does the Dalai Lama) is not at all interested in strengthening and maintaining an established and orderly state. Such a conservative position is valid only for as long as it does not stand in the way of the final goal, the conquest of the world by a Buddhocracy. This imperial path to world control is paved with sacrifices: the sacrifice of the *karma mudra* (the wisdom consort), the sacrifice of the pupil's individual personality, the symbolic sacrifice of worldly kingship, etc.



Just as the guru is able to evoke mental states in his *sadhaka* (pupil) which lead to the fragmentation of the latter's psyche so that he can be reborn on a *higher* spiritual plane, so too he applies such deliberately initiated practices of dismemberment to the state and society as well, in order for these to re-emerge on a *higher* level. Just as the tantra master dissolves the structures of his human body, he can likewise bring down the established structures of a social community. Then the Buddhist/tantric idea of the state has an essentially symbolic nature and is fundamentally no different to the procedures which the yogi performs within his energy body and through his ritual practices.

From the viewpoint of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, all the important events in Tibetan history point eschatologically to the control of the universe by a *Chakravartin* (world ruler). The precondition for this is the destruction of the old social order and the construction of a new society along the guidelines laid down in the Dharma (the teaching). Following such a logic, and in accordance with the tantric "law of inversion", the destruction of a national Tibet could become the requirement for a *higher* transnational Buddhocratic order.

Have — we must now ask ourselves — the Tibetan people been sacrificed so that their life energies may be freed for the worldwide spread of Lamaism? As fantastic and cynical as such a mythical interpretation of history may sound, it is surreptitiously widely distributed in the occult circles of Tantric Buddhism. Proud reference is made to the comparison with Christianity here: just as Jesus Christ was sacrificed to save the world, so too the Tibet of old was destroyed so that the Dharma could spread around the globe.

In an insider document which was sent to the Tibetologist Donald S. Lopez, Jr. in 1993, it says of the Chinese destruction of Tibetan culture: "From an esoteric viewpoint, Tibet has passed through the burning ground of purification on a national level. What is the 'burning ground'? When a developing entity, be it a person or a nation (the dynamic is the same), reaches a certain level of spiritual development, a time comes for the lower habits, old patterns, illusions and crystallized beliefs to be purified so as to better allow the spiritual energies of inner being to flow through the instrument without distortion ..... After such a purification the entity is ready for the next level of expansion in service. The Tibetans were spiritually strong enough to endure this burning ground so as to pave the way for its defined part in building the new world". In this latter, the authors assure us, the "first Sacred Nation" will become a "point of synthesis" of "universal love, wisdom and goodwill" (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 204).

Or was the exodus of the omnipotent I and the killing of many Tibetan believers by the Chinese even "planned" by the Buddhist side, so that Tantrism could conquer the world? The Tibetologist Robert Thurman (the "mouthpiece of the Dalai Lama" in America) discusses such a theory in his book *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*. "The most compelling, if somewhat dramatic [theory]," Thurman writes, "is that Vajrapani (the Bodhisattva of power) emanated himself as Mao Tse-tung and took upon himself the heinous sin of destroying the Buddha Dharma's institutions [of Tibet], along with many beings, for three main reasons: to prevent other, ordinarily human, materialists from reaping the consequences of such terrible acts; to challenge the Tibetan Buddhists to let go the trapping of their religion and philosophy and force themselves to achieve the ability to embody once again in this terrible era their teachings of detachment, compassion, and wisdom, and to scatter the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist teachers and disseminate their teachings throughout the planet among all the people, whether religious or secular, at this apocalyptic time when humanity must make a quantum leap from violence to peacefulness in order to preserve all life on earth" (quoted in Lopez, 1998, p. 274).

Such visions of purification and sacrifice may sound bizarre and fantastic to a western historian, but we must nevertheless regard them as the expression of an ancient culture which recognizes the will and the plan of a supreme being behind every historical suffering and every human catastrophe. The catastrophe of Tibet is foreseen in the script of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Thus for the current Dalai Lama his primary concern is not the freedom of the nation of Tibet, but rather the

spread of Tantric Buddhism on a global scale. “My main concern, my main interest, is the Tibetan Buddhist culture, not just political independence”, he said at the end of the eighties year in Strasbourg (*Shambhala Sun*, Archive, November 1996).

How deeply interconnected politics and ritual are felt to be by the *Kundun*'s followers is shown by the vision described by a participant at a conference in Bonn (“Mythos Tibet”) who had traveled in Tibet: he had suddenly seen the highlands as a great mandala. Exactly like the sand mandala in the *Kalachakra Tantra* it was then destroyed so that the whole power of Tibet could be concentrated in the person of the Dalai Lama as the world teacher of the age to come.

As cynical as it may sound, through such imaginings the suffering the Tibetans have experienced under Chinese control attain a deeper significance and spiritual solemnity. It was the greatest gift for the distribution of Tibetan Buddhism in the West. [1]

The spectacular self-sacrifice has since the spring of 1998 become a new political weapon for both the Tibetans who remained and those in exile: in 1997, the majority of monks from the Tibetan Drepung monastery were convinced that the Dalai Lama would soon return with the support of the US in order to free Tibet. Thus, now would be the right moment to sacrifice oneself for His Holiness, for the religion, and for Tibet (Goldstein, 1998, p. 42). To bring the situation in their home country to the world's attention and above all to raise the question of Tibet in the UN, Tibetan monks protested in India with a so-called “hunger strike to the death”. When the Indian police admitted the protesters to hospital after a number of days, the 50-year-old monk, Thubten Ngodub, publicly self-immolated, with the cry of “Long live the Dalai Lama!” on his lips. [2] He was declared a martyr of the nation and his funeral in Dharamsala was a moving demonstration which went on for hours. Youths wrote *Free Tibet* on their chests in their own blood. In a public communiqué from the youth organization (TYC) it was said that “The Tibetan people have sent a clear message to the world that they can sacrifice themselves for the cause of an independent Tibet ... More blood will flow in the coming days” (AFP, New Delhi, April 29, 1998). The names of many more Tibetans who were prepared to die for their country were placed on a list.

On the one hand, the Dalai Lama condemned such proceedings because they were a resort to violent means (suicide is violence directed against the self), on the other hand he expressed that he admired the motivation and resolve of these Tibetans (who sacrifice themselves) (*The Office of Tibet*, April 28, 1998). He visited the hunger strikers and blessed the national martyr, Ngodub, in a special ritual. The grotesque aspect of the situation was that, at the same time and under American pressure, the *Kundun* was preparing for an imminent encounter with the Chinese. Whilst he repeatedly stresses in public that he renounced an “independent Tibet”, his subjects sacrifice themselves for exactly this demand. We shall come to speak later of the discordance which arises between Lamaism and the national question.

### **Real violence and one's own imaginings**

Is perhaps the violence which the Land of Snows has had to experience under Chinese occupation a mirror image of its own culture? If we look at the scenes of unbounded suffering and merciless sadism which are depicted upon countless thangkas, then we have before our eyes an exact visual prognosis of what was done to the Tibetans by the Chinese. In just casting a glance at in the Tibetan Book of the Dead one is at once confronted with the same infernal images as are described by Tibetan refugees. The history of horrors is — as we know — codified in both the sacred iconography of Tantric Buddhism and in the unfolding scenes of the tantras.

In light of the history of Tibet, must Lamaism's images of horror just be seen as a prophecy of events to come, or did they themselves contribute to the production of the brutal reality? Does the deed follow the meditative envisioning, like thunder follows lightning? Is the Tibetan history of suffering aligned with a tantric myth? Were the Buddhist doctrine of insight applied consistently, it would have to answer this question with “yes”. Joseph Campbell, too, is one of the few western

authors to describe the Chinese attacks, which he otherwise strongly criticizes, as a “vision of the whole thing come true, the materialization of the mythology in life” and to have referred to the depiction of the horrors in the tantras (Joseph Campbell, 1973, p. 516).

If one spins this mythological net out further, then the following question at once presents itself: Why were Tibet and the “omnipotent” lamas not protected by their deities? Were the wrathful *dharmapalas* (tutelary deities) too weak to repel the “nine-headed” Chinese dragon and drive it from the “roof of the world”? Perhaps the goddess *Palden Lhamo*, the female protective spirit of the Dalai Lama and the city of Lhasa, had freed herself from the clutches of the andocentric clergy and turned against her former masters? Had the enchained *Srinmo*, the mother of Tibet, joined up with the demons from the Middle Kingdom in order to avenge herself upon the lamas for nailing her down? Or was the exodus of the omnipotent lamas intentional, in order to now conquer the world?

Such questions may also appear bizarre and fantastic to a western historian; but for the Tibetan/tantric “discipline of history”, which suspects superhuman forces are at work behind politics, they do make sense. In the following chapter we would like to demonstrate how decisively such an atavistic view influences the politics of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama through a consideration of the Tibetan oracle system and the associated *Shugden* affair.

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**Footnotes:**

[1] On the other hand, the “sacrificing” of Tibet is lamented on all sides or seven linked to the fate of all humanity: “If one allows such a spiritual society to be destroyed,” writes the director Martin Scorsese, “we lose a part of our own soul” (*Focus*, 46/1997, p. 168).

[2] There is a passage in the *Lotus Sutra* in which a Bodhisattva burns himself up as a sacrifice for a Buddha.

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## 7. THE WAR OF THE ORACLE GODS AND THE SHUGDEN AFFAIR

The Tibetans can be described without exaggeration as being “addicted to oracles”. The most varied methods of augury and clairvoyance have been an everyday presence in the Land of Snows since time immemorial. The following types of oracle, all of which are still employed (among the Tibetans in exile as well), are described on an Internet site: doughball divination, dice divination, divination on a rosary, bootstrap divination, the interpretation of “incidental” signs, clairvoyant dreams, examining flames, observing a butter lamp, mirror divination, shoulder-blade divination, and hearing divination (HPI 10). When the “Great Fifth” seized worldly power in Tibet in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, he founded the institution of a state oracle so as to be able to obtain divinatory advice about the business of government. This is a matter of a human medium who serves as the mouthpiece of a particular deity. Still today, this form of “supernatural” consultation forms an important division within the Tibetan government in exile. The opinions of oracles are obtained for all important political events, often by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in person. He is — in the accusations of his opponents — all but obsessed by divinations; it is primarily the prophecies of the state oracle which are mentioned. But before we examine this accusation, we should take a closer look at the history and character of this “state oracle”.

### The Tibetan state oracle

In the Tibet of old, the state oracle (or rather its human medium) lived, as one of the highest ranking lamas in the Nechung residence. “It” had at its command a considerable “court” and celebrated its liturgies in a temple of its own. The predominant color of the interior temple was black. On the walls of the gloomy shrine hung mysterious weapons, from which great magical effects were supposed to emanate. In the corners lurked stuffed birds, tigers, and leopards. Pictures of terror gods looked back at the visitor, who suddenly stood in front of a mask of dried leather feared across the whole country. Among the chief iconographic motifs of the temple was the depiction of human ribcages.

At the beginning of an oracle session, the Nechung Lama is sent into a trance via all manner of ritual song and incense. After a while eyes close, his facial muscles begin to twitch, his brow becomes dark red and glistens with sweat. The prophet god then visibly enters him, then during his trance the medium develops — and this is confirmed by photographs and western eyewitness reports — almost superhuman powers. He can bend iron swords and, although he carries a metal crown weighing over 80 pounds (!) on his head, perform a wild dance. Incomprehensible sounds come from his foaming lips. This is supposed to be a sacred language. Only once it has been deciphered by the priests can the content of the oracle message be recognized.

The deity conjured up by the Nechung Lama is called *Pehar* or *Pedkar*. However often only his adjutant is invoked, *Dorje Drakden* by name. This is because a direct appearance by *Pehar* can be so violent that it threatens the life of his medium (the Nechung Lama). *Pehar* has under his command a group of five wrathful gods, who together are called the “protective wheel”. It seems sensible to make a few thoughts about this prophesying god, who has for centuries exercised such a decisive influence upon Tibetan politics and still continues to do so.

In iconographic representations, *Pehar* has three faces of different colors. He wears a bamboo hat which is crowned with a *vajra* upon his head. In his hands he holds a bow and arrow, a sword, a cleaver, and a club. His mount is a snow lion.

*Pehar*’s original home lay in the north of Tibet, there where in the conception of the old Tibetans (in the *Gesar* epic) the “devil’s country” was to be found. In earlier times he reigned as war god of the Hor Mongols. According to the sagas, this wild tribe was counted among the bitterest opponents of the pre-Buddhist Tibetans and their national hero, *Gesar of Ling*.

Old documents from Tunhuang describe the Hor as “flesh-eating red demons” (Stein, 1993, p. 36). Their martial king had laid waste to the Land of Snows and stolen its queen, the wife of *Gesar of Ling*. After terrible battles the Tibetan national hero defeated the rapacious Hors, to whom we are

indebted for the word *horde*, and won their commitment and that of their chief god, *Pehar*, with an eternal oath of loyalty. Over the centuries the term *Hor* was then used to refer to various Mongolian tribes, including those of Genghis Khan. Hence, *Pehar* (the principal oracle god of the Dalai Lama) was originally a bitter arch-enemy of the Tibetans.

Where *Gesar* had rendered the Mongol god harmless, it was the *Maha Siddha* Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) who brought Buddhism to Tibet who first succeeded in actually putting *Pehar* to work. The saga tells how Guru Rinpoche pressed a *vajra* upon the barbaric god's head and thus magically mastered him. After this act, *Pehar* was able to be incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon as a servant. For seven hundred years his chief residence was the founding monastery Samye, by the construction of which he had to assist as a "forced laborer". About 900 years later the "Great Fifth" transported him (i.e., his symbol) to Nechung in the vicinity of the Drepung monastery and advanced the former war god of the Hor to state oracle. Since, after his "Buddhization", he did not want to be reminded of his former defeat (by the national hero, *Gesar*), not a single verse from the *Gesar* epic was allowed to be cited in the Drepung monastery or at any other location where he had stayed.

The question soon arises as to why of all gods *Pehar*, the former ferocious and cruel opponent of the Land of Snows, was given the delicate office of being a supernatural governmental advisor to the Tibetan "god-king". Surely this would have sooner been the entitlement of a Bodhisattva like *Avalokiteshvara* or a national hero like *Gesar of Ling*.

With this question too, the key is to be sought in the "political theology" of the "Great Fifth". We may recall that both the conferring of the title of *Dalai Lama* and the establishment of the hierarch's secular power were the actions of the Mongolians and not of the Tibetan people. In contrast, as we have reported, in the 17th century the national forces of the country were actually gathered under the kings of Tsang and around the throne of the Karmapa (the leader of the "red" Kagyupa sect). Thus, it does not take much fantasy to be able to sketch out why *Pehar* was chosen as the advisor of the "yellow" Buddhist state (then represented by the Fifth Dalai Lama). It was expected of the former Mongolian god and opponent of Tibet that he tame the recalcitrant Tibetans (who supported the Karmapa). In this his interests were in complete accord with those of the "god-king". Additionally, the "Great Fifth" himself was a descendant of an aristocratic family which traced its lineage back to the Hor Mongols. *Pehar*, the later state oracle, is thus a foreign deity imposed upon the Tibetan people.

It is true that the oracle god has sworn an oath of loyalty, but it is — in the lamas' opinion — by no means ruled out that he may one day break this and unleash his full vengeance upon the Tibetans who defeated him in times gone by. He has in his own words explained to Padmasambhava what will then happen. He will destroy the houses and the fields. The children of the Land of Snows will have to endure famine and will be driven insane. The fruit of the and will be destroyed by hail and swarms of insects. The strong will be carried off and only the weak shall survive. Wars shall devastate the roof of the world. *Pehar* himself will interrupt the meditations of the lamas, rob their spells of their magic power, and force them to commit suicide. Brothers will rape their sisters. He will make the wisdom consorts (the *mudras*) of the tantra masters bad and heretical, yes, transform them into enemies of the teaching who emigrate to the lands of the unbelievers. But first he shall copulate with them. "I," *Pehar* proclaims, "the lord of the temples, the stupas and scriptures, I shall possess the fair bodies of all virgins" (Sierksma, 1966, p. 165).

In the sphere of practical politics the recommendations of the Mongolian martial god have also not always been advantageous for the Tibetans. For example, he gave the Thirteenth Dalai Lama the catastrophic advice that he should attack the British army under Colonel Younghusband which led to a massacre of the Tibetan soldiers.

### *Current politics and the oracle system*

One would think that the Tibetans in exile would these days have distanced themselves from such a

warlike deity as *Pehar*, who constantly threatens them with bloody acts of revenge, especially after their experiences at the hands of the Chinese occupying forces. One would further assume that, given the *Kundun*'s strident professions of democracy, the oracle system as such would be in decline or have even been abandoned. But the opposite is the case: in Dharamsala the divinatory arts, astrology, the interpretation of dreams, and even the drawing of lots still have a most decisive (!) influence upon the politics of the Tibetans in exile. Every (!) politically significant step is first taken once the mediums, soothsayers, and court astrologers have been consulted, every important state-political activity requires the invocation of the wrathful Mongolian god, *Pehar*. This tendency has increased in recent years. Today there are said to be three further mediums (who represent different deities) whose services are made use of. Among these is a young and attractive girl from an eastern province of Tibet. Some members of the community of Tibetans in exile are therefore of the opinion that the various oracles misuse His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama for their own ends and force their will upon him.

Now, how does the “god-king” see this through his own eyes? “Even some Tibetans,” we learn from the *Kundun*, “mostly those who consider themselves 'progressive', have misgivings about my continued use of this ancient method of intelligence gathering. But I do so for the simple reason that as I look back over the many occasions when I have asked questions of the oracle, on each one of them time has proved that his answer was correct” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993 I, p. 312). “I not only believe in spirits, but in various kinds of spirits!”, His Holiness further admits, “... To this category belongs the state oracle Nechung (*Pehar*). We consider these spirits reliable, then they have a long history without any controversy in over 1000 years” (*Tagesanzeiger* (Switzerland), March 23, 1998). *Pehar* determined the point in time in which the Dalai Lama had to flee Tibet and with the statement “that the shine of the 'wish-fulfilling jewel' [one of the Dalai Lama's names] will light up in the West” predicted the spread of Buddhism in Europe and North America. (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 154).

Even the aggression of his oracle god is not denied by the *Kundun*: “His [task], in his capacity as protector and defender, is wrathful. [!] However, although our functions are similar, my relationship with Nechung is that of commander to lieutenant: I never bow down to him. It is for Nechung to bow to the Dalai Lama” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993 I, p. 312). This statement confirms once again that from a tantric viewpoint, the politics of the Tibetans in exile is not conducted by people, but by gods. As *Avalokiteshvara* and the *Kalachakra* deity, the Dalai Lama commands the Mongolian god, *Pehar*, to make predictions about the future. [1] The *Kundun*'s comment in this quotation that his functions and the “functions” of *Pehar* are “similar” is ambiguous. Does he want to allude to his own “wrathful aspect” here? On September 4, 1987 a new Nechung medium was enthroned in Dharamsala, since the old one had died three years before. His official confirmation was attained following a demonstrative trance session at which the *Kundun*, cabinet members of the Tibetan government in exile and the parliamentary chairman were present. About two months later another séance was held before the Council of Ministers and a number of high lamas. This illustrious assembly of the highest ranking representatives of the Tibetan people shows how the political prophecies and instructions of the god *Pehar* are taken seriously not just by the Dalai Lama but also by the “people's representatives” of the Tibetans in exile. Thus, in political decisions neither reason nor the majority of votes, nor even public opinion have the last word, but rather the Mongolian oracle god.

### **Dorje Shugden—a threat to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's life?**

Since 1996 at the latest, *Pehar* and his Nechung medium have met with embittered competition from among the Tibetan's own ranks. This is a matter of the tutelary and divinatory deity, *Dorje Shugden*. In pictures, *Dorje Shugden* is depicted riding grim-faced through a lake of boiling blood upon a snow lion. It is primarily conservative circles among the Gelugpas (the “Yellow Hats”) who have grouped around this figure. They demand the exclusive supremacy of the yellow sect (the *Gelugpas*) over the other Buddhist schools.

This traditional political position of the *Shugden* worshippers is not acceptable to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (although he himself is a member of the yellow sect) because he is working towards an integration of all Tibet's religious orientations, including the Bonpos. With the same resolve as the "Great Fifth" he sees a one-off chance to multiply the power of his own institution in a collective movement involving all schools. It is therefore not surprising that even the early history of *Dorje Shugden* features an irreconcilable confrontation between the protective god and the Fifth Dalai Lama, which appears to be repeating itself today.

What took place on that occasion, and what has been the history of the recalcitrant *Shugden*? The "pan-Buddhist" program of the "Great Fifth", but especially his occult tendency towards the Nyingmapa sect, led the abbot of the powerful Drepung (Yellow Hat) monastery, Drakpa Gyaltsen, to organize a rebellion against the ruler in the Potala. The conspiracy was discovered and was not carried out.



*The two oracle gods at daggers drawn: Shugden [l] and Nechung [r]*

Most probably at the command of the in such matters unscrupulous god-king, the rebel was murdered first. Whilst the corpse was being burned on a pyre, a threatening cloud which resembled a huge black hand, the hand of the avenger, was formed by the ascending smoke. After his death the murdered lama, Drakpa Gyaltsen, transformed into a martial spirit and took on the fearsome name of *Dorje Shugden*, which means the "Bellow of the Thunderbolt". He continued to pursue his political goals from the beyond.

Shortly after his death — the legend reports — all manner of unhappy incidents befell the country. Towns and villages were afflicted with sicknesses. The Tibetan government constantly made wrong decisions, even the Fifth Dalai Lama was not spared. Every time he wanted to have a meal in the middle of the day, his victim (*Dorje Shugden*) manifested himself as an invisible evil force,

up-ended the dinner tables and damaged the “His Holiness’s possessions”. [2] Ultimately it proved possible to subdue the vengeful spirit through all manner of rituals, but he did not therefore remain inactive.

With the assistance of a human medium, through whom he still today communicates with his priests, the abbot who had transformed into a protective god organized (from the beyond, so to speak) a oppositional grouping within the Yellow Hat (Gelugpa) order, who wanted (and still want) to enforce the absolute supremacy of their order by magical and practical political means. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century the invocation of *Shugden* by the powerful Yellow Hat lama, Pabongka Rinpoche, was used to suppress the Nyingmapas and Kagyupas in eastern Tibet. An outright ritual war was fought out: “... whenever this [*Shugden*] ritual was practiced in the Gelugpa monasteries, the surrounding monasteries of the other schools [performed] certain practices so as to check the negative forces again” (*Kagyü Life* 21-1996, p. 34).

Nonetheless the “reactionary” *Shugden* movement constantly gained in popularity, especially among members of the Tibetan nobility too. Later, this “sub-sect” of the Yellow Hats came to understand itself as a secret nest of resistance against the Chinese occupation force, since the traditional protectors of Tibet (*Palden Lhamo* or *Pehar*, for example) had allegedly betrayed and left the country. One of the chief representatives of the secret conservative alliance (Trijang Rinpoche) was a teacher of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who himself initiated his divine pupil into the *Shugden* cult.

The reverence for *Shugden* is likewise high among the Tibetans in exile, and is well distributed worldwide (everywhere where Gelugpas are to be found). A fifth, in some other versions even two-thirds, of the yellow sect are said to pray to the reactionary *dharmapala* (tutelary spirit). But in the meantime the movement has also spread among Westerners. These are primarily from the *New Kadampa Tradition* (NKT), an English-based grouping around the lama Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. The declaration of exclusion from his former monastery says of the latter that, “this demon with broken commitments, Kelsang Gyatso, burns with the flame of unbearable spite toward the unsurpassed omniscient XIV Dalai Lama, the only staff of life of religious people in Tibet, whose activities and kindness equal the sky” (Lopez, 1998, p. 195). His supporters provide online information about their conflict with Dharamsala under the name of the *Shugden Supporters Community* (SSC).

### *The Kundun and Shugden*

It is true that in the year 1976 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama had already declared that he did not wish for his person to associated in any way with *Dorje Shugden*, especially because the worship of this “reactionary” spirit had come into conflict with three other *dharmapalas* (tutelary gods) which he revered highly, the oracle god *Pehar*, the terrible *Palden Lhamo*, and the protective god *Dharmaraja*. Rumors report of a dream of the *Kundun* in which *Shugden* and *Pehar* had fought with one another. On a number of occasions *Pehar* prophesied via the Nechung Lama that *Shugden* was attempting to undermine the sovereignty of the *Kundun* and thus deliver Tibet into the hands of the Chinese. The Mongolian god received unexpected support in his accusations through a young attractive female medium by name of Tsering Chenma, who, during the preparations for a *Kalachakra initiation* (!) in Lahaul Spiti announced that 30 members of the *Dorje Shugden Society* would attack the Dalai Lama in the course of the initiation. Thereupon the *Kundun’s* security staff searched all present for weapons. Nothing was found and not a single representative of the *Shugden* society was in attendance (Burns, Newsgroup 1).

Yet another, female (!) oracle was questioned about the *Shugden* affair. During the session and in the presence of the Dalai Lama, the woman is supposed to have fallen upon a monk and whilst she tore at his clothes and shook his head cried out: “This Lama is bad, he is following *Dorje Shugden*, take him out, take him out” (Burns, Newsgroup 9).

The majority of the Tibetans in exile were naturally not informed about such incidents, which were



more or less played out behind closed doors, and were thus most surprised at the sharpness and lack of compromise with which the *Kundun* repeated his criticisms of the *Shugden* movement in 1996.

On March 21, during the initiation into a particular tantra (*Hayagriva*) he turned to those present with the following words: “I have recently said several prayers for the well-being of our nation and religion. It has become fairly clear that *Dolgyal* [another name for *Shugden*] is a spirit of the dark forces. ... If any of you intend to continue to invoke *Dolgyal* [*Shugden*], it would be better for you to stay away from this authorization, to stand up and leave this place. It is unfitting if you continue to sit here. It will be of no use to you. It will in contrast have the effect of shortening the life of the Gyalwa Rinpoche [of the Dalai Lama, that is, his own life]. Which is not good. If there are, however, some among you who want that Gyalwa Rinpoche [he himself] should soon die, then just stay” (*Kagyü Life* 21-1996, p. 35).

At another location the *Kundun* announced his fear that *Shugden* was seeking to spoil all his pleasure in life via psychic terror: “You should not think that dangers for my life come only from someone armed with a knife, a gun or a bomb. Such an event is extremely unlikely. But dangers to my life may arise if my advice is constantly spurned, causing me to feel discouraged and to see no further purpose in life” (Kashag, HPI 11).

Such statements by His Holiness may imply that the Dalai Lama (and behind him the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*) is very fearful of this vengeful spirit, which induced the Indian *Associated Press* to make the mocking comment that, “a 350-year old ghost is haunting the Dalai Lama” (*Associated Press*, August 21, 1997, 2:54 a.m.). At any rate,, the god-king’s security service which protects his residence in Dharamsala in the meantime consists of 100 police officers.

The following statement by the *Kundun* has been leaked from a secret meeting of influential exiled Tibetan politicians and high lamas which the Dalai Lama called to discuss the *Shugden* case in Caux (Switzerland): “Everyone who is affiliated with the Tibetan Society of Ganden Phodrang government (Tibetan Government) should relinquish ties with Dhogyal (*Shugden*). This is necessary since it poses danger to the religious and temporal situation in Tibet. As for foreigners, it makes no difference to us if they walk with their feet up and their head down. We have taught Dharma to them, not they to us. ... We should do it [carry out this ban] in such a way to ensure that in future generations not even the name of Dhogyal [*Shugden*] is remembered” (Burns, Newsgroup 1).

Numerous Tibetans who had in the past been initiated into the *Shugden* cult by the personal teacher of the *Kundun*, Trijang Rinpoche, and believed that through this they enjoyed His Holiness’s favor, saw themselves all at once betrayed after the ban and felt deeply disappointed. For the sophisticated Dalai Lama, however, the sectarian position of the “yellow fundamentalists” and “sectarians” was no longer bearable and quite obviously a significant obstacle on his mission to compel all sects to accept his absolute control and thus limit the supremacy of the Gelugpas. “This *Shugden* spirit”, the *Kundun* has said, “has for over 360 years created tensions between the Gelug tradition and the other schools. ... Some may [because of the ban] have lost trust in me. But at the same time numerous followers of the Kagyupa or Nyingma schools have recognized that the Dalai Lama is pursuing a truly non-sectarian course. I believe this *Shugden* worship has been like an agonizing boil for 360 years. Now like a modern surgeon I have undertaken a small operation” (*Tagesanzeiger* (Switzerland), March 23, 1998).

He then also branded the *Shugden* cult as “idolatry” and as a “relapse into shamanism” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1997, No. 158, p. 10). On March 30, 1996 the ban on the worship of *Shugden* was pronounced by governmental decree. The “mouthpiece” of the *Kundun* in the USA, Robert Thurman, emotionally denounced the “sectarians” and publicly disparaged them as the “Taliban of Buddhism”.

In the meantime the accusations coming out of Dharamsala against the *Shugden* worshippers fill many pages: they were cooperating with the Chinese and received funding from Beijing; they were fouling their own nest; they were playing “Russian roulette”, because they dragged the whole exile Tibetan case (and thereby themselves) into the depths. They were trying to kill the *Kundun*.

### *The accusations made by the Shugden worshippers*

On the other hand, the *Shugden* followers, whose leader has meanwhile been officially declared to be an “enemy of the people”, speak of a true witch hunt directed against them which has already been in progress for a number of months. They accuse the Dalai Lama of a flagrant breach of human rights and the right to freedom of religion and do not shy from drawing comparisons with the Chinese occupation force and the Catholic Inquisition. Houses belonging to the sect are said to have been illegally searched by followers of the *Kundun*, masked bands of thugs to have attacked defenseless *Shugden* believers, images of and altars to the protective god to have been deliberately burned and thrown into rivers. Lists of the names of *Dorje Shugden* practitioners (“enemies of the people”) are said to have been drawn up and pictures of them and their children to have been hung out in public buildings so as to defame them. It is said that followers of the protective deity have been completely refused entry to the offices of the government in exile and that the children of their families no longer have access to the official schools. Following a resolution of the so-called *Tibetan Cholsum Convention* (held between August 27 and 31, 1998) *Shugden* followers were unable to travel internationally or draw pensions, state child assistance, or social security payments. In it, Tibetans are forbidden to read the writings of the cult and they were called upon to burn them.

A militant underground organization with the name of the “secret society for the destruction of internal and external enemies of Tibet” threatened to murder two young lineage holders, the lamas Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche (13-years-old) [3] and Song Rinpoche (11-years-old), who (under the influence of their teacher) performed rites in honor of *Dorje Shugden*: “... we will destroy your life and your activities” (Swiss Television, SF1, January 6, 1998). In a document from this group tabled by *Shugden* followers, it says: “Anyone who goes against the policy of the government must be singled out one-pointedly, opposed and given the death penalty. ... As for the reincarnations of Trijang and Song Rinpoche, if they do not stop practicing Dhogyal [*Shugden*] and contradict with the word of H.H. the Dalai Lama, not only will we not be able to respect them, but their life and their activities will suffer destruction. This is our first warning” (Burns, Newsgroup 1). Whilst a Western television crew were filming, a Tibetan monk who cooperated with the reporters received a death threat: “... in seven days you will be dead!” (Swiss Television, SF1, January 6, 1998).

In addition Dharamsala has exerted vehement psychological pressure on Buddhist centers in the West and forbidden them from performing *Shugden* rituals. In a word — the worshippers of the protective god had become the “Jews of Buddhism” (*Newsweek*, April 28, 1997, p. 26).

In London, where the sect has around 3000 members, there were protest demonstrations at which pictures of the *Kundun* were held high with the slogan, “*Your Smiles Charm, Your Actions Harm*”. He was referred to here as a “merciless dictator, who oppresses his people more than the Chinese do” (*Kagyü Life* 21, 1996, p. 34).

However, in an official communiqué from May 14, 1996, the government in exile denied all accusations. In contrast — they announced that death threats had been sent from *Shugden* to the offices of His Holiness and the *Tibetan Women's Association*. “If there comes division among prominent persons in the Yellow Hat Sect, there will be bloodshed in the monasteries and settlements across India”, one of the threatening letters is said to have stated (*Newsweek*, April 28, 1997, p. 26; retranslation). Both sides clearly fear that their lives are threatened by the other side.

All these mutual fears, accusations, and slander in the battle between the two oracle gods reached their climax in the ritual murder of the lama Lobsang Gyatso on February 4, 1997 which we have described above. Lobsang Gyatso was considered a special friend of the Dalai Lama and a pronounced opponent of the *Shugden* sect. A few days after the murder a press release from the

government in exile coursed around the world in which *Dorje Shugden* followers were said to certainly be responsible for the murder. There was talk of confessions and arrests. This opinion remains current among a broad public to this day.

As evidence, among other things a letter to the murder victim (Lobsang Gyatso) was cited in which (it was said) the secretary of the *Dorje Shugden Society* had threatened the abbot with murder. Tashi Wangdu, a minister of the Tibetan government in exile, held this document, written in Tibetan, in his hand and showed it again on January 25, 1998 in Swiss Television (on the “Sternstunde”[Star Hour] program). However, this turned out to be a deliberate and very blatant attempt to mislead, then the Tibetan document, which was later translated, does not contain a single word of a murder threat. Rather, it contains a polite invitation to Lobsang Gyatso to discuss “theological” questions with the *Dorje Shugden Society* in Delhi (Gassner, 1999).

But this document was enough to arrest all known followers of the protective god (*Shugden*) in Delhi and illegally imprison them. However, they denied participating in the crime in any form whatsoever. [4] Indeed, despite interrogations lasting weeks by the Indian criminal police, nothing has been proven. The evidence is so meager that it is most likely that the crime was committed by another party. The matter was also seen so by a court in Dharamsala, which negated any connection between the *Dorje Shugden Society* and the murders of February 4.

For this reason, there are claims from the *Shugden* followers that the Dalai Lama’s circle tried to pin the blame on them in order to muzzle and marginalize them. In light of the power-political ambitions and relative strength of the sect — it is said to have over 20,000 active members in India alone — this version also makes sense. Some western worshippers of the protective god even go so far as to claim that a higher order from the *Kundun* lay behind the deed. Until the murderers are convicted, a good criminologist must keep his or her eye on all of these possibilities.

#### *Reactions of the Tibetan parliament*

Within the Tibetan parliament in exile, the incidents have led to great nervousness and high tension. A resolution was passed demanding that “in essence government departments, organizations, associations, monasteries and their branches under the direction of the exile Tibetan government should abide by the ban against worship of Dhogyal” (Burns, Newsgroup 1).

In the further reactions of the people’s representatives one can read just how risky the whole matter is seen to be. Hence, during the parliamentary session of September 20, 1997 one of the members established that “an unprecedented amount of literature is being published everywhere that criticizes the Dalai Lama and belittles the Tibetan Exile Government” (Burns, Newsgroup 1). This is “extremely dangerous” and in the principal monasteries there was open talk of a schism. During the parliamentary session the government was strongly criticized for not having done anything to treat the *Shugden* affair as an internal Tibetan matter, but rather to have told the whole world about it, thus bringing it to the attention of an international public. We have to conclude from the committed discussions of the parliamentary members that the power and potential influence of the *Shugden* followers are actually more significant than one would have thought from the previous official statements out of Dharamsala.

On the third day of the session the situation in parliament had reached such a dead end that there seemed to be nothing more to say. What do the representatives of Tibetans in exile do in such a situation? — They consult the state oracle! It is not the members of parliament as the representatives of the people’s will but rather the oracle god *Pehar* who decides which course the government is to steer in the controversy surrounding the recalcitrant *Dorje Shugden*. The grotesqueness of the situation can hardly be topped, since *Pehar* and *Shugden* — as we learn from the writings of both parties — are the most bitter of enemies. How, then, is the Mongolian god (*Pehar*) supposed to provide an objective judgment about his arch-enemy (*Shugden*)? Indeed, it was *Pehar*, who in 1996 prophesied for the Dalai Lama that his life and hence the fate of Tibet were endangered by the *Shugden* cult. In contrast, the *Shugden* oracle announced that the *Kundun* has

been falsely advised by *Pehar* for years. Hence what the state oracle consulted by parliament would say was clear in advance. The advice was to combat the *Shugden* followers with uncompromising keenness.

This interesting case is thus a matter of a war between two oracle gods who seek control over the politics of Tibet. No other example since the flight of the Dalai Lama (in 1959) has so clearly revealed to the public that “gods” are at work behind the Tibetan state, the *realpolitik* of the *Kundun*, and the power groupings of the society of Tibetans in exile. One may well be completely skeptical about such entities, but one cannot avoid acknowledging that the ruling elite and the subjects of the Lamaist state are guided by just such an ancient world view. How these occult struggles are to be reconciled with the untiringly repeated professions of belief in democracy is difficult to comprehend from a western-oriented way of thinking.

Dharamsala is completely aware that antidemocratic methods must arouse disquiet in the West. For example, in contrast to before, since the mid-eighties reports about the pronouncements of oracles no longer play a large role in the *Tibetan Review* (the exile Tibetans’ most important foreign-language organ of the press). Only since the “*Shugden affair*” (1996) has the excessive use of oracle mediums in the politics of the Tibetans in exile been rediscovered and become known worldwide. In monastic circles it is openly joked that the *Kundun* employs more oracles than ministers. “Favorites and sorcerers manipulate the sovereign”, it says in a Spanish magazine, with “demons and deities fighting to control people's minds ...” (*Más Allá de la Ciencia*, No. 103, 1997).

Nevertheless, the *Kundun* has succeeded amazingly well in marginalizing the *Shugden* cult internationally and branding it as medieval superstition. For example, the German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, which normally takes an extremely critical stance towards religious matters, was prepared to blindly take up the official version of the *Shugden* story from Dharamsala: the *Shugden* followers, *Der Spiegel* reported, were responsible for two (!) murders and their flight could be traced to China and the Chinese secret service (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 119). Nearly all western media stereotypically repeat that the ritual murderers came from the ranks of the protective god (for example, *Time Magazine Asia*, September 28, 1998).

One of the arguments of the *Shugden* followers in this “battle of the gods” is the claim that the Dalai Lama is engaged in selling his own country to the Chinese. He (they argue) is not acting in the interests of his people at all, since in his Strasbourg Declaration he renounced the national sovereignty of Tibet as his goal.

It is not possible for us to form a final judgment about such a charge; however, what we can in any case assume is the fact that the Mongolian war god *Pehar* (the Nechung oracle) can have no interest in the (well-being of the)Tibetans and their nation, against whom he in former times grimly struggled as a Hor Mongol and who then enslaved him. Of course, the national interests of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama could also collide with his worldwide ambitions concerning the spread of Tantric Buddhism. We shall return to this topic in our article on his politics towards China.

If — as the tantric belief maintains- deities are pulling the strings behind the scenes of “human” politics, then a direct consequence of this is that *magic* (as an invocatory art of gaining influence over gods and demons) must be counted among the “political” activities *par excellence*. Magic as statecraft is therefore a Tibetan specialty. Let us take a closer look at this “portfolio”.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] Here we ought to ask how a lesser deity like *Pehar* is able to predict the future at all for the hierarchically superior Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* and the incarnated time god (*Kalachakra*) who are embodied in the Dalai Lama.

[2] According to statements by the followers of *Shugden*, the Fifth Dalai Lama is supposed to have later changed his mind and prayed to the protective deity. He is even said to have molded the first statue of Dorje Shugden with his own hands and have composed prayers to the protective god. This statue is said to

currently be found in Nepal.

[3] Trijang Rinpoche is the reincarnation of the deceased lama who previously initiated the Fourteenth Dalai Lama into the *Shugden* cult whilst his teacher.

[4] Up until now (February 1998) the police claim to have identified two of the six murderers. These have slipped over the border into Nepal, however.

Next Chapter:

## [8. MAGIC AS A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT](#)

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### The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 8. Magic as a political instrument

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## 8. MAGIC AS A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT

Since his flight from Tibet (in 1959), the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has negotiated the international political and cultural stage like a sensitive democrat and enlightened man of the world. As a matter of course he lays claim to all the western “virtues” of humanism, freedom of opinion, rational argument, belief in technical and scientific progress, etc. One gains the impression that he is an open-minded and modern president of a modern nation, who masterfully combines his cosmopolitanism with an elevated, spiritually based, ethical system. But this practical, reasoning facade is deceptive. Behind it is hidden a deeply rooted belief in supernatural powers and magic practices which are supposed to exercise a decisive influence upon social and political events.

### Invocation of demons

Since time immemorial ritual magic and politics have been one in Tibet. A large proportion of these magic practices are devoted to the annihilation of enemies, and especially to the neutralizing of political opponents. The help of demons was necessary for such ends. And they could be found everywhere — the Land of Snows all but overflowed with terror gods, fateful spirits, vampires, ghouls, vengeful goddesses, devils, messengers of death and similar entities, who, in the words of Matthias Hermanns, “completely overgrow the mild and goodly elements [of Buddhism] and hardly let them reveal their advantages” (Hermanns, 1965, p. 401).

For this reason, invocations of demons were not at all rare occurrences nor were they restricted to

the spheres of personal and family life. They were in general among the most preferred functions of the lamas. Hence, “demonology” was a high science taught at the monastic universities, and ritual dealings with malevolent spirits were — as we shall see in a moment — an important function of the lamaist state. [1]

For the demons to appear they have to be offered the appropriate objects of their lust as a sacrifice, each class of devil having its own particular taste. René von Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes a number of culinary specialties from the Lamaist “demon recipe books”: cakes made of dark flour and blood; five different sorts of meat, including human flesh; the skull of the child of an incestuous relationship filled with blood and mustard seeds; the skin of a boy; bowls of blood and brain; a lamp filled with human fat with a wick made of human hair; and a dough like mixture of gall, brain, blood and human entrails (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 261).

Once the gods had accepted the sacrifice they stood at the ritual master’s disposal. The four-armed protective deity, *Mahakala*, was considered a particularly active assistant when it came to the destruction of enemies. In national matters his bloodthirsty emanation, the six-handed *Kschetrapala*, was called upon. The magician in charge wrote the war god’s mantra on a piece of paper in gold ink or blood from the blade of a sword together with the wishes he hoped to have granted, and began the invocation.

Towards the end of the forties the Gelugpa lamas sent *Kschetrapala* into battle against the Chinese. He was cast into a roughly three-yard high sacrificial cake (or *torma*). This was then set alight outside Lhasa, and whilst the priests lowered their victory banner the demon freed himself and flew in the direction of the threatened border with his army. A real battle of the spirits took place here, as a “nine-headed Chinese demon”, who was assumed to have assisted the Communists in all matters concerning Tibet, appeared on the battlefield. Both spirit princes (the Tibetan and the Chinese) have been mortal enemies for centuries. Obviously the nine-headed emerged from this final battle of the demons as the victor.

The Chinese claim that 21 individuals were killed in this enemy ritual so that their organs could be used to construct the huge *torma*. Relatives of the victims are supposed to have testified to this (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 29). Now, one could with good reason doubt the Chinese accusations because of the political situation between the “Middle Kingdom” and the “Roof of the World”, but not because they contradict the logic of Tibetan rites of war — these have been recorded in numerous tantric texts.

Likewise in the middle of last century, the Yellow Hats from the Samye monastery were commissioned by the Tibetan government with the task of capturing the army of the red *tsan* demons in four huge “cross-hairs” in order to then send them off against the enemies of the Land of Snows. This magic instrument, a right-angled net of many-colored threads, stood upon a multistage base, each of which was filled with such tantric substances as soil from charnel fields, human skulls, murder weapons, the tips of the noses, hearts, and lips of men who died an unnatural death, poisonous plants, and similar things. The repulsive mixture was supposed to attract the *tsan* like a moth to a candle, so that they would become inescapably caught in the spells said over the spirit trap (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 258). Following the seven-day deep meditation of a high lama it was ready and the demons could be given the command to set out against the enemy.

Such a ritual is also said to have summoned up a terrible earthquake and great panic in Nepal in earlier times, when Tibet was at war with the Nepalese. Experience had shown, however, that it sometimes takes a long time before the effects of such harmful rites are felt. It took two decades after the successful occupation of Tibet by the English (in 1904) before there was an earthquake in the Indian province of Bihar in which a number of British soldiers lost their lives. The Tibetans also traced this natural disaster back to magical activities which they had conducted prior to the invasion.

### “Voodoo magic”

The practice widely known from the Haitian voodoo religion of making a likeness of an enemy or a doll and torturing or destroying this in their place is also widespread in Tibetan Buddhism. Usually, some substance belonging to the opponent, be it a hair or a swatch from their clothing, has to be incorporated into the substitute. It is, however, sufficient to note their name on a piece of paper. Even so, sometimes hard-to-find ingredients are necessary for an effective destructive ritual, as shown by the following Buddhist ritual: “Draw a red magic diagram in the form of a half-moon, then write the name and lineage of the victim on a piece of cotton which has been used to cover the corpse of a plague victim. As ink, use the blood of a dark-skinned Brahmin girl. Call upon the protective deities and hold the piece of material in black smoke. Then lay it in the magic diagram. Swinging a magic dagger made from the bones of a plague victim, recite the appropriate incantation a hundred thousand times. Then place the piece of material there where the victim makes his nightly camp” (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p.260). This induces the death of the person. [2]

The same ritual text includes a recipe for the inducement of madness: “draw a white magic circle on the summit of a mountain and place the figure of the victim in it which you have to prepare from the deadly leaves of a poisonous tree. Then write the name and lineage of the victims on this figure with white sandalwood resin. Hold it in the smoke from burnt human fat. Whilst you recite the appropriate spell, take a demon dagger made of bone in your right hand and touch the head of the figure with it. Finally, leave it behind in a place where *mamo* demonesses are in the habit of congregating” (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 261).

Such “voodoo practices” were no rare and unhealthy products of the Nyingmapa sect or the despised pre-Buddhist Bonpos. Under the Fifth Dalai Lama they became part of the elevated politics of state. The “Great Fifth” had a terrible “recipe book” (the *Golden Manuscript*) recorded on black thangkas which was exclusively concerned with magical techniques for destroying an enemy. In it there a number of variations upon the so-called *gan tad* ritual are also described: a man or a woman depicting the victim are drawn in the center of a circle. They are shackled with heavy chains around their hands and feet. Around the figures the tantra master has written harmful sayings like the following. “the life be cut, the heart be cut, the body be cut, the power be cut, the descent be cut” (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1993, p. 483). The latter means that the victim’s relatives should also be destroyed. Now the menstrual blood of a prostitute must be dripped onto the spells, the drawings are given hair and nails. According to some texts a little dirt scraped from a shoe, or some plaster from the victim’s house are sufficient. Then the ritual master folds the paper up in a piece of cloth. The whole thing is stuffed into a yak’s horn with further horrible ingredients which we would rather not have to list. Gloves have to be worn when conducting the ritual, since the substances can have most harmful effects upon the magician if he comes into contact with them. In a cemetery he entreats an army of demons to descend upon the horn and impregnate it with their destructive energy. Then it is buried on the land of the enemy, who dies soon afterwards.

The “Great Fifth” is supposed to have performed a “voodoo” ritual for the defeat of the Kagyupa and the Tsang clan in the Ganden monastery temple. He regarded them, “whose spirit has been clouded by *Mara* and their devotion to the Karmapa”, as enemies of the faith (Ahmad, 1970, p. 103). In the ritual, a likeness of the Prince of Tsang in the form of a *torma* (dough cake) was employed. Incorporated into the dough figure were the blood of a boy fallen in the battles, human flesh, beer, poison, and so on. 200 years later, when the Tibetans went to war with the Nepalese, the lamas had a substitute made of the commander of the Nepalese army and conducted a destructive ritual with this. The commander died soon after and the enemy army’s plans for invasion had to be abandoned (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1993, p. 495).

Among other things, Tibetan magic is premised upon the existence of a force or energy possessed by every living creature and which is known as *la*. However, this life energy does not need to be stored within a person, it can be found completely outside of them, in a lake, a mountain, a tree, or

an animal for instance. A person can also possess several *las*. If one of his energy centers is attacked or destroyed he is able to regenerate himself out of the others. Among aristocrats and high lamas we may find the *la* in “royal” animals like the snow lion, bears, tigers, or elephants. For the “middle class” of society we have animals like the ox, horse, yak, sheep, or mule, and for the lower classes the rat, dog, and scorpion. The *la* can also keep alive a family, a tribe, or a whole people. For example, Lake Yamdrok is said to contain the life energy of the Tibetan nation and there is a saying that the whole people would die out if it went dry. There is in fact a rumor among the Tibetans in exile that the Chinese planned to drain the entire lake (*Tibetan Review*, January 1992, p. 4).

If a tantra master wants to put an enemy out of action through magic, then he must find his *la* and launch a ritual attack upon it. This is of course also true for political opponents. If the life energy of an enemy is hidden in a tree, for instance, then it makes sense to fell it. The opponent would instantly collapse. Every lama is supposed on principle to be capable of locating the *la* of a person via astrology and clairvoyance.

### **Magic wonder weapons**

In the armories of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and of the “Great Fifth”, we find the “magic wheel with the sword spokes”, described by a contemporary lama in the following words: “It is a magic weapon of fearsome efficacy, a great wheel with eight razor-edge sharpened swords as spokes. Our magicians employed it a long time ago in the battle against foreign intruders. The wheel was charged with magic forces and then loosed upon the enemy. It flew spinning through the air at the enemy troops and its rapidly rotating spikes mowed the soldiers down in their hundreds. The devastation wrought by this weapon was so terrible that the government forbade that it ever be used again. The authorities even ordered that all plans for its construction be destroyed” (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 257).

A further magic appliance, which was, albeit without success, still put to use under the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, was to be found in a Yellow Hat monastery near Lhasa (Kardo Gompa). It was referred to as the “mill of the death demons” and consisted of two small round stones resting upon each other, the upper one of which could be rotated. René von Nebesky-Wojkowitz reports how the lamas started up this killing machine in 1950 at the beginning of the conflict with China: “The 'Mill of the Death Demons' was employed by the Tibetan government to kill the leaders of the opposing party. A priest who was especially experienced in the arts of black magic was appointed by the authorities to operate the instrument. In meditations extending over weeks he had to try to transfer the life energy (*la*) of the people he was supposed to kill into a number of mustard seeds. If he noticed from certain indications that he had succeeded, then he laid the seeds between the stones and crushed them. .... The exterminating force which emanated from this magic appliance is supposed to even have had its effect upon the magician who operated it. Some of them, it is said, died after turning the 'Mill of the Death Demons'” (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, pp. 257-258).

### **The “Great Fifth” as magician and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama**

The Fifth Dalai Lama was an enthusiast and a master of magic ritual politics. A distinction was drawn in the ceremonies he conducted between continuous, annually repeated state events, and special, mostly enemy-combating events. His “rituals [were] concerned with power; spiritual and political”, writes Samten Karmay, “... we stand in the arena of the dawn of modern Tibetan history” (Karmay, 1988, p. 26).

The god-king was firmly convinced that he owed his political victories primarily to “the profound potency of the tantric rites” and only secondarily to the intervention of the Mongolians (Ahmad, 1970, p. 134). According to a Kagyupa document, the Mongolian occupation of the Land of Snows was the work of nine terror gods who were freed by the Gelugpas under the condition that they fetch the Mongolian hordes into Tibet to protect their order. “But in the process they brought much suffering on our land”, we read at the close of the document (Bell, 1994, p. 98).



The visions and practices of the magic obsessed Fifth Dalai Lama are -as we have already mentioned — recorded in two volumes he wrote: firstly the *Sealed and Secret Biography* and then the *Golden Manuscript*. This abundantly illustrated book of rituals, which resembles the notorious *grimoires* (books of magic) of the European Middle Ages, was, in the master’s own words, written “for all those who wish to do drawings and paintings of the heavens and the deities” (Karmay, 1988, p. 19). [3]



*Magic drawing from the Golden Manuscript of the Fifth Dalai Lama*

We have no direct knowledge of any modern “voodoo practices” performed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who has chosen the magician prince from the 17th century, the “Great Fifth”, as his most important model. Here, the *Kundun* has just as skillfully succeeded in laying a veil over the shadowy world of his occult ritual life as with the sexual magic initiations of Tantrism. But there are rumors and insinuations which allow one to suspect that he too deliberately conducts or has conducted such tantric killing rites.

In one case this is completely obvious and he himself has confirmed this. Thus we may read in the most recent edition of his autobiography of how he staged a rite connected to the *Kalachakra Tantra* on the day of Mao Zedong’s death. „On the second the ceremony’s three days, Mao died. And the third day, it rained all morning. But, in the afternoon, there appeared one of the most beautiful rainbows I have ever seen. I was certain that it must be a good omen” we hear from the

Dalai Lama's own mouth (Dalai Lama XIV, 1990, 222). The biographer of His Holiness, Claude B. Levenson, reports of this ritual that it was a matter of "an extremely strict practice which demanded complete seclusion lasting several weeks combined with a very special teaching of the Fifth Dalai Lama" (Levenson, 1990, p. 242). Recalling the strange death of the Empress Dowager Ci Xi and her imperial adoptive son described above, one may well ask whether this "strict practice" may not have been a killing rite recorded in the *Golden Manuscript* of the "Great Fifth". In Buddhist circles the death of Mao Zedong is also celebrated as the victory of spiritual/magic forces over the raw violence of materialism.

In such a context, and from a tantric/magic viewpoint, the visiting of Deng Xiaoping by Gyalo Thondup, one of the Dalai Lama's brothers and himself a tulku, to may also have a momentous significance. Thondup negotiated with the Chinese party head over the question of Tibet. Deng died a few days after this meeting, on February 12, 1997 (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 44).

### **Mandala politics**

In contrast, the Fourteenth Dalai constantly and quite publicly conducts a magic practice which is less spectacular, but from a tantric point of view just as significant as the killing of a political opponent — it is just that this is not recognized as a act of magic. We are talking about the construction of mandalas, especially the *Kalachakra* sand mandala.

We have already reported in detail on the homologies between a tantric mandala, the body of a yogi, the social environment, and the universe. Consistently thought through, this equivalence means that the construction of a mandala must be regarded as a magic political act. Through a magic diagram, a tantra master can "energetically" occupy and lay claim to the location of its construction and the corresponding environs. People within range of the power of such a magic architectural construction are influenced by the mandala's energy and their consciousness is manipulated by it.

The *Kalachakra* sand mandala thus serves not only to initiate adepts but also likewise as a magic title of possession, with which control over a particular territory can be legitimated. Accordingly, the magic power of the diagram gives its constructors the chance to symbolically conquer new territories. One builds a magic circle (a mandala) and "anchors" it in the region to be claimed. Then one summonses the gods and supplicates them to take up residence in the "mandala palace". (The mandala is so to speak "energized" with divine forces.) After a particular territory has been occupied by a mandala (or cosmogram), it is automatically transformed into a sacred center of Buddhist cosmology.[4] Every construction of a mandala also implies — if one takes it seriously — the magic subjugation of the inhabitants of the region in which the "magic circle" is constructed.

In the case of the *Kalachakra* sand mandala the places in which it has been built are transformed into domains under the control of the Tibetan time gods. Accordingly, from a tantric viewpoint, the *Kalachakra* mandala constructed at great expense in New York in 1991 would be a cosmological demonstration of power which aimed to say that the city now stood under the governing authority or at least spiritual influence of *Kalachakra* and *Vishvamata*. Since in this case it was the Fourteenth Dalai Lama who conducted the ritual as the supreme tantra master, he would have to be regarded as the spiritual/magic sovereign of the metropolis. Such fantastic speculations are a product of the ancient logic of his own magic system, and are incompatible with our ideas. We are nonetheless convinced that the laws of magic affect human reality proportional to the degree to which people *believe* in them.

Further, there is no doubt that the magic diagrams evoke an exceptional fascination in some observers. This is confirmed, for example, by Malcolm Arth, art director of an American museum in which Tibetan monks constructed a *Kalachakra* sand mandala: "The average museum visitor spends about ten seconds before a work of art, but for this exhibit, time is measured in minutes,

sometime hours. Even the youngsters, who come into the museum and run around as if it were a playground — these same youngsters walk into this space, and something happens to them. They're transformed" (Bryant, 1992, pp. 245-246). The American Buddhist, Barry Bryant, even talks of an "electric kind of energy" which pervades the space in which the *Kalachakra* mandala is found (Bryant, 1992, p. 247).

However, what most people from the West evaluate as a purely artistic pleasure, is experienced by the lamas and their western followers as a numinous encounter with supernatural forces and powers concentrated within a mandala. This idea can be extended so far that modern exhibitions of Tibetan artworks can be conceived by their Buddhist organizers as temples and initiation paths through which the visitors knowingly or unknowingly proceed. Mircea Eliade has described the progression through a holy place (a temple) in ancient times as follows: "Every ritual procession is equivalent to a progression to the center, and the entry into a temple repeats the entry into a mandala in an initiation or the progress of the *kundalini* through the chakras" (Eliade, 1985, p. 253).

The major Tibet exhibition "Weisheit und Liebe" (Wisdom and Love), on view in Bonn in the summer of 1996 as well as at a number locations around the world, was designed along precisely these lines by Robert A. F. Thurman and Marilyn M. Rhie. The conception behind this exhibition, Thurman writes, "is symbolically significant. It ... draws its guiding principle from the mandala of the "wheel of time" [*Kalachakra*], the mystic site which embodies the perfect history and cosmos of the Buddha. ... The arrangement of the individual exhibits reflects the deliberate attempt to simulate the environment of a Tibetan temple" (Thurman and Rhie, 1996, pp. 13–14).

At the entrance one passed a *Kalachakra* sand mandala. The visitor then entered the various historical phases of Indian Buddhism arranged into separate rooms, beginning with the legends from the life of Buddha, then *Hinayana*, *Mahayana*, and *Vajrayana*. The simulated "initiatory path" led on to Tibet passing through the four main schools in the following order: Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Kagyupa, and then Gelugpa. After the "visitor/initiand" had so to speak obtained the secret teachings of the various sects, he or she stepped into the final "hall" of the exhibition temple. This was again, like the start, dedicated to the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

Through the construction of this exhibition the history of Buddhism and of Tibet was presented as a mystery play played out over centuries. Every single epoch in the history of the Buddhist doctrine counted as a kind of initiatory stage in the evolutionary progression of humanity which was supposed to culminate in the establishment of a global *Shambhala* state. The same initiatory role was filled by the four Tibetan schools. They all stood — in the interpretation of the exhibitor — in a hierarchic relation to one another. Each step up was based on the one before it: the Sakyapas on the Nyingmapas, the Kagyupas on the Sakyapas, and the Gelugpas on the Kagyupas. The message was that the history of Buddhism, especially in Tibet, had had to progress like a initiand through the individual schools and sects step by step so as to further develop its awareness and then reach its highest earthly goal in the person of the Dalai Lama.

The visitor entered the exhibition through a room which contained a *Kalachakra* sand mandala (the "time palace"). This was supposed to proclaim that from now on he or she was moving through the dimension of (historical) time. In accordance with the cyclical world view of Buddhism, however, the journey through time ended there where it had begun. Thus at the end of the tour the visitor left the exhibition via the same room through which he or she had entered it, and once more passed by the sand mandala (the "time palace").

If the Tibet exhibition in Bonn was in Thurman's words supposed to have a symbolic significance, then the final message was catastrophic for the visitor. The final (!) image in the "temple exhibition" (before one re-entered the room containing the *Kalachakra* sand mandala) depicted the apocalyptic *Shambhala* battle, or (as the catalog literally referred to it) the "Buddhist Armageddon".[5] We would like to quote from the official, enthusiastically written explanatory text which accompanied the thangka: "The forces of Good from the kingdom of *Shambhala* fight

against the powers of Evil who hold the world in their control, centuries in the future. Phalanxes of soldiers go into combat, great carts full of soldiers, as small as Lilliputians are drawn into battle by huge white elephants, laser-like (!) weapons loose their fire and fantastic elephant-like animals mill together and struggle beneath the glowing sphere of the kingdom” (Thurman and Rhie, 1996, p. 482). With this doomsday vision before their eyes the visitors leave the “temple” and return to the *Kalachakra* sand mandala.

But who was the ruler of this time palace, who is the time god (*Kalachakra*) and the time goddess (*Vishvamata*) in one? None other than the patron of the Tibet exhibition in Bonn, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. He destroyed the *Kalachakra* sand mandala in Bonn in the ritual we have described above and then absorbed its energies (the time gods residing in it). If we pursue this tantric logic further, then after the absorption of the mandala energies the *Kundun* assumed control over the region which had been sealed by the magic diagram (the sand mandala). In brief, he became the spiritual regent of Bonn! Let us repeat, this is not our idea, it is rather the ancient logic of the tantric system. That it however in this instance corresponded with reality is shown by the enormous success His Holiness enjoyed in the German Bundestag (House of Representatives) after visiting his “*Kalachakra Temple*” in Bonn (in 1996). The Kohl government had to subsequently endure its most severe political acid test in relations with China because of the question of Tibet.

Scattered about the whole world in parallel to his *Kalachakra* initiations, sand mandalas have been constructed for the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. What appears to a western observer to be a valuable traditional work of art, is in its intentions a seal of power of the Tibetan gods and a magic foundation for the striven-for world dominion of the ADI BUDDHA (in the figure of the *Kundun*).

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#### Footnotes:

[1] The discipline is indebted to the Austrian, René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, for the most profound insight into Tibetan demonology, his great work, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. His early death, and his wife’s suicide shortly afterwards are seen by the Tantra researcher, John Blofeld, as an act of revenge by the spirits whom he described.

[2] Of course, these killing practices stand in irreconcilable opposition to the Buddhist commandment to not harm any living being. To gloss over this discordance, the lamas have a clever excuse on hand: the ritual master prevents the victim from perpetrating further bad deeds which would only burden him with bad karma and bring him certain damnation.

[3] The *Golden Manuscript* is considered the precursor of the black thangkas, which otherwise first emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They were especially developed for the evocation of tantric terror gods. The background of the images is always of the darkest color; the illustrations are sparsely drawn, often in gold ink — hence the name of the *Golden Manuscript*. This technique gives the images a mysterious, dangerous character. The deities “spring out of the awful darkness of cosmic night, all aflame” comments Guiseppe Tucci (Karmay, 1988, p. 22).

[4] Such a magic occupation does not even need to be performed via an external act; a specially trained lama can mentally execute it through the power of imagination alone.

[5] The catalog text did indeed use the Hebrew term *armageddon*, just as the doomsday guru Shoko Asahara also spoke of “Armageddon”.

Next Chapter:

### [9. THE WAR GODS BEHIND THE MASK OF PEACE](#)

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**The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 9. The war gods behind the mask of peace**

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## 9. THE WAR GODS BEHIND THE MASK OF PEACE

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When Buddhism is talked about today in the West, then the warlike past of Tibet is not a topic. The majority of people understand the Buddha's teaching to be a religion with a program that includes inner and outer peace, humans living together in harmony, the rejection of any form of violence or aggression, a commandment against all killing, and in general a radically pacifist attitude. Such a fundamental ethical attitude is rightly demanded by Buddhists through an appeal to their founder. Admittedly, the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, was born as the descendant of a king from the warrior caste, however, he abandoned his family, became "homeless", and distanced himself from every aspect of the art of war. He did so not just for moral reasons, but also because he recognized that wars are the expression of one's own misdirected awareness and that the dualism taken to its limits in war contained a false view of the world. Reduced to a concise formula, what he wanted to say with this was that in the final instance the ego and its enemy are one. Shakyamuni was a pacifist because he was an idealist epistemologist. Only later, in *Mahayana* Buddhism, did the ethical argument for the fundamental pacifism of the *dharma* (the doctrine) emerge alongside the philosophical one. A strict ban on killing, the requirement of nonviolence, and compassion with all living beings were considered the three supreme moral maxims.

Both of these arguments against war, the epistemological and the human-political, today play a fundamental role in the international self-presentation of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Tirelessly and upon countless occasions over the last decades His Holiness has done what he can for world peace. For this reason he received the Nobel peace prize in 1989. His pacifist sermons and political programs were not the least reason for the fact that the Tibet of old (prior to the Chinese occupation) was increasingly seen and admired in the West as a peaceful sanctuary, inhabited by

unwarlike and highly ethically developed people, a paradise on earth. A western student of the dharma has summarized Tibet's history in the following concise sentence: "Buddhism turned their [the Tibetan] society from a fierce grim world of war and intrigue into a peaceful, colorful, cheerful realm of pleasant und meaningful living" (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 7). With this longed-for image the *Kundun* seized upon a thread already spun by numerous Euro-American authors (since the nineteen-thirties), above all James Hilton, in his best-seller *The Lost Horizon*.

Under the leadership of their lamas, the Tibetans in exile have thus succeeded in presenting themselves to the world public as a spiritual people of peace threatened by genocide, who in a period rocked by conflicts wish to spread their pacifist message. "A confession with which one cannot go wrong", wrote the German news magazine, *Spiegel*, in reference to Tibetan Buddhism, "Two-and-a-half thousand years of peaceableness in place of the inquisition, monks who always seemed cheerful rather than officious and impertinent religious leaders, hope for nirvana rather than the threat of *jihad* — Buddhism harms no-one and has become *trendy*" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). And the German Buddhist and actor Sigmar Solbach explained to his television audience that "a war has never been fought in the name of Buddhism" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). Regrettably, the opposite is the case — countless wars have been fought in the name of Buddhism just as they have in the name of Christianity. The *Shambhala myth* has rightly — as we shall demonstrate on the basis of historical events — been described as the "Buddhist jihad" (holy war).

### **The aggressiveness of the Tibetan tutelary gods (dharmapalas)**

When we examine the iconography of Tantric Buddhism it literally swarms with aggressive warriors, demons, vampires, monsters, sword bearers, flame magicians, and avenging gods, who have at their disposal an overflowing arsenal of weapons: spears, spikes, darts, shields, clubs, hooks, slings, knives, daggers, and all manner of killing machines. This downright grotesque collection of repellant figures reflects on the one hand the social struggles which Indian Buddhism had to endure in the dispute with Hinduism and later with Islam. On the other it is a dogmatic part of the tantric project, which makes wrath, aggression, murder, and the annihilation of enemies the starting point of its system of rituals. A total of three types of warlike deities are distinguished in *Vajrayana* Buddhism:

1. **The horror aspect of a peaceful Buddha, the so-called *heruka*.**
2. **The "flesh-eating" dakini who challenges the adept on his initiatory path.**
3. **Warlike foreign gods who have been incorporated in the tantric system as "protectors of the faith" (*dharmapala*).**

In all three cases the "wrathful gods" direct their potential for aggression outwards, against the "enemies of the faith", and without exaggerating one can say that the *heruka* aspect of a Buddha plays just as great a role in the cultural life of Tibetan Buddhism as the peaceful aspect of a compassionate Bodhisattva.

In Lamaism, Tibet's mystic history and "civilization" has always been experienced and portrayed as the coercion and enslavement of the local gods and demons. If these wanted to remain alive after their magic struggle with the magician lamas then they had to commit themselves under oath to serve in future as a protective guard under Tibetan command. Their basic warlike attitude was thus neither reduced at all nor transformed by Buddhism, rather it was used as a means to achieve its own ambitions and thus increased. This metapolitics of the Lamaist clergy has led to a systematic extension and expansion of its grotesque pandemonium, which afflicted the country across the centuries. There was no temple in which these monsters were not (and still are) prayed to. In the gloomy *gokhang*, the chamber or hall where their cult worship took (and still takes) place, hung (and still hang) their black thangkas, surrounded by an arsenal of bizarre weapons, masks and stuffed animals. Dried human organs were discovered there, the tanned skin of enemies and the bones of children. Earlier western visitors experienced this realm of shadows as a "chaotic, contradictory world like the images formed in a delirium" (Sierksma, 1966, p. 166).

There are dreadful rumors about the obscure rituals which were performed in the “horror chambers” (Austin Waddell), and not without reason, then human flesh, blood, and other bodily substances were considered the most effective sacrificial offerings with which to appease the terror gods. If this flow of bloody food for the demons ever dries up, then according to Tibetan prophecies they fall upon innocent people, indeed even upon lamas so as to still their vampire-like thirst (Hermanns, 1956, p. 198).



*Shrine of the tibetan war god Begtse*

The number of “red and black executioners”, as the “protectors of the doctrine” are sometimes known, is legion, since every place in the land is served by its own regional demons. Nonetheless some among them are especially prominent, like the war god *Begtse*, for example, also known as *Chamsrin*. In the iconography he strides over corpses swinging a sword in his right hand and holding a human heart to his mouth with the left so that he can consume it. His spouse, *Dongmarma* the “red face”, chews at a corpse and is mounted upon a man-eating bear. Another “protective god”, *Yama*, the judge of the dead, king of hell and an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara* (and thus also of the Dalai Lama), threatens with a club in the form of a child’s skeleton in his right hand. *Palden Lhamo*, the Tibetan god-king’s protective goddess whom we have already introduced, gallops through a lake of blood using her son’s skin as a saddle.

Even for the “superhuman” lamas this hellish army is only with difficulty kept under control. Hence it is not rare that demons succeed in breaking free of their magical chains and then loosing their wrath upon even the pious believers. For instance, in the past women were not allowed to enter the main temple of the Kumbum monastery because the “terrible gods” worshipped there would then fall into a blind rage and there was a danger that they would take it out upon all of humanity. Sometimes the rebellious spirits even seized the body of a naive monk, possessed him with their destructive energy and then ran amok in this form. Or, the other way around, a disappointed lama who felt himself to have been unjustly treated in life upon dying transformed into a merciless vengeful spirit. [1] The Tibetan government (the Kashag) and the Dalai Lama must also defend themselves time and again against acts of revenge by opposing protective spirits. In connection with the *Shugden* affair described above, James Burns refers to a total of 11 historical examples (Burns, Newsgrid 9).

The clergy in the Tibet of old was busy day and night defending themselves from foreign demons and keeping their own under control. This was not motivated by fear alone, then the fees for defensive rituals against malevolent spirits counted as a lucrative source of income if not the most significant of all. As soon as something did not seem right, the superstitious peoples suspected that a demon was at work and fetched a lama to act as an exorcist for a fee and drive it out.

The Dutch psychologist and cultural critic, Fokke Sierksma, interpreted the cult of the terror gods as an “incomplete acculturation of a warrior nation that for the sake of Buddhism has had to give up a part of itself, of a Buddhism that for that warrior nation has also had to abandon an integral part, while the two have not found ultimate reconciliation” (Sierksma, 1966, p. 168). We do not find it difficult to agree with this judgment. Yet it must be added that the abandonment of Buddhist principles like nonviolence and peaceableness did not first begin in Tibet; it is, rather, implicit in the tantric doctrine itself. Thus it was not the case that a pacifist Buddhism came out of India to tame a warlike country, rather, the Indian founding fathers of Tibetan Buddhism themselves brought numerous terror gods with them and thereby significantly added to the already existing army of native demons. *Mahakala, Vajrabhairava, Yama, Acala*, or whatever their names may be, are all of Indian origin.

### **Gesar of Ling: The Tibetan “Siegfried”**

Anybody who wishes to gain further insight into the ancient warrior mentality of the Tibetans cannot avoid studying the pre-Buddhist *Gesar* epic. Old shamanic beliefs and “heathen” uses of magic play just as great a role in the adventures of this national hero as the language of weapons. The adventures of *Gesar von Ling* have been compared with the Germanic Nibelungen epic, and not without reason: daredevilry, braggadocio, intrepid courage, thirst for revenge, sporting contests, tumultuous slaughter, military strategy, tricks, deception, betrayal can be found in both, just like joy and suffering in love, courtly love, feminine devotion, rape, mighty amazons, sorceresses, marital infidelity, jealousy, revenge of the Furies. On the basis of the similarities spanning whole scenes it may not even be ruled out that the poets composing both epics drew upon the same sources. One difference lies perhaps in that in *Gesar's* milieu it is even more barbarically eaten and drunk than among the Germanic warriors.

Even if the name of the hero may be historically derived from a Tibetification of the Latin *Caesar* (“emperor”), his mythic origin is of a divine nature. The old soldier was dispatched from heaven to fulfill a mission. His divine parents sent him to earth so that he could free the country of Ling (Tibet) from an evil demon which, after many superhuman deeds, he also succeeded in doing. We do not intend to report here on the fantastic adventures of the hero. What interests us is *Gesar's* thoroughly aggressive mentality. The numerous episodes that tell of the proud self-awareness and physical strength of the women are especially striking, so that the epic can definitely not have been penned by a lama. In some versions (several widely differing ones are known) there are also quite heretical comments about the Buddhist clergy and a biting sarcasm which spares no aspect of monastic life. What remains beyond any criticism is, however, is an unbounded glorification of



war. This made *Gesar* a model for all the military forces of central Asia.

As a sample of the bragging cruelty which dominates the whole epic, we quote a passage translated by Charles Bell — the song of a knight from *Gesar's* retinue:

*We do not need swords; our right hands are enough.  
 We split the body in the middle,  
 and cut the side into pieces.  
 Other men use clubs made of wood;  
 We require no wood;  
 our thumbs and forefingers are enough.  
 We can destroy by rubbing thrice with our fingers.....  
 The blood of the liver [of our enemies] will escape from the mouth.  
 Though we do not injure the skin,  
 We will take out all the entrails through the mouth.  
 The man will still be alive,  
 Though his heart will come to his mouth....  
 This body [of our enemy] with eyes and head  
 Will be made into a hat  
 for the king of the white tent tribe.  
 I offer the heart to the war god  
 of the white people of Ling  
 (Bell, 1994, pp. 13-14)*

There is little trace of ethics, morality, or Buddhist compassion here! In an anthology edited by Geoffrey Samuel, Pema Tsering and Rudolf Kaschewsky also indicate that “the basic principle [of the epic] is to seek one's own advantage by any means available. Whether the opponent is led astray by deception, whether treachery is exploited or the other's weakness brutally made use of, scruples or any qualms of conscience are entirely lacking. If there is a basic idea that runs through the whole work it is the principle that might is right” (Tsering and Kaschewsky in Samuel, 1994, p. 64).

But this is precisely what makes the pre-Buddhist *Gesar* myth so interesting for the philosophy of the Tantrics. It is for this reason that Geoffrey Samuel also reaches the conclusion that the epic is “a classical expression of the shamanic *Vajrayana* religion of Tibet” (Samuel, 1993, 55). This would indeed mean that both systems, the Tantric Buddhism of India and the pre-Buddhist shamanism of Tibet, entered into a culture-bearing symbiosis with one another.

The Nyingmapas, for example, saw in the hero (*Gesar*) an incarnation of Padmasambhava, who returned to drive the demons out of the Land of Snows. Other Lamaist interpreters of the epic celebrate *Gesar* as “lord over the three-layered cosmos” and as *Chakravartin* (Hummel, 1993, p. 53). The belief that the “Great Fifth” was an incarnation of the semi-divine warrior was and is still widely distributed. In eastern Tibet at the start of last century the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was worshipped as *Gesar* reborn. In contrast, the supreme clerical incarnation in Mongolia, the Jabtsundamba Khutuktu, is considered to be an embodiment of *Gesar's* miraculous horse.

A connection has also often been drawn between the rough daredevil and the *Shambhala* myth. Following his earthly demise he is supposed to have gone to the mythic country in order to wait for the prophesied final battle. After he “has left this mortal world once more, there is, according to the Tibetans, a connection between him and the Lamaist apocalypse” (Hummel, 1993, p. 37).

Even in the twentieth century, his archetype as a militant salvational figure played an important role for the Tibetan guerrillas in the fifties and sixties. In the struggle against the Chinese Communists the return of the war hero was longed for so that Tibet could be freed from the “red

tyranny”. The myth is currently again experiencing a renaissance in Tibetan underground circles. In 1982 there was a movement in the province of Amdo whose leader, Sonam Phuntsog, proclaimed himself to be an incarnation of *Gesar* the war hero. The group’s activities were mostly of a magic nature and consisted above all in the invocation of the terror gods.

In good dualist form, these announced via a possession that „now is the time when the deities of the 'white side' hold their heads high and the demons of the 'dark side' are defeated” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 229). It is astounding how seriously the “atheist” Chinese take such magic séances and that they ban them as “open rebellion”.

The *Gesar* myth is experiencing a renaissance in the West as well. For example, the Red Hat lama Chögyam Trungpa, allows the barbarian to be worshipped by his pupils in the USA as a militant role-model. In the meantime, the hero has become a symbol for freedom and self-confidence worthy of emulation for many western Buddhists who have not made the slightest effort to examine his atavistic lifestyle.

Even the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (“the greatest living prince of peace”) does not criticize the war hero, but rather goes so far as to see him — this view must be regarded as a high point of tantric inversion — as a master of compassion: “Could *Gesar* return one day, as some people claim and others believe?” asks the *Kundun*, and answers, “The fact is that he promised this. ... Is it not also said that *Gesar* is an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*, the Buddha of boundless compassion? He is thus also a master and masters have much power ...” (Levenson, 1990, p. 83). There is speculation in Buddhist circles on the basis of such quotations as to whether His Holiness (likewise an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*) is not also an embodiment of the barbaric *Gesar*, particularly since the “Great Fifth” also claimed to be so. The question of how compatible such a martial past can be with the award of the Nobel peace prize remains unanswered, however.

According to Ronald D. Schwartz, in the current protest movements in Tibet the return of the mythic warrior *Gesar*, the appearance of the *Shambhala* king, and the epiphany of Buddha *Maitreya* are eschatologically linked with the „immediate and tangible possibility of the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 231). Rainbows and earthquakes are supposed to show that superhuman forces are also at work in the rebellion. [2]

However, so that *Gesar*’s martial character does not scare off western souls or bring them into conflict with their Buddhist ideals, the lamas solve the problem — as always in such cases — with a subjectification of the myth. Hence, in the adventures of *Gesar* Tarthang Tulku sees every adept’s inner struggle with his bad self: “Interpreted symbolically, King *Gesar*, representing freedom and liberation from the bondage of ignorance, is the King of the human mind. The Kingdom of Ling is the realm of restless experience that must be unified and strengthened. The treasure to win and protect is our own understanding. The enemies that we must conquer are emotionality and ignorance” (quoted by Samuel, 1994, p. 65).

Western pupils, of whom hardly any may have read the violent epic, swallow such messages with shining eyes. But if it were consistently applied to the spiritual struggles, the *Gesar* pattern would imply that one would have to employ brutality, murder, underhandedness, disloyalty, rape, coarseness, boasting, mercilessness, and similar traits against oneself in order to attain enlightenment. What counts is victory, and in achieving it all means are allowed.

The political danger which can arise from such an undifferentiated glorification of *Gesar* may perhaps become obvious if we think back to the Nibelungen epic, which, as we have already mentioned, may according to several researchers draw upon the same mythic sources. For the majority of Germans the fateful glorification of Siegfried the dragonslayer by the national socialists (the Nazis) still raises a shudder. Yet in comparison to his barbaric Tibetan “brother”, the blond Germanic knight still appears noble, honest, good-natured, and pious.

### **The Tibetan warrior kings and their clerical successors**

In the guidelines for a new form of government after the liberation of the Land of Snows from the imposition of the Chinese will, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama wrote (in 1993) that, “under the control of its kings and the Dalai Lamas the political system of Tibet was firmly anchored in its spiritual values. As a consequence peace and happiness reigned in Tibet” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993b, p. 24).

Whether this statement is true can only be proved by the events of history. Let us cast a glance back then, into Tibet’s past. As successful and brutal military leaders, the two most important kings of the Yarlung dynasty, Songtsen Gampo (617-650) and Trisong Detsen (742-803), extended their dominion deep into China with a thorough-going politics of war. Both were, at least according to the sagas, incarnations of Bodhisattvas, i.e., compassionate beings, although the Tibetan armies were feared throughout all of inner Asia for their merciless cruelty. Reports from the Tang annals also admire the highly developed art of war of the Tibetan “barbarians”. Even modern authors still today enthuse about the good old days when Tibet was still a major military power: „These armies were probably better run and disciplined than those of late Medieval Europe and would be recognisable in their general structure to Generals of the modern era like generals like Wellington and Rommel”, we can read in a 1990 issue of the *Tibetan Review* (*Tibetan Review*, October 1990, p. 15).

After the fall of the Yarlung dynasty there were indeed no more major military incidents for centuries. But this was in no way because the Tibetans had become more peaceful and compassionate. Completely the opposite was true, the individual sects in mutual dispute and the various factions among the people were so weakened by the frequent internecine wars that it was not possible for an overarching state to be formed. It was not at all rare for great lamas and their many monastic minions to wage outright war against one another. In such conflicts, none of the orientations shied away from inviting outsiders into the country so as to take to the field against the others with their help. Up until well into the twentieth century the Chinese and Mongolians could thus in any case intervene in Tibetan politics as the invited allies of particular monasteries.

For example, in 1290 the Brigung monastery of the Kagyupa sect was razed to the ground by armed Sakyapa monks with help from the Mongolians. “The misery was greater even than among those who have gone into Hell!” (Bell, 1994, p. 67), a Red Hat text records. The only reason the numerous military disputes in the history of the Land of Snows are not more widely known about is because they usually only involved smaller groups. Hence the battles neither continued for long, nor were they spread over a wide territory. In addition, the “pure doctrine” officially forbade any use of violence and thus all disputes between the orders were hushed up or repressed as soon as possible by both parties. As paradox as it may well sound, the country remained relatively “quiet” and “peaceful”, because all of the parties were so embroiled in wars with one another. But in the moment in which it came to the creation of a larger state structure under the Fifth Dalai Lama in the 17th century, a most cruelly conducted civil war was the necessary precondition.

### **The Dalai Lamas as supreme war lords**

These days there is an unwillingness to speak about this terrible civil war between the Gelugpas and the Kagyupas from which the “Great Fifth” emerged as the hero of the battlefield. We know that the Fifth Dalai Lama called up the war god *Begtse* against the Tibetans several times so as to force through his political will. Additionally, in eastern Tibet he was celebrated as an incarnation of the ancient hero, *Gesar*. He himself was the author of a number of battle hymns like the following:

*Brave and tested are the warriors,  
sharp and irresistible the weapons,  
hard and unbreakable the shields,  
Fleet and enduring the horses.*

(Sierksma, 1966, p. 140)

This brutal call to absolutely annihilate the enemy into its third generation was also composed by him:

*Make the lines like trees that have had their roots cut;  
Make the female lines like brooks that have dried up in winter;  
Make the children and grandchildren like eggs smashed against rocks;  
Make the servants and followers like heaps of grass consumed by fire;  
Make their dominion like a lamp whose oil has been exhausted;  
In short, annihilate any traces of them, even their names.*

(quoted by Sperling, 2001, p. 318)

With these instructions to batter his enemy's children to death against the rocks and to make their women barren, the „Great Fifth” (the preeminent historical model for the current Fourteenth Dalai Lama) turned to the Mongolians under Gushri Khan and thus legitimated the terrible deeds they inflicted upon the Tibetans. „One may say with some confidence,” Elliot Sperling writes, „that the Fifth Dalai Lama does not fit the standard image that many people today have of a Dalai Lama, particularly the image of a Nobel Peace Prize laureate” (Sperling, 2001, p. 319). Barely two centuries later (at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) a Red Hat lama sought revenge for the humiliation of his order by the Dalai Lama, and fetched the Indian gorkhas into the country.

The “Great Thirteenth” himself formed an army consisting of regular troops, a lay militia, and the “golden army” as the monastic soldiers were known. Warrior monks were nothing out of the ordinary in the Tibet of old, although their training and their military equipment was less than desirable. They firmly believed in the law of violence, worshipped their special deities, and maintained their own secret cults. Lama ‘Longear’ was the leader of the troops in the lamasery, it says in western travel report of a lama commander (at the start of the twentieth century). “Although a monk, he didn't know how to say his prayers and because he had killed several people was not allowed to have part in the chanting services. But he was considered a man of courage and audacity — greatly feared in the lamasery, a mighty friend and terror to his enemies” (quoted by Sierksma, 1966, p. 130).

The Tibetan army assembled by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was composed of three services: the cavalry, equipped with lances and breastplates, the somewhat more modern infantry, and the artillery. Oddly enough, the name of *Allah* was engraved in the riders' helmets. These came from a Mohammedan army which was said to have once moved against Lhasa. A terrible snowstorm surprised them and froze them all to death. Their weapons and armor were later brought into the capital and displayed there in an annual parade. It was probably believed that the helmets would offer protection in the battle against the Mohammedans — the arch-enemy from the *Kalachakra Tantra* — since they would not dare to fire at the holy name of their supreme god.

This army of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, to a large part composed of serfs, was more or less picturesque, which naturally did their warlike, “unBuddhist” performance no harm. Yet one did not just fight with weapons in the hand but also operated magically. During the “Great Prayer Festival” for example *tormas* (dough figures) of the cavalry and the infantry were thrown into a fire so as to do harm to the enemies of the land through this fire magic. Every single sacrificial offering was supposed to later “function [like a] bomb” in reality (Chö-Yang, vol. 1 no. 2, 1987, p. 93). [3]

Of even greater martial pomposity than the Tibetan army was the so-called “monks' police”. Heinrich Harrer (the “best friend of the Dalai Lama”) describes the “dark fellows” who were responsible for law and order in Lhasa at the beginning of the fifties in the following words: “The figures in the red habits are not always gentle and learned brethren. The majority re coarse and unfeeling fellows for whom the whip of discipline cannot be strong enough. ... They tie a red band around their naked arm and blacken their faces with soot to as to appear really frightening. They have a huge key tucked into their belts which can serve as a knuckleduster or a throwing weapon as

required. It is not rare for them to also carry a sharp cobblers' knife hidden in their pocket. Many of them are notorious fighters; even their impudent stride seems provocative; their readiness to attack is well known, and one avoids aggravating them" (Harrer, 1984, pp. 216-217).

Just like the police from Lhasa, the officers and other ranks of the Tibetan armed forces tended towards excessive corruption and of a night committed all manner of crimes. Like the western mafia they demanded protection money from businesses and threatened to attack life and limb if not paid. This was certainly not the intention of their supreme military commander, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who still in his last will dreamed of "efficient and well-equipped troops ... as a sure deterrent against any adversaries" (Michael, 1982, p. 173).

Since the once mighty Tibet has been unable to develop itself into a great military power again since the fall of the Yarlung dynasty (in the ninth century), the country all but vibrates with bottled-up military energy. This has been confirmed by a number of western travelers. The British friend of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Charles Bell, was also forced to ascertain "that the martial energy of the Tibetans, though sapped by Buddhism, has not even now been destroyed. Should Buddhism ever go, the combative spirit will return" (Bell, 1994, p. 77). Bell overlooks here that this spirit is already a part of tantric practice, yet he seems to have an inkling of this when he continues as follows: "Indeed, Tibet expects later to fight for her religion. You can sometimes read in Tibetan books about the country called *Shambhala* ... a mystical country which, three or four centuries hence, will be the scene of hostilities, fierce and decisive, between Buddhists and Muhammadans" (Bell, 1994, p. 77). It is a Tibetan saying that "for The Buddha faced by foemen his disciples don their armor" (Bell, 1994, p. 191).

### **The historical distortion of the "peaceful" Tibetans**

The impression, widely distributed in the West, of ancient Tibet as a peaceful country is thus a deliberate and gross misrepresentation of history. Even official texts from the Tibetan tradition are seldom tempted to such pacifist exaggerations as is the Dalai Lama today, above all since being awarded the Nobel peace prize. The local historians knew full well about the fighting spirit and aggressive potential which slumbered in the Tibetan soul. They did not deny that the lamas often enough had to use violence in their own interests. The *Mani Kambum*, a book about the mythic history of Tibet from the 13th century, reported already that its inhabitants had inherited faith, wisdom, and goodness from their father, *Avalokiteshvara*, and from their mother, *Srinmo*, however, "pleasure in killing, bodily strength, and courage" (Stein, 1993, p. 37).

Lamaism's evaluation of war is fundamentally positive and affirmative, as long as it involves the spread of Buddhism. (We shall later demonstrate this through many examples.) This in no sense implicates a discontinuity between historical reality and the Buddhist/pacifist doctrine. *Vajrayana* itself cultivates an aggressive, warlike behavior and indeed not just so as to overcome it through mental control. Wars are declared — as is usual among other religions as well — so as to proceed against the "enemies of the faith". The state religion of the Land of Snows (*Vajrayana*) has always been essentially warlike, and a Buddhist Tantric reaches for his weapon not just in desperation, but also so as to conquer and to eliminate opponents. The virtues of a soldier — courage, self-sacrifice, bravery, honor, endurance, cunning, even fury, hate, and mercilessness — are likewise counted among the spiritual disciplines of Buddhist Tantrism.

Yet the lamas do not conduct "wars" on real battlefields alone. Many more battles are fought in the imagination. Anyone can ascertain this, even if they only cast a fleeting glance over the aggressive tantric iconography. Likewise, all (!) tantras apply military language to religious events and describe the struggle of the spirit against its besmirchment as a "war". Along the path to enlightenment it is fought, beaten, pierced through, burned up, cut to pieces, chained, decapitated, defeated, destroyed, won, and exulted. The Buddhas take to the battlefield of *samsara* (our so-called world of illusion) as "victors", "heroes", "fighters", "generals", and "army commanders".

Accordingly, Tibetan society has always revered the “figure of the warrior” alongside the “figure of the saint” (Buddha, Bodhisattva, or tulku) as their supreme archetype. From the half mythical kings of the 7th century to the modern guerilla leaders of the *Khampas*, the “fighting hero” is the heroic archetype adopted even today by thousands of youths and young men in Tibet and in exile. Already from the beginnings of Tibetan history on the border between “warrior” and “saint” has been blurred. A good “pupil” of the *Vajrayana* and a *Shambhala* “warrior” are still identical today.

### **Is the Fourteenth Dalai Lama the “greatest living prince of peace”?**

Since being awarded the Nobel peace prize (in 1989) the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has been celebrated in the western press as the “greatest living prince of peace”. With a self-confident and kindly smile he accepts this appellation and modestly reminds his audience what an enormous debt he owes to Mahatma Gandhi. Armed with the latter’s doctrine of nonviolence (*ahimsa*), there is no topic which His Holiness speaks of more often or with more emotion than that of “outer” and “inner” peace. “For me, violence cannot possibly be the way” is in recent years the phrase most often heard upon his lips (Levenson, 1992, p. 349).

*Ahimsa* (the rejection of all violence) was originally not a Buddhist value, especially not in the context of the tantric. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama, for example, when Gandhi encouraged him in a letter to join in with his idea, did not at all know where he was at with the term. Be that as it may — the future Tibet, freed from the Chinese yoke, is in the words of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama supposed to be transformed into a “peace and *ahimsa* zone”. There will be no army, no weapons, above all no nuclear warheads any more in the Land of Snows after its liberation. Further, the *Kundun* considers the trade in military hardware to be something just as irresponsible as the aggressive and uncontrolled temper of an individual. In an exemplary fashion he invites the Israelis and the Palestinians to lay down their weapons. He proclaims the demilitarization of the entire planet as a desirable final goal.

### **War toys**

Surprisingly, in opposition to this constantly publicly demonstrated basic pacifist attitude there stands a particular fascination for the art of warfare which captivated His Holiness whilst still a child. In Martin Scorsese’s film (*Kundun*) about the life of the Dalai Lama, this fondness is graphically depicted in a short scene. The child god-king is playing with some tin soldiers. Suddenly, with a sweep of his hand he knocks them aside and cries out emphatically, “I want power!”. This film anecdote could well be more realistic than the widespread and pious legend in which the young god-king had these tin soldiers melted down and then recast as toy monks.

As an adolescent the *Kundun* enjoyed target practice with an air gun he inherited from his predecessor and is still proud of being a good shot. Without embarrassment he reveals in his autobiography that he owns an air pistol and that he practices target shooting with it. One day he killed a hornet which was plundering a wasp’s nest. “A protector of the unprotected!” was the reverential comment of one of his biographers on this piece of sharp shooting (Hicks and Chögyam, 1985, p. 197).

The *Kundun*’s openly admitted weakness for war literature and war films has surprised not a few of his admirers. As a youth he enthused over English military books. They provided him with the images from which to construct models of fighter planes, ships, and tanks. Later he had passages from them translated into Tibetan. Towards the end of the forties the former member of the Nazi SS, Heinrich Harrer, had to recount for him the only recently played out events of the second world war. There has been little change in this passion for military objects since his youth. As late as 1997 the *Kundun* admitted his enthusiasm for uniforms in an interview: “but [they] are also very attractive. ... Every button on the jacket shines so prettily. And then the belt. The insignia” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, March 21, 1997, p. 79). On a visit to Germany in 1998 the Nobel peace prize winner told how “even as a child I liked looking at illustrated books from my predecessor’s library, especially about the First World War. I loved all the instruments, the

weapons and the tanks, the airplanes, the fantastic battleships and submarines. Later I asked for books about World War II. When I visited China in 1954 I knew more about it than the Chinese did” (*Zeitmagazin*, no. 44, October 22, 1998, p. 24). Asked (again in Germany) about his television viewing habits, he chatted about his preference for war films: “Earlier though, I had a favorite program. You won’t believe me! ‘M.A.S.H.’ — the US series about the Vietnam War. Very funny ... (laughs)(*Focus* 44/1998, p. 272).

When he was visiting Normandy in 1986, he unexpectedly and in complete contradiction to the planned schedule expressed the wish to see the Allied bridgehead from the Second World War. “I also wanted to see the weapons, these mighty cannon and all these rifles which painfully moved me. In the vicinity of these machines, these weapons, and this sand I felt and shared the emotions of those who were there then ...” (Levenson, 1992, p. 291). Despite such pious affirmations of compassion with the victims of battle, here too his childlike enthusiasm for the machinery of war can be heard. Or is it only a mood of the “time god”, whose enthusiasm for various systems of weaponry is — as we have already reported — expressed at such length in the *Kalachakra Tantra*?

Even if such martial preferences and play may normally be harmless, we must never forget that, unlike an ordinary person, the Dalai Lama represents a symbolic figure. In the meantime, all the pious aspects which are otherwise known of the childhood and life of the god-king are, thanks to a powerful film propaganda, considered to be a wonderful omen and the indicators of a cosmic plan. Is it then not logically consistent to also interpret his fascination for the military milieu as a sign which flags the aggressive potential of his religion?

#### *Reting Rinpoche and the murder of the Dalai Lama’s father*

The early life of the young Dalai Lama was anything but peaceful. In the forties his milieu was caught up in violent and bloody clashes which could in no way be blamed solely on the Chinese. Although the then regent, the discoverer and first teacher of the god-king, Reting Rinpoche, had transferred the business of state to his successor, Taktra Rinpoche, in 1941, he later wanted to regain the power he had lost. Thus, from 1945 on it came to ever more serious discordances between the Tibetan government and the ex-regent. Uncouth and feared for his escapades countrywide, the Dalai Lama’s father, Choekyong Tsering, counted among the latter’s faithful followers. In 1947 he died suddenly at the age of 47 during a meal. It is not just Gyalo Thondup, one of the *Kundun’s* brothers, who is convinced that he was poisoned by someone from government circles (Craig, 1997, p. 120).

Shortly after the poisoning, Reting Rinpoche decided to stage an open rebellion. His followers attempted to assassinate the regent, Taktra, and approached the Chinese about weapons and munitions. But they were soon overpowered by Tibetan government troops, who took captive the ex-regent. Monks from the Sera monastery rushed to his aid. First of all they murdered their abbot, a Taktra supporter. Then, under the leadership of an 18-year-old lama, Tsenya Rinpoche, who had been recognized as the incarnation of a wrathful tutelary deity (*dharmapala*) and was referred to by his fellow monks as a “war leader”, they stormed off to Lhasa in order to free Reting Rinpoche. But this revolt also collapsed under the artillery fire of the government troops. At least 200 Sera monks lost their lives in this monastic “civil war”. Reting’s residence was razed to the ground.

Soon afterwards he was charged with treason, found guilty, and thrown into the notorious Potala dungeons. He is said to have been cruelly tortured and later strangled. According to other reports he was poisoned (Goldstein, 1989, p. 513). A high-ranking official who was said to have sympathized with the rebels had his eyeballs squeezed out. Just how cruel and tormenting the atmosphere of this time was has been described later by a Tibetan refugee (!): “Rivalry, in-fighting, corruption, nepotism, it was decadent and horrible. Everything was a matter of show, ceremonial, jockeying for position” (quoted by Craig, 1997, p. 123).

#### **Tibetan guerrillas and the CIA**

In the fifties and with the support of the USA, a guerilla army was developed in Tibet which over many years undertook military action against the Chinese occupation forces. A broad scale anti-Communist offensive was planned together with Taiwanese special units and indirect support from the Indian secret service. At the head of the rebellion stood the proud and “cruel” *Khampas*. These nomads had been feared as brigands for centuries, so that the word *Khampa* in Tibet is a synonym for *robber*. In the mid-fifties the American secret service (CIA) had brought several groups of the wild tribe to Taiwan via eastern Pakistan and later to Camp Hale in the USA. There they received training in guerilla tactics. Afterwards the majority of them were dropped back into Tibet with parachutes. Some of them made contact with the government in Lhasa at that stage. Others did not shy away from their traditional trade of robbery and became a real nuisance for the rural population whom they were actually supposed to liberate from the Chinese and not drive into further misery through pillaging.

Despite the Dalai Lama’s constant affirmations, still repeated today, that his flight took place without any external influence, it was in fact played out months in advance in Washington by high military officials. Everything went as planned. In 1959, the American-trained guerillas collected His Holiness from his summer residence (in Lhasa). During the long trek to the Indian border the underground fighters were in constant radio contact with the Americans and were supplied with food and equipment by aircraft. We learn from an “initiate” that “this fantastic escape and its major significance have been buried in the lore of the CIA as one of the successes that are not talked about. The Dalai Lama would never have been saved without the CIA” (Grunfeld, 1996, pp. 155-156).

In addition, the Chinese were not particularly interested in pursuing the refugees since they believed they would be better able to deal with the rebellion in Tibet if the *Kundun* was out of the country. Mao Zedong is thus said to have personally approved of the flight of the Dalai Lama after the fact (*Tibetan Review*, January 1995, p. 10). Yes — Beijing was convinced for months after the exodus that His Holiness had been kidnapped by the *Khampas*.

In fact, the Chinese had every reason to make such an assumption, as becomes apparent from a piece of correspondence between the *Kundun* and the Chinese military commander of Lhasa, General Tan Guansan. Only a few days before the god-king was able to flee the town, he had turned to the General with the most urgent appeal to protect him from the “reactionary, evil elements “ who “are carrying out activities endangering me under the pretext of protecting my safety” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 135). What he meant by these “evil elements” were hundreds of Tibetans who had surrounded his summer palace day and night to cheer him on. This crowd was called upon a number of times by the Dalai Lama’s political staff to abandon their “siege” since it was provoking the Chinese and there was a real danger that they would answer with artillery fire at the illegal rally and in so doing quite possibly threaten the life of the *Kundun*. But the people nevertheless remained, on the pretext of caring for the security of their “god-king”. Thereupon the latter wrote the above request to General Tan Guansan. But in a furtive maneuver he was secretly collected by a group of *Khampas* and brought to the Indian border unharmed.

The flight, organized by the CIA and tolerated by the Chinese, was later mythologized by the western press and the Dalai Lama himself into a divine exodus. There was mysterious talk of a “mystic cloud” which was supposed to have veiled the column of refugees during the long trek to India and protected them from the view of and attack by the Chinese enemy. The CIA airplanes which gave the refugees air cover and provided them with supplies of food became Chinese “reconnaissance” flights which circled above the fleeing god-king but, thanks to wondrous providence and the “mystic cloud”, were unable to discern anything.

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[www.naatanet.org/shadowcircus/shang4.html](http://www.naatanet.org/shadowcircus/shang4.html): **“Resistance fighters escorted the Dalai Lama through guerrilla-held territory. The two CIA-trained men met up with the escape party halfway on their journey and accompanied them to the Indian border, keeping the Americans updated about their progress. The Dalai Lama’s escape triggered a massive military operation by the Chinese who brutally**



**quelled the revolt in Lhasa and went on the offensive against the resistance bases in southern Tibet. The guerrillas suffered major setbacks. Andrug Gompo Tashi and the remainder of his force had no choice but to join the exodus of Tibetans who were streaming across the Himalaya, following their leader into exile.” (From the Film *The Shadow Circus – The CIA in Tibet*)**

Even if the *Kundun* has for years publicly distanced himself from the Tibetan guerillas, he always showed great sympathy in the community of Tibetans in exile for “his” underground fighters. His Holiness has also valued the services of his guerillas in exile and on a number of occasions since 1959 publicly stood by them. “Despite my belief”, he says in his autobiography published in 1964 “I much admire their courage and their determination to take on the fierce struggle which they began for our freedom, our culture, and religion. I thank them for their strength and their daring, and also personally for the protection which they gave me. ... Hence I could not honorably give them the advice to avoid violence. In order to fight they had sacrificed their homes and all the comforts and advantages of a peaceful life. Now they could not see any alternative to continuing to struggle and I had nothing to oppose that with” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1964, p. 190). In the new edition of the autobiography of the in the meantime winner of the Nobel peace prize which appeared in 1990 (*Freedom in Exile*), this passage is no longer mentioned. It is too obvious a contradiction of the current image of the *Kundun* as “the supreme prince of peace of the century”.

Another statement, which can be read in the biography, *The Last Dalai Lama* by Michael Harris Goodman, shows even more clearly the god-king’s two-facedness concerning nonviolence: “In [the message]”, he is supposed to have said, “I called the guerillas 'reactionaries', stated that the Tibetan people should not support them. At the same time the delegation was instructed to tell the guerillas to keep on fighting. We spoke in two tongues, the official and the unofficial. Officially we regarded their act as rebellion, and unofficially we regard them as heroes and told them so” (Goodman, 1986, p. 271).

Already in exile, at the beginning of the sixties the Dalai Lama bestowed on a distinguished rebel leader the same honors which normally accompany an appointment to the rank of general (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 142). At the same time a number of volunteer exile Tibetans flew to the USA in order to once again be trained in guerilla warfare under the supervision of the CIA. The action was mediated by Gyalo Thondup, a elder brother of the Dalai Lama.

Parallel to this, together with the Indian secret service Thondup established the *Special Frontier Force* (SFF) in 1962 with exile Tibetan recruits, a powerful and well-equipped mountain army which could be dropped into Tibet by parachute at any moment. It had 10,500 men under arms and its own officer corps. At the same time the “National Volunteer Defence Army” was founded. It can hardly be assumed that the *Kundun* was not very well informed about these ambitious military projects of his brother. Nonetheless it continues to be officially denied up to the present day. His Holiness is also not supposed to have known anything about the \$1.7 million which the CIA provided annually to the Tibetans for military activities in the sixties.

The armed struggle of the Tibetans was prepared for at the highest political levels, primarily in Washington, Delhi, and Taipei. The only reason it was not brought into action was that at the start of the seventies Richard Nixon began with his pro-China politics and cancelled all military support for the Tibetans. But without American support the outlook for a guerilla war was completely hopeless, and from this point on the Dalai Lama publicly distanced himself from any use of violence.

Military action now no longer had any chance of success and in Dharamsala the work began of effectively reformulating the history of the Tibetan guerillas „in that one encouraged the fiction that the popular resistance had been nonviolent”, as Jamyan Norbu writes, before continuing, Tibetan officials, Buddhist followers, Western supporters and intellectuals [...] regard the resistance movement as an embarrassment [...] because it somehow detracts from the preferred peace-loving image of Tibet as a *Shangri-La*” (Huber, 2001, p. 369).

The Nobel peace prize winner's statements on the armed struggle of the Tibetans are most contradictory and were in the past more oriented to the political situation and constellations of power than fundamental principles. At times the Dalai Lama expressed the view that "it is quite appropriate to fight for a just cause and even to kill" (Levenson, 1992, p. 135). In an interview in 1980 he answered the question of whether violence and religion did not exclude one another as follows: „They can be combined. It depends on the motivation and the result. With good motivation and result, and if under the circumstances there is no other alternative, then violence is permissible" (Avedon, 1980, p. 34).

Only since 1989, after he was awarded the Nobel peace prize, has the god-king cultivated an exclusively pacifist retrospective on the violent history of his country. A few years ago one still heard from His Holiness that there was much which was aggressive in the Tibet of old, about which one could not exactly be happy. From 1989 on, the stereotypical message is that there had only been "peace and happiness" in the Land of Snows' past. [4] Earlier, the *Kundun* had stated that "the Tibetans are predisposed to be fairly aggressive and warlike" and could only be tamed by Buddhism (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993a, p. 18). Today, we read from the same author that "The Tibetan people are of an upright, gentle, and friendly nature" (Dalai Lama XIV, 1993b, p. 34), whilst at the same time the Indian press describes Tibetan youths in Dharamsala as "militant", "violent", "impatient" and "restless" (*Tibetan Review*, May 1991, p. 19). In 1994 a Tibetan youth stabbed a young Indian which led to violence breaking out against the exile Tibetan community.

### **Marching music and terror**

Are the Tibetans a peaceful people? In the camp of the Tibetans in exile a somewhat different tone is struck than at the western press conferences of the Dalai Lama. Anyone who has ever participated in the official festivities of the Tibetan national holiday (March 10) in Dharamsala and seen the uniformed groups of youths parading past the Lion Throne of His Holiness, anyone who has been able to experience the ceremonies of the flag and hear the war and fighting songs sung there, must have gained the impression that this was a military parade and definitely not a peace festival of gentle monks. Admittedly, the *Kundun* also always introduces these festivities with a profession of nonviolence, but after his speech — in the words of the historian, Christiaan Klieger — „the tone of the event turns decidedly martial" (Klieger, 1991, p. 62). The Khampa warriors with whom we are already familiar appear in ancient leopard skin uniforms. Guards of honor salute the Tibetan flag, on which the two snow lions symbolize the twin pillars of church and state. Enthusiastically sounds the tune of "Song of the Uprising People" (*Long shog*), which was composed as a military march. Its two final verses go as follows:

*Tibet follows its true leader ...  
The Great Protector, His Holiness the Dalai Lama,  
Accepted by Tibetans in and out.  
The red-handed butcher – enemy,  
The imperialistic Red Chinese,  
Will surely be kicked out of Tibet.  
Rise up, all patriots!  
(Klieger, 1991, p. 63)*

Such warlike marching songs may be of great importance for the formation of the poorly developed Tibetan national consciousness — they are also sung with the appropriate gusto by all present — but they have absolutely nothing to do with the much invoked principle of *ahimsa*. In contrast, they reify the concept of an enemy and glorify His Holiness ("the greatest living apostle of peace") as the "supreme military commander".

The warlike tendencies among the Tibetans in exile are not exhausted by marching music and ceremonial displays during the national holiday celebrations. Already at the start of the sixties a

small group of militants resolved “that the time had come to employ terrorism in the fight for Tibet” (Avedon, 1985, p. 146). In 1998, at a press conference in Dharamsala, Kuncho Tender, a militant who spent 20 years in the Tibetan underground, argued for a renaissance of the guerilla movement in Tibet “which would kill one Chinese after another until the country [is] free” (Associated Press, Dharamsala, May 28, 1998).

Discussion about “terror as an instrument of politics” is also very current once more among radical Tibetan underground groups in the occupied Land of Snows, for example the *Tiger-Leopard Youth Organization*: „Our non\_violent methods”, it says in a letter from this organization to the United Nations General Secretary, „have been taken as a sign of weakness. We are determined to regain our freedom, and the recent UN vote [in which a criticism of China was rejected] clearly shows us that without bloodshed, sabotage, and aggressive acts we will not gain publicity, sympathy and support. [...] So why should we not follow the destructive path?” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 224). Further the young patriots affirm that they are aware that these methods disagree with the politics of the Dalai Lama but no other option remained open to them.

Another underground organization from eastern Tibet calls itself the „Volunteer Army to Defend Buddhism” (Huber, 2001, p. 363). Calling themselves this shows that this group does not see the “destructive path” to liberation as being in contradiction to their religion. In contrast, an urgent prayer with which the terrible protective gods of the country are invoked and incited against the Chinese enemy counts as part of the daily work of the underground. In 1996 there were three bomb attacks in Lhasa.

Such activities cannot harm the *Kundun* at all, then by publicly criticizing them he furthers his image as an “apostle of peace”. This need not prevent him from secretly encouraging the “armed groups” as he already did with the Khampas. Even if this contradicts his pacifist professions, it does not contradict the principles of Tantric Buddhism.

In the meantime, discussions about Buddhism and the military are becoming an increasingly popular topic in Buddhist circles in the West. For example, there was an article in the journal *Tricycle* in 1996 with the title *Apology of a Buddhist Soldier*, in which the author gathered together arguments which are supposed to legitimate a “just” war for a Buddhist (*Tricycle*, V (3), p. 71). It is of course all very ethical, with reference to, among others, the Buddhist Emperor Ashoka (273–226 B.C.E.) who united India into a peaceful realm. Ashoka was, however, a great and cruel military commander who conducted the bloodiest of campaigns before he achieved power. Some Buddhist traditions revere him without inhibition as a merciless war hero. “Thus the need to kill”, P. J. Tambiah writes in reference to the Emperor, “before becoming a great king who can rule righteously is a Buddhist root dilemma. — Kings must be good killers before they can turn to piety and good works” (Tambiah, 1976, pp. 50, 522).

### **Political calculation and the Buddhist message of peace**

It is not the task of our analysis to make a personal choice between “armed rebellion” and the “*ahimsa* principle” or to answer the question whether violent action in Tibet is morally justified and makes sense in terms of national politics. We also do not want -as the Chinese attempt to do — to expose the *Kundun* as no more than a fanatical warmonger in sheep’s clothing. Perhaps, by and large he is *personally* a peace-loving person, but without doubt he represents a culture which has from its very origins been warlike and which does not even think of admitting to its violent past, let alone reappraising it.

Instead, Dharamsala and the current Dalai Lama make a constant propaganda project of presenting Tibetan Buddhism and the history of Tibet to the world public as a storehouse of eternal teachings about nonviolence and peace. There is thus a refusal to accept that the *Kundun* first acquired his pacifist ideas (e.g., under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi) after his flight; instead it is implied that they are drawn from the inexhaustible inheritance of a many hundred year old tradition and

history. Even the aggressive “Great Fifth” and the “Great Thirteenth” with his strong interest in military matters now appear as the precursors of the current “Buddhism of peace”. On the basis of this distortion, the current Dalai Lama is able to fully identify with his fifth incarnation without having to mention his warlike and Machiavellian power politics and murderous magic: “By holding the position of the Fifth Dalai Lama I am supposed to follow what he did, this is the reason I have to interfere”, the *Kundun* explained in 1997 (HPI 006). Thus there is much which speaks for the pacifism of the Dalai Lama being nothing more than a calculated political move and never having been the expression of a principle. Jamyang Norbu, co-director of the Tibetan cultural institute, thus accuses his “revered leader” (the *Kundun*) and his exile Tibetan politicians of fostering the formation of the western myth of the good and peaceful Tibet of old. At no stage in history have the Tibetans been particularly pacifist — the terrible fighting out of the conflicts between individual monasteries proves this, as well as the bloody resistance to the occupation in the fifties. “The government in exile”, says Norbu, “capitalizes upon the western clichés, hampers a demythologization, a critical examination of its own history” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998).

There is also absolutely no intention of doing this. For the Dalai Lama the fundamental orientation to be adopted is dependent upon what is favorable in the prevailing power-political situation. Thus a immediate *volte-face* to a fighting lineage is thoroughly laid out in his system. Neither religious, nor ideological, and definitely not historical incarnational obstacles stand in the way of a possible decision to go to war. In contrast, the Tibetan war gods have been waiting for centuries to strike out and re-conquer their former extended empire. Every higher tantra includes a call to battle against the “enemies of the faith”. In any event, the *Kalachakra* ritual and the ideology at work behind it are to be understood as a declaration of war on the non-Buddhist world. Important members of the Tibetan clergy have already reserved their places in the great doomsday army of *Shambhala*. „Many of them already know the names and ranks they will have.” (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 29, 30).

When the political circumstances are ripe the “simple monk” from Dharamsala will have to set aside his personal pacifist tendencies and, as the embodied *Kalachakra* deity, will hardly shrink from summoning *Begtse* the god of slaughter or from himself appearing in the guise of a *heruka*. “The wrathful goddesses and the enraged gods are there,” we learn from his own mouth (before he was awarded the Nobel peace prize), “in order to demonstrate that one can grasp the use of violence as a method; it is an effective instrument, but it can never ever be a purpose” (Levenson, 1992, p. 284). There is no noteworthy political leader in the violent history of humankind who would have thought otherwise. Even for dictators like Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin violence was never an end in itself, but rather an “effective instrument” for the attainment of “honorable” goals.

Even some western voices these days no longer shrink from drawing attention to the dangerous and violent aspects of the figure of the *Kundun* in fascination: “This man has something of a pouncing wild cat, a snow leopard imbued with freedom and loneliness which no cage could hold back”, his biographer, Claude B. Levenson, has written (Levenson, 1992, p. 160).

### **“Buddha has smiled”: The Dalai Lama and the Indian atomic tests of 1998**

In the opinion of the Indian military as well, the religion of the Buddha appears to be not so pacifist as it is presented to us here in the West. Why else would the first Indian nuclear weapons tests (in 1974) have been referred to under the secret code of “The Lord Buddha has smiled!”? Why were the spectacular tests in 1998 deliberately launched on the birthday of the Gautama Buddha? (*Focus*, 21/1998, p. 297; *Spiegel*, 21/1998, p. 162). In fact the sole “living Buddha” at this time, the Dalai Lama, has a profound interest in the Indian atomic tests. For him (“as the smiling third party”) a confrontation between the two Asian giants (China and India) would be of great political advantage. It was thus only logical that the “god-king” from Tibet gave the demonstration of a nuclear capability by his host country the Buddhist blessing. While the whole world, especially the heads of state of the G8 countries gathered at the time in Birmingham, protested sharply (President Bill Clinton spoke of “a terrible mistake”) the Tibetan “Nobel peace prize winner” approved of the Indian bomb. “India should not”, said the Dalai Lama “be pressured by developed nations to get rid

of nuclear weapons. ... It should have the same access to nuclear weapons as developed countries. ... The assumption of the concept that few nations are ok to possess nuclear weapons and the rest of the world should not — that's undemocratic" [5] (Associated Press, May 13, 1998). But the disastrous implication of such a statement is that any nation ought to be able to acquire nuclear weapons simply because other countries also possess them. It should be obvious that the Indian public was enthusiastic about the *Kundun's* approbation. "If a man of peace like Dalai Lama can approve of India's nuclear position," one Mamata Shah wrote on the Internet, "Gandhi too would have no hesitation in approving it" (Nospamlchow, Newsgroup 8).

In addition, the whole nuclear display between India and Pakistan symbolically heralds the *Shambhala* war prophesied in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The bomb of the *smiling Buddha* was "the signal for the Pakistanis to forcefully pursue the development of the *Islamic bomb*" and to test it (*Spiegel*, 21/1998) — a foretaste of what awaits us when (according to the *Shambhala myth*) Buddhists and Moslems face each other in the final battle.

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**Dalai Lama praises US approach to bombing Afghanistan: "At the same time, as a quiet fellow, I am amazed and admire that, at this moment, unlike First World War, Second World, Korean War and Vietnam War, I think the American side is very, very carefully selecting targets, taking maximum precautions about the civilian casualties." - "I think this is a sign of more civilization," said the Dalai Lama. He warned, however, that "bombing can eliminate only physical things, not thoughts or emotions. Talk and reasoning is the only long-term solution." (Strasbourg, Oct 24 – AFP)**

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#### **Footnotes:**

[1] How current and far reaching such activities by "vengeful lamas" can be is shown by the *Shugden* affair described above in which the "protective god" (*Dorje Shugden*) has succeeded in overshadowing the public image of the Dalai Lama.

[2] During a cult ceremony in Kongpo in 1989, the "gods" *Amitabha*, *Avalokiteshvara*, and *Padmasambhava* appeared. Ever more mediums are emerging, through whom the *dharmapalas* (the tutelary deities) speak and announce the liberation from the Chinese yoke (Schwartz, 1994, p. 227).

[3] In 1954, Rudolf A. Stein took part in a martial ceremony in Sikkim, at which various war gods were invoked. There was one "recitation to incite the sword" and another for the rifle. The text ended with an "incitement" of the planet *Rahu* (Stein, 1993, p. 247). Such ceremonies were also performed in the Tibet of old.

[4] Only since 1997, under the influence of the *Shugden* affair has a self critical position begun to emerge. This too — as we shall later show — is purely tactically motivated.

[5] This statement stands, even if two days later the Dalai Lama, certainly under pressure from the West, stressed that he was in favor of a general disarmament. The news agency CND even reversed the statement by His Holiness into its opposite and reported on May 20 that the "Dalai Lama said on Tuesday that he was disappointed by India's nuclear test and backed China's call to ban all nuclear weapons" (CND, May 20, 1998). The unrestricted opportunism of the god-king, of which we still have numerous examples to mention, easily allows one to presume that he made both statements (both for and against India).

Next Chapter:

### [10. THE SPEARHEAD OF THE SHAMBHALA WAR](#)

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## The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 10. The spearhead of the Shambhala war

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# 10. THE SPEARHEAD OF THE SHAMBHALA WAR

War in the Tibet of old on a number of occasions meant the military intervention of various Mongolian tribes into the internal affairs of the country. Over the course of time a deep cultural connection with the warlike nomads from the north developed which ultimately led to a complete Buddhization of Mongolia. Today this is interpreted by Buddhist “historians” as a pacification of the country and its inhabitants. But let us examine more closely some prominent events in the history of Central Asia under Buddhist control.

### Genghis Khan as a Bodhisattva

The greatest conqueror of all humankind, at least as far as the expansion of the territory under his control is concerned, was Genghis Khan (1167–1227). He united the peoples of the Mongolian steppes in Asia and from them formed a horseback army which struck fear into the hearts of Europe and China just as much as it did in the Islamic states. His way of conducting warfare was for the times extremely modern. The preparations for an offensive usually took several years. He had the strengths and weaknesses of his opponents studied in detail. This was achieved by among other things a cleverly constructed network of spies and agents. His notorious cavalry was neither chaotic nor wild, nor as large as it was often said to be by the peoples that he conquered. In contrast, they were distinguished by strict discipline, had the absolutely best equipment, and were courageous, extremely effective, and usually outnumbered by their enemies. The longer the preparations for war were, the more rapidly the battles were decided, and that with a merciless cruelty. Women and children found just as little pity as the aged and the sick. If a city opposed the great Khan, every living creature within it had to be exterminated, even the animals — the dogs and rats were executed. Yet for those who submitted to him, he became a redeemer, God-man, and prince of peace. To this day the Mongolians have not forgotten that the man who conquered and ruled the world was of their blood.

Tactically at least, in wanting to expand into Mongolia Tibetan Lamaism did well to declare Genghis Khan, revered as divine, to be one of their own. It stood in the way of this move that the world conqueror was no follower of the Buddhist teachings and trusted only in himself, or in the shamanist religious practices of his ancestors. There are even serious indications that he felt attracted to monotheistic ideas in order to be able to legitimate his unique global dominion.

Yet through an appeal to their ADI BUDDHA system the lamas could readily match their monotheistic competitors. According to legend a contest between the religions did also take place before the ruler’s throne, which from the Tibetan viewpoint was won by the Buddhists. The same story is recounted by the Mohammedans, yet ends with the “ruler of the world” having decided in favor of the Teachings of the Prophet. In comparison, the proverbial cruelty of the Mongolian khan was no obstacle to his fabricated “Buddhization”, since he could without further ado be integrated into the tantric system as the fearful aspect of a Buddha (a *heruka*) or as a bloodthirsty *dharmapala* (tutelary god). Thus more and more stories were invented which portrayed him as a representative of the Holy Doctrine (the *dharma*).

Among other things, Mongolian lamas constructed an ancestry which traced back to a Buddhist Indian law-king and put this in place of the zoomorphic legend common among the shamans that

Genghis Khan was the son of a wolf and a deer. Another story tells of how he was descended from a royal Tibetan family. It is firmly believed that he was in correspondence with a great abbot of the Sakyapa sect and had asked him for spiritual protection. The following sentence stands in a forged letter in which the Mongol addresses the Tibetan hierarch: “Holy one! Well did I want to summon you; but because my worldly business is still incomplete, I have not summoned you. I trust you from here, protect me from there” (Schulemann, 1958, p. 89). A further document “from his hand” is supposed to have freed the order from paying taxes. In the struggle against the Chinese, Genghis Khan — it is reported — prayed to ADI BUDDHA.

### **The Buddhization of Mongolia**

But it was only after the death of the Great Khan that the missionary lamas succeeded in converting the Mongolian tribes to Buddhism, even if this was a process which stretched out over four centuries. (Incidentally, this was definitely not true for all, then a number took up the Islamic faith.) Various smaller contacts aside, the voyage of the Sakya, Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen, to the court of the nomad ruler Godän Khan (in 1244), stands at the outset of the conversion project, which ultimately brought all of northern Mongolia under Buddhist influence. The great abbot, already very advanced in years, convinced the Mongolians of the power of his religion by healing Ugedai’s son of a serious illness. The records celebrate their subsequent conversion as a triumph of civilization over barbarism.

Some 40 years later (1279), there followed a meeting between Chögyel Phagpa, likewise a Tibetan great abbot of the Sakyapa lineage, and Kublai Khan, the Mongolian conqueror of China and the founder of the Yuan dynasty. At these talks topics which concerned the political situation of Tibet were also discussed. The adroit hierarch from the Land of Snows succeeded in persuading the Emperor to grant him the title of “King of the Great and Valuable Law” and thus a measure of worldly authority over the not yet united Tibet. In return, the Phagpa lama initiated the Emperor into the *Hevajra Tantra*.

Three hundred years later (in 1578), the Gelugpa abbot, Gyalwa Sonam Gyatso, met with Althan Khan and received from him the fateful name of “Dalai Lama”. At the time he was only the spiritual ruler and in turn gave the Mongolian prince the title of the “Thousand-Golden-Wheel turning World Ruler”. From 1637 on the cooperation between the “Great Fifth” and Gushri Khan began. By the beginning of the 18th century at the latest, the Buddhization of Mongolia was complete and the country lay firmly in the hand of the Yellow Church.

But it would be wrong to believe that the conversion of the Mongolian rulers had led to a fundamental rejection of the warlike politics of the tribes. It is true that it was at times a moderating influence. For instance, the Third Dalai Lama had demanded that women and slaves no longer be slaughtered as sacrificial offerings during the ancient memorial services for the deceased princes of the steppe. But it would fill pages if we were to report on the cruelty and mercilessness of the “Buddhist” Khans. As long as it concerned the combating of “enemies of the faith”, the lamas were prepared to make any compromise regarding violence. Here the aggressive potential of the protective deities (the *dharmapala*) could be lived out in reality without limits. Yet to be fair one has to say that both elements, the pacification and the militarization developed in parallel, as is indeed readily possible in the paradoxical world of the tantric doctrines. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that the proverbial fighting spirit of the Mongolians would once more really shine forth and then, as we shall see, combine with the martial ideology of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

Before the Communists seized power in Mongolia in the twenties, more than a quarter of the male population were simple monks. The main contingent of lamas belonged to the Gelugpa order and thus at least officially obeyed the god-king from Lhasa. Real power, however, was exercised by the supreme *Khutuktu*, the Mongolian term for an incarnated Buddha being (in the Tibetan language: *Kundun*). At the beginning of his term in office his authority only extended to religious matters,

then constitutionally the steppe land of Genghis Khan had become a province of China.

In the year 1911 there was a revolt and the “living Buddha”, Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, was proclaimed as the first head of state (*Bogd Khan*) of the autonomous Mongolian peoples. At the same time the country declared its independence. In the constitutional decree it said: “We have elevated the Bogd, radiant as the sun, myriad aged, as the Great Khan of Mongolia and his consort Tsagaan Dar as the mother of the nation” (Onon, 1989, p. 16). The great lama’s response included the following: “After accepting the elevation by all to become the Great Khan of the Mongolian Nation, I shall endlessly strive to spread the Buddhist religion as brightly as the lights of the million suns ...” (Onon, 1989, p. 18).

From now on, just as in Tibet a Buddhocracy with the incarnation of a god at its helm reigned in Mongolia. In 1912 an envoy of the Dalai Lama signed an agreement with the new head of state in which the two hierarchs each recognized the sovereignty of the other and their countries as autonomous states. The agreement was to be binding for all time and pronounced Tibetan Buddhism to be the sole state religion.

Jabtsundamba Khutuktu (1870–1924) was not a native Mongol, but was born in Lhasa as the son of a senior civil servant in the administration of the Dalai Lama. At the age of four his monastic life began in Khüre, the Mongolian capital at the time. Even as a younger man he led a dissolute life. He loved women and wine and justified his liberties with tantric arguments. This even made its way into the Mongolian school books of the time, where we are able to read that there are two kinds of Buddhism: the “virtuous way” and the “mantra path”. Whoever follows the latter, “strolls, even without giving up the drinking of intoxicating beverages, marriage, or a worldly occupation, if he contemplates the essence of the Absolute, ... along the path of the great yoga master.” (Glasenapp, 1940, p. 24). When on his visit to Mongolia the Thirteenth Dalai Lama made malicious comments about dissoluteness of his brother-in-office, the Khutuktu is said to have foamed with rage and relations between the two sank to a new low.

The “living Buddha” from Mongolia was brutal to his subjects and not rarely overstepped the border to cruelty. He is accredited with numerous poisonings. It was not entirely without justification that he trusted nobody and suspected all. Nonetheless he possessed political acumen, an unbreakable ambition, and also a noteworthy audacity. Time and again he understood how, even in the most unfathomable situations, to seize political power for himself, and survived as head of state even after the Communists had conquered the country. His steadfastness in the face of the Chinese garnered him the respect of both ordinary people and the nobility.

There had barely been a peaceful period for him. Soon after its declaration of independence (in 1911) the country became a plaything of the most varied interests: the Chinese, Tsarist Russians, Communists, and numerous national and regional groupings attempted to gain control of the state. Blind and marked by the consumption of alcohol, the Khutuktu died in 1924. The Byelorussian, Ferdinand Ossendowski, who was fleeing through the country at the time attributes the following prophecy and vision to the Khutuktu, which, even if it is not historically authenticated, conjures up the spirit of an aggressive pan-Mongolism: “Near Karakorum and on the shores of Ubsa Nor I see the huge multi-colored camps. ... Above them I see the old banners of Jenghiz Khan, of the kings of Tibet, Siam, Afghanistan, and of Indian princes; the sacred signs of all the Lamaite Pontiffs; the coats of arms of the Khans of the Olets; and the simple signs of the north-Mongolian tribes. .... There is the roar and crackling of fire and the ferocious sound of battle. Who is leading these warriors who there beneath the reddened sky are shedding their own and others’ blood? ... I see ... a new great migration of peoples, the last march of the Mongols ...” (Ossendowski, 1924, pp. 315-316).

In the same year that Jabtsundamba Khutuktu died the “Mongolian Revolutionary People’s Party” (the Communists) seized complete governmental control, which they were to exercise for over 60 years. Nonetheless speculation about the new incarnation of the “living Buddha” continued. Here



the Communists appealed to an old prediction according to which the eighth Khutuktu would be reborn as a *Shambhala* general and would thus no longer be able to appear here on earth. But the cunning lamas countered with the argument that this would not hamper the immediate embodiment of the ninth Khutuktu. It was decided to approach the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Ninth Panchen Lama for advice. However, the Communist Party prevailed and in 1930 conducted a large-scale show trial of several Mongolian nobles and spiritual leaders in connection with this search for a new incarnation.

There were attempts in Mongolia at the time to make Communist and Buddhist ideas compatible with one another. In so doing, lamas became excited about the myth that Lenin was a reincarnation of the historical Buddha. But other voices were likewise to be heard. In a pamphlet from the twenties we can also read that “Red Russia and Lenin are reincarnation of Langdarma, the enemy of the faith” (Bawden, 1969, p. 265). Under Josef Stalin this variety of opinion vanished for good. The Communist Party proceeded mercilessly against the religious institutions of Mongolia, drove the monks out of the monasteries, had the temples closed and forbade any form of clerical teaching program.

### **The Mongolian Shambhala myth**

We do not intend to consider in detail the recent history of Mongolia. What primarily interests us are the tantric patterns which had an effect behind the political stage. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century prophetic religious literature has flourished in the country. Among the many mystic hopes for salvation, the *Shambhala myth* ranks as the foremost. It has always accompanied the Mongolian nationalist movement and is today enjoying a powerful renaissance after the end of Communism. Up until the thirties it was almost self-evident for the Lamaist milieu of the country that the conflicts with China and Russia were to be seen as a preliminary skirmish to a future, worldwide, final battle which would end in a universal victory for Buddhism. In this, the figures of the *Rudra Chakrin*, of the *Buddha Maitreya*, and of *Genghis Khan* were combined into an overpowering messianic figure who would firstly spread unimaginable horror so as to then lead the converted masses, above all the Mongols as the chosen people, into paradise. The soldiers of the Mongolian army proudly called themselves “*Shambhala warriors*”. In a song of war from the year 1919 we may read

*We raised the yellow flag  
For the greatness of the Buddha doctrine;  
We, the pupils of the Khutuktu,  
Went into the battle of Shambhala!*  
(Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 104).

Five years later, in 1924, the Russian, Nicholas Roerich, met a troop of Mongolian horsemen in Urga who sang:

*Let us die in this war,  
To be reborn  
As horsemen of the Ruler of Shambhala*  
(Schule der Lebensweisheit, 1990, p. 66).

He was informed in mysterious tones that a year before his arrival a Mongol boy had been born, upon whom the entire people’s hopes for salvation hung, because he was an incarnation of *Shambhala*.

The Buriat, Agvan Dorjiev, a confidante of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, about him we still have much to report, persistently involved himself in every event which has affected Mongolia since the beginning of the twentieth century. “It was his special contribution”, John Snelling writes, “to expand pan-Mongolism, which has been called ‘the most powerful single idea in Central Asia in the

twentieth century', into the more expansive pan-Buddhism, which, as we have already noted, he based upon the *Kalachakra* myths, including the legend of the messianic kingdom of *Shambhala*" Snelling, 1993, p. 96).

The *Shambhala myth* lived on in the underground after Communist accession to power, as if a military intervention from out of the mythic kingdom were imminent. In 1935 and 1936 ritual were performed in Khorinsk in order to speed up the intervention by the king of *Shambhala*. The lamas produced postcards on which could be seen how the armies of *Shambhala* poured forth out of a rising sun. Not without reason, the Soviet secret service suspected this to be a reference to Japan, whose flag carries the national symbol of the rising sun. In fact, the Japanese did make use of the *Shambhala* legend in their own imperialist interests and attempted to win over Mongolian lamas as agents through appeals to the myth.

### **Dambijantsan, the bloodthirsty avenging lama**

To what inhumanity and cruelty the tantric scheme can lead in times of war is shown by the story of the "avenging lama", a Red Hat monk by the name of Dambijantsan. He was a Kalmyk from the Volga region who was imprisoned in Russia for revolutionary activities. "After an adventurous flight", writes Robert Bleichsteiner, "he went to Tibet and India, where he was trained in tantric magic. In the nineties he began his political activities in Mongolia. An errant knight of Lamaism, demon of the steppes, and tantric in the style of Padmasambhava, he awakened vague hopes among some, fear among others, shrank from no crime, emerged unscathed from all dangers, so that he was considered invulnerable and unassailable, in brief, he held the whole Gobi in his thrall" (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p. 110).

Dambijantsan believed himself to be the incarnation of the west Mongolian war hero, *Amursana*. He succeeded over a number of years in commanding a relatively large armed force and in executing a noteworthy number of victorious military actions. For these he was awarded high-ranking religious and noble titles by the "living Buddha" from Urga. The Russian, Ferdinand Ossendowski, reported of him, albeit under another name (Tushegoun Lama) [1], that "Everyone who disobeyed his orders perished. Such a one never knew the day or the hour when, in his *yurta* or beside his galloping horse on the plains, the strange and powerful friend of the Dalai Lama would appear. The stroke of a knife, a bullet or strong fingers strangling the neck like a vise accomplished the justice of the plans of this miracle worker" (Ossendowski, 1924, p. 116). There was in fact the rumor that the god-king from Lhasa had honored the militant Kalmyk.

Dambijantsan's form of warfare was of a calculated cruelty which he nonetheless regarded as a religious act of virtue. On August 6, 1912, after the taking of Khobdo, he had Chinese and Sarten prisoners slaughtered within a tantric rite. Like an Aztec sacrificial priest, in full regalia, he stabbed them in the chest with a knife and tore their hearts out with his left hand. He laid these together with parts of the brain and some entrails in skull bowls so as to offer them up as *bali* sacrifices to the Tibetan terror gods. Although officially a governor of the Khutuktu, for the next two years he conducted himself like an autocrat in western Mongolia and tyrannized a huge territory with a reign of violence "beyond all reason and measure" (Bawden, 1969, p. 198). On the walls of the yurt he live in hung the peeled skins of his enemies.

It was first the Bolsheviks who clearly bothered him. He fled into the Gobi desert and entrenched himself there with a number of loyal followers in a fort. His end was just as bloody as the rest of his life. The Russians sent out a Mongolian prince who pretended to be an envoy of the "living Buddha", and thus gained entry to the camp without harm. In front of the unsuspecting "avenging lama" he fired off six shots at him from a revolver. He then tore the heart from the body of his victim and devoured it before the eyes of all present, in order — as he later said — to frighten and horrify his followers. He thus managed to flee. Later he returned to the site with the Russians and collected the head of Dambijantsan as proof. But the "tearing out and eating of the heart" was in this case not just a terrible means of spreading dread, but also part of a traditional cult among the

Mongolian warrior caste, which was already practiced under Genghis Khan and had survived over the centuries. There is also talk of it in a passage from the *Gesar* epic which we have already quoted. It is likewise found as a motif in Tibetan thangkhas: *Begtse*, the highly revered war god, swings a sword in his right hand whilst holding a human heart to his mouth with his left.

In light of the dreadful tortures of which the Chinese army was accused, and the merciless butchery with which the Mongolian forces responded, an extremely cruel form of warfare was the rule in Central Asia in the nineteen twenties. Hence an appreciation of the avenging lama has arisen among the populace of Mongolia which sometimes extends to a glorification of his life and deeds. The Russian, Ossendowski, also saw in him an almost supernatural redeemer.

### **Von Ungern Sternberg: The “Order of Buddhist Warriors”**

In 1919 the army of the Byelorussian general, Roman von Ungern Sternberg, joined up with Dambijantsan. The native Balt was of a similar cruelly eccentric nature to the “avenger lama”. Under Admiral Kolchak he first established a Byelorussian bastion in the east against the Bolsheviks. He saw the Communists as “evil spirits in human shape” (Webb, 1976, p. 202). Later he went to Mongolia.

Through his daredevilry he there succeeded in building up an army of his own and positioning himself at its head. This was soon to excite fear and horror because of its atavistic cruelty. It consisted of Russians, Mongolians, Tibetans, and Chinese. According to Ossendowski, the Tibetan and Mongolian regiments wore a uniform of red jackets with epaulettes upon which the swastika of Genghis Khan and the initials of the “living Buddha” from Urga were emblazoned. (In the occult scene von Ungern Sternberg is thus seen as a precursor of German national socialism.)

In assembling his army the baron applied the tantric “law of inversion” with utmost precision. The hired soldiers were firstly stuffed with alcohol, opium, and hashish to the point of collapse and then left to sober up overnight. Anyone who now still drank was shot. The General himself was considered invulnerable. In one battle 74 bullets were caught in his coat and saddle without him being harmed. Everyone called the Balt with the shaggy moustache and tousled hair the “mad baron”. We have at hand a bizarre portrait from an eyewitness who saw him in the last days before his defeat: “The baron with his head dropped to his chest, silently rode in front of his troops. He had lost his hat and clothing. On his naked chest numerous Mongolian talismans were hanging on a bright yellow cord. He looked like the incarnation of a prehistoric ape man. People were afraid even to look at him” (quoted by Webb, 1976, p. 203).

This man succeeded in bringing the Khutuktu, driven away by the Chinese, back to Urga. Together with him he staged a tantric defense ritual against the Red Army in 1921, albeit without much success. After this, the hierarch lost trust in his former savior and is said to have made contact with the Reds himself in order to be rid of the Balt. At any rate, he ordered the Mongolian troops under the general’s command to desert. Von Ungern Sternberg was then captured by the Bolsheviks and shot. After this, the Communists pushed on to Urga and a year later occupied the capital. The Khutuktu had acted correctly in his own interests, then until his death he remained at least *pro forma* the head of state, although real power was transferred step by step into the hands of the Communist Party.

All manner of occult speculations surround von Ungern Sternberg, which may essentially be traced to one source, the best-seller we have already quoted several times by the Russian, Ferdinand Ossendowski, with the German title of *Tiere, Menschen, Götter* [English: Beasts, Men and Gods]. The book as a whole is seen by historians as problematic, but is, however, considered authentic in regard to its portrayal of the baron (Webb, 1976, p. 201). Von Ungern Sternberg quite wanted to establish an “order of military Buddhists”. “For what?”, Ossendowski has him ask rhetorically. “For the protection of the processes of evolution of humanity and for the struggle against revolution, because I am certain that evolution leads to the Divinity and revolution to bestiality”

(Ossendowski, 1924, p. 245). This order was supposed to be the elite of an Asian state, which united the Chinese, the Mongolians, the Tibetans, the Afghans, the Tatars, the Buriats, the Kyrgyzstanis, and the Kalmyks.

After calculating his horoscope the lamas recognized in von Sternberg the incarnation of the mighty Tamerlan (1336-1405), the founder of the second Mongolian Empire. The general accepted this recognition with pride and joy, and as an embodiment of the great Khan drafted his vision of a world empire as a “military and moral defense against the rotten West...” (Webb, 1976, p. 202). “In Asia there will be a great state from the Pacific and Indian Oceans to the shore of the Volga”, Ossendowski presents the baron as prophesying. “The wise religion of Buddha shall run to the north and the west. It will be the victory of the spirit. A conqueror and leader will appear stronger and more stalwart than Jenghiz Khan .... and he will keep power in his hands until the happy day when, from his subterranean capital, shall emerge the king of the world” (Ossendowski, 1924, p. 265).

Here he had uttered the key phrase which continues to this day to hold the occult scene of the West enthralled, the “king of the world”. This figure is supposed to govern in a kingdom below the ground somewhere in Central Asia and from here exercise an influence on human history. Even if Ossendowski refers to his magic empire under the name of *Agartha*, it is only a variant upon or supplement to the *Shambhala myth*.<sup>[2]</sup> His “King of the World” is identical to the ruler of the *Kalachakra* kingdom. He “knows all the forces of the world and reads all the souls of humankind and the great book of their destiny. Invisibly he rules eight hundred million men on the surface of the earth and they will accomplish his every order” (Ossendowski, 1924, p. 302). Referring to Ossendowski, the French occultist, René Guénon, speculates that the *Chakravartin* may be present as a trinity in our world of appearances: in the figure of the Dalai Lama he represents spirituality, in the person of the Panchen Lama knowledge, and in his emanation as Bogdo Khan (Khutuktu) the art of war (Guénon, 1958, p. 37).

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Mongolia**

Since the end of the fifties the pressure on the remainder of the “Yellow Church” in Mongolia has slowly declined. In the year 1979 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama visited for the first time. Moscow, which was involved in a confrontation with China, was glad of such visits. However it was not until 1990 that the Communist Party of Mongolia relinquished its monopoly on power. In 1992 a new democratic constitution came into effect.

Today (in 1999) the old monasteries destroyed by the Communists are being rebuilt, in part with western support. Since the beginning of the nineties a real “re-Lamaization” is underway among the Mongolians and with it a renaissance of the *Shambhala myth* and a renewed spread of the *Kalachakra* ritual. The Gelugpa order is attracting so many new members there that the majority of the novices cannot be guaranteed a proper training because there are not enough tantric teachers. The consequence is a sizeable army of unqualified monks, who not rarely earn their living through all manner of dubious magic practices and who represent a dangerous potential for a possible wave of Buddhist fundamentalism.

The person who with great organizational skill is supervising and accelerating the “rebirth” of Lamaism in Mongolia goes by the name of Bakula Rinpoche, a former teacher of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and his right hand in the question of Mongolian politics. The lama, recognized as a higher tulku, surprisingly also functions as an Indian ambassador in Ulan Bator alongside his religious activities, and is accepted and supported in this dual role as ambassador for India and as a central figure in the “re-Lamaization process” by the local government. In September of 1993 he had an urn containing the ashes of the historical Buddha brought to Mongolia for several weeks from India, a privilege which to date no other country has been accorded by the Indian government. Bakula enjoys such a great influence that in 1994 he announced to the Mongolians that the ninth incarnation of the Jabsundamba Khutuktu, the supreme spiritual figure of their country, had been

discovered in India.

The Dalai Lama is aware of the great importance of Mongolia for his global politics. He is constantly a guest there and conducts noteworthy mass events (in 1979, 1982, 1991, 1994, and 1995). In Ulan Bator in 1996 the god-king celebrated the *Kalachakra* ritual in front of a huge, enthusiastic crowd. When he visited the Mongolian Buriats in Russia in 1994, he was asked by them to recognize the greatest military leader of the world, Genghis Khan, as a “Bodhisattva”. The winner of the Nobel peace prize smiled enigmatically and silently proceeded to another point on the agenda. The Kundun enjoys a boundless reverence in Mongolia as in no other part of the world (except Tibet). The grand hopes of this impoverished people who once ruled the world hang on him. He appears to many Mongolians to be the savior who can lead them out of the wretched financial state they are currently in and restore their fame from the times of Genghis Khan.

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**Footnotes:**

[1] It must be the same person, since the author refers to him as a Kalmyk Russian and as the “avenging lama”.

[2] Marco Pallis is of the opinion that Ossendowski has simply substituted the name *Agarhi* for *Shambhala*, because the former was very well known in Russia as a “world center”, whilst the name *Shambhala* had no associations (Robin, 1986, pp. 314-315).

Next Chapter:

[11. THE SHAMBHALA MYTH AND THE WEST](#)

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 The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 11

The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 11. The Shambhala Myth and the west

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## 11. THE SHAMBHALA MYTH AND THE WEST

The spread of the *Shambhala myth* and the *Kalachakra Tantra* in the West has a history of its own. It does definitely not first begin with the expulsion of the lamas from Tibet (in 1959) and their diaspora across the whole world, but rather commences at the beginning of the twentieth century in Russia with the religious political activity of an ethnic Buriat by the name of Agvan Dorjiev.

### The Shambhala missionary Agvan Dorjiev

Even in his youth, Agvan Dorjiev (1854–1938), who trained as a monk in Tibet, was already a very promising individual. For this reason he was as a young man entrusted with caring for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. The duties of the Buriat included among other things the ritual cleansing of the body and bedroom of the god-king, which implies quite an intimate degree of contact. Later he was to be at times the closest political adviser of His Holiness.

Dorjiev was convinced that the union of Tibet with Russia would provide the Highlands with an extremely favorable future, and was likewise able to convince the hierarch upon the Lion Throne of the merits of his political vision for a number of years. He thus advanced to the post of Tibetan envoy in St. Petersburg and at the Russian court. His work in the capital was extremely active and varied. In 1898 he had his first audience with Tsar Nicholas II, which was supposed to be followed by others. The Russian government was opening up with greater tolerance towards the Asian minorities among whom the Buriats were also to be counted, and was attempting to integrate them more into the Empire whilst still respecting their religious and cultural autonomy, instead of missionizing them as they had still done at the outset of the 19th century.

Even as a boy, Nicholas II had been fascinated by Tibet and the “yellow pontiff” from Lhasa. The famous explorer, Nikolai Przhevalsky, introduced the 13-year-old Tsarevitch to the history and geopolitics of Central Asia. Przhevalsky described the Dalai Lama as a „powerful Oriental pope with dominion over some 250 million Asiatic souls” and believed that a Russian influence in Tibet would lead to control of the entire continent and that this must be the first goal of Tsarist foreign policy (Schimmelpennink, 1994, p. 16). Prince Esper Esperovich Ukhtomsky, influential at court and deeply impressed by the Buddhist teachings, also dreamed of a greater Asian Empire under the leadership of the “White Tsars”.

Since the end of the 19th century Buddhism had become a real fashion among the Russian high society, comparable only to what is currently happening in Hollywood, where more and more stars profess to the doctrine of the Dalai Lama. It was considered stylish to appeal to Russia’s Asiatic inheritance and to invoke the Mongolian blood which flowed in the veins of every Russian with emotional phrases. The poet, Vladimir Solovjov declaimed, “Pan-Mongolism — this word: barbaric, yes! Yet a sweet sound” (Block, n.d., p. 247).



*Agvan Dorjiev*

The mysto-political influences upon the court of the Tsar of the naïve demonic village magician, Rasputin, are common knowledge. Yet the power-political intrigues of an intelligent Asian doctor by the name of Peter Badmajev ought to have been of far greater consequence. Like Dorjiev, whom he knew well, he was a Buriat and originally a Buddhist, but he had then converted to Russian Orthodox. His change of faith was never really bought by those around him, who frequented him above all as a mighty shaman that was “supposed to be initiated into all the secrets of Asia” (Golowin, 1977, p. 219).

Badmajev was head of the most famous private hospital in St. Petersburg. There the cabinet lists for the respective members of government were put together under his

direction. R. Fülöp-Miller has vividly described the doctor’s power-political activities: “In the course of time medicine and politics, ministerial appointments and ‘lotus essences’ became more and more mingled, and a fantastic political magic character arose, which emanated from Badmajev’s sanatorium and determined the fate of all Russia. The miracle-working doctor owed this influence especially to his successful medical-political treatment of the Tsar. ... Badmajev’s mixtures, potions, and powders brewed from mysterious herbs from the steppes served not just to remedy patient’s metabolic disturbances; anyone who took these medicaments ensured himself an

important office in the state at the same time” (Fülöp-Miller, 1927, pp. 112, 148). For this “wise and crafty Asian” too, the guiding idea was the establishment of an Asian empire with the “White Tsar” at its helm.

In this overheated pro-Asian climate, Dorjiev believed, probably somewhat rashly, that the Tsar had a genuine personal interest in being initiated into the secrets of Buddhism. The Buriat’s goal was to establish a *mchod-yon* relationship between Nicholas II and the god-king from Lhasa, that is, Russian state patronage of Lamaism. Hence a trip to Russia by the Dalai Lama was prepared which, however, never eventuated.

### *Bolshevik Buddhism*

One would think that Dorjiev had a compassionate heart for the tragic fate of the Tsarist family. At least, Nicholas II had supported him and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had even declared the Russian heir to the throne to be a Bodhisattva because a number of attempts to give him a Christian baptism mysteriously failed. At Dorjiev’s behest, pictures of the Romanovs adorned the Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg.

Hence, it is extremely surprising that the Buriat greeted the Russian October Revolution and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks with great emotion. What stood behind this about-face, a change of attitude or understandable opportunism? More likely the former, then at the outset of the twenties Dorjiev, along with many famous Russian orientalists, was convinced that Communism and Buddhism were compatible. He publicly proclaimed that the teaching of Shakyamuni was an “atheistic religion” and that it would be wrong to describe it as “unscientific”. Men in his immediate neighborhood even went so far as to celebrate the historical Buddha as the original founder of Communism and to glorify Lenin as an incarnation of the Enlightened One. There are reliable rumors that Dorjiev and Lenin had met.

Initially the Bolsheviks appreciated such currying of favor and made use of it to win Buddhist Russians over to their ideas. Already in 1919, the second year of the Revolution, an exhibition of Buddhist art was permitted and encouraged amidst extreme social turmoil. The teachings of Shakyamuni lived through a golden era, lectures about the Sutras were held, numerous Buddhist books were published, contacts were established with Mongolian and Tibetan scholars. Even the ideas of pan-Mongolism were reawakened and people began to dream of blood-filled scenes. In the same year, in his famous poem of hate *Die Skythen* [The Scythians], Alexander Block prophesied the fall of Europe through the combined assault of the Russians and the Mongolians. In it we can read that

*We shall see through the slits of our eyes  
How the Huns fight over your flesh,  
How your cities collapse  
And your horses graze between the ruins.*  
(Block, n.d., p. 249)

Even the Soviet Union’s highest-ranking cultural official of the time, Anatoli Vassilievich Lunacharski, praised Asia as a pure source of inexhaustible reserves of strength: “We need the Revolution to toss aside the power of the bourgeoisie and the power of rationality at the same time so as to regain the great power of elementary life, so as to dissolve the world in the real music of intense being. We respect and honor Asia as an area which until now draws its life energy from exactly these right sources and which is not poisoned by European reason” (Trotzkij, 1968, p. 55).

Yet the Buddhist, pan-Asian El Dorado of Leningrad transformed itself in 1929 into a hell, as the Stalinist secret service began with a campaign to eradicate all religious currents. Some years later Dorjiev was arrested as a counterrevolutionary and then put on trial for treason and terrorism. On January 29, 1938 the “friend of the Dalai Lama” died in a prison hospital.

### *The Kalachakra temple in St. Petersburg*

There is a simple reason for Dorjiev's enthusiasm for Russia. He was convinced that the *Kalachakra* system and the *Shambhala myth* had their origins in the Empire of the Tsar and would return via it. In 1901 the Buriat had received initiations into the Time Tantra from the Ninth Panchen Lama which were supposed to have been of central significance for his future vision. Ekai Kawaguchi, a Buddhist monk from Japan who visited Tibet at the turn of the last century, claims to have heard of a pamphlet in which Dorjiev wrote "*Shambhala* was Russia. The Emperor, moreover, was an incarnation of Tsongkhapa, and would sooner or later subdue the whole world and found a gigantic Buddhist empire" (Snelling, 1993, p. 79). Although it is not certain whether the lama really did write this document, it fits in with his religious-political ideas. Additionally, the historians are agreed: "In my opinion," W.A. Unkrig writes, "the religiously-based purpose of Agvan Dorjiev was the foundation of a Lamaist-oriented kingdom of the Tibetans and Mongols as a theocracy under the Dalai Lama ... [and] under the protection of Tsarist Russia ... In addition, among the Lamaists there existed the religiously grounded hope for help from a 'Messianic Kingdom' in the North ... called 'Northern Shambhala'" (quoted by Snelling, 1993, p. 79).

At the center of Dorjiev's activities in Russia stood the construction of a three-dimensional mandala — the Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg. The shrine was dedicated to the *Kalachakra* deity. The Dalai Lama's envoy succeeded in bringing together a respectable number of prominent Russians who approved of and supported the project. The architects came from the West. A painter by the name of Nicholas Roerich, who later became a fanatic propagandist for *Kalachakra* doctrine, produced the designs for the stained-glass windows. Work commenced in 1909. In the central hall various main gods from the Tibetan pantheon were represented with statues and pictures, including among others Dorjiev's wrathful initiation deity, *Vajrabhairava*. Regarding the décor, it is perhaps also of interest that there was a swastika motif which the Bolsheviks knocked out during the Second World War. There was sufficient room for several lamas, who looked after the ritual life, to live on the grounds. Dorjiev had originally intended to triple the staffing and to construct not just a temple but also a whole monastery. This was prevented, however, by the intervention of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The inauguration took place in 1915, an important social event with numerous figures from public life and the official representatives of various Asian countries. The Dalai Lama sent a powerful delegation, "to represent the Buddhist Papacy and assist the Tibetan Envoy Dorjiev" (Snelling, 1993, p. 159). Nicholas II had already viewed the *Kalachakra* temple privately together with members of his family several days before the official occasion.

Officially, the shrine was declared to be a place for the needs of the Buriat and Kalmyk minorities in the capital. With regard to its occult functions it was undoubtedly a tantric mandala with which the *Kalachakra* system was to be transplanted into the West. Then, as we have already explained, from the lamas' traditional point of view founding a temple is seen as an act of spiritual occupation of a territory. The legends about the construction of first Buddhist monastery (Samye) on Tibetan soil show that it is a matter of a symbolic deed with which the victory of Buddhism over the native gods (or demons) is celebrated. Such sacred buildings as the *Kalachakra* temple in St. Petersburg are cosmograms which are — in their own way of seeing things — employed by the lamas as magic seals in order to spiritually subjugate countries and peoples. It is in this sense that the Italian, Fosco Maraini, has also described the monasteries in his poetic travelogue about Tibet as "factories of a holy technology or laboratories of spiritual science" (Maraini, 1952, p. 172). In our opinion this approximates very closely the Lamaist self-concept. Perhaps it is also the reason why the Bolsheviks later housed an evolutionary technology laboratory in the confiscated *Kalachakra* shrine of St. Petersburg and performed genetic experiments before the eyes of the tantric terror gods.

The temple was first returned to the Buddhists in June 1991. In the same year, a few days before his own death, the English expert on Buddhism, John Snelling, completed his biography of the god-king's Buriat envoy. In it he poses the following possibility: "Who knows then but what I call



Dorjiev's *Shambhala Project* for a great Buddhist confederation stretching from Tibet to Siberia, but now with connections across to Western Europe and even internationally, may well become a very real possibility” (Snelling, 1993, xii). Here, Snelling can only mean the explosive spread of Tantric Buddhism across the whole world.

If we take account of the changes that time brings with it, then today the *Kalachakra* temple in Petersburg would be comparable with the *Tibet House* in New York. Both institutions function(ed) as semi-occult centers outwardly disguised as cultural institutions. In both instances the spread of the *Kalachakra* idea is/was central as well. But there is also a much closer connection: Robert Alexander Farrar Thurman, the founder and current leader of the *Tibet House*, went to Dharamsala at the beginning of the sixties. There he was ordained by the Dalai Lama in person. Subsequently, the Kalmyk, Geshe Wangyal (1901-1983), was appointed to teach the American, who today proclaims that he shall experience the Buddhization of the USA in this lifetime. Thurman thus received his tantric initiations from Wangyal.

This guru lineage establishes a direct connection to Agvan Dorjiev. Namely, that as a 19-year-old novice Lama Wangyal accompanied the Buriat to St. Petersburg and was initiated by him. Thus, Robert Thurman's "line guru" is, via Wangyal, the old master Dorjiev. Dorjiev — Wangyal — Thurman form a chain of initiations. From a tantric viewpoint the spirit of the master live on in the figure of the pupil. It can thus be assumed that as Dorjiev's "successor" Thurman represents an emanation of the extremely aggressive protective deity, *Vajrabhairava*, who had incarnated himself in the Buriat. At any rate, Thurman has to be associated with Dorjiev's global *Shambhala* utopia. His close interconnection with the *Kalachakra Tantra* is additionally a result of his spending several months in Dharamsala under the supervision of Namgyal monks, who are specialized in the time doctrine.

#### **Madame Blavatsky and the Shambhala myth**



Yet, as the real pioneering deed in the spread of the *Shambhala myth* in the West we have to present the life and work of a woman. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891), the influential founder of Theosophy, possibly contributed more to the globalization of a warlike Buddhism than

she was aware of. The noble-born Russian is supposed to have already been a gifted medium as a child. After an adventurous life (among other things she worked as a rider in a circus) her spiritual career as such began in the 1870s in the USA. At first she tried her hand at all kinds of spiritualist séances. Then she wrote her first occult book, later world famous, *Isis Unveiled* (first published in 1875). As the title reveals, at this stage she oriented herself to secret Egyptian teachings. There is almost no trace of Buddhist thought to be found in this work. In 1879 together with her most loyal follower, Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, Blavatsky made a journey to Bombay and to the teachings of Buddha Gautama. There too, the doctrine of the “great White Brotherhood of Tibet” and the mysterious spiritual masters who determine the fate of humanity was invented, or rather, in Blavatsky’s terms, “received” from the higher realms.

Tibet, which, her own claims to the contrary, she had probably never visited, was a grand obsession for the occultist. She liked to describe her own facial characteristics as “Kalmyk-Buddhist-Tatar”. Even though her esoteric system is syncretized out of all religions, since her work on the *Secret Doctrine* Tibetan/Tantric Buddhism takes pride of place among them.

A detailed comparison of the later work of the Theosophist with the *Shambhala myth* and the *Kalachakra Tantra* would reveal astounding similarities. Admittedly she only knew the Time Tantra from the brief comments of the first western Tibetologist, the Hungarian, Csoma de Körös, but her writings are permeated by the same spirit which also animates the “Highest Tantra of all”. The mystic *Secret Book of Dzyan*, which the Russian claimed to have “received” from a Tibetan master and which she wrote her *Secret Doctrine* as a commentary upon, is central to her doctrine. It is supposed to be the first volume of the 21 *Books of Kiu te*, in which all the esoteric doctrines of our universe are encoded according to Blavatsky. What are we dealing with here? The historian David Reigle suspects that by the mysterious *Books of Kiu te* she means the tantra section of the Tibetan *Tanjur* and *Kanjur*, the officially codified Tibetan collections of Buddhist doctrinal writings, about which only little was known at the time. But this is not certain. There is also supposed to be a Tibetan tradition which claims that the *Books of Kiu te* were all to be found in the kingdom of *Shambhala* (Reigle, 1983, p. 3). Following such opinions Madame Blavatsky’s secret directions would have been drawn directly from the kingdom.

In her philosophy the ADI BUDDHA system is of central importance, and likewise the fivefold group of the Dhyani (or meditation) Buddhas and the glorification of *Amitabha* as the supreme god of light, whom she compares with the “*Ancient of Days*” of the Jewish Cabala. Astutely, she recognizes the Chinese goddess *Guanyin* as the “genius of water” (Spierenburg, 1991, p. 13). But as “mother, wife, and daughter” she is subordinate to the “First Word”, the Tibetan fire god *Avalokiteshvara*. The result is — as in the *Kalachakra Tantra* — an obsessive solar and fire cult. Her fire worship exhibits an original development in the principal deity of our age, *Fohat* by name. Among other things he is said to emanate in all forms of electricity.

Madame Blavatsky was not informed about the sexual magic practices in the tantras. She herself supported sexual abstinence as “occult hygiene of mind and body” (Meade, 1987, p. 398). She claimed to be a virgin all her life, but a report from her doctors reveals this was not the truth. “To Hades with the sex love!”, she cursed, “It is a beastly appetite that should be starved into submission” (Symonds, 1959, p. 64). When the sexes first appeared — we learn from the *Secret Book of Dzyan* — they brought disaster to the world. The decline into the material began with a sexual indiscretion of the gods: “They took wives fair to look upon. Wives from the mindless, the narrow-headed. ... Then the third eye acted no longer” (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. 2, p. 13).

Blavatsky was probably convinced that her female body was being borrowed by a male Tibetan yogi. At any rate her closest co-worker, Henry Steele Olcott, who so admired her works that he could not believe they could be the work of a woman, suspected this. Hence, thinking of Madame, he asked an Indian guru, “But can the *atman* [higher self] of a yogi be transferred into the body of a woman?”. The Indian replied, “He can clothe his soul in her physical form with as much ease as he can put on a woman's dress. In every physical aspect and relation he would then be like a woman;

internally he would remain himself” (Symonds, 1959, p. 142). As in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, androgyny is also considered the supreme goal along the path to enlightenment in Theosophy. The gods are simultaneously “male-female”. Their bisexuality is concentrated in the figure of *Avalokiteshvara*, the cosmic Adam.

Through her equation of the ADI BUDDHA with the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* Madame Blavatsky clears the way for a cosmologization of the latter’s earthly embodiment, the Dalai Lama. For her, the Bodhisattva is “the powerful and all-seeing”, the “savior of humanity” and we learn that as “the most perfect Buddha” he will incarnate in the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Lama in order to redeem the whole world (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. 2, p. 178).

As in the *Shambhala myth*, the Russian presumes that a secret world government exists, whose members, the *Mahatmas*, were brought together in an esoteric society in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by the founder of the Gelugpa order, Tsongkhapa. The “White Brotherhood”, as this secret federation is known, still exists in Tibet, even if hidden from view, and influences the fate of humanity. It consists of superhumans who watch over the evolution of the citizens of the earth.

Likewise, the catastrophic destruction of the old eon and the creation of a new paradisiacal realm are part of the Theosophical world view. Here, Blavatsky quotes the same Indian source from which the *Kalachakra Tantra* is also nourished, the *Vishnu Purana*. There it says of the doomsday ruler that, “He ... shall descend on Earth as an outstanding Brahman from *Shambhala* ... endowed with the eight superhuman faculties. Through his irresistible power he will ... destroy all whose hearts have been relinquished to evil. He will re-establish righteousness on earth” (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. 1, p. 378).

Of course, the Russian was able to read much into the Tibetan Buddhist doctrine, since in her time only a few of the original texts had been translated into a western language. But it is definitely wrong to dismiss her numerous theses as pure fantasy, as her speculative world brings her closer to the imagination and occult ambience of Lamaism than some philologically accurate translations of Sanskrit writings. With an unerring instinct and a visionary mastery she discovered many of the ideas and forces which are at work in the tantric teachings. In that she attained these insights more through intuition and mediumism than through scientific research, she can be regarded as the semi-aware instrument of a Buddhist-Tibetan world conquest. At any rate, of all the western “believers in Tibet” she contributed the most to the spread of the idea of the Land of Snows as a unfathomable mystery. Without the occult veil which Madame Blavatsky cast over Tibet and its clergy, Tantric Buddhism would only be half as attractive in the West. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is also aware of the great importance of such female allies and has hence frequently praised Blavatsky’s pioneering work.

### **Nicholas Roerich and the Kalachakra Tantra**

A further two individuals who won the most respect for the *Shambhala myth* in the West before the flight of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, were also Russians, Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947) and his wife Helena Ivanovna (1879–1955). Roerich was a lifelong painter, influenced by the late art nouveau movement. He believed himself to be a reincarnation of Leonardo da Vinci. Via his paintings, of which the majority featured Asian subjects, especially the mountainous landscapes of the Himalayas, he attempted to spread his religious message. He became interested in the ideas of Theosophy very early on; his wife translated Madame Blavatsky’s *Secret Doctrine* into Russian. The occultist led him to Buddhism, which was as we have said *en vogue* in the society of St. Petersburg at the time. We have already briefly encountered him as a designer of Agvan Dorjiev’s *Kalachakra* temple. He was a close friend of the Buriat. In contrast, he hated Albert Grünwedel and regarded his work with deep mistrust. Between the years of 1924 and 1928 he wandered throughout Central Asia in search of the kingdom of *Shambhala* and subsequently published a travel diary.

In 1929 he began a very successful international action, the *Roerich Banner of Peace* and the *Peace Pact*, in which warring nations were supposed to commit themselves to protecting each other's cultural assets from destruction. In the White House in 1935 the Roerich Pact was signed by 21 nations in the presence of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The migrant Russian succeeded in gaining constant access to circles of government, especially since the American agricultural minister, Henry Wallace, had adopted him as his guru. In 1947 the painter died in the *Himalayan* foothills of northern India.

With great zeal his wife continued her husband's religious work up until the nineteen-fifties. Helena Ivanovna had from the outset actively participated in the formation of her husband's ideas. Above all it is to her that we owe the numerous writings about *Agni Yoga*, the core of their mutual teachings. Roerich saw her as something like his shakti, and openly admitted to her contribution to the development of his vision. He said in one statement that in his understanding of the world "the duty of the woman [is] to lead her male partner to the highest and most beautiful, and then to inspire him to open himself up to the higher world of the spirit and to import both valuable and beautiful aspects and ethical and social ones into life" (Augustat, 1993, p. 50). In his otherwise Indian Buddhist doctrinal system there was a revering of the "mother the world" that probably came from the Russian Orthodox Church.

Roerich first learned about the *Kalachakra Tantra* from Agvan Dotjiev during his work on the temple in St. Petersburg. Later, in Darjeeling, he had contact to the lama Ngawang Kalzang, who was also the teacher of the German, Lama Govinda, and was well versed in the time teachings. It is, however, most unlikely that Roerich received specific initiations from him or others, as his statements about the *Kalachakra Tantra* do not display a great deal of expertise. Perhaps it was precisely because of this that he saw in it the "happy news" of the new eon to come. He thus took up exactly the opposite position to his contemporary and acquaintance, Albert Grünwedel, who fanatically denounced the supreme Buddhist doctrinal system as a work of the devil. "*Kalachakra*", Roerich wrote, "is the doctrine which is attributed to the numerous rulers of *Shambhala*. ... But in reality this doctrine is the great revelation brought to humankind ... by the lords of fire, the sons of reason who are and were the lords of *Shambhala*" (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, pp. 79, 81).

According to Roerich, the "fiery doctrine was covered in dust" up until the twentieth century. (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 122). But now the time had come in which it would spread all over the world. As far as their essential core was concerned, all other religions were supposed to be included in the Time Tantra already: "There are now so many teachers — so different and so hostile to one another; and nonetheless so many speak of the One, and the *Kalachakra* expresses this One", the Russian has a Tibetan lama say. "One of your priests once asked me: Are the Cabala and *Shambhala* not parts of the one teaching? He asked: Is the great Moses not a initiate of the same doctrine and a servant of its laws?" (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 78).

### *Agni yoga*

For Roerich and his wife the Time Tantra contains a sparkling fire philosophy: „This Teaching of *Kalachakra*, this utilization of the primary energy, has been called the Teaching of Fire. The Hindu peoples know the great *Agni* — ancient teaching though it be, it shall be the new teaching for the New Era. We must think of the future; and in the teaching of *Kalachakra* we know there lies all the material which may be applied for greatest use. [...] *Kalachakra* is the Teaching ascribed to the various Lords of *Shambhala* [...] But in reality this Teaching is the Great Revelation brought to humanity at the dawn of its conscious evolution in the third race of the fourth cycle of Earth by the Lords of Fire, the Sons of reason who were and are the Lords of *Shambhala*" (Reigle, 1986, p. 38). The interpretation which the Russian couple give to the *Kalachakra Tantra* in their numerous publications may be described without any exaggeration as a "pyromaniac obsession". For them, fire becomes an autocratic primary substance that dissolves all in its flames. It functions as the sole creative universal principle. All the other elements, out of the various admixtures of which the variety of life arises, disappear in the flaming process of creation: "Do not seek the creative fire in

the inertia of earth, in the seething waves of water, in the storms of the air (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 5). Keep away from the other “elements” as “they do not love fire” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 7). Only the “fiery world” brings blessing. Everyone carries the “sparks of the fiery world in their hearts” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. II, p. 8). This announces itself through “fiery signs”. “Rainbow flames” confirm the endeavors of the spirit. But only after a “baptism of fire” do all the righteous proceed with “flaming hearts” to the “empire of the fiery world” in which there are no shadows. They are welcomed by “fire angels”. “The luminosity of every part of the fiery world generates an everlasting radiance” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. II, p. 8). The “song of fire sounds like the music of the spheres” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. II, p. 8). At the center of this world lies the “supreme fire”. Since the small and the large cosmos are one, the “fiery chakras” of the individual humans correspond to “the fiery structures of space” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 240).

This fire cult is supposed to be ancient and in the dim and distant past its shrines already stood in the Himalayas: „Beyond the Kanchenjunga are old menhirs of the great sun cult. Beyond the Kanchenjunga is the birthplace of the sacred Swastika, sign of fire. Now in the day of *Agni Yoga*, the element of fire is again entering the spirit.” (N. Roerich, 1985, p. 36, 37). Madame Blavatsky’s above-mentioned god of electricity, *Fohat*, is also highly honored by the Roerichs.

The Roerichs’ fiery philosophy is put into practice through a particular sacred system which is called *Agni Yoga*. We were unable to determine the degree to which it follows the traditions of the already described *Sadanga Yoga*, practiced in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. *Agni Yoga* gives the impression that is conducted more ethically and with feelings than technically and with method. Admittedly the Roerich texts also talk of an unchaining of the *kundalini* (fire serpent), but nowhere is there discussion of sexual practices. In contrast -the philosophy of the two Russians requires strict abstinence and is antagonistic to everything erotic.

In 1920 the first *Agni Yoga* group was founded by the married couple. The teachings, we learn, come from the East, indeed direct from the mythical kingdom: „And Asia when she speaks the Blessed *Shambhala*, about *Agni Yoga*, about the Teaching of Flame, knows that the holy spirit of flame can unite the human hearts in a resplendent evolution” (N. Roerich, 1985, p. 294). *Agni Yoga* is supposed to join the great world religions together and serve as a common basis for them.

With great regret the Roerichs discover that the people do not listen to the “fiery tongues” that speak to them and want to initiate them into the secrets of the flames. They appropriated only the external appearances of the force of fire, like electricity, and otherwise feared the element. Yet the “space fire demands revelation” and whoever closes out its voice will perish in the flames (H. I. Roerich, 1980, p. 30).

Even if it is predicted in the cosmic plan, the destruction of all dark and ignorant powers does not happen by itself. It needs to be accelerated by the forces of good. It is a matter of victory and defeat, of heroic courage and sacrificial death. Here is the moment in which the figure of the *Shambhala* warriors steps into the plan and battles with the inexorably advancing Evil which wants to extinguish Holy Flame: “They shall come — the extinguishers; they shall come — the destroyers; they shall come — the powers of darkness. Corrosion that has already begun cannot be checked” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 124).

### *Shambhala*

We hear from Helena Ivanova Roerich that “the term *Shambhala* truly is inseparably linked to fiery apparitions” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, p. 26). “Fire signs introduce the epoch of *Shambhala*”, writes her spouse (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 29). It is not surprising that the Russian visionaries imagined the temple of *Shambhala* as an “alchemic laboratory”, then a fire oven, the *athanor*, also stood at the heart of the hermetic art, as western alchemy was known.

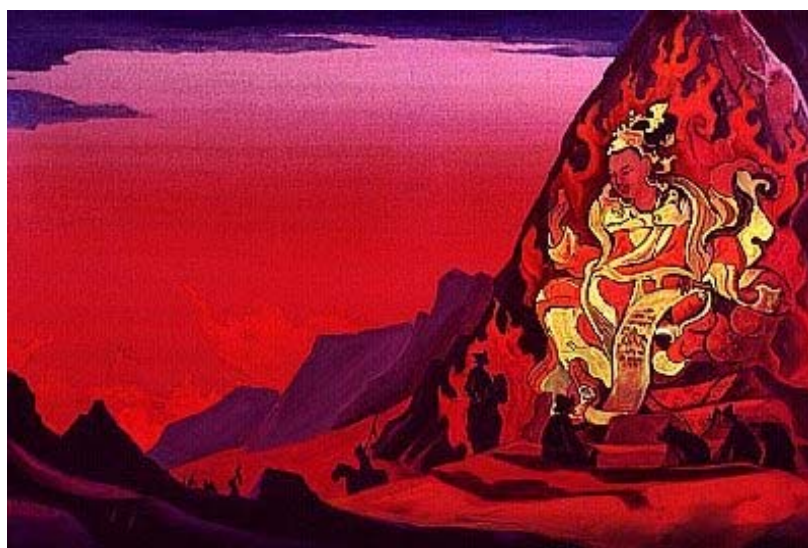
The couple consider *Shambhala*, the “city of happiness”, to be the “geographic residence or workplace of the brotherhood and seat of the interplanetary government in the trans-Himalaya”

(Augustat, 1993, p. 153). In an official fundamental declaration of the two it says: “The brotherhood is the spiritual union of highly developed entities from other planets or hierarchs, which as a cosmic institution is responsible to a higher institution for the entire evolution of the planet Earth. The interplanetary government consists of cosmic offices, which are occupied by the hierarch depending on the task and the age” (Augustat, 1993, p. 149). The *Mahatmas*, as these hierarchs are called in reference to Madame Blavatsky, have practical political power interests and are in direct contact with certain heads of state of our world, even if the ordinary mortals have no inkling of this.

Then it is impossible for normal humans to discover the main lodge of the secret society: “How can one find the way to our laboratories? Without being called no-one will get to us”, Roerich proclaims (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 9). From there the *Mahatmas* coordinate an army of in part paid agents, who operate here on Earth in the name of the hidden kingdom. In the meantime the whole planet is covered by a net of members, assistants, contacts, and spies of the “international government” who are only waiting for the sign from their command center in *Shambhala* in order to step into the light and reveal themselves to humanity.

Likewise, the activities and resolutions of the “invisible international government” are all but impenetrable for an outsider. There is a law which states that each earthly nation will only be visited and “warned” by an envoy from *Shambhala* once in a century. An exception was probably made during the French Revolution, then “hierarchs” like the Comte de Saint Germain for example were extremely active at this troubled time. Sadly he died in the year 1784 “as a result of the undisciplined thinking of one of his assistants”. (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 117). The dissolute life of his sadhaka (pupil), Cagliostro, was probably to blame for his not being able to participate in the great events of 1789 (the storming of the Bastille).

According to Roerich the members of the government of *Shambhala* have the ability to telepathically penetrate into the consciousness of the citizens of Earth without them realizing where particular ideas come from: “Like arrows the transmissions of the community bore into the brains of humanity” (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 10). Sometimes this takes place using apparatuses especially constructed for this purpose. But they are not permitted to openly reveal their amazing magical abilities: “Who can exist without food? Who can get by without sleep? Who is immune to heat and cold? Who can heal wounds? Truly only one who has studied *Kalachakra*” (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 77).



*Tableau of N. Roerich: “The command of Rigden-jyepo”*

For the Russian couple all the interventions of the governing yogi caste have just one goal, to prepare for the coming of the future Buddha *Maitreya Morya* or *Rigden-jyepo*, who shall then

make all important decisions. According to the Roerichs both names are synonyms for the *Rudra Chakrin*, the “wrathful wheel turner” and doomsday ruler of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. We thus await a fairytale oriental despot who cares about his subjects: “Just like a diamond the light shines from the tower of *Shambhala*. He is there — *Rigden-jyepo*, untiring, ever watchful for the sake of humanity. His eyes never close. In his magic mirror he sees everything which happens on Earth. And the power of his thoughts penetrates through to the distant countries. ... His immeasurable riches lay waiting to help all the needy who offer to serve the cause of uprightness” (Augustat, 1993, p. 11).

In passing, this doomsday emperor from *Shambhala* also reveals himself to be the western king of the Holy Grail, who holds the Holy Stone in his hands and who emigrated to Tibet under cover centuries ago. He is returning now, messengers announce him. True Knights of the Holy Grail are already incarnated on Earth, unrecognized. The followers of the Roerichs even believe that their master himself protected the grail for a time and then returned it to *Shambhala* on his trip to Asia (Augustat, 1993, p. 114).

### *Apocalypse now*

“Why do clouds gather when the Stone [the Grail] becomes dull? If the Stone becomes heavy, blood shall be spilled”, we learn mysteriously (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 88). Behind this secret of the grail lies the apodictic statement known from almost all religions that total war, indeed the destruction of the world, is necessary in order to attain paradise. It is essential because in a good dualist cliché the “brotherhood of Good” is always counterposed by the “brotherhood of Evil”. The “sons of darkness” have succeeded in severing humanity’s connection to the “higher world”, the “bright hierarchy”. The forces of the depths lurk everywhere. Extreme caution is required since an ordinary mortal can barely distinguish the Evil from the Good, and further, “the brotherhood of Evil attempts to imitate the Good’s method of action” (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 126).

The final battle between Light and Darkness is — the Roerichs say- presaged in the prophecies of the ancestors and the writings of the wise and must therefore take place. When natural disasters and crimes begin to pile up on Earth, the warriors from *Shambhala* will appear. At the head of their army stands the Buddha *Maitreya Morya*, who “ [combats] the prince of darkness himself. This struggle primarily takes place in the subtle spheres, whereas here [on earth] the ruler of *Shambhala* operates through his earthly warriors. He himself can only be seen under the most exceptional circumstances and would never appear in a crowd or among the curious. His appearance in fiery form would be disastrous for everybody and everything since his aura is loaded with energies of immense strength” (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 152). It could be thought that this concerned an atomic bomb. At any rate the battle will be conducted with a fire and explosive power which allows of comparison only to the atomic detonations in Hiroshima and Nagasaki:

*Fiery the battle  
with blazing torches,  
Blood red the arrows  
against the shining shield*

(Schule der Lebensweisheit, 1990, p. 110)

Thus the armies of *Shambhala* storm forth. „Space is filled with fire. The lightning of the *Kalki* avatar [*Rudra Chakrin*] — the preordained *Maitreya* — flashes upon the” (N. Roerich, 1985, p. 76). Even if *Kalki* also goes by the epithet of “Lord of Compassion”, with his enemies he knows no mercy. Accompanied by *Gesar*, the mythic war hero of the Tibetans, he will storm forward mounted on a “white horse” and with a “comet-like, fiery sword” in his hand. Iron snakes will consume outer space with fire and frenzy (N. Roerich, 1988 p. 12). “The Lord”, we read, “ strikes the people with fire. The same fiery element presides over the Day of Judgment. The purification of evil is performed by fire. Misfortunes are accompanied by fires” (H. I. Roerich, 1980, vol. I, 46).

Those who fight for *Shambhala* are the precursors of a new race who take control of the universe after Armageddon, after the “wheat has been separated from the chaff” (Augustat, 1993, p. 98). That is, to put it plainly, after all the inferior races have been eradicated in a holocaust.

### *Distribution in the west*

As far as the fate of Tibet is concerned, the prophecies that Roerich made at the end of the twenties have in fact been fulfilled: „We must accept it simply, as it is: the fact that the true teaching shall leave Tibet”, he has a lama announce, „and shall again appear in the South. In all countries, the covenants of Buddha shall be manifested. Really, great things are coming.” (N. Roerich, 1985, p. 3) In 1959 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama fled to India in the south and from this point in time onwards Tibetan Buddhism began to be spread all around the world.

Roerich and his wife saw themselves as agents of *Shambhala* who were supposed to make contact with those governing our world in order to warn them. They could at any rate appeal to a meeting with Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Their followers, however, believe that they were higher up in the hierarchy and that they were incarnated *Mahatmas* from the kingdom.

In the meantime the Roerich cult is most popular in Eastern Europe, where even before the fall of Communism it had penetrated the highest circles of government. The former Bulgarian Minister for Culture, Ludmilla Shiffkova, daughter of the Communist head of state Todor Shiffkov, was almost fanatically obsessed with the *Agni* master’s philosophy, so that she planned to introduce his teachings as part of the official school curriculum. For a whole year, cultural policy was conducted under the motto “N. K. Roerich — A cultural world citizen”, and she also organized several overseas exhibitions including works by her spiritual model as well.

Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife also supported numerous Roerich initiatives. In Russia, the renaissance of the visionary painter was heralded for years in advance in elaborate symposia and exhibitions, in order to then fully blossom in the post-Communist era. In Alma Ata in October 1992, a major ecumenical event was organized by the international Roerich groups under the patronage of the president of Kazakhstan, at the geographical gateway, so to speak, behind which the land of *Shambhala* is widely believed to have once lain. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama hesitated as to whether he ought to visit the Congress before deciding for scheduling reasons to send a telegram of greeting and a high-ranking representative.

### **The “Shambhala warrior” Chögyam Trungpa**

In 1975 the Tibetan, Chögyam Trungpa (1940–1987), gathered several of his western pupils around himself and began to initiate them into a special spiritual discipline which he referred to as “*Shambhala Training*”. As a thirteen-month-old infant the Rinpoche from the Tibetan province of Kham was recognized as the tenth reincarnation of the Trungpa and accepted into the Kagyupa order. In 1959 he had to flee from the Chinese. In 1963 he traveled to England and studied western philosophy and comparative religion at Oxford. Like no other Tibetan lama of his time, he understood how to make his own contribution to western civilization and culture. As a brilliant rhetorician, poet, and exotic free spirit he soon found numerous enthusiastic listeners and followers. In 1967 he founded the first European tantric monastery in Scotland. He gave it the name and the ground-plan of *Samye Ling* — in remembrance of the inaugural Tibetan shrine of the same name that Padmasambhava erected at the end of the 8th century despite resistance from countless demons.

In the opinion of Trungpa’s followers the demonic resistance was enormous in Scotland too: In 1969 the young lama was the victim of a serious car accident which left him with a permanent limp. There is an ambiguous anecdote about this unfortunate event. Trungpa had reached a fork in the road in his car — to the right the road led in the direction of his monastery, the road to the left to the house in which his future wife lived. But he continued to drive straight ahead, plowing right into a shop selling magic and joke articles. Nevertheless, his meteoric rise had begun. In 1970 he



went to the United States.

Trungpa's charming and initially anarchic manner, his humor and loyalty, his lack of respect and his laugh magnetically attracted many young people from the sixties generation. They believed that here the sweet but dangerous mixture of the exotic, social critique, free love, mind-expanding drugs, spirituality, political activism and self-discovery, which they had tasted in the revolutionary years of their youth, could be rediscovered. Trungpa's friendship with the radical beatnik poet Allan Ginsberg and other well-known American poets further enhanced his image as a "wild boy" from the roof of world. Even the first monastery he founded, *Samye Ling*, was renowned for the permissive "spiritual" parties which were held there and for the liberal sex and drug consumption.

But such excesses are only one side of things. Via the tantric law of inversion Trungpa intended to ultimately transform all this abandon (his own and that of his pupils) into discipline, goodness, and enlightened consciousness. The success of the guru was boundless. Many thousands came to him as pilgrims. All over America and Europe spiritual centers (*dharmadhatus*) were created. The *Naropa Institute* (near Denver, Colorado) was established as a private university, where alongside various Buddhist disciplines fine arts could also be studied.

### *The Shambhala warrior*

Trungpa had told one of his pupils that during deep meditation he was able to espy *Shambhala*. He also said he had obtained the teachings for the "*Shambhala training*" directly from the kingdom. The program consists of five levels: 1. The art of being human; 2. Birth of the warrior; 3. Warrior in the world; 4. Awakened heart; 5. Open sky: The big bang. Anyone who had completed all the stages was considered a perfect "*Shambhala warrior*". As a spiritual hero he is freed from the repulsiveness which the military trade otherwise implies. His characteristics are kindness, an open heart, dignity, elegance, precision, modesty, attentiveness, fearlessness, equanimity, concentration, and confidence of victory. To be a warrior, one of Trungpa's pupils writes, irrespective of whether as a man or a woman, means to live honestly, also in regard to fear, doubt, depression, and aggression which comes from outside. To be a warrior does not mean to conduct wars. Rather, to be a warrior means to have the courage to completely fathom oneself (Hayward, 1997, p. 11). This subjectification of the warrior ethos brings with it that the weapons employed first of all represent purely psycho-physical states: controlled breathing, the strict stance, walking upright, clear sight.

The first basic demand of the training is, as in every tantric practice, a state of „egolessness“. This is of great importance in the *Shambhala* teachings, writes Trungpa. It is impossible to be a warrior if you have not experienced egolessness. Without egolessness, your consciousness is always filled with your ego, your personal plans and intentions (Hayward, 1997, p. 247). Hence the individual ego is not changed through the exercises, rather the pupil tries solely to create an inner emptiness. Through this he allows himself to be transformed into a vessel into which the cult figures of the Tibetan pantheon can flow. According to Trungpa these are called *dralas*. Translated literally, that means "to climb out over the enemy" or in a further sense, energy, line of force, or "gods".

The "empty" pupils thus become occupied by tantric deities. As potential "warriors" they naturally attract all possible forms of eager to fight *dharmapalas* (tutelary gods). Thus a wrathful Tibetan "protector of the faith" steps in to replace the *sadhaka* and his previous western identity. This personal transformation takes place through a ritual which in Trungpa's *Shambhala* tradition is known as "calling the gods". The supernatural beings are summoned with spells and burning incense. When the thick, sweet-smelling white smoke ascends, the pupils sing a long incantation, which summons the *dralas*. At the end of the song the warrior pupils circle the smoke in a clockwise direction and constantly emit the victory call of the warrior (Hayward, 1997, p. 275). This latter is "*Lha Gyelo* — victory to the gods" — the same call which the Dalai Lama cried out as he crossed the Tibetan border on his flight in 1959.

Trungpa was even more fascinated by the ancient national hero, *Gesar*, whose barbaric daredevilry we have already sketched in detail, than he was by the *dharmapalas*. The guru recommended the

atavistic war hero to his followers as an example to imitate. Time and again he proudly indicated that his family belonged to the belligerent nomadic tribe of the “Mukpo”, from whose ranks *Gesar* also came. For this reason he ennobled his pupils as the “Mukpo family” and thus proclaimed them to be comrades-in-arms of *Gesar*. The latter — said Trungpa — would return from *Shambhala*, “leading an army to conquer the forces of darkness in the world” (Trungpa, 1986, p. 7).

But Trungpa did not just summon up Tibetan *dharmapalas* and heroes with his magic, rather he also invoked the deceased spirits of an international, on closer examination extremely problematic, warrior caste: the Japanese samurai, the North American plains Indians, the Jewish King David, and the British King Arthur with his round table — all archetypal leading figures who believed that justice could only be achieved with a sword in the hand, who were all absolutely ruthless in creating peace. These “holy warriors” always stood opposed to the “barbarians” of another religion who had to be exterminated. The non-dualist world view which many of the original Buddhist texts so forcefully demand is completely cancelled out in the mythic histories of these warlike models.

Trungpa led his courses under the name of “*Dorje Dradul*” which means “invincible warrior”. Completely in accord with an atavistic fighter tradition only beasts of prey were accepted as totem animals for his pupils: the snow lion, the tiger, the dragon. *Dorje Dradul* was especially enthusiastic about the mythic sun bird, the *garuda*, about its fiery redness, wildness, and its piercing cry commanding the cessation of thought like a lightning bolt (Hayward, 197, p. 251). *Garuda* is the sun bird *par excellence*, and since time immemorial the followers of the warrior caste have also been worshippers of the sun. Thus in the center of Trungpa’s *Shambhala* mission a solar cult is fostered. But it is not the natural sun which lights up all, but rather the “Great Eastern Sun” which rises at the beginning of a new world era when the *Shambhala* warriors seize power over the world. It sinks as a mighty cult symbol into the hearts of his pupils: “So, we begin to appreciate the *Great Eastern Sun*, not as something outside from us, like the sun in the sky, but as the Great Eastern Sun in our head and shoulders, in our face, our hair, our lips, our chest” (Trungpa, 1986, p. 39). Why of all people it was the chairman of the Communist Party of China, Mao Zedong, who was worshipped by the Red Guard as the *Great Eastern Sun* is a topic to which we shall return.

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**The basic ideology of the Shambhala program divides the world into two visions: Great Eastern Sun, which corresponds to enlightenment in the Buddhist path, and setting sun, which corresponds to samsara. [...] Great Eastern Sun is cheering up; setting sun is complaining and criticizing. Great Eastern sun ist elegant und rich; setting sun is sloppy and poor. To paraphrase George Orwell: “Great Eastern Sun good, setting sun bad.” (Butterfield, 1994, p. 96).**

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#### *From anarchy to despotism*

Trungpa played brilliantly with the interchangeability of reality and non-reality, even regarding his own person, he was especially a master of the tantric law of inversion. He thus simply declared his excessive alcoholism and his sexual cravings to be the practicing of the tantra path. Whether alcohol is a poison or a medicine depends on one’s own attentiveness. Conscious drinking — that is when the drinker remains self-aware — changes the effect of the alcohol. Here the system is steered through attentiveness. Alcohol becomes an intelligent protective mechanism. But it has a destructive effect if one abandons oneself to comfort (Hayward, 1997, pp. 306–307). Yet *Dorje Dradul* was not free of the aggressive moods which normally occur in heavy alcoholics. He thus spread fear and horror through his frequent angry outbursts. But his pupils forgave him everything, proclaimed him a “holy fool” and praised his excesses as the expression of a “*crazy wisdom*”. They often attempted to emulate his alcoholism: I think there is a message for us in his drinking, Dennis Ann Roberts believed, “I know his drinking has certainly encouraged all of us to drink more” (Boucher, 1985, p. 243). Another pupil enthusiastically wrote: “He’s great. I love the fact that he works on his problems the way he does. He doesn’t hide it. He drinks, and it’s almost killed him. So he is working on it. I find that great” (Boucher, 1985, p. 243).

Similar reasons are offered for his sexual escapades. In 1970 he abandoned his vow of celibacy and married a young British aristocrat. His bride is said to have been thirteen years old in 1969 (*Tibetan*

*Review*, August 1987, p. 21). In addition he had a considerable number of yoginis, who were obviously uninformed about the andocentric manipulations of Tantrism. There was admittedly a minor rebellion among the female followers when the Karmapa insisted on talking only with the men during his visit to a Trungpa center, but essentially the western *karma mudras* occupied by Tibetan deities behaved loyally towards their lord and master. A lot of women have been consorts of Rinpoche — one of them tells that “The Tibetans are into passion, they think sexuality is an essential energy to work with. You don't reject it. So it's a whole other perception of sexuality anyway” (Boucher, 1985, p. 244).

Such affirmations of tantric practice by the female pupils are definitely not exceptions and they most clearly testify to the charisma which the tantra master projects. Thus we learn from another of Trungpa's lovers, “My first meeting with him was a real turn-off. I mean, I didn't want a guru who did things like that. The irony was that I had left my other Tibetan Buddhist teacher partly because he was coming on to me. And I just couldn't handle it. And Rinpoche is very much into alcohol and having girl friends. Now it makes total sense to me” (Boucher, 1985, p. 241).

Chögyam Trungpa has obviously succeeded in keeping his western *karma mudras* under control. This was much more difficult for the Tibetan Tantric, Gedun Chöpel, who died in 1951. He left behind an amusing estimation of the “women of the west” from the thirties which shows how much has changed in the meantime: “In general a girl of the west is beautiful, splendid, and more courageous than others. Her behavior is coarse, and her face is like a man's. There is even hair around her mouth. Fearless and terrifying, she can be tamed only by passion. Able to suck the phallus at the time of play, the girl of the west is known to drink regenerative fluid. She does it even with dogs, bulls and any other animals and with father and son, etc. She goes without hesitation with whoever can give the enjoyment of sex” (Chöpel, 1992, p. 163).

Towards the end of his life, Trungpa the “indestructible warrior” moved further and further away from his Hippie past. As the head of his lineage the Karmapa is said to have not been at all pleased to observe the permissive practices in the “wild” guru's centers. However, in accordance with the tantric “law of inversion”, after a few years the pendulum swung from anarchy to the other pole of despotism and all at once Trungpa abandoned himself to his fascistoid dreams. His protective troops, *Dorje Kasung*, initially a kind of bodyguard composed of volunteers was transformed within a short period into a paramilitary unit in khaki uniforms. The guru himself put aside his civilian clothing for a time and appeared in high-ranking military dress as a “*Shambhala* general”. We do not know whether, alongside the warlike ethos of the tantric tradition, the physical handicap which he sustained in his car accident in England did not also trigger his unusual interest in military things as a counter-reaction. At any rate his “military parades” became a fixed part of the *Shambhala* training.

On other occasions the former “freak” donned a pinstripe suit with a colorful tie and looked like nothing more than an Asian film gangster. Thus he really did play brilliantly through the ambivalent spectrum completely laid out in the tantric repertoire, from poetic anarchist and flower power dancer to saber-rattling dictator and underworld boss. In 1987 the master warrior died and his body was committed to the flames in Vermont (USA).

**“May I shrivel up instantly and rot,’ we vowed, ‘if I ever discuss these teachings with anyone who has not been initiated into them by a qualified master.’ As if this were not enough, Trungpa told us that if we ever tried to leave Vajrayana, we would suffer unbearable, subtle, continuous anguish, and disasters would pursue us like furies. Heresy had real meaning in this religion, and real consequences. Doubting the dharma or the guru and associating with heretics were causes for downfall. In Tibetan literature, breaking faith with the guru must be atoned by such drastic measures as cutting off your arms and offering it at the door of his cave in hopes that he might take you back.” – “To be part of Trungpa's inner circle, you had to take a vow never to reveal or even discuss some of the things he did. This personal secrecy is common with gurus, especially in Vajrayana Buddhism. It is also common in the dysfunctional family system of alcoholics and sexual abusers. This inner circle secrecy puts up an almost insurmountable barrier of a healthily skeptical mind.” (Butterfield, 1994, p. 11, 100)**

Trungpa's Shambhala Warriors see: <http://sealevel.ns.ca/ctr/photo01.html> and <http://www.shambhalashop.com/archives/junephoto/june12.html>

### *The inheritance*

The immediate inheritance which Trungpa left behind him was catastrophic. Completely in the spirit of his Tibetan guru, the American, Thomas Rich, who succeeded him under the name of "Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin", continued the carefree permissiveness of his master with a tantric justification. However, in 1988 there was a scandal from which the organization has not fully recovered to this day. The "Vajra Regent" had been HIV positive for three years and had infected numerous members with the AIDS virus in the meantime. He died in 1991. Trungpa's son, Sawang Ösel Rangdroel, then took over the leadership.

**"From Vajrayana point of view, passion, aggression, and ignorance, the sources of human suffering, are also the well-spring of enlightenment. Afflictions like AIDS are not merely disasters, but accelerations toward wisdom, and opportunities to wake up. They can be transformed into buddha-mind. Trungpa was a Vajra master who had empowered Tendzin to guide students on this path" (Butterfield, 1994, p. 7).**

Even if Trungpa's *Shambhala warriors* have forfeited quite a deal of their attractiveness in recent years, thousands still revere the master as the "holy fool" and "indestructible warrior", who brought the "Eastern sun" to the West. For this reason he is said to also be prayed to in the whole of Asia as a great Bodhisattva and *Maha Siddha* (Hayward, 1997, p. 319). "For ten years he presented the *Shambhala Teachings*", summarizes one of his sadhakas, "In terms of time and history, that seems insignificant; however in that short span he set in motion the powerful force of goodness that can actually change the world" (Trungpa, 1986, p. 157). Only rarely does a "deserter" go public, like P. Marin for example, a strong critic of the Naropa Institute, for whom this western Tibetan Buddhist organization is "a feudal, priestly tradition transplanted to a capitalist setting" (quoted by Bishop, 1993, p. 101).

On the other hand it goes without saying that the Tantric Trungpa time and again draws attention to the fact that the warlike figures he invokes are illusionary reflections of the human ego and that even the *Shambhala* kings are projections of one's own consciousness. But if everything really can be reduced to forms of consciousness, then it remains totally unclear why it is time and again the phantoms of a destructive black-and-white mode of thought which are summoned up to serve as examples along the personal initiation path. Wouldn't it make more sense, indeed be more logical, to directly conjure up those "peace gods" who have surmounted such dualist thought patterns? What is the reason for this glorification of an atavistic warrior caste?

It goes without saying that in Trungpa's system no-one is entitled to even dream of critically examining the *dralas* (gods). Although only projections of one's own consciousness according to the doctrine, they are considered sacrosanct. They are pure, good, and exemplary. Since Trungpa's *Shambhala Training* unquestioningly incorporates all of the established tantric deities, the entire martial field of Tibetan Buddhism with its entrenched concept of "the enemy" and its repellent daemonic power is adopted by people who naively and obligingly set out to attain personal enlightenment.

We thus have the impression that the pupils of the tantra masters are exposed to a hypnotic suggestion so as to make them believe that their own spiritual development was the agenda whereas they have long since become the pawns of Tibetan occultism in whose unfathomable net of regulations (*tantra* means 'net') they have become entrapped. Once their personal ambitions have been dissolved into nothingness they can be enslaved as the loyal lackeys of a spiritual power politics which no longer sees the "higher self" in the "universal monarch" but rather a real political "wrathful wheel turner" (*Rudra Chakrin*) who lays waste to the world with his armies from *Shambhala* so as to then establish a global Buddhocracy.

### Other Western Shambhala visions

James Hilton's novella, *Lost Horizon*, published in 1933, counts among the best-sellers of the last century. It tells of a monastery in the Land of Snows whose name, *Shangri-La*, is reminiscent of the kingdom of *Shambhala*. The term has in the meantime become a synonym for leisure, refinement, and taste, at least in the English-speaking world, and is employed by an Asian luxury hotel chain. The idyll described in the book concerns people who had retreated from the hustle and bustle of the modern world to the Himalayas and now devote themselves to exclusively spiritual enjoyments. It is, however, no Tibetan tulku but rather a Catholic missionary who collects together those tired of civilization in a hidden valley in the Land of Snows so as to share with them a study of the fine arts and an extended lifespan. The “monks” from the West do not even need to do without European bathtubs — otherwise unknown in the Tibet of the thirties. The essence of the *Shangri-La* myth ultimately consists in the transportation of “real” products of European culture and civilization to the “roof of the world”.

The most recent western attempt at spreading the Tibetan myth is Victoria LePage's book, *Shambhala*. The author presents the secret kingdom as an overarching mystery school, whose high priests are active as “an invisible, scientific and philosophical society which pursues its studies in the majestic isolation of the Himalayas” (LePage, 1996, p. 13). For LePage *Shambhala* is the esoteric center of all religions, the secret location from which every significant occult, and hence also religious, current of the world has emanated. Esoteric Buddhism, and likewise the ancient Egyptian priestly schools, the Pythagoreans, Sufism, the Knights Templar, alchemy, the Cabala, Freemasonry, Theosophy — yes even the witches cults — all originated here. Accordingly, the *Kalachakra Tantra* is the overarching “secret doctrine” from which all other mystery doctrines may be derived (LePage, 1996, p. 8).

The mythic kingdom, which is governed by a sun ruler, is to be found in Central Asia, there where the axis of the world, Mount Meru, is also to be sought. This carefree adoption of Buddhist cosmology does not present the author with any difficulties since the *axis mundi* is said to only be visible to the initiated. In accordance with the mandala principle her *Shambhala* has distributed numerous copies of itself all over the world — the Pyramids of Giza, the monastery at Athos, Kailash, the holy mountain. Sites of the Grail like Glastonbury and Rennes le Chateau are such “offshoots” of the hidden imperium — likewise only perceivable through initiated eyes. Together they form the acupuncture points of a cosmic body which corresponds to the mystic body of the *Kalachakra* master (i.e., taken literally, in the energy body of the Dalai Lama). LePage too, sees a great “mystic clock” in the Time Tantra. The segments of this time machine record the cyclical periods of the course of the world. A “hidden directorate”, a mysterious brotherhood of immortal beings in the Himalayas, ensures that the cosmic hours marked on the clockface are adhered to.

### The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Shambhala myth

LePage's global monopolization of the entire cultic life of our planet by the *Kalachakra Tantra* could be regarded as an important step in a worldwide Shambhalization plan of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Nonetheless, the *Kundun* deliberately prefers to leave such esoteric speculations (which are in no way at odds with his doctrine) to others, best of all “hobby Buddhists” like the author. So as not to lose political respectability, the *Kundun* keeps his statements about the *Shambhala* question enigmatic: “Even for me *Shambhala* remains a puzzling, even paradox country”, the highest *Kalachakra* master reassures his listeners (Levenson, 1992, p. 305). All that we hear from him concretely is the statement that “the kingdom of *Shambhala* does indeed exist, but not in the usual sense” (Dalai Lama Fourteenth, 1993a, p. 307).

Can we expect a total world war in circa 300 years in accordance with the prophecy? His Holiness has no doubts about this either: “That lies in the logic of circulation!” (Levenson, 1992, p. 305). But then he modifies his statement again and speculates about whether the final battle is not to be interpreted as a psychological process within the individual. For dreamers for whom such a psychological interpretation is too dry, however, the *Kundun* subsequently hints that *Shambhala*

could perhaps concern another planet and the soldiers of the kingdom could be extraterrestrials (Levenson, 1992, p. 305).

He understands how to rapidly switch between various levels of reality like a juggler and thus further enhance the occult ambience which already surrounds the *Shambhala myth* anyway. „Secrets partly revealed are powerful”, writes Christiaan Klieger, and continues, „The ability of the Dalai Lama to skillfully manipulate a complex of meaning and to present appropriate segments of this to his people and the world is part of his success as a leader” (Klieger, 1991, p. 76). Ultimately, everything is possible in this deliberate confusion, for example that the *Shambhala* king in person stands before us in the figure of His Holiness as some worshippers believe, or that Lhasa is the capital of the mythic country of “Kalapa” albeit not visible to mortal eyes. Should the *Kundun* some day return to Tibet as a savior — some people believe — then the veil would be lifted and the earthly/supernatural kingdom (*Shambhala*) would reveal itself to the world.

Similar speculations are in fact very popular in the Buddhist scene. On the official (!) homepage of the *Kalachakra Tantra* the “dharma master”, Khamtrul Rinpoche, explains to his readers that the current Dalai Lama is an incarnation of Kulika Pundarika, the eighth *Shambhala* king famed as the first commentator on the Time Tantra. But it gets better: “My companion [the goddess *Tara*, who led him through *Shambhala* in a dream]”, Khamtrul writes, “told me that the last Kulika King will be called *Rudra* with a wheel, 'the powerful and ferocious king who holds an iron wheel in his hand' ... and he will be none other than His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who will subdue everything evil in the universe” (Khamtrul, HPI 005). Following this revelation, which prophecies the *Kundun* as the military commander of an apocalyptic army, Rinpoche worries whether the *Shambhala* army is a match for the modern armaments industry with its missiles and nuclear bombs. Here the kindly *Tara* comforts and reassures him that no matter what weapons of mass destruction may be produced in our world, a superior counter-weapon would automatically be created by *Shambhala*'s magic armaments industry (Khamtrul, HPI 005).

In the words of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama “world peace” is supposed to be strengthened with every *Kalachakra* ritual. He repeats this again and again! But is this really his intention?

With an ironic undertone, the Tibetologist Donald L. Lopez (formerly one of the closest followers of the *Kundun*), writes in the final section of his book, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, that “this peace may have a special meaning, however, for those who take the initiation are planting the seeds to be reborn in their next lifetime in Shambhala, the Buddhist pure land across the mountains dedicated to the preservation of Buddhism. In the year 2245 [?], the army of the king will sweep out of Shambhala and defeat the barbarians in a Buddhist Armageddon,[!] restoring Buddhism to India and to the world and ushering in a reign of peace” (Lopez, 1998, p. 207).

Next Chapter:

## [12. FASCISM AND IT'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO BUDDHIST TANTRISM](#)

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**The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 12. Fascist occultism and it's close relationship to Buddhist Tantrism** © Victor & Victoria Trimondi

## 12. FASCIST OCCULTISM AND IT'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO BUDDHIST TANTRISM

Visionary fascism was, and indeed still is, exceptionally deeply fascinated by the Buddhocratic form of state. In the late thirties (as the various fascist systems bloomed in Europe and the whole world) Spencer Chapman, a traveler in Tibet, wrote that even in the days of the dictators one can only be amazed at what uncontested power the Dalai Lama possesses" (Chapman, 1940, p. 192). The idea of kingship of the world, the uniting of spiritual and secular power in a single person, the ideology of war in the *Shambhala* myth, the uncompromisingly andocentric orientation, the tantric vision of the feminine, the whole occult ambience and much more besides were specifically adopted by several fascist ideologists and welded together into an aggressive myth. As we shall soon see, entire fascist systems are based upon the adoption of Tibetan/tantric doctrines.

### The Fourteenth Dalai Lama's national socialist friends

As depressing as it may be for the Nobel peace prize winner's followers, there has been continuous contact between the Dalai Lama and the far right wing and former national socialists (Nazis). His close friendship with his German mentor, Heinrich Harrer has become the most well-known of these. It caused a small scandal in 1997-1998 when, after years of research, the Austrian journalist, Gerald Lehner, succeeded in making public Harrer's "brown-shirt" (i.e., German fascist) past, which the latter had been able to keep secret for many years. Harrer is not just anybody. He is one of the best-known international authors and has sold over four million books in 57 languages (mostly about Tibet and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama).

The Austrian mountain climber and competition skier joined the SS on April 1, 1938 and in the same year received instructions to climb Nanga Parbat in the Himalayas after an official meeting with Adolf Hitler. Heinrich Himmler, himself most interested in occult phenomena is said by Harrer to have offered him a Tibet expedition. In 1942, the *Reichsführer* of the SS (Himmler) ordered the creation of the *Sven Hedin Institut für Innerasienforschung* [Sven Hedin Institute for Central Asian Research]. This educational establishment had combined esoteric, scientific, and racial studies goals. It was completely in this vein that Himmler was interested in occult doctrines from "mysterious Tibet", and assumed — probably under the influence of theosophical ideas — that a "race with Nordic blood" existed there, oppressed by the English and Chinese, and waiting for their liberation by the Germans. Himmler's "advisor", reports the German magazine *Spiegel*, "... and the scientist Ernst Schäfer believed that Tibet was the cradle of humanity, the refuge of an 'Aryan root race', where a priestly caste had created a mysterious kingdom of *Shambhala* — decorated with the Buddhist symbol of the wheel of teaching, a swastika. In 1934 Schäfer set out on the first of two expeditions financed by the SS to track down remnants of the 'Nordic intellectual' nobility" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 111).

Dr. Ernst Schäfer, a specialist on Tibet and an ornithologist, was one of Himmler's personal staff and in 1943 took over the scientific leadership of the notorious project, "*Ahnenerbe*" ('ancestral inheritance'), primarily devoted to racial studies. His third research trip to the Himalayas was officially described as the "SS Schäfer Expedition" and was considered a huge success (Kater 1997, p. 80). Upon his return in August 1939, the scientist was presented with the SS skull ring and dagger of honor in recognition. Subsequently, the *Reichsführer* of the black corps (Himmler) had

grand plans for his protégé: Schäfer was supposed to return to Tibet and “stir up the Tibetan army against the British/Indian troops” with a shock troop of 30 men (Kater, 1997, p. 212). The undertaking was, however, called off at Hitler’s direct order. In the years to follow, Schäfer instead built up the Sven Hedin Institute for Central Asian Research with great success, making it the largest division within the *Ahnenerbe* project.

But let us return to Heinrich Harrer. War broke out while he was still in India and the young German was interned by the British. It was not until 1944 that he was able to flee to Tibet with a comrade. Coincidence or fate led to his acting as the young Dalai Lama’s personal tutor until the early 50s, and teaching him about all the “wonders” of western civilization and introducing him to the English language as well. It is very likely that his lessons were tainted by the contemporary *zeitgeist* which had swept through Hitler’s Germany, and not by the British attitudes of the envoy Hugh Richardson, also present in Lhasa. This led in fact to some problems at the court of the young god-king and the English were not happy about his contact to Harrer. But there are nevertheless no grounds for describing the lessons the former SS member gave his “divine” pupil as fascist, particularly since they were primarily given after the end of the World War II. In 1952 His Holiness’s German “teacher” returned to Europe.

The adaptation to film of Harrer’s autobiographic bestseller, *Seven Years in Tibet*, triggered an international protest. Since the famous traveler through Tibet had told director Jean Jacques Annaud nothing about his “brown-shirt” past, and this only became public knowledge after the film had been finished, Annaud felt pressured to introduce “corrections”. A remorseful Austrian was now shown, who begins his mountain-climbing career as a supporter of a regime accused of genocide and then, under the influence of the young *Kundun* and Tibetan Buddhism, reforms to become a “campaigner for human rights”. In the film, he says of the brutal Chinese: “Terrible — I dare not think about how I myself was once so intolerant” (*Stern* 41/97, p. 24).

Reinhold Messner, the famous mountain climber, found such an admission of guilt from Hollywood’s dream factory difficult to understand. He spoke up, confirming that he had long known about Harrer’s political opinions. This man, he said had up until the present day still not learned anything, he still believed in the national socialist alpinist ideals. In contrast, the Dalai Lama’s brother, Gyalo Thondup, defended the former SS member with the tasteless argument that what the Chinese had done to the Tibetans was worse and more cruel than what the Nazis had done to the Jews.

It is a fact that Harrer — in his own account- first turned against the Chinese invaders at the end of the fifties, after he had already left Tibet. There is not the slightest trace of a deep catharsis as depicted in Annaud’s film to be found in the German’s books. This was purely an invention of the director to avoid losing face before a world audience.

The journalist Gerhard Lehner also pursued a second lead: on September 13, 1994 eight veterans who had visited and reported from Tibet before 1950 met with the Dalai Lama in London. In a photo taken to record the occasion a second major SS figure can be seen beside Heinrich Harrer and directly behind the *Kundun*, Dr. Bruno Beger. Beger was the actual “expert” who pushed forward the racial studies research by Himmler’s *Ahnenerbe* project (Kater, 1997, p. 208). He too, like the Tibetan explorer Ernst Schäfer, was a member of Himmler’s personal staff. In 1939 he went to the Himalayas as a member of the SS Expedition. There he measured the skulls of more than 400 Tibetans in order to investigate a possible relationship between the Tibetan and Aryan ‘races’. In 1943, Beger was sent to Auschwitz where he took the measurements of 150 mainly Jewish prisoners. These were later killed and added to a collection of skeletons. In 1971 Beger appeared in a German court and was sentenced to three years imprisonment on probation for his national socialist crimes.

The racist, who was the last survivor of the “SS Schäfer Expedition” (dying in 1998), met His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama at least five times (in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1994). The



meetings were all very hearty affairs. The former SS member dedicated a small brochure entitled “My Encounters with the Ocean of Knowledge” to the first three (Beger, 1986).

The Dalai Lama (worshipped by his followers as the “Ocean of Wisdom” because of his “omniscience”) claims not to have been informed about his Nazi friends’ past. One may well believe this, yet he has not distanced himself from them since their exposure. His statements about Adolf Hitler and the “final solution to the question of the Jews” also seem strange. Just like his brother, Gyalo Thondup, he sees the dictator as a more noble figure than the Chinese occupiers of Tibet: “In 1959, in Lhasa, the Chinese shot Tibetan families from aeroplanes with machine guns. Systematic destruction in the name of liberation against the tyranny of the Dalai Lama! Hu, Hu, Hu! In Hitler's case he was more honest. In concentration camps he made it clear he intended to exterminate the Jews. With the Chinese they called us their brothers! Big brother bullying little brother! Hu, Hu, Hu! It's less honest, I think” (*Daily Telegraph*, August 15, 1998).

### **The Nazi–Tibet connection**

Were there occult intentions behind the “SS Schäfer Expedition”? In the neo-fascist literature these are considered a top secret mission of Himmler’s to make contact with the “adepts of Shambhala and Agartha”. Authors from the scene like Wilhelm Landig, Miguel Serrano, Russell McCloud, etc., let their readers believe that through these expeditions a kind of metapolitical axis between Berlin and Lhasa was constructed. Dietrich Bronder knows that “Schäfer’s SS men were permitted to enter holy Lhasa, otherwise closed to Europeans and Christians, even the magnificent Lamaist temple that contains just one huge symbol, the holiest in the Mongolian world — the swastika” (Bronder, 1975, p. 250)

Although in recent years comprehensive research findings about the interests of leading Nazis in occult phenomena have been published, this is currently played down by pro-Lamaist intellectuals, especially as far as a occult Nazi — Tibet connection is concerned. [1] Ernst Schäfer and Bruno Beger, the two leaders of the undertaking (the SS Schäfer expedition), are depicted as sober natural scientists. Heinrich Himmler’ esoteric ambitions in Tibet were minimal, indeed “probably did not exist” (Brauen, 2000). Hitler himself appears as a decided anti-occultist. “However, the suggestion that Hitler was interested in Eastern esotericism or even Tibet can be ruled out” (Brauen, 2000, p. 65). With an appeal to the historian Goodrick-Clark, the pro-Lamaist authors also assess the occult currents within the early Nazi movement (the notorious *Thule Society* for example) as insignificant, and completely lacking in evidence for a particular interest in Tibet. Rudolf Freiherr von Sebottendorf (1875-1945), the founder of the *Thule Society*, is said to have explicitly spoken out against the suggestion that the light came from the highlands of Asia.

We do not see it as our primary task here to historically prove the interweaving of the relevant SS members (Hitler, Himmler, Harrer, etc.) in an occult Nazi — Tibet connection. Things were not as cleanly rationalist and scientifically correct as the pro-Lamaist intellectuals would have it among the SS. When for example, at the presentation of a gift to the Tibetan regent in Lhasa Ernst Schäfer declaims, “Since the swastika is also the supreme and most holy symbol for us Germans, the motto of our visit is: A meeting of the Western and Eastern swastikas in friendship and peace ...” (quoted by Brauen, 2000, p. 79), then an occult note in accord with the *zeitgeist* of the time is present.

There are certainly also other, non-fascist, authors who create an occult correspondence between national socialism and Tibetan Buddhism via a esoteric interpretation of the “Hakenkreuz” (the *swastika*), a Buddhist symbol *par excellence*: “The rightward hooked cross [signifies] a prayer formula in Tibet”, writes Friedrich W. Doucet, “In its left-turned form — like the national socialist swastika — it designates the orthodox Yellow Hats ... it is the Yellow Hats who supervise the spiritual rules in the Tibetan ecclesiastical state and also exercise worldly power” (Doucet, 1979, p. 81).[2]

It is also certain that Himmler’s spiritual advisor, Karl Maria Wiligut (“Himmler’s Rasputin”), saw

the “SS Schäfer Expedition” as an extremely occult undertaking and at Himmler’s direction attempted to exert an appropriate influence on the participants in the expedition. The SS standard bearer Wiligut/Weisthor, who was one of Himmler’s personal staff, was accredited with mediumistic abilities and he himself was convinced he was in contact with transpersonal powers. Wiligut/Weisthor was considered to be the *Schutz Staffel’s* (SS’s) expert on runes and designed the legendary skull ring of the SS. His megalomaniac overestimation of himself (there are authenticated statements from him to the effect that he believed he was the “secret King of Germany”) and the fact that he was deprived of the right of decision by his family led Himmler to discharge Wiligut from the SS in 1939 (Lange 1998, p. 271).

The German author Rüdiger Sunner quotes the report of a member of the “SS Schäfer Expedition” over a meeting with Wiligut.[3] During the encounter (in 1937 or 1938?), the latter was in a trance-like state and addressed his visitors in a guttural voice: “I telephoned my friends this evening ... in Abyssinia and America, in Japan and Tibet ... with all who come from another world in order to construct a new empire. The occidental spirit is thoroughly corrupted, we have a major task before us. A new era will come, for creation is subject to just one grand law. One of the keys lies with the Dalai Lama [!] and in the Tibetan monasteries.” The visitor was not a little distressed, and goes on to report: “Then came the names of monasteries and their abbots, of localities in eastern Tibet which I alone knew about ... Did he draw these out of my brain? Telepathy? To this day I do not know, I know only that I left the place in a hurry” (Sünner, 1999, p. 50). In the 80s the Chilean Miguel Serrano took up the speculation anew that the Dalai Lama plays a key role in the Nazi-Tibet connection. His “skill”, this author says of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, is “closely linked with that of Hitler’s Germany ... on the basis of not yet discovered connections. A few years after Germany, Tibet also falls” (Serrano, 1987, p. 366).

Wiligut also believed that Lhasa would form a geomantic quadrilateral with Urga (Ulan Bator), the Egyptian pyramids, and Vienna. Miguel Serrano was later to expound similar ideas (in the seventies). Himmler too was interested in geomantic ideas and it cannot be excluded “that he hoped for more exact data about this from the Schäfer expedition” (Brauen, 2000, p. 78).

Otto Rahn, likewise a member of the SS, who in the 30s attempted to render the myth of the holy grail and the Cathar movement fruitful for the national socialist vision and the SS as some kind of “warrior monks”, assumed that the Cathars had been influenced by Tibetan Buddhism “One of the Cathari symbols of the spirit that is god which was taken over from Buddhism was the *mani*, a glowing jewel that lit up the world and allowed all earthly wishes to be forgotten. The *mani* is the emblem of the Buddhist law that drives out the night of misconception. In Nepal and Tibet it is considered the symbol of the Dyanibodhisattva Avalokiteshvara or Padmapani, charity” (Rahn, 1989, pp. 185, 107).

The myth of the “black sun” which was able to win a central place in the neo-fascist movement and displays similarities with the Tibetan *Rahu* myth from the *Kalachakra Tantra*, can be traced to the inspiration of Wiligut and his milieu among others. In a commentary on Wiligut’s runic writings, a pupil, Emil Rüdiger, mentions an invisible dark planet, *Santur* by name, which is supposed to influence human history and to be able to be microcosmically linked with the energy body of an adept. Appropriate yogic exercises (rune gymnastics) are recommended for producing “high intelligence effects” (Lange, 1998, p. 226). Just how seamlessly such “rune gymnastics” can be linked to tantric exercises can be seen in the writings of Miguel Serrano, the father of “esoteric Hitlerism” (Serrano, 1984).

It is thus not at all the case that there is no historical foundation for hypothesizing an occult Nazi — Tibet connection, even if it is publicly denied by one of the protagonists of the “SS Schäfer Expedition”, Bruno Beger (Lange 1998, p. 68). Nevertheless, an occult interconnection between the SS and Lamaist Tibet of the dimensions in which it is currently portrayed in a large number of neo-fascist and esoteric publications has to be described as a *post facto* construction. This construction could, however, we repeat, fall back on an esoteric ambience in which Heinrich

Himmler, the head of the SS, and other high-ranking Nazis moved. Thus the well-known, historically proven material has at any rate been sufficient to create new and very effective myths. In the Nazi- Tibet connection , we are thus dealing with a process of myth creation and not a historical set of events. In such processes, there is a blending of historical facts, the stuff of traditional sagas, straining for effect, and imaginary, visionary, religious, fantastic, and personal elements until it all binds into a resistant pattern and anchors itself as such in a culture. It is not unusual for different mythologemes to become fused, and this is exactly, as we will show, what has happened in the case of the Nazi — Tibet connection. Here, racist Nazi myths have been fused with elements of the Tibetan Shambhala myth and with sexual magic practices from Tantric Buddhism.

In this process of myth construction it should also not be underestimated that the meetings known to have occurred between the Dalai Lama and former SS members (Schäfer, Harrer, Beger) have a occult significance alone by virtue of the fact that anybody who mentally negotiates an esoteric network interprets a meeting with the Dalai Lama as an occult event.

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**On the Homepage of the Government of Tibet in Exile ( <http://www.tibet.com/Status/statement.html> ) 13. 09. 1994: The XIV. Dalai Lama between two former SS-men, Bruno Beger on his right behind and Heinrich Harrer on his left behind. The other persons, who visited Tibet before 1950, are: Mr Kazi Sonam Togpyal, Mr Robert Ford, Mrs Rongyu Collectt (daughter of Sir Charles Bell), Mrs Joan Mary Jehu, Mr Archibald Jack and Prof. Fosco Maraini.**

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In the meantime an enormous amount of literature about a suspected Nazi — Tibet connection has appeared, some examples of which we briefly introduce here:

- In 1958 an American publisher released the book *The Lightning and the Sun*, by Savitri Devi (“Hitler’s Priestess”), which presents Adolf Hitler as an avatar (an incarnation) of the sun god, alongside Akhenaton and Genghis Khan. Devi does not mention a Nazi — Tibet connection, but introduces the “avatar principle” into the myth building surrounding Hitler that is seized upon by later authors so as to present the *Führer* as an incarnation from the kingdom of Agarthi/Shambhala (see Miguel Serrano in this regard).
- In their best-seller *The Dawn of Magic*, Jacques Bergier and Louis Pauwells (1962) first claim that the Shambhala/Agarthi myth strongly influenced the founders of the national socialist movement.
- Robert Charroux (*Verratene Geheimnisse* [“Betrayed Secrets”]) presumes that Lama priests had gained influence over Hitler and worked on “ a plan for exercising control over the world which was thoroughly the equal of that of the Germans “ (Charroux, 170, p. 258).
- The anti-fascist myth researcher Friedrich Doucet (*Im Banne des Mythos* [In the Thrall of Myth], 1979) discusses “psycho-techniques of the monks and abbots in the Lama monasteries of Tibet” with which leading national socialist figures were manipulated.
- Likewise, the anthroposopically oriented author, Trevor Ravenscroft (*The Spear of Destiny*), 1974), assumes that Hitler cooperated with “Tibetan leaders” in Berlin.
- In the 80s, two books by the Chilean Miguel Serrano appeared (*El Cordon Dorado* [The Golden Ribbon] and *Adolf Hitler el último Avatara* [Adolf Hitler: The Final Avatar]). Both texts form the basis for “esoteric Hitlerism”. One of Serrano’s central themes is the relationship between sexual magic and political power (especially national socialism). The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, whom Serrano has met several times, is woven by the author into the creation of neo-fascist myths around Hitler.
- According to Jan van Helsing (*Geheimgesellschaften und ihre Macht ...* [“Secret Societies and their Power”], 1993), Tibetan monks worked together with Templar Knights who were organized in the highest lodge of the “black sun” on the establishment of the Third Reich. The secret order had (and still has) an important base underground in the Himalayas. The ruler of the underground kingdom is said to be “Rigden Iyepo”, the king of the world, with his representative on the surface, the Dalai Lama.
- In *Die schwarze Sonne von Tashi Lhunpo* [The Black Sun of Tashi Lhunpo] (1996), McCloud reports on the survival of the national socialist Thule group in Tibet . They are the followers of

a “sun oracle” there.

- For Wilhelm Landig (*Götzen gegen Thule ...* [Idols against Thule], n.d.), Tibet is also “the realm of the black sun! It is the meeting point of the esoteric circles of the *Schutzstaffel* [the SS], whose knowledge Mr. Himmler also knew about but did not share.”
- In his novel (*The Black Sun...*, 1997), Peter Moon reiterates the decisive influence of Tibetan Lamas on National Socialism and extends it with new images. He takes the side of the old Tibetan Bon religion, and accuses the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism of religious oppression.

“Why”, Martin Brauen, a pro-Lamaist expert on Tibet, asks in light of this considerable and by no means complete literature list, “does Tibet arouse the interest of the neo-fascists so much?” What makes Tibet so attractive for them? What is so fascinating about the Shambhala myth that it draws into its thrall both those who cultivate and those who combat it?” (Brauen, 2000, p. 93). He cannot answer this question. But in order to be able invert the fact that national socialism had a occult relationship to Tibetan Buddhism into its complete opposite, he foregrounds an anti-Lamaist faction within the German right-wing. It was precisely the Nazis, Brauen says, who denounced the Lamas and the Tibetans as “*Untermenschen*” (subhumans).

- Among the anti-Dalai Lama and anti-Tibet literature are works by S. Ipares (*Geheime Weltmächte* [Secret World Powers], 1937), who was influenced by the orientalist Albert Grünwedel. In his book, the author talks of an occult *hierarchia ordinis* of the Lamaist theocracy, which invisibly influences and steers the East.
- J. Strunk’s arguments (*Zu Juda und Rom — Tibet*, [To Juda and Rome — Tibet], 1937) are more far reaching; he tries to uncover a conspiracy of an international ecclesiastical elite (with members from all the world religions) with the living Buddha, the Dalai Lama from Lhasa as their visible head. “What there are of organizations and new spiritual currents running alongside and in all directions nearly always end up on the ‘roof of the world’, in a Lama temple, once one has progressed through Jewish and Christian lodges” (Strunk, 1937, p. 28).
- In the same year (1937) Fritz Wilhelmy published the piece *Asekha. Der Kreuzzug der Bettelmönche* [Asekha: The Crusade of the Mendicant Monks]. In it “Tibetan Buddhism ... [is] openly appointed to play a more than mysterious role in the great global hustle and bustle of suprapstate pullers of strings” (Wilhelmy 1937, p.17)
- General Ludendorff and his wife likewise took to the field with great vigor against the “Asian priests” and warned that the Tibetan Lamas had emplaced themselves at the head of Jewish and Jesuit secret orders (*Europa den Asiatenpriestern?* [Europe of the Asian priests]), 1941).
- Clearly the most prominent of the anti-Lamaist Nazi faction was the racist Alfred Rosenberg, who in his seminal work *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhundert* [The Myth of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century] made the battle between the priests and the warrior caste into the primal conflict of the history of the world. The Tibetan lamas appear here as the representatives of a decadent Asian Catholicism.

The problem with the construction of a fascist anti-Lamaism lies in the fact that apart from Alfred Rosenberg the right-wing authors cited definitely did not occupy positions of power like those of Himmler, the SS, and the *Ahnenerbe* project. “Hitler’s mythologist” (Rosenberg) was cut dead by Himmler and barely taken seriously by Hitler. The Ludendorff’s fell out of favor with the *Führer*. In contrast, the SS with their rites and their martial style increasingly became the epitome of the Nazi myth. It was the SS who explored Tibet and it was a former SS trooper (Heinrich Harrer) who schooled the Dalai Lama.

Besides this, the national socialist opponents of Lamaism mentioned, who Martin Brauen so demonstratively parades to prove that fascism was hostile towards Tibetan Buddhism, are just as fanatically fascinated by the atavistic mythology of Tibet as the pro-Lamaist fascists whom we have listed above. They do not attack the Lamaist system out of a democratic attitude or rational consideration, but the opposite, because they fear the occult world of the Lamas — namely, control

by magic, the conquest of the planet by Buddhist despots, the manipulation of awareness through rituals, etc. — all concepts which can indeed be found in the tantric texts. Thus, right-wing opponents of Lamaism, just like the right-wing advocates of Lamaism, see in Tibet and its religion an occult control center.

Since the pro-Lamaist intellectuals can no longer deny that fascist authors increasingly sought out contact with Lamaist cultural images after the war, they emphatically reassure us that these were a matter of Western “illusions”, or at least Western hybrids of Lamaism which were in no sense just. With this they seem to think the problem is solved (in this regard, see Brauen 2000). But they leave us waiting for an examination of contents which reveals to what depth and extent ideas and practices from Lamaism have been directly incorporated by the fascist side. Yet a debate about the images, archetypes, metapolitical visions, political structures, and rituals from the Tibetan cultural sphere which the neo-Nazi refer back to is of far greater interest than the question of whether there was personal contact between lamas and Nazis. Here the actual work of cultural criticism begins, which entails

1. **discovering Lamaist myths of origin behind the “Nazi fantasies”**
2. **investigating these Lamaist myths of origin**
3. **examining structural similarities between neo-fascism and Lamaism**

Only then when such “myths of origin” are not to be found can the Nazi- Tibet connection be said to have been exposed as a purely Western fiction.

The following list of paradigms, concepts, theories, methods, and myths which have essentially shaped the culture of Lamaism (and still do) have become central for the neo-fascist movement:

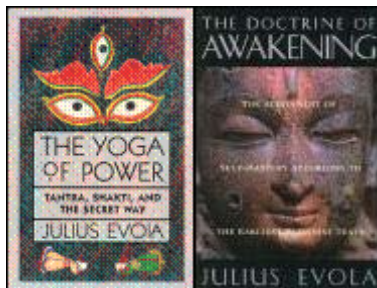
- The combination of religious and political power
- A strictly hierarchical state structure that rests upon a spiritually based “Führer principle”
- The out and out patriarchal orientation of the state and society
- A pattern of complete subordination of pupil to master
- The appearance of divine beings of earth to fulfill political missions (the avatar, incarnation, and Bodhisattva principle)
- A political micro-/macrocosmic theory according to which a Buddhist ruler represents a likeness of the entire universe.
- The idea of a world ruler (Chakravartin) and a violent conquest of the world
- The motif of spiritual/political redemption
- The idea of a superhuman center of power in Asia, from where an influence on world politics is exercised (the Shambhala myth)
- The legitimation of contemporary politics through mythic roots
- The derivation of political control from myths of the sun and light
- The myth of the “black sun” (Rahu myth in the *Kalachakra Tantra*)
- Alchemic speculations (as in the *Kalachakra Tantra*)
- An interest in secret men’s associations (members of orders)
- The existence of a supernatural community of “priestly warriors” (Shambhala warriors) who observe and influence the history of the world
- A “Buddhist” warrior ethic based upon spiritual control of the body and emotions
- An apocalyptic final battle, in which good and evil stand opposed and all nonbelievers are annihilated (Shambhala war)
- A fascination with the machinery of war (Shambhala myth)
- Flying discs (UFOs) — corresponding objects (flying wheels) will be put to use in the final Shambhala war
- A magical view of the world and the associated conception that the manipulation of symbols can affect history
- Techniques for manipulating consciousness

- A great interest in paranormal phenomena and their combination with politics (visions, oracles, prophecies)
- A magic/political understanding of the system of rituals in the service of the state
- Sexual magic practices for transforming erotic love and sexuality into worldly and spiritual power (*Kalachakra Tantra*)
- The functionalization of the feminine principle for the purposes of politico-religious power

All these pillars of Tibetan Buddhist culture are likewise ingredients of the *Kalachakra Tantra* constantly practiced by the Dalai Lama and the Shambhala myth this evokes. For centuries they have determined the form of Tibetan monastic society, completely independent of any Western imaginings or influence. Hence the question about neo-fascism's inordinate interest in Tibet and its atavistic culture is easily answered: fascists of the most varied persuasion see their own “political theology” confirmed by the Tibetan Buddhist religious system, or discover new images and practices in it with which they can enrich and extend their ideologies.

Some (not all) of the above-mentioned Tibetan cultural elements to which the new right has helped itself were also to be found in the Europe of old, yet these were either disempowered or relativized by the Enlightenment and “modernity” — only to be reactivated in the history of fascism and national socialism. In traditional Tibet (up until 1958), in the community of Tibetans in exile, but above all in the figure of the Dalai Lama and his clergy, in the holy texts and the rituals (the tantras), these images and archetypes were able to survive without pause. Through the active presence of the lamas in the West they are now visible and tangible once more and play an ever greater role in Western popular culture. Yet it is not just in comics and kitsch films that the Dalai Lama is portrayed as a god-king, but also both the respectable and the down-market western press, a label which gains fundamental significance in the political theology of fascism and is combined there with the *Führer* principle.[4]

### Julius Evola: A fascist Tantric



It was not just the ideologists and theoreticians of national socialism who were closely concerned with Tibet, but also high-ranking intellectuals and scholars closely linked to Italian fascism. First of all, Giuseppe Tucci, who attempted to combine Eastern and fascist ideas with one another, must be mentioned (Benavides 1995).

A further example is the work of the Italian, Julius Evola (1898-1974), for a time Benito Mussolini's chief ideologist (mainly in the forties). In numerous books and articles he has investigated and further developed the relationship between tantric rituals and power politics. He has followed “tantric trails” in European cultural history and come across them everywhere: among the Cathars, the troubadours, the Knights Templar, in the work of Alighieri Dante, the mysticism surrounding the holy grail, European knighthood, alchemy. Using criteria drawn from *Vajrayana*, he propounds a cultural history of sexuality in his most famous book, *Eros and the Mysteries of Love: The Metaphysics of Sex*. Evola was not just a theoretician, he also practiced sexual magic rites himself. There are unmistakable statements from him about the “tantric female sacrifice” and the transformation of sexuality into political power. Like almost no other, the Italian has openly named the events that unfold in the mysteries of the yogis and then confessed to them: “The young woman,” he writes, “who is first ‘demonized’ and then raped, ... is essentially... the basic motif for the higher forms of tantric and Vajrayanic sexual magic” (Evola, 1983, p. 389). In dictators like

Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini he saw the precursors of future *Maha Siddhas* who would one day conquer the world with their magic powers: “The magician, the ruler, the lord”, he proclaims in regard to Tantrism, “that is the type of the culture of the future!” (Evola, 1926, p. 304). He recommends Tantrism as “the way for a Western elite” (Evola, *East and West*, p. 29).

In the Shambhala myth he sees a confirmation of the European tradition of the savior king, especially the myth of the grail: “At a particular time decreed by one of the cyclical laws, a new manifestation of the solar principle from above will occur in the form of a sacred ruler who gains victory over the ‘dark age’: Kalki Avatara. Symbolically Kalki will be born in Shambhala — one of the terms in the Indian/Tibetan tradition for the holiest hyperborean [Nordic] center” (Evola 1955, p. 56).

We could fill many pages illustrating the influence of Vajrayana (Tibetan Tantrism) on Evola’s work. But however, we will instead concentrate on a detailed discussion of the ideas of one of his pupils, Miguel Serrano. Serrano combines Evola’s fascist philosophy of power warriors with the national socialist thoughts on race. His works are particularly interesting for us not just because he is still alive (in 1999), but also because he has been linked with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama several times.

### **Miguel Serrano: The Dalai Lama’s “friend” and chief ideologist of “esoteric Hitlerism”**

“Miguel Serrano”, writes his interviewer, Isidro Palacios, “was the only [!] western foreigner who traveled to meet the Dalai Lama as the monk-emperor of the Tibetan Buddhists fled from the holy land of Tibet to the south because of the Chinese invasion. Our conversation partner [Serrano] traveled from India into the Himalayas where his meeting with the Dalai Lama took place, and since then a close friendship has existed between him and the now Nobel prize winner” (Palacios, 1990, p. 2). Who is this “close friend” of the *Kundun* then?

Miguel Serrano was born in Santiago, Chile in 1917. Between 1947 and 1948 he visited Antarctica for the first time, to which he later undertook many journeys. One of the massifs which he explored on an expedition there bears his name today. Between 1939 and 1945 he published the esoteric journal, *La Nueva Edad* [The New Age]. He was active as a diplomat for Chile in several countries, including India, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Austria. He also worked as an ambassador at the International Atomic Energy Commission in Vienna and at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Largely unnoticed by the public, Serrano has been in friendly contact with numerous prominent national socialist and fascist figures since the seventies: with Léon Degrelle, Otto Skorzeny, Hans-Ulrich Rudel, Hanna Reitsch, Julius Evola, Herman Wirth, Savitri Devi, and the French *Waffen* SS man and author Saint Loup. The Chilean returned to his country of birth and lives some kilometers from Santiago (as of 1999).

He published numerous books with an occult/poetic content. Even his work best known in the West, in which he recounts his encounters with the German poet Hermann Hesse and the depth psychologist C. G. Jung, displays a great deal of occultist speculation when one reads it attentively. Serrano titled his book *The Hermetic Circle: Conversations, Correspondence, and Memories of Hermann Hesse and C. G. Jung*.<sup>[5]</sup> This title alone should signal that the author had formed an esoteric brotherhood with Jung and Hesse, a sort of triumvirate of magicians who had gained admittance to the archetypal storehouses of the human subconscious and are unique in the twentieth century. Jung was sympathetic towards the Chilean who had courted him. He wrote an effusive foreword to Serrano’s tale, *The Visit of the Queen of Saba*: “This book is unusual. It is a dream amidst other dreams, one could say, and completely different to the spontaneous creations of the unconscious with which I am familiar” (Serrano, 1980, p. 7). Serrano was also a great admirer of the American poet, Ezra Pound, who sympathized with the Italian fascists. Together with Pound’s widow (Olga Rudge) and Prince Ivanici, Serrano had a commemorative stone erected in Italy.

His occult studies took him to all parts of the world. He saw himself as a modern Percival (Parsifal) and Minnesinger, who went in search of the Grail under the protection of his diplomatic passport. “The life of an ambassador is a farce and a folly”, he said in an interview in the journal *Cedade*, “My post allows me to meet with people of value like the Dalai Lama, Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Hanna Reitsch (Hitler’s famous female war pilot) and others” (*Cedade*, 1986). Switzerland, Westphalia, the mountains of Salzburg, the Pyrenées, his travels in search of the Grail led him through all these “geomantically” significant sites, but likewise to the Himalayas, Patagonia, and Antarctica.

The Chilean was rightly considered the occult eminence of modern, international fascism. Meanwhile, his phantasmagoric writings have also developed a fanatic following in the German neo-nazi scene: It is the Chilean author’s obsessive intention to convince his readers that Adolf Hitler was an *avatar* (a divine incarnation) or a *tulku*, and ever will be, since he lives on in another body in another sphere, that of the kingdom of *Shambhala*. According to Serrano, the *Führer* will reappear as the doomsday ruler and fight a terrible battle, and that in the next few years. How did this bizarre fantasy arise?

Shortly after the Second World War a mysterious “master” from the beyond is supposed to have appeared to the Chilean and said to him: “Hitler is a initiate, he can communicate with those dwelling on the astral plane. I do not know who his spiritual leaders are, but I have decided to help him. Hitler is a being with an iron, unshakable will which he inevitably put into effect. He never yielded. I was in contact with him.” (Serrano, 1987, p. 21).

After this appearance of his spiritual guru, Serrano was absolutely convinced that he had been entrusted with the mission of the century: the worldwide dissemination of *Hitlerismo Esoterico* (of “esoteric Hitlerism”). Whilst still performing his international duties as a Chilean Ambassador he held himself back, although he carried the idea in his heart from the nineteen fifties on. During this period he published books of a poetic/esoteric content with several respectable western publishers which, although they without exception include tantric topics (especially the “female sacrifice”), studiously avoid mentioning the name of Adolf Hitler. Only in 1978 did the Chilean first dare to go public with an open profession of belief in the German Nazi dictator, and published *El Cordon Dorado — Hitlerismo Esoterico* [The Golden Ribbon — Esoteric Hitlerism]. In the mid-eighties the almost 650-page, large-format book, *Adolf Hitler, el Último Avatâra* [Adolf Hitler, the Last Avatar], followed. Serrano summarizes the results of his extensive occult research into this topic with the concise statement that, “esoteric Hitlerism is tantric” (Serrano, 1987, p. 330).

### ***Shambhala: The center of “esoteric Hitlerism”***

In the following sections, we hope to show just how much of his fascist world view Serrano owed to Tantrism. It is of especial interest in connection with this study that he recognized “esoteric Hitlerism” as a central doctrine from the kingdom of *Shambhala*: “In fact”, the author says, “*Shambhala* is indeed the center of esoteric Hitlerism. The entrance to it [the realm of *Shambhala*] was to be found in the vicinity of Shigatse or near Gyantse [in southern Tibet]. Through my investigations I arrived at the conclusion that our center [i.e., that of Serrano’s occult order] had also been located there. The connection between Hitlerism and the Tibetans or Mongolians was also not immediate, but indirect, in as far as they established contact with the Hyperboreans (the Aryan gods of the north) and made free passage and the transmission of physical messages possible. Tibetans and Mongolians were their vassals who had to guard the magic entry gates to their world. ... When I visited Berchtesgaden [the Obersalzberg to which Hitler retreated time and again], my attention was constantly captivated by a tellurian force, a tangible vibration in the air, which instantaneously linked this point with the Tibetan Himalayas and trans-Himalaya: *Hitler’s* high-lying refuge with the Lhasa of the *Dalai Lama*, with *Shambhala*. For some particular reason, esoteric Hitlerism had chosen this point, which is full of direct connections, magnetic vibrations, and those which touch the stars, as the holy center of its order (the SS), and it had avoided letting a final physical struggle, which could have harmed this area, take place there” (Serrano, 1987, p. 32).



In his book, *NOS*, Serrano defines the kingdom of *Shambhala* as “one of the hidden subterranean cities in which is performed the tantric initiation that transforms, transmutes and transfigures matter. There are people who say that it was the capital of *Agartha*” (Serrano, 1984, p. 186). Before *Shambhala* was relocated in the Himalayas by the hyperborean (Nordic) *siddhas*, it was a kingdom at the North Pole.

*Shambhala* and *Agartha* are thus the two occult regions (or cities) from which the national socialist dictator, Adolf Hitler, was sent to our planet. According to Serrano the two locations lie in a magic realm beneath the surface of the Earth. “Thus the submerged *Agartha* and *Shambhala* are to be found there, which the Tibetans and Mongolians speak of as the seat of the king of the world, and also the symbolic orient of the [Knights] Templar and the true Rosicrucians. Thus the unknown leaders of these two orders, as well the organization of esoteric Hitlerism [the SS], betook themselves there. And from there Hitler clearly received instructions” (Serrano, 1987, p. 32). [6]

Following the Second World War the rumor (which Serrano seizes upon thankfully) arose in occult circles that Hitler had settled a brotherhood of Tibetan lamas in Berlin, who stood in direct contact with the kingdom of *Shambhala*. After the Russians entered the city the members of the order committed suicide ( Ravenscroft, 1988, p. 262ff.).[7]

But Hitler — Serrano says- did not suicide; rather he was able to return to his subterranean home of *Shambhala*. “Hitler lives. He did not die in Berlin. I have seen him under the earth. ... I kept this secret for many years; then it was dangerous to reveal it, and it was even more difficult to write about it”, the mysterious master we have already mentioned explained to his pupil, Serrano (Serrano, 1987, p. 37). The “Führer”, however, did not flee to Tibet as is assumed in other occult speculations. Serrano doubts such assumptions, since on the basis of his researches he reached the conclusion that the mythic realm of *Shambhala* was relocated from the Himalayas to the South Pole (Antarctica) following the war and that today the entrance to the underground imperium may be found there. Hitler is thus said to have traveled to Antarctica.

In the near future, the “Führer” will ascend to earth from the subterranean *Shambhala* (now at the South Pole) for a second time, with a powerful army of UFOs in fact. (At another point Serrano reports that Hitler will lead his army on a white horse, like the *Rudra Chakrin*, the wrathful wheel turner from *Shambhala*.) The “last avatar” (Hitler) will plunge the planet into a terrible apocalyptic war between the forces of light (the hyperborean Aryan race) and the powers of darkness (the Jewish race). The Jews, who currently rule the world, will be exterminated and the Nazis will found the *Edidad Dorada* (the “golden age”) and the “Fourth Reich”.

Serrano took his “fantasies” literally. To seek his spiritual leader (or the *tulku* Hitler), the Chilean diplomat (in India at the time) set off and began exploring in the Himalayas and in Antarctica. “In the book *The Serpent of Paradise*, I describe my search for the ashram of the Siddha in the Himalayas, which is likewise to be found beneath the earth in the Kailash mountains, in a very remote area where my master’s residence also is” (Serrano, 1987, p. 40).[8] He was convince that he would find an entrance to *Shambhala* or *Agartha* in the Kailash. He also tried to reach Lake Yamdrok, because he suspected there was an entrance gateway to the underground *Shambhala* there as well. But the Chinese turned him back at the border.

### *EL/ELLA*

But the time was not ripe, Serrano was unable to discover the entrance to *Shambhala*. In Kalimpong, “before the gates of Tibet” he encountered a “man” who assured the Chilean that a mysterious “order” exerts an influence over both the affairs of the distant past and the most recent events of world history. Obviously this *man* was the guru who — as he recounts in his key book *EL/ELLA* — initiated Serrano into the rites of sexual magic, and the *order* was a tantric secret society. Its members, the “man” said, “live in two cities in the Himalayas, *Agartha* and *Shambhala*. To get there one has to trace this (tantric) way back to the origin of time” (Serrano, 1982, p. 10).

The pupil (Serrano) — we read in *EL/ELLA* — is prepared to go this way and is initiated into the tantras and the “laws of androgyny” by the master: “This knowledge has been passed on to us by the serpent [*kundalini*] that survived on the ocean floor as the world of the god-men was destroyed, in which the woman was not outside but rather inside and where man and woman were one. .... Until you are one with the woman ... you will be no priest king ... The stallion must become a mare, the man a woman ...” the guru continued his teaching (Serrano, 1982, pp. 11-12).[9]

This is never, the pupil learns, possible through chastity and asceticism. Rather, the man must encounter the woman in the “magic love” in order to divert her feminine energies. As we know, this requires absolute control over the sexual act and above all the retention of the seed: “If the stallion expels the seed, he becomes impoverished by this. ... For as long as the seed flows outwards like a river, the play of the deceptive appearances will continue” (Serrano, 1982, p. 13). In another text it says: “the magic love that is taught in ... *Shambhala*. ... In it the seed may not be issued outwardly and be lost in the woman, rather it must flow inwardly into the body of its owner in order to impregnate him with the androgyne, ... as one in the likewise symbolic language of alchemy” (Serrano, 1987, p. 289). If the man does not expel his sperm he can absorb the woman’s *gynergies* completely. “If the woman does not receive”, Serrano says, “she gives! Through her skin she exudes substances, a concentrated energy, which satiates you and penetrates into your blood and heart” (Serrano, 1982, p. 14).

But it can happen that the tantric experiment fails. If the *sadhaka* (the pupil) loses his seed during the magic sexual act then he is destroyed by the aggressive femininity: “The spider devours the male who fertilizes her, the bees murder the drones, the fearsome mother wears the organ of generation tied around her neck. Everything female devours, every mare, mother, goddess, or woman. In one way or another the man is consumed” (Serrano, 1982, p. 13).

It is thus a matter of life and death. Ultimately, according to Serrano the “killing” of the *external* woman (the *karma mudra*) is therefore necessary, so that the *inner* woman (the *maha mudra*) can be formed. The author does not shrink from discussing the “tantric female sacrifice” directly: “Only those who are able to love the woman so much [!] that they externally kill her [!] in order to make possible her inner rebirth will find the immortal city of *Agartha* (or *Shambhala*)” (Serrano, 1982, p. 13).[10] For an uninformed reader hidden, but obvious to one who knows the logic of Tantrism, a tantric female murder is described in both of his initiatory writings, *EL/ELLA* [*HE/SHE*] and *NOS* [*WE*].

In a love scene from *EL/ELLA* a young woman expires in Serrano’s arms in order to then re-emerge within him as an inner *maha mudra*. He bends over her, strokes her hair and kisses her bloody lips: “They tasted like bitter honey, and he swallowed a little of her blood” Then he suddenly sees the stigmata: “Strangely, it [the blood] was only on her feet and the palms of her hands as if she had been crucified. 'Here!', she said. She indicated her side, at breast level. A white line seemed to run through it, like a spear wound” (Serrano, 1982, pp. 72-73). The references to the sacrifice of Christ are obvious, indeed they seem quite blatant. “When I die,” the woman then says, “you will bear me within you; I will be you, live in you ... You have drunk my blood, and we are now two siblings. My character is already being transferred into your blood ... If god will, I shall love you even more when I am dead. ... I have to die that you may live” (Serrano, 1982, pp. 73-74). With this she fulfills the wise saying of Serrano’s master: “The decay of the one [the woman] is the purification of the other [the man]” (Serrano, 1982, p. 93). “The absolute woman”, he says at another point, “can sleep or she can die, which is the same thing” (Serrano, 1987, p. 289).

Written in a fantasy manner, the book *NOS — Book of the Resurrection* also depicts a tantric female sacrifice. The heroine of this “hermetic biography” is called Allouine, the main hero is admittedly Serrano. Additionally, various “tantric” masters crop up. Among them are, unmistakably, C.G. Jung, Hermann Hesse, and the American poet Ezra Pound. The contents of the book depict the voluntary self-sacrifice of Allouine, her interiorization as a *maha mudra* by the author (Serrano), and the latter’s achievement of immortality through the absorption of *gynergy*.

“The woman dies. She is dead. She must die. ... She is the warrior’s [the yogi’s] companion, existing only in his mind, in his spirit” (Serrano, 1984, p. 11), Serrano instructs us once more. “She [the woman] becomes interiorized in you through her death, she inspires you”, one of his masters explains to him and in another passage continues: “The secret path of yoga along which you are traveling is only for the warrior, for the initiated hero. It is not the path for the woman; because a woman has no chakras, no *kundalini* to awaken. ... A woman is the Kundalini. A woman has no soul. She is the soul. A woman has no eternity. She is eternity” (Serrano, 1984, pp. 102, 147).

Serrano stages a tantric séance with Allouine, in which they both consume the five forbidden foods. Then he drinks “the liquor of orgasm ... the heavenly Soma, an spirit of secret wine ... which is now only to be found in the river of your blood” (Serrano, 1984, p. 112). We know that he is talking about the *sukra*, the mixture of male and female seed, of menstrual blood and sperm. This magic potion grants the Tantric immortality. In *NOS* too the author longs for the blood of his lover like a vampire and goes into raptures if he detects it on his lips. After he has washed the dying Allouine, he kisses her and drinks of her blood.

Yet Allouine patiently and will-lessly accepts her sacrifice: “My desire for you (i.e., for Serrano) is reaching its peak. The fire of sacrifice has already been lit in my vulva and beats there like a heart. ... My will no longer exists” (Serrano, 1984, p. 111). “The authentic, absolute woman sacrifices herself voluntarily,” we read in *NOS*, “immolating herself in order to give her eternity to her lover. ... The beloved is now the hidden beloved, she who has died and buried herself in your bones and your veins. The female Sophia, guru of the soul, she who courses through the blood, the female philosopher, Sophia, wisdom, the dove, gnosis” (Serrano, 1984, pp. 147-148). Dying, his “wisdom consort” says to him, “I shall but love thee better after death. I give you my eternity. ... My beloved, you will be my coffin of perfumed, precious wood!” (Serrano, 1984, p. 140).

After he has internalized Allouine within himself, the Tantric Serrano can now overcome his EGO, he can now talk of NOS (WE), since his lover (*maha mudra*) will dwell in him for ever. Through this love, deadly for the woman, the man gains eternal life. In this context, Serrano plays upon the word AMOR, which does not just mean love, but also A-MOR, i.e., beyond death.

Eternally united with Allouine’s *gynergy* following her physical death, Serrano buries her corpse and places a stone at her grave into which he has chiseled a leftward hooked cross, the supreme symbol of “esoteric Hitlerism”.

### *Hitler as a tantric and as king of the world (Chakravartin)*

From Serrano’s tantric world view it is only all too easy to assume that Hitler (as a *tulku*) also conducted sexual magic practices with a wisdom consort (*mudra*). Eva Braun, the lover of the dictator appears to have only partially performed this duty. Behind her, Serrano says, stood a greater one: “We must thus consider the relationship with Eva Braun to have been like that between Jesus and Mary Magdalene in the Christian legend, like that of an alchemist to his mystic sister. ... The presence of the woman, her telepathic, self-communicating energy, the tensions this generates are indispensable for a tantric magician, for this kind of bearer of power. The mystic consort of Hitler was, however, not Eva Braun, but rather another” (Serrano, 1987, p. 25). He refers to her as the “Valkyrie” or as *Lilith* too. With the name *Lilith* he draws a connection to *Adam*. Like Hitler, the biblical first father of humanity (*Adam*) also possessed two women, an outer *Eve* and an inner *Lilith*. Did Hitler perhaps make an decisive tantric mistake, asks the author, in marrying *Eva Braun* (shortly before his suicide)? “... Since the secret *Eve* [Braun] of transient flesh and blood was accepted, she now [took] the place of the mystic consort” (Serrano, 1987, p. 25), and Hitler lost part of his magic powers (*siddhis*).

A according to Serrano the “Führer” of the Third Reich was a tantra master from *Shambhala*, the “high priest of the occident” (Serrano, 1987, p. 269) He came to earth to fulfill a mission — the control of the world by the Nordic (“hyperborean”) race. But in him Serrano does not just see the incarnation of a warlike archetype who lowered himself into a human frame in the nineteen-thirties

and forties. In the dictator he directly recognized a *tulku* and god sent from *Shambhala*. Hitler “was a highly developed being, a Bodhisattva, a tulku ... the incarnation of a deity” (Serrano, n.d., p. 119).

Just as a *tulku* need not only appear in the form of a single person, but can rather produce many emanations of his self, so too the various fascist national “*Führers*” of the first half of our century were the emanations of the mightiest central *tulku* and *Shambhala* prince, Adolf Hitler: Benito Mussolini in Italy; Oliveira Salazar in Portugal; Leon Degrelle in Belgium; José Antonio Primo de Rivera in Spain; Plinio Salgado in Brazil; Doriot in France; Jorge González von Marée in Chile; and Subhash Chandra Bose in India. All the fascist energy of the world was concentrated in the German “*Führer*” (Hitler): “The tulku”, says Serrano, “— in this case it is Hitler — radiates out from a center of higher power, which like an enormous sun absorbs everything and draws it into his fire and his fate. If HE falls, then all the others fall too, then HE is of course ALL [of them]” (Serrano, 1987, p. 270).

According to Serrano Hitler must also be seen as the earthly appearance of the *Chakravartin*: “For the initiates of the SS Hitler was that mysterious prophet or magician who ... would restore the sense of royal dignity, where the king of the world is the emperor, the priest of priests and king of kings; it is the leader, who will establish a new golden age for a thousand years and more” (Serrano, 1987, p. 354). This is clearly intended for the future, since— according to Serrano — Hitler will soon return once more to fulfill his cosmic mission. One may think what one will of such prognoses, but it is in any case amazing what a large upturn fascist movements have achieved worldwide since the end of the eighties.

#### *The SS as a tantric warrior order from Shambhala*

For Serrano the tantric initiation is the central rite of a “hyperborean” (Nordic) warrior caste. *Shambhala* counts as the supreme mystery site for the initiation of the “priest-warriors”. “In *Shambhala*”, the author says, “the use of the force through which the mutation of the earth and the people can be carried out is taught, and the latter [the people] are introduced into the *martial* initiation, which makes this possible. ... Those who follow this initiatory stream have struggled to found a new/old order here on the present-day earth which has its roots in the transcendent origins, with the goal of reawakening the golden age, and they will fight on to the end...” (Serrano, 1987, p. 258). [11]

This order is the secret brotherhood of the *Shambhala* officers, who have for centuries been incarnated in our world — for instance as knights of the holy grail or as Rosicrucians or finally as the occult elite of the SS, Hitler’s notorious *Schutz-Staffel*. “Once a year”, we learn, “the inner circle of the SS people met with their supreme leaders for a few days of retreat, the solitude, and meditation. A kind of western yoga was practiced here, but nothing is known about it” (Serrano, 1987, pp. 171-172).

According to Serrano the SS were divided into two sections, an inner esoteric one and an outer one. The “exoteric SS” were selected to “be able to deal with the most difficult tasks and adventures in the external world”. “Nothing of the esoteric of the black order, its practices and teachings, its invisible connections and its occult doctrines was known” to them (Serrano, 1987, p. 264). The “inner circle” of the SS consisted of “sun people, supermen, god-men, the total human, the human magician” (Serrano, n.d., p. 96). The esoteric SS were *siddhas* (magicians) from the underground kingdom of *Shambhala*, or at least their messengers. In German, SS are the initials of the “black sun” (“*schwarze Sonne*”), and Serrano did also call the members of the order “the men of the black sun”. We are reminded that the planet of darkness, *Rahu*, which darkens the sun and moon, is also referred to in the *Kalachakra Tantra* as the black sun.

The author is convinced, of course, that sexual magic rites were practiced in the SS (the “new aristocracy of the Aryan race”). Like Julius Evola before him, the Chilean makes constant references in his writings to how sexuality may be converted into high-quality aggressive military

energy and political power through tantric practices: “Come and take me like a *warrior!*”, a lover (his *karma mudra*) says to him at one stage in his key novels, “I give you my heart for you to devour. Let us drink our blood” (Serrano, 1982, p. 54). In *EL/ELLA* the author recommends to heroes initiated into the tantras that “the *warrior* should give death the face of his lover; the fiery femininity of death will be thus evoked” (Serrano, 1982, p. 87). For Serrano, tantric practices and the cult life of a fascist/esoteric warrior caste are one.

Additionally, the sexual magic of the SS was connected with racial experiments. These aimed at a mutation of the human race, or better, a regaining of the formerly high-standing Aryan god-men who had in the dim and distant past tarnished themselves through “ordinary” sexual intercourse with human women and produced a lesser race. According to Serrano, such experiments were conducted in the Wewelsburg, the occult center of the SS. “Laboratories of leftward magic” for the re-creation of the original, pure Aryan race were to be found there (Serrano, n.d. pp. 488, 589). But these were nothing more than the above-ground branches of corresponding establishments in subterranean *Shambhala*. “In *Shambhala* they attempted to produce a mutation of their kind which would allow them to return to that which they were before their interbreeding with the sons of man...” — when they still had a white, almost transparent body and blonde hair (Serrano, 1982, p. 54).

As Tantrics, the SS were “beyond good and evil” and for this reason their “terrible deeds” were justified by Serrano, plus that they took place at higher cosmic command (Serrano, 1987, p. 331). The “final solution to the question of the gypsies” (many gypsies perished in the concentration camps), for example, is said to have come directly “from Tibet to Hitler, certainly from *Shambhala*”. The gypsies used to live in *Shambhala* and had then been driven out of there. “The reasons for this”, says Serrano, “were known in the Tibet of the Dalai Lama” (Serrano, 1987, p. 366).

Just like the Knights Templar, the inner occult core of the SS were incarnations of the guardians of the holy grail, and “the grail of the siddhas [the magicians], of the solar and martial initiations” is to be found in *Shambhala* (Serrano, 1987, p. 264). The miracles which radiated from the grail were evident in the achievements of the black order in the course of the Second World War: “If one examines the achievements of the followers of Hitler in all areas of creation within a period of just six years, one cannot avoid admiring this miracle and making a comparison with the Templar order. And one comes to believe that the SS have likewise found the grail and even deciphered it” (Serrano, 1987, p. 278). Even the monumental architecture of the Third Reich is supposed to have been prepared on the building sites of *Shambhala*. The Hyperboreans (the gods of the north), we may read, “emigrated to two secret cities in the Himalayas, *Agartha* and *Shambhala*. ... In *Shambhala* they practiced the magic of the giants which made the monumental buildings possible” (Serrano, 1982, p. 54).

In the Second World War the forces of light and the “sun race” (Hitler and the SS) stood opposed to the forces of darkness and the “moon race” (the Allies and the Jews). It was no ordinary war, but rather a global battle between the gods (the Nazis, the light Aryan race) and demons (the Jews, the dark Semitic race), between *Odin*, the highest god of the Germanic peoples, and *Jehovah*, the highest god of the Jews. The Nordic (hyperborean) heroes fought the “lord of darkness”, the “satanic demiurge”. At heart, Serrano says, the patriarchal and matriarchal powers were at war.

Admittedly Hitler outwardly lost the war, but through his sacrifice and his example he saved the ideals of the warrior caste from *Shambhala*. He shall return at the head of his “wild army” to finally liberate the white race from the lord of darkness (*Jehovah*). It will then come to a terrible final battle. “These are the dimensions of Hitler, the envoy of the hyperborean [Nordic] siddhas, the tulku, the Bodhisattva, the Chakravartin, the Führer of the Aryans, so that the demiurge *Jehovah* has to mobilize all his earthly and extraterrestrial legions” (Serrano, n.d., p. 50).

One may well dismiss Serrano’s visions as the product of an overactive imagination, but it cannot

be denied that modern fascism has found a home and a predecessor in the *Shambhala* myth and in Tantrism. Its mythological conceptions and visions of power can without difficulty be brought into harmony with the practice and political ideology of the *Kalachakra Tantra* for all fundamental issues. The occult right wing's move toward Tibetan Buddhism is thus in no way to be understood as the exploitation of the *dharma* for ignoble purposes, since there is a profound inner relatedness between these two ways of looking at the world.

### **The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Serrano**

Naturally, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama would simply dismiss any link between the *Shambhala myth* and *Kalachakra Tantra* and the “esoteric Hitlerism” of Serrano, regardless of how closely matched even the conceptual principles of the two systems may be. Nonetheless, it is of great interest to our culturally critical study that the *Kundun* met with the racist Chilean several times (in at least 1959, 1984, and 1992). When His Holiness visited Chile in the year 1992, he was greeted at the airport by, among others, the leader of the *National Socialist Party of Chile* — Miguel Serrano by name. The principal ideologue of *Esoteric Hitlerism* told the reporters present that he and the hierarch from Tibet had been good “friends” since his time in India (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 302). Serrano was also a friend of the German living in India whom we have so often cited, Lama Govinda, in whose meditation tower with a view of the Himalayan mountains he was able to immerse himself.

The first encounter with the *Kundun* took place in 1959. In his own account, the founder of “esoteric Hitlerism” was the sole foreigner to greet the Dalai Lama as he crossed the Indian border after his flight from Tibet. “Shortly before the taking of Tibet by Mao’s troops”, he reports in his own words, “the Dalai Lama succeeded in fleeing to India. I journeyed into the Himalayas to wait for him there. I donned Tibetan clothes which the Maharaja of Sikkim had given me so as to attempt to get to Tibet from there. I made it to the Tibetan border, where — incidentally — I made the acquaintance of one of Roerich’s sons who also gave me a report of the hidden city lying in the mountains (*Shambhala*). The at that time still very young Dalai Lama later, when everything was over, gave me a small Tibetan dog, as a sign of his gratitude” (Palacio, 1990, p. 4).

It is at any rate interesting that the *Kundun*, who was introduced to western culture by a member of the SS (Heinrich Harrer), meets as the first (!) Westerner after his crossing of the Indian border the fascist Miguel Serrano, who sees a mythic command from the kingdom *Shambhala* at the esoteric core of the SS. Serrano says of himself: “I was employed as a tool and continue to be used” (Cedade, 1986). We may recall that upon crossing the border, the Dalai Lama gave vent to the cry of “Victory to the gods!”. The gods that Serrano represented and as whose tool he served were *Wotan*, *Odin*, and, in his own words, *Adolf Hitler*.



*Miguel Serrano and the XIV. Dalai Lama in Santiago de Chile (1992)*

As far as the “enchanted” Tibetan temple bitch of “honey yellow color” which was given him by the *Kundun* is concerned, this creature had a most special significance for the Chilean. The lamas, the author says, referred to the petite race as the “lion of the back door of the Temple”. Serrano’s “back door lion” was called *Dolma*, “the name of a Tibetan goddess; in truth the *shakti*” (Serrano, n.d., p. 189). *Dolma* is the Tibetan name for the goddess *Tara*. As abstruse as it may sound, after some time the Chilean recognized in the *Dolma* given him by the *Kundun* the reincarnation of a woman whom he once loved as a “mystic partner” and who (in accordance with the laws of the “tantric female sacrifice”) had had to die (Serrano, n.d., p. 189). As *Dolma* the bitch one day passed away in his arms — Serrano had flown from Spain to Vienna just to accompany her into eternity — he recalled an event of mythological dimensions from the 16th century. As if he were in a trance he suddenly felt that it was not the Tibetan *Dolma* but rather the dying sister of the last Aztec emperor Montezuma, Papán by name, whom he held in his arms. Papán — Serrano claimed — originally a high priestess from the north (“Hyperborea”), had in Mexico prophesied- according to legend — the return of the white gods to America. In her final hour, *Dolma* (the bitch) radiated out the energy of the Aztec princess who had to suffer a ritual sacrificial death.

Thanks to this vision Serrano could once more experience the fascination which habitually flooded through him at the embrace of dying women, even if one of them had this time been incarnated in a bitch. In *NOS*, a dying dog (the fate of *Dolma* probably lies behind this) spoke to him like a tantric lover with a human voice: “You don’t need me outside anymore. I will howl inside you, like my brother the wolf” (Serrano, 1984, p. 21).

Such central “hermetic” experiences naturally tied the Chilean to the *Kundun* and his tantric world view profoundly and so it is also not surprising that Serrano linked “esoteric Hitlerism” and the fate of Germany to the Dalai Lama directly: His “skill”, the author says of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, is “closely linked to that of Hitler’s Germany ... on account of yet undiscovered connections. A few years after Germany, Tibet also fell” (Serrano, 1987, p. 366).

The Chilean did not yet know about the SS past of Heinrich Harrer, the *Kundun*’s “best friend” and teacher, since this first became known in 1997 in connection with the film *Seven Years in Tibet*. But we can be certain that this fact would have been cited by him as further evidence to justify an occult *connection* between *Shambhala* and the SS, between the *Dalai Lama* and *Adolf Hitler*, particularly as the Chilean indicates at many points in his writings that the SS sent “secret missions” to Tibet in order to search for traces of the Aryan race there.

Serrano allows himself to be celebrated as the “Führer” of the *National Socialist Party of Chile*. His calendar commences with the year of Adolf Hitler’s birth in 1889. He describes “esoteric Hitlerism” as the “new religion of the young heroes and future warriors and priests, the true myth of the coming century” (*Cedade*, 1986). In 1989, on the 100th anniversary of Hitler’s birth (the year 100 for Serrano) a commemorative celebration was staged at which the Chilean and representatives of “esoteric Hitlerism” from various countries (Chile, Spain, Italy, Germany) spoke: “On the peak of a mountain in the Andes ranges which dominates Santiago,” the Chilean newspaper, *La Epoca*, writes, “and to the sounds of the *Ride of the Valkyrie* from Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), some 100 Chilean followers and foreigners commemorated Adolf Hitler in yesterday’s evening twilight and promised that in the new Hitlerist age the continuing triumph of his ideas would proceed from Chile. ... Hitler, Serrano opined, would be resurrected from in the Andes (‘Andes’ means ‘perfected, total human’) and he would do like the *Caleuche* [a mystic hero of Chile, whose name means ‘the man who returns’] and introduce the age of Hitler” (*Epoca*, April 21, 1989). This event should not be underestimated on the basis of the small number of participants. For Serrano it had a ritual/symbolic significance and was reported in detail in the German neo-Nazi scene, for example.

In fascist circles worldwide, Serrano is a “hot tip” and his bizarre visions do in fact exercise a

fascinating attraction on many young people. His nazi books are openly offered for sale in all South American countries. The German translation of *Cordón Dorado Hitlerismo Esoterico* is available as a hardback (*Das goldene Band — esoterischer Hitlerismus*). Highly sought after copies of the other works (about Hitlerism) in German translation and individual propaganda essays are in circulation and passed from hand to hand. “Serrano’s mystical neo-Nazism ... [has] a distinct appeal to the younger generation”, writes the historian Goodrick Clark, “Here Nazism becomes a pop mythology, severed from the historic context of the Third Reich. The Gnostic Cathars, Rosicrucian mysteries, Hindu Avatars, and extraterrestrial gods add a sensational and occult appeal to powerful myths of elitism, planetary destiny, and the cosmic conspiracy of the Jews that culminate in a global racist ideology of white supremacism. ... Books by Serrano ... are now circulating among neo-pagans, Satanists, skinheads, and Nazi metal music fans in the United States, Scandinavia, and Western Europe” (Goodrick Clark, 1998, pp. 221-222). The Dalai Lama has never distanced himself from Serrano. Instead of decisively opposing fascism in any country, he recently called for the former Chilean State President and fascist, Augusto Pinochet, to be spared a trial.

In the following chapter, we shall introduce a further case where Tantric Buddhism, the *Shambhala myth*, and the Dalai Lama have acted as godfather to a modern, extremely radical and aggressive form of fascism. A case which shook the world community — we mean the story of the Japanese *doomsday guru*, Shoko Asahara.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] See Martin Brauen, *Traumbild Tibet — Westlicher Trugbilder* [„Ideal Tibet — Western Illusions“], Bern 2000.

[2] Clearly under the impression that the *swastika* would become the emblem of national socialism, a moral category was introduced in that one distinguished between the hooked crosses which are turned to the right and those to the left. The left is supposed to produce evil, the right good (Doucet, 197, p. 74). Without doubt this is based upon misinformation. In the Tibetan ritual system both forms of swastika are common.

[3] Sünner does not name the author, yet it can only have been Ernst Schäfer. This is apparent from the following quotation from Hans Jürgen Lange: “According to his unpublished memoirs that are still in Berlin in the possession of his widow, Ernst Schäfer is said to have witnessed how Wiligut fell into a trance with rolled-back eyes in the Caspar-Theiß-Strasse. A trance which Schäfer compared with the transported state of the foot messengers in the Tibetan highlands which he had already seen in his previous research trips (in 1930-32 and 1934-36)” (Lange 1998, p. 68).

[4] Historical fascism’s contact with Japanese Zen Buddhism is the topic of Brian Victoria’s book, *Zen at War*. Victoria’s historical critique reveals that it was not just Shintoism that was characterized by a militaristic world view based on a strong and pervasive concept of the enemy but also Japanese Buddhism in the first half of the last century. With very few exceptions (which Victoria highlights) the Japanese Buddhists professed to the fascistoid system of their state. Even such an undisputed authority in the west as D.T. Suzuki can be counted among them. There was hardly a Buddhist “personality” (the Soto, Rinzai, Shin, Nichirin schools) which did not enthusiastically bring its religious conceptions into line with the dominant system. “Warrior Zen” — “The Unity of Zen and Sword” — “Buddhism of the Imperial Way” — “Imperial Zen” — “Soldier Zen” — “Samurai Zen”; these were the slogans of the time. After the war the martial stance of the Buddhist schools was only hesitantly reviewed. It also partly survived and finds its place in the ideology of Japanese “Corporate Zen”.

[5] The German-language Rascher publishing house in Zurich did not accept the title as such as it feared the book would not attract buyers by sounding too occult. They decided upon *Meine Begegnungen mit C.G. Jung und Hermann Hesse in visionärer Schau* [My encounters with C.G. Jung und Hermann Hesse from a visionary point of view].

[6] The labels of *Agartha* and *Shambhala* also lead to some confusion in a best-seller novel in right wing circles with the title of *The Black Sun of Tashi Lunpho* (by Russel McCloud). Here too there is a national socialist secret society in close contact with the Tibetan lamas. Its members are, however, known as the followers of *Agartha*, whilst their opponents rally around *Shambhala*. In the world of appearances, the followers of *Shambhala* are representatives of western big business and Freemasonry.

[7] Those concerned were most probably a scattered group of Kalmyks who had sided with the Germans in the struggle against the Soviet Union and had been driven back to the capital at the end of the war. But the myth that leading national socialist figures had maintained a connection to Lamaist sects (the “Berlin —



Lhasa axis”) has survived to this day and is the topic of a voluminous occult Literature.

[8]According to Serrano “the Siddha or god-man [is] ... the self freed from the influence of the stars, the stellar influences no longer touch him, he is *Chakravartin*, king of the world” (Serrano, 1987, p. 289).

[9]Serrano was initiated into the Tantras of the *Kaula*, a Shivaite order. Yet the initiation scenarios from his books which we describe here are completely in keeping with *Vajrayana*. Serrano is not very fussy about distinguishing between the Hindu and Buddhist Tantra tradition. For him it is a matter of the *principle* behind the Tantric initiation and he finds this to the same extent among the Buddhists and the Hindus. Tantrism is for him an esoteric world cult which he discovers among the Egyptians, the Knights Templar, the Cathars, the Rosicrucians and the secret societies behind Hitler (the Thule society). At any rate, he sees in *Shambhala* and *Agartha* the two mythic points of origin from which the Tantras come.

[10]Serrano often uses the labels *Agartha* and *Shambhala* as if they were synonymous. On p. 257 of his book *The Golden Ribbon* he writes: “Some are of the opinion that Shambhala is the capital of Agartha.”

[11]Serrano regards Julius Evola and, oddly enough, Herrmann Hesse as well as the two teachers who first made him aware of the warlike spirit of Buddhism: “I am indebted to both that I got to know Buddhism as a way of the warrior. Evola explains that the religion of the Gautama is principally a warlike teaching which came from a prince who belonged to the Indian warrior caste, the Kshatriyas” (Palacio, 1990, p. 11).

Next Chapter:

### [13. THE DOOMSDAY GURU SHOKO ASAHARA AND THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA](#)

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**See also:**

[“Hitler-Buddha-Krishna” – Presentation](#)

[Book Review of “Hitler-Buddha-Krishna”](#)

Asia as a topos of Fear and Desire for Nazis and extreme rightists in the case of Asian Studies in Sweden: <http://orient4.orient.su.se/personal/tobias.hubINETte/asianists.pdf>

The Connection of the Dalai Lama to Hindu-Fundamentalism see:

[www.trimondi.de/EN/links.htm#Hindu](http://www.trimondi.de/EN/links.htm#Hindu)

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 The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 13

The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 13. The doomsday guru Shoko Asahara and the XIV. Dalai Lama

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## 13. THE JAPANESE DOOMSDAY GURU SHOKO ASAHARA AND THE XIV. DALAI LAMA

On March 20, 1995 there was a poison gas attack in Tokyo’s underground system that killed a number of people and injured around 5,500 further victims and shook the world public. It was a

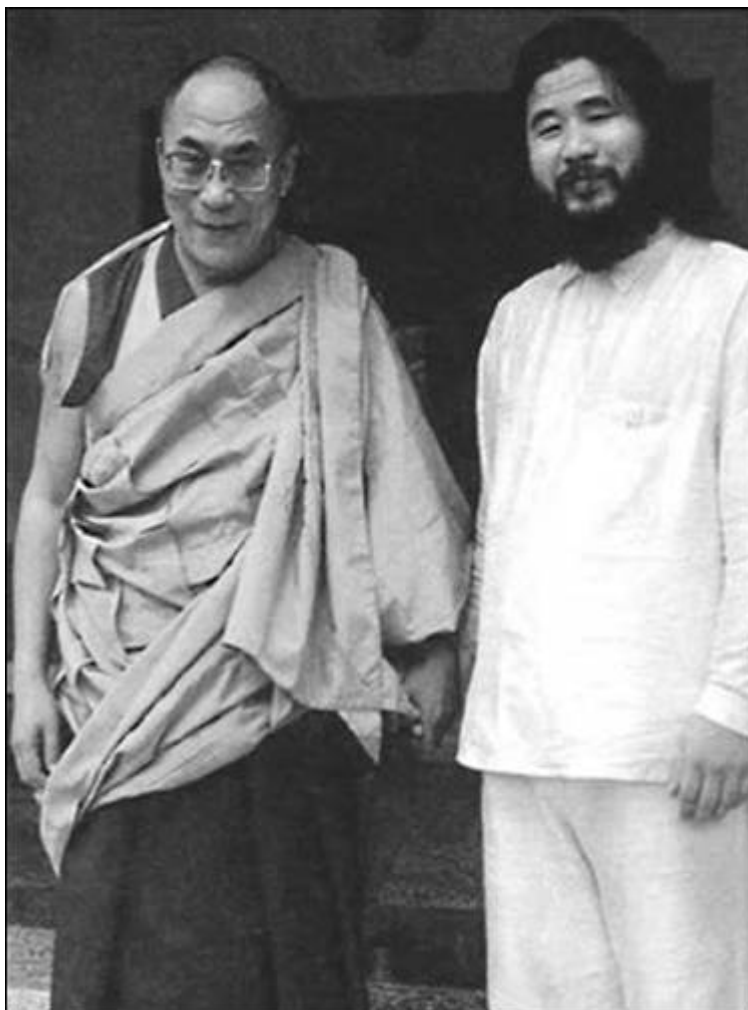
sect leader, Shoko Asahara, who gave the command. Asahara was born in 1955 as the son of a large Japanese family. As he could barely see, he had to attend a school for the blind. After finishing school he tried without success to gain admittance to Tokyo University. In the following years he became involved in Asian medicine and started to practice various yoga exercises. He married in 1978. This marriage produced six children. The first spiritual group, which he founded in 1984, was known as *AUM Shinsen-no-kai*, that is, “AUM — Group of the mountain ascetics”.

### **Shoko Asahara’s relationship to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama**

The „mystic” history of the AUM sect began in India in 1986. Shoko Asahara had wandered through the southern slopes of the Himalayas for weeks visiting Buddhist monasteries. This journey was supposed to mark the end of years of pilgrimage through the most varied esoteric landscapes: „I tried all kinds of practices such as Taoism, Yoga, Buddhism, incorporating their essence into my training. My goal was supreme spiritual realization and enlightenment. I continued the austere practices with Buddhist texts as my only resort. Finally, I reached my goal in the holy vibration of the Himalayas. I attained supreme realization and enlightenment. [...] I also acquired supernatural powers” (Asahara, 1991, vol. 2, p. 13). Upon returning to Japan he changed the name of his yoga group and called it *AUM Shinrikyo*, which means roughly „AUM — Doctrine of the absolute truth”. From this point on, Asahara’s world view was shaped by the compassionate ethos of *Mahayana* Buddhism: „I could not bear the fact that only I was happy and the other people were still in the world of suffering. I began to think: I will save other people at the sacrifice of my own self. I have come to feel it is my mission. I am to walk the same path as Buddha Shakyamuni” (Asahara, 1991, vol. 2, p. 13).

But the Himalayas did not yet lose their hold over him. Almost a year later, in February 1987, Shoko Asahara stood before the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. He was received by the supreme *Kalachakra* master in person. He probably first met him in the year 1984, as His Holiness conducted a ceremony in Tokyo at the invitation of the Agon-shu sect. Asahara was at this stage still a member of this religious community.

The Japanese would later report the following of his meeting in Dharamsala: “Imagine my delight at being able to meditate with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, ... And in His Holiness’s private meditation room! ‘I’ll sit here where I always sit; you sit there,’ he instructed me. ‘Let me give you a Buddha image.’ ... After a few minutes of loud, deep breathing, all traces of the Dalai Lama vanished. He must have completely stopped his breath. At that moment, the astral vision of the golden face of Shakyamuni Buddha radiated from my *ajuna chakra*. The vision persisted steadily, without a flicker. ‘Ah, this is the Buddha image the Dalai Lama was talking about,’ I thought. I continued my meditation” (Bracket, 1996, p. 68). Smiling, the Dalai Lama then took his leave of him after an intensive exchange of ideas with the following words: “Dear friend, ... Look at the Buddhism of Japan today. It has degenerated into ceremonialism and has lost the essential truth of the teachings. ... If this situation continues, ... Buddhism will vanish from Japan. Something needs to be done” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 13). Thereupon the god-king entrusted him with a spiritual mission: “You should spread real Buddhism there [in Japan]. ... You can do that well, because you have the mind of a Buddha. If you do so, I shall be very pleased. It will help me with my mission” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 13). Asahara was indeed more than happy. Afterwards, His Holiness blessed him with water and posed for a photo with him. Eight years later this photo was to appear in all the newspapers of the world. From now on, the Japanese guru referred to himself as a pupil of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. The god-king’s final version of affairs is different. He never commissioned the Japanese to do anything at all, nor established any special relation with him, and definitely did not take him on as a *sadhaka*. For him Asahara was just one of the many hundreds of worshippers and visitors whom he met with in the course of a year. After the fact, His Holiness made a critical pronouncement with reference to the Japanese guru, which he obviously took to apply to others, but not himself: “I am suspicious of miracles and supernatural powers. Believers in Buddhism should not rely too much on a specific leader. This is unhealthy” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1995, p. 9).



*The Dalai Lama and Shoko Asahara*

But Asahara was not a complete *nobody* for the god-king. According to the German magazine, *Stern*, they had met five times since 1987 (*Stern* 36/95, p. 126). Amazingly, weeks after the first poison gas attack, His Holiness still called the guru a “friend, although not necessarily a perfect one” (*Stern* 36/95, p. 126). Then a document from 1989 came to light in which the *Kundun* thanked the AUM sect for donations and confirmed that they “encouraged public awareness through religious and social activities” (*Focus* 38/95, p. 114). On January 21, 1989 Asahara had sent the sum of \$100,000 to Dharamsala for the assistance of Tibetan refugees. As a kind of service in return he received an official note from the *Council for religious and cultural affairs of His Holiness the Dalai Lama* in which one can read: “To the best of our knowledge, AUM attempts to promote public well-being through various religious and social activities, for example through instruction in Buddhist doctrines and yoga” (*Focus* 38/95, p. 116–117).

On February 8, Asahara wrote back: “It is my fervent wish that Tibet will return to the hands of the Tibetans in the near future. I am willing to do whatever I can to be of help” (Shimatsu, I). The Japanese guru’s gratitude is only too easy to understand, then with the aforementioned note in his hand he succeeded in being recognized as a religious body by the Japanese administration and thus exempt from taxes.

Admittedly there was a certain cooling of relations between the two religious leaders before the poison gas attack, since Tibetans in exile from Japan had sharply criticized Asahara’s public appearances. Yet he simply ignored such criticisms. This is shown by his spectacular letter to the *Kundun* of February 24, 1995, which was sent about a month before the events in Tokyo. The letter

leaves no room for doubt about how deeply the Japanese sect leader felt himself to be connected to the Tibetan religious sphere. In it Asahara not without pride announces that his son, Gyokko, is the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama who died in 1989: “May I report to His Holiness most humbly that I am convinced that Gyokko is a reincarnation of Panchen Rinpoche” (Shimatsu, I, HPI 008).

As evidence for this suspicion Asahara appeals to synchronicities and miraculous signs. Like the Panchen Lama, his son was also deaf in one ear. Yet the vision which appeared to the child’s mother was even more unambiguous: “A boy flying in spurts over a snowy mountain range with his legs crossed in a full Lotus posture. A low male voice said: ‘Panchen Lama’. The voice continued, ‘Tibetan Buddhism is finished. I have come to rebuild it ...’” (Shimatsu, I).

Asahara also met with other high Tibetan tantra masters — Khamtrul Rinpoche, for example, an important Nyingmapa teacher, and Kalu Rinpoche, the *Kalachakra* specialist of the Kagyupas whose multifarious activities we have already considered. There is supposed to have been a meeting between the Tibetan scholar, Khamtrul (who the *Kundun* had prophesied to be the future *Rudra Chakrin*), the Dalai Lama, and a member of the AUM sect (Hisako Ishii) at which the publication of esoteric teachings of Padmasambhava in Japanese was discussed. According to statements by Asahara, Khamtrul Rinpoche confirmed his “perfect, absolute, divine wisdom” (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 18). On May 24, 1989, the Tibetan is supposed to have issued the Japanese guru with the following letter of recommendation:

“Teacher Asahara is my old friend, and I consider it an honor to be able to say the following in favor of him and of his religious activities:

1. I am filled with boundless admiration for Teacher Asahara’s innate Buddhist traits, like enthusiasm for his work, goodness, generosity, and selflessness.
2. He is an experienced and qualified meditation; tantra; and yoga instructor.
3. On the condition that he receives fitting recognition, Teacher Asahara can become a truly well-known teacher of Buddhism, who is capable of re-establishing the true doctrine of the Dharma in Japan.
4. I also know that AUM Shinrikyo, Teacher Asahara’s religious organization, is a religious association that distinguishes itself through discipline and good organization and wide-ranging activities in order to suitably further social well-being.
5. Teacher Asahara’s sympathy and assistance in regard to the people and culture of Tibet is an example of generosity and concern for the poor.
6. It is painful for me to see that AUM, with no regard for its good intentions and activities, has up until now not found the recognition and support it is due from the Japanese government.
7. I emphatically recommend that AUM be accorded the justly deserved status of a tax-free organization, and that it likewise receive all necessary governmental and social privileges. Many thanks, Khamtul Giamjang Dontup Rinpoche.” (AUM Shinrikyo, HPI 013)

In Sri Lanka, the land of Theravada Buddhism, he was additionally praised as the “greatest religious person in Japan” and “the only one who can save the world” (also quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 18). The Prime Minister gave him a Shakyamuni relic, thus equipping him with an important symbol of authority. Then, in the foreword to one of his books it also says “The Buddha of our times is Shoko Asahara” (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 18). And the guru preaches to his followers “You ought to become Buddhas yourselves. You should preach my teachings, or rather the cosmic truth, and should produce many Buddhas. Spread the AUM system of training on a global scale and scatter Buddhas around the whole world. If we accomplish this, all battles and conflicts shall come to an end” (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 35).

In light of the in hindsight extremely embarrassing meetings of the *Kundun* and high Lamaist dignitaries with Shoko Asahara, His Holiness’s representative in Japan (Karma Gelek Yuthok) issued an interesting communiqué some weeks after the attack. Before the world press Karma Gelek Yuthok explained that “Whatever little relationship Asahara had with His Holiness the Dalai Lama

and other Tibetan lamas fell purely under the religious domain in spirit and deed. I had nothing to do with the world-shocking criminal acts known and alleged to have been committed by the AUM cult. It is unthinkable that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is related with the criminal acts of AUM simply because of his casual spiritual relationship with Asahara” (Samdup).

We see this in a completely different light, however. It was precisely because of these *spiritual* encounters with the god-king and his “viceroys” and his intensive study of the Tibetan/tantric esoterica and apocalyptica that the inexorable madness developed in Asahara’s mind which made him become the *doomsday guru* of the western press.

### **The staged Shambhala war**

Let us begin, then, to present the “spiritual” evidence and incriminating material piece by piece: there is no doubt that Asahara believed himself to be the incarnation of a *Shambhala* warrior and was absolutely convinced that he was acting as a delegate of the mythic kingdom. “There will be a final battle between Rudra Chakrin, the king of *Shambhala*, and a foolish being called *Vemacitta*. The war at the end of this century is the last event seen by many prophets for the past several thousand years. When it happens, I want to fight bravely”, the guru had proclaimed via his radio station four (!) months before the Tokyo assassination (on December 4, 1994) (Archipelago, I, HPI 003). Rudra Chakrin (“the terrible wheel turner”), the militant doomsday king of Shambhala, is also an epithet of the Indian god, Shiva. The destroyer god and the Buddha blend into one figure for Asahara, just as they merge into one as the final Shambhala king, Rudra Chakrin, in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. As his followers were called upon “to have the purest faith in the guru, the Great Lord Shiva, or the Buddhas”, Asahara declared in December 1990 that “Here, the Buddhas and the Great Lord Shiva mean the guru [Asahara], who is their incarnation” (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 18). Or, even more succinctly: “The first thing you should do is to understand the Great Lord Shiva, the Buddhas, and the guru as one, as the embodiment of truth and to take refuge in them. Refuge means to learn their teachings, to make sacrifices, and perform services for them (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 30). As early as in spring 1985, whilst meditating on the beach at Miura, south of Tokyo, he was visited by a vision of Shiva “the god of light who leads the armies of the gods” who “charged him with building an ideal society made up of those who had attained psychic powers, a society called the Kingdom of Shambhala. ... Asahara’s seaside epiphany was the origin of his claim to be a messiah and his leadership role in Armageddon, or final war, which would destroy Japan” (Brackett, 1996, p. 66). A sect pamphlet suggests that Asahara himself came from Shambhala and had descended to earth in order to direct and save it: “This kingdom (Shambhala), ruled by the god Shiva, is a world where only those souls which have attained the complete truth of the universe can go. In Shambhala, the ascetic practices of messianic persons have made great advances in order to lead souls to *gedatsu* (emancipation) and save them. Master Asahara has been reborn from there into the human world so that he might take up his mission as a messiah. Therefore, the Master’s efforts to embody truth throughout the human world have been sanctioned by the great will of the god Shiva” (quoted by Brackett, 1996, 70).

In his own words, Asahara drew up a “Japan Shambhalization Plan . This was said to be “the first step to Shambhalizing the world. ... If you take part,” he explained to his readers, “you will achieve great virtue and rise to a higher world” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 18). IN the pamphlet already quoted above, it says, “For that reason Aum Shinri Kyo’s plan to transform Japan into Shambhala was presented. This plan is without equal in its scope, as it wants to extend Aum’s sacred sphere throughout all of Japan, making Japan the base for the salvation of the whole world by fostering the development of multitudes of holy people. This plan cannot be realized without the help of our believers. Please come and join us!” (quoted by Brackett, 1996, p. 70). The two journalists, David E. Kaplan and Andrew Marshall, with somewhat too little fantasy and far too restrictively see this “*Shambhala* project” as a plan “to open AUM offices and training centers in every major Japanese city and establish a ‘Lotus Village’ or utopian community where AUM members would survive Armageddon” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 18). But whatever Asahara may have understood by this, *Shambhala* was for him the guiding star that led him into the abyss

and that he deliberately followed. One of the songs the members of the sect had to listen to daily on headphones goes “*Shambhala, Shambhala!*”

### **The sect’s system of rituals is Tantric Buddhist**

Asahara became familiar with the teachings of Tantric Buddhism at a very early stage. In the early 1980s he joined a religious group by the name of Agon Shun (founded by Seiyu Kiriyma), which among other things employed sexual magic rites to attain rapid enlightenment. Asahara, despite having been a keen pupil, left the group and turned to the preferred teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. HE saw himself as an orthodox Buddhist who wanted to anchor afresh the “Four Noble Truths”, the “Bodhisattva vow”, and the system of monks and nuns in decadent Japan. After his contacts with the Tibetan lamas, however, this pure Mahayana orientation became increasingly complemented by tantric practices and viewpoints. In the spring of 1990 he introduced what he called the *Tantra-Vajrayana System of Practice* as a discipline of AUM *Shinrikyo*. Some time later a journal by the title of *Vajrayana Sacca* appeared.



*Shoko Asahara in Front of a Tantric Deity*

From this point on the gateway to the legitimation of any crime lay open. In accordance with the tantric “law of inversion” the low was from now on inverted into the high. „Bad deeds”, the young tantra master wrote, „instantly change into good deeds. This is a tantric way of thinking” (Asahara, 1991, vol. 1, p. 65). At another point it says, “If the guru possesses a crystal clear spirit, if a being can see through everything, then for him there are no lies; lies no longer mean anything to him. [...] Good and evil also change according to their circumstances. Somebody who has lied so as to motivate another to follow the practice of truth, for instance. The fact that he has lied will certainly bring him bad karma, but the fact that he led somebody to the truth brings him merit. Hence, what one chooses to stress depends upon what one is aiming for. In the practice of Mahayana, this kind of exercise is not used. From a tantric point of view it is seen as good, then you will be of use to others because of your self-sacrifice” (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 32). We also learn of Asahara’s commitment to the “crimes” of Tantric Buddhism from the charges laid against him by the state prosecutor: “The teachings of esoteric Buddhism from Tibet were really quite horrible”, he is supposed to have said, “If, for example, a guru ordered a pupil to kill a thief, the pupil did so, and

treated the deed as a virtuous one. In my previous existence I myself killed somebody at the guru's command" (Quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 33).

True to the tantric doctrine, Asahara explained the sexual magic symbolism of his system as follows: "For normal Japanese sensibilities it is a very obscene image. A man and a woman in sexual embrace. But the facts of the matter are quite different [...] This consort can be Parvati [Shiva's wife] or Dakini, and if one practices guru yoga the union is the holy union to create our astral bodies. It is the union of yin and yang" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 27). He regularly held public lectures about *Kundalini* Yoga, he even spoke about the "fire serpent" in the Moscow sport stadium — naturally without going into the sexual magic practices of his *Tantra-Vajrayana System*. As the highest guru, all the women of the organization were at his disposal both on the basis of divine benevolence and *de facto*, and he made frequent use of this right, but it did not prevent him from granting his wife (Tomoko Ishii) the highest spiritual rank in the sect aside from his own. Just as in Tibet's monasteries, the tantric union with a *karma mudra* was for him exclusively the privilege of the highest initiates. In contrast, the main body of AUM members had to submit to a strict commandment of sexual abstinence. Anyone who was caught masturbating had to spend several days in solitary confinement.

This, however, was only the case — and here too we can see how strictly Asahara adhered to *Vajrayana* laws — if it came to ejaculation; other than that he recommended the exact opposite to his male pupils: "Masturbate daily, but do not ejaculate! ... Continue this for ten days. Then start masturbating twice a day ... Find a picture of your favorite entertainment star, preferably nude. Use the photo to activate your imagination and start masturbating four times a day" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 159). The number of daily masturbations is increased further in the course of the initiatory path.

By the sixth week the time has come. A female partner is found and given a little alcohol to drink. Then the couple withdrew together and began first with "some petting" in which the adept stroked the nipples of his *mudra* and stimulated her clitoris. Afterwards he copulated with the girl according to a predetermined rhythm that was always derived from factors of the number nine: keeping still for 81 breaths, moving the phallus in and out nine times; keeping still for another 81 breath units, 27 times in and out, and so forth. It is not clear from the translation by Kaplan and Marshall whether here too the seed is retained. At any rate they had to "always let her come first" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 160).

The offering up of the wisdom consort to the guru necessary in the high tantras was likewise practiced by the AUM sect. A pupil who made his girlfriend available justified this offertory act as follows: "If she and the guru fuse together her mental level rises. ... By sacrificing himself, he pours his energy into a woman. It's better [for her] than fusing with me" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 161). Asahara also made use of this reason: "This is a Tantric initiation. Your energy will rise quickly and you'll achieve enlightenment faster", he is said to have told a reluctant female pupil whilst he tore the clothes from her body (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 158).

Asahara also worked with the tantric fluids of blood and sperm. He had his own blood drawn off and offered it, often for high prices, to the members of the sect as a cure-all. His hair was boiled and drunk as a kind of tea. Even his bathwater is supposed to have been sold as a holy substance. Such practices were also widespread in Tibet's monasteries, for example the excrement of the great lamas was considered to be a medicine and sold well when manufactured into pills with other substances.

The science department of AUM, it was said one day, had discovered that the "DNA of the master" possessed magic characteristics and would grant anyone who drank it supernatural powers (*siddhis*). This was about Asahara's sperm, a small flask of which went for the price of \$7000 according to Kaplan and Marshall. Here too there is an allusion to the sperm gnosis of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, where the master gives the pupil to taste during the "secret initiation".

Likewise the horror scenarios the members of the sect had to go through in order to practice fearlessness are also tantric. “Delinquents” who transgressed the rules of the order were locked up in small chambers and had to watch videos of one horror film after another. Via a loudspeaker they were inundated with constant death threats.

Already after his first trip to India Asahara believed himself to be in possession of “supernatural powers” (*siddhi*). He claimed he could make contact with the dead and read the thoughts of others. Like the “*maha siddhas*” he was said to be able to walk through walls. “In the future ... I will be able to fly freely through the sky” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 7), he prophesied. He Later he developed the “Divine Ear” and was, on his own account, in a position “to hear the voices of the gods and humans” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 199).

### Asahara’s gods

The metaphysics and spiritual practices of the sect were primarily dominated by Tibetan Buddhist images and exercise. Basically, “AUM Supreme Truth”, we learn from Kaplan and Marshall, “became a familiar New Age blend of Eastern religion and mysticism. Its beliefs and rituals were drawn heavily from Tibetan Buddhism, its physical rigor from yoga” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 15). He himself referred to his rituals as “Tibetan Buddhism” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1995, p. 9).

Of course, this is rejected by Dharamsala with protestation, in that the blame for the Japanese’s practices is (as often happens) pinned on the Hindu competition: „The rituals he teaches his disciples include practice of yoga, levitation and other acts that are neither Tibetan nor Buddhism and are more akin to ritual of Indian *sadhus* (Hindu ascetics). The teacher as well as the disciples wear flowing white robes, something that no practitioner of Buddhism does” (*Tibetan Review*, May, 1995, p. 9). This too is not entirely correct — in certain scenes from the *Kalachakra* ritual white robes are worn, and all the priests of *Shambhala* are dressed in white.

Asahara regarded himself as an incarnation of Buddha Shakyamuni. Publicly he declared that he was “at the same level as Buddha” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 25). In Bihar in India he sat upon the sacred seat and announced to those present, “I am Buddha” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 67). “The Buddha in our times is Master Shoko Asahara”, was the praise of his pupils (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 67). Many of the members of the sect were given Buddhist names. His closest collaborator, the sect’s *éminence grise*, Kiyohide Hayakawa, was called “Tiropa” (i.e., Tilopa) after the great *Kalachakra* master. The guru recognized him as “a Bodhisattva in his past life” and declared that “without Master Tiropa’s efforts there would be no AUM Supreme Truth” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 75). It was Asahara’s proclaimed intention to Buddhize the planet. “Spread the training system of AUM on a global scale”, the guru preached, “and scatter Buddhas over the world” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 16).

We have discussed in detail the description of Tantric Buddhism as a solar cult. Asahara also made appearances like a sun priest and like the prophet of a coming empire of light: “After insubstantial religions with pseudo-light, there will be a religion which produces light as the sun does, and it will change the future” (Archipelago, I, NPI 003).

Although his system of rituals was decisively influenced by Tibetan mysticism, this was not universally true of the gods. Here, in accordance with the guru’s world concept, the deities of other religions were also invoked. Since these were, according to the laws of Tantrism, nothing more than the yogi’s projections the doctrine was able to easily overcome the cultural hurdles.

Behind Asahara’s decision to carry out his act of destruction lay the Indian god, *Shiva*, the lord of destruction. The latter appeared to him a number of times, the guru said, and confirmed his enlightenment in his own words. The members of the sect were from now on expressly required to replace their own wills with the will of *Shiva*. One epithet of this god who lays waste to the world



so as to subsequently produce it anew in the violent cycle of death and rebirth, is *Rudra*. Translated from the Sanskrit it means the “terrible one”, the “wild one”, the “violent one”. As the *Rudra* of the apocalyptic fire (*Kalagni Rudra*) he destroys the universe and time itself (White, 1996, p. 232). “Once it has consumed the waters of the ocean,” it says in a tantric text, “it will become the *Kalagni Rudra*, the fire that consumes time” (White, 1996, p. 232). There can be no doubt that Asahara adopted *Rudra*’s will to destroy from Tantric Buddhism. This is probably also true of the name: *Rudra Chakrin*, the 24th *Shambhala* king who contests the final battle, undoubtedly combines the characteristics of Buddha and of the wrathful *Shiva* in his person. That is exactly what Asahara sought to do. Incidentally, the region around Dharamsala, the seat of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile, is from a Hindu point of view dedicated to the god *Shiva*.

The Japanese guru does not stop at making loans from Christianity either. After his first reading of the Bible he already announced: “I hereby declare myself to be the Christ” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 67). Afterwards he wrote a book on this topic and in it drew attention to his similarities to Jesus of Nazareth: “Jesus changed water to wine, I changed ordinary water to the water that emits light” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 18). Here, Asahara is referring to a transformatory miracle he performed in the presence of his pupils. From his own lips we learn “I am the last messiah in this century” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 67).

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**“The guru’s most insistent megalomaniac claim was to deity. In addition to declaring himself an avatar of Shiva, he professed to have achieved ‘the state of a Buddha who has attained mirror-like wisdom’ and to be the ‘divine emperor’ of Japan and the world; the declared Christ, who will ‘disclose the meaning of Jesus’ gospel’; the ‘last twentieth-century savior’; the ‘holiest holy man’, one ‘beyond the Bible’; and the being who will inaugurate the Age of Aquarius and preside over a ‘new era of supreme truth’. For disciples transfixed by guruism, he could indeed be all these things (Lifton, 2000, p. 167)**

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The fantasy worlds of certain comics also had an influence upon him. It is a fact that Asahara and members of the sect took the virtual reality of the comic strips for real. The same is true of science fiction novels. Isaac Asimov’s famous *Foundation* epic was declared to be a kind of holy book. In it we can read the following sentences: “The Empire will vanish and all its good with it. Its accumulated knowledge will decay and the order it has imposed will vanish” (quoted by Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 29). Additionally Asahara was convinced that extraterrestrials constantly visit our planet. He was, however, not on a friendly footing with them, as he believed among other things that they fed themselves with human flesh. From the world of “esoteric fascism” he had his reverence for Adolf Hitler, who was said to be still alive and be landing with an escort of UFOs in the near future.

### **The Japanese Chakravartin**

Within his group the “Buddha of our times” had an absolute power monopoly. He was lord over life and death in the truest sense of the word, there were cases where members who resisted his will were tormented to death. In accordance with the absolutification of the teacher drawn from the tantras, he demanded that his pupils replace their own will with his own.

But for Asahara power was not just spiritual in nature. He combined practical political concepts with it very early on. When as a younger man he applied albeit unsuccessfully for admission to Tokyo University, he wanted to become the prime minister of Japan. Later he saw himself at the head of a Japanese Buddhocracy. He prophesied that he would soon ascend the imperial throne and created a shadow cabinet from among his people. Yet the guru was not even to be content with this role as a *Tennos*. Asahara intended to establish a “millennial kingdom” (!) which was to span the entire planet. He called his political model the “Supreme State”. Kaplan and Marshall comment that this description “leaves no doubt about who would inherit the world. And on top of the great empire, ruling serenely over the cosmos, sat Shoko Asahara, now deemed the Holy Monk Emperor” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 157). The claim to the world throne of the *Chakravartin* was thus a political program: “I intend to become a spiritual dictator ... A dictator of the world”, the *doomsday* guru openly proclaimed (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 25).

The financial motivations which Kaplan and Marshall attribute to him were thus not his first priority. He considered them to be only means to an end. A Japanese expert on the sect has expressed this most clearly: “Asahara distinguished himself from the other cult leaders in that he did not spend large sums of money upon himself. ... His primary goal was to attain power” (Repp, 1996b, p. 195).

### **Murder, violence, and religion**

Only a few months before it came to an explosion of violence, Shoko Asahara attempted to gain power via legal means — he founded a party (the Truth Party) and stood for election. Even this short sequence in his religious political career demonstrates how deeply allied to Buddhism in general and Tibetan Buddhism in particular he felt himself to be. He formed a shadow cabinet from among the members of his sect and gave these the names of either pupils of the historical Buddha or of high Tibetan lamas. [1] The ostentatious election campaign ended in a disastrous defeat. It is said that not even all the members of the sect voted for him. Soon afterwards he turned to the tactics of terror.

Asahara’s aggression arose from its opposite. Everything began with his proclaimed self-sacrifice in the sense of Mahayana Buddhism. One of the mantras which the members of the sect had to repeat constantly went as follows: “I make a joy of my suffering; I make the suffering of others my own suffering” (Repp, 1996a, p. 45). Completely in the Buddhist tradition, the guru wanted “to rescue people from their suffering” and “to lead the world to enlightenment”. (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, pp. 14-15). Thus, in this early phase the rejection of violence was one of his highest ethical principles: “Nonviolence”, Asahara said, “means to love every living creature”, and at another point he declaimed that “killing insects means accumulating the bad karma of killing” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 50).

But in accordance with the tantric “law of inversion”, and thanks to the fact that the Buddha can also appear in his terrible form as *Heruka*, this nonviolence soon became transformed into its exact opposite — cold-blooded terrorism. We spare ourselves the details of the sect’s numerous crimes. These include cases of imprisonment, extortion, bodily harm, child abuse, torture and all kinds of murder. The police charged Asahara’s followers with a total of 27 murders.

The murder of certain individuals was legitimated by a ritual which Asahara called *phowa* and which he had also imported from Tibetan cultural circles. This was understood to involve the deliberate leading of a soul to a higher spiritual level so that it could be freed from the harmful karma which clung to it in this current life. From a Tibetan point of view *phowa* practices can also include the murder of an individual. Asahara committed his followers to murder through an oath in the form of a prayer known as the “Vajrayana Vow” that required complete subjugation to the guru and the practice of *phowa*. It was recommended that the following prayer be recited “a thousand, a million, a billion times” (Brackett, 1996, p. 96).

*I take refuge in the Tantra Vajrayana!*  
(repeated four times)  
*What is the first law?*  
*To be mindful of the Buddha.*  
*And in Tantra Vajrayana,*  
*the Buddha and the Guru are identical.*  
*I take refuge in the Guru!*  
(repeated four times)  
*What is the Guru?*  
*The Guru is a life form born to phowa all souls.*  
*Any method that leads to salvation is acceptable.*  
*My life will come to an end sometime.*

*It makes no difference if the end comes in twenty years,  
 thirty years, or eighty years,  
 It will come regardless.  
 What's important is how I give my life.  
 If I give it for salvation,  
 eliminating all the evil karma I have accumulated,  
 freeing myself from all karma, the Guru and Shiva  
 and all winners of truth  
 will without fail lead me to a higher realm.  
 So I practice the Vajrayana without fear.  
 The Armageddon taught in the Bible approaches,  
 The final battle is upon us.  
 I will be among the holy troops of this last great battle  
 And phowa the evil ones.  
 I will phowa one or two evil ones.  
 Phowa is the highest virtue  
 And phowa is the path to the highest level of being.*  
 (Brackett, 1996, pp. 96-97)

In the end, the Tibetan *phowa* ritual became the guiding principle behind the acts of terrorism and also played a significant role in the prosecution's case against Asahara. There, the following incriminating quotations from the guru were also tabled: "If your guru commands you to take somebody's life it is an indication that this person's time is already up. With other words you are killing this person at precisely the right time and making possible the *phowa* of this person. [...] The end justifies the means. Take the example of a person who is burdened by so many sins that he is certain to go to hell. If an enlightened person decides that it would be best to put an end to his life and to really kill him, this act would generally be seen by society as a straightforward murder. But in the light of our teachings the killing comes to the same thing as making his *phowa* possible for this person. Every enlightened person would see at once that both the murderer and the murdered benefit from the deed" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 33).

The guru justified all of his orders to kill by appealing to the Tibetan practice of *phowa*, even in the case of the one-year-old son of the lawyer, Sakomoto, who took the sect on legally: "The child ended up not being raised by Sakomoto, who tried to repeat bad deeds". It would be "born again in a higher world" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 42). According to Kaplan and Marshall, the guru is also supposed to have said that "it is good to eliminate people who continue to do bad things and are certain to go to hell" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 50). This was primarily directed at the immediate opponents of the sect, like the parents of members, lawyers and journalists.

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**"Within Aum, Asahara's attack guruism was anchored in what was called the *mahamudra*. In Tibetan Buddhism, the term refers to a state in which a devotee achieves 'the unity of emptiness and luminosity' and, thereby, 'the purification ... [of] the transitory contamination of confusion.' The concept was sometimes conceived in this way in Aum, and a few of Asahara's closest disciples were described as achieving *mahamudra*. But given Aum's atmosphere, attaining *mahamudra* came largely to mean the overcoming of all resistances to an absolute and unquestioned dedication to the guru himself" (Lifton, 2000, p. 63).**

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### The Japanese Armageddon

Asahara made himself familiar with the "theologies of destruction" early on. A year after his visit to the Dalai Lama (in 1988) he began with his study of the *Apocalypse of St. John*. The *Prophecies of Nostradamus* followed soon after. This French prophet became a leading light for the sect. On the basis of inspirations whispered to him by the terror gods, the guru now developed his own apocalyptic prognostications.

At first they concerned rescue plans. The planet was supposed to be in danger and AUM had been

chosen to secure world peace. But then the prognoses became increasingly gloomy. The planetary countdown was said to be in the offing: „In my opinion” Asahara said, „the realm of desire by the law of this universe, has already entered the process of going back to its original form to where it all started. In short, we are heading for Armageddon” (Asahara, 1996, vol. 2, p. 103). He actually used the Hebrew word “Armageddon”. But even now there was still talk of compassion and assistance and Asahara believed that “If AUM tries hard , we can reduce the victims of Armageddon to a fourth of the world’s population. ... However, at present, my rescue plan is totally delayed. The rate of survivors is getting smaller and smaller” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 31). “And what will happen after Armageddon?”, he asked in one of his sermons, “After Armageddon the beings will be divided into two extreme types: the ones who will go to the Heaven of Light and Sound, and the ones who will go to Hell”(Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, pp. 48-49).

His apocalyptic visions are dated precisely: in one of his prophecies from 1987, the year of enlightenment, he says that “Japan will rearm herself in 1992. Between 1999 and 2003, a nuclear war is sure to break out. I, Asahara, have mentioned the outbreak of nuclear war for the first time. We have only fifteen years before it” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 16).

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**“Any imagined Armageddon is violent, but the violence tends to be distant and mythic, to be brought about by evil forces that leave God with no other choice but total cleansing of this world. With Aum’s Armageddon the violence was close at hand and palpable. Aum was always an actor in its own Armageddon drama, wheter as a target of world-destroying enemies or as a fighting force in a great battle soon to begin or already under way. As time went on, however, Aum increasingly saw itself as the initiator, the trigger of the final event” (Lifton, 2000, p. 59).**

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Somewhat later, in his book *Day of Annihilation*, there was no longer so much time left. According to this text, Japan would sink into the ocean already in 1996. The end of the world would begin in 1998/99. A pupil saw in a vision how a branch of AUM would move to Jerusalem in 1998 and that members of the sect would be imprisoned there and then tortured. In a triumphant campaign the fellow believers would be freed. Asahara, this prophecy predicted, would die the death of a martyr during the liberation and set off a final world war.

In order to introduce his “Shambhalization of the world”, it was only natural that Asahara would want to lead a great apocalyptic army, then that is integral to the script of the tantric myth. Hence, as he was meditating on the Japanese Pacific coast, one day a powerful voice told him, “I have chosen you to lead God’s army” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 12). From this point in time on the sect’s music also changed; in place of the old harmonic *New Age* music of the spheres, military marches now sounded over the loudspeakers. “The time has come ... We have to fight ... Defeat means death for the guru”, Asahara’s closest intimate wrote in his notebook (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 154). The connection between the destruction of the world and emptiness invoked by the *Kalachakra Tantra* also had a decisive influence on Shoko Asahara, and even found expression in the title of one of his writings, *From Destruction to Emptiness: A Sequel to the Day of Destruction*.

### **Religion and chemical laboratories**

The final war could not be fought without effective weapons. Asahara recruited a small group of highly qualified scientists, all university graduates in the natural sciences: chemists, biochemists, electronic engineers. They were commissioned to establish large laboratories for the manufacture of chemical and biological weapons. According to Kaplan and Marshall colonies of all sorts of deadly bacteria were cultivated there, anthrax, influenza, and even the notorious Ebola virus. The young people dreamed of gigantic laser cannons. “When the power of this laser is increased,” Asahara says, “a perfectly white belt, or sword can be seen. This is the sword referred to in the Book of Revelations. This sword will destroy virtually all life” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 207). He was especially fascinated by a “microplasm” weapon with which all living things could be vaporized in seconds. “The weapons used in World War III” he wrote in 1993, “will make the atomic and hydrogen bombs look like toys. At present, the centerpiece of the Russian arsenal is called the star-reflector cannon. The United States has the Strategic Defense Initiative and the

extension of this is 'microplasma'" (Archipelago, I, HPI 003).

In particular, Asahara's ingenious scientist, Hideo Murai reveled at the idea of all kinds of apocalyptic weapons of destruction. He was a specialist in electromagnetic (EM) phenomena. For him too, and for his work, the tantric law of inversion would one day take effect. At first Murai began by constructing weapons to defend the cult against the military apparatus of the superpowers. For years his paranoid guru believed himself to be the target of electromagnetic and chemical attacks by the most varied worldly and religious secret services. It was only thanks to his elevated spirituality that he was still alive at all. As redeemer of the world he wanted to rescue humanity from an imminent war of destruction and hence he devoted his thoughts to what countermeasures could be developed. But then came the moment when defense turned into attack. Hideo Murai was commissioned by his guru to develop miraculous weapons that were no longer defensive, but would rather accelerate the end of the world.

The sect now focused on the physical theories and experiments of the famous Serbo-Croatian inventor, Nikola Tesla (1846-1943), who had undertaken extensive research into the enormous electromagnetic (EM) energy fields that are said to span the globe. Tesla believed that influence could be gained over these and that earthquakes could thus be triggered or the weather changed. He is supposed to have designed appropriate machines and conducted successful experiments. In the course of his investigations he reached the conclusion that it would be possible to split the world into two halves like an apple with an "EM experiment". This tempting apocalyptic conception motivated the young scientists at AUM to write to the Tesla Society in New York and to visit the Tesla Museum in Belgrade so as to be able to examine his notes.

In March 1994 Hideo Murai went to Australia with several assistants and carried out electromagnetic (EM) experiments on a sheep station bought by the sect. He is supposed to have built an *all round* machine, which could both evoke earthquakes and act as a shield against nuclear warheads. This apparatus proved to be the ideal weapon of mass destruction for the "final war" (Archipelago, I). There are speculations that the Japanese earthquake in Kobe (in 1995) had an artificial origin and was staged by the technicians of the AUM sect. This may well sound just too fantastic, but on this occasion one of Asahara's prophecies, which were otherwise very rarely fulfilled, came true. Nine days before the big earthquake which shook the Hanshin region, on January 8, 1995 the guru announced on a radio program that "Japan will be attacked by an earthquake in 1995. The most likely place is Kobe" (Archipelago, II, HPI 004). After the event AUM announced that the infrastructure of the province of Kobe with its skyscrapers and major bridges had been "the best place for simulating an earthquake-weapon attack against a big city such as Tokyo. Kobe was the appropriate guinea pig" (Archipelago, II, HPI 004).

But at the foot of the holy Mount Fuji conventional weapons were also being mass produced. Members of the sect there were producing Russian automatic rifles (the AK-47) in factories disguised as spiritual centers. Sources purchased a military helicopter in Russia that was then dismantled and shipped to Japan piece by piece.

But, as should be self-evident, the tantra master Asahara saw the explosive force of his own mind as the most dangerous weapon of all. "In *Tantrayana* vows," we hear from the man himself, "there is one that prohibits attainments from destroying villages and towns. This means that the power to destroy a town or village is obtained through *Tantrayana* and *Vajrayana* practice" (Archipelago, I, HPI 003). In accordance with the tantric logic of inversion that we have described in detail, the guru believed he was thoroughly justified in breaking this vow.

Fundamentally, Asahara's factories corresponded conceptually to the alchemical laboratories of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, although they were incomparably more technical. In both cases scientists did not just experiment with chemical substances, rather they combined their findings with religious concepts and symbols. Let us recall how the couple, Nicholas and Helena Ivanovna Roerich, described the temple structures of *Shambhala* as "laboratories" and glorified the monastic

priests of the wonderland as “adepts of a sacred alchemy”.

Asahara also gave his chemical factory holy names and called it the “Clear Stream Temple” or “Supreme Science” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 87). Several altars were to be found in the three-story building in which the poison gases were created. Shortly after entering one reached a mezzanine and came face to face with a golden figure of the destroyer god *Rudra Shiva*. To the left of this stood a small devotional shrine which according to Asahara housed some of the bones of the historical Buddha. He had brought them back with him from Sri Lanka to Japan. The room in which a wide variety of tinctures for the production of poisonous gases were stored was referred to as the “Room of Genesis”. Things were more matter of fact on the ground floor, there were tanks, extruders, reactors, ducting systems, circulating pumps. The main hall was called *Satian 7*, which meant “Truth 7”. But it also had a nickname. The young scientists referred to it simply as “the magician”. In the last days before the fateful attack on the underground a gigantic statue of Buddha was erected there.

### **The Song of Sarin**

Since it is not difficult to manufacture and the ingredients were easy for AUM to obtain, research and production were concentrated upon a highly effective nerve gas by the name of Sarin. This poison had been developed by the German national socialists in the Second World War. Asahara’s relation to the deadly substance proved to be very multi-layered. It followed a fiendish three-stage cycle. At first there was constant talk of how the sect itself was the victim of poison gas attacks. “Wherever I go,” the Guru announced, “I have been sprayed from helicopters or planes. The hour of my death has been foretold. The gas phenomenon has already happened. Next time it might be an atomic bomb” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 125). As a consequence of this paranoia it was decided to hit back with the same weapon. In the third phase the poison became independent and developed into a quasi-divine substance. It was given half-ironic names like “Magic, Witch, and Sally” (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 121) and sung about in the following hymn:

*It came from Nazi Germany, a dangerous little chemical weapon,  
Sarin! Sarin!  
If you inhale the mysterious vapor, you will fall with bloody vomit  
from your mouth,  
Sarin! Sarin! Sarin — the chemical weapon.  
Song of Sarin, the brave.  
In the peaceful night of Matsumoto City  
People can be killed, even with our own hands,  
Everywhere there are dead bodies,  
There! Inhale Sarin, Sarin,  
Prepare Sarin! Prepare Sarin! Immediately poisonous gas weapons  
will fill the place.  
Spray! Spray! Sarin, the brave Sarin*  
(Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, pp. 212-213)

The original plan was to spray the poison gas over the parliament and government buildings with a helicopter so as to paralyze the Japanese apparatus of state. The attack on the underground system was therefore regarded as only a preparatory exercise.

Interestingly, 60 years before the events in Tokyo the Russian whom we have already portrayed in detail, Nicholas Roerich, had linked the *Shambhala myth* to poison gases. He was convinced that the wonderland was protected from invaders by a gaseous substance that he called “sur”. Here is his story, told to him on his travels through Central Asia in search of *Shambhala* by a Buddhist monk: “A lama, leader of a caravan, covers his mouth and nose with a scarf. He is asked why, since it is not cold. He reports: ‘Caution is needed now. We are approaching the forbidden zone of *Shambhala*. We shall soon notice ‘sur’, the poisonous gas that protects the border of *Shambhala*.”

Konchok, our Tibetan, rides up to us and says in a subdued voice: 'Not far from here, as the Dalai Lama was traveling to Mongolia, all the people and animals in the caravan began to tremble and the Dalai Lama explained that they should not be alarmed since they had entered the forbidden zone of *Shambhala* and the vibrations of the air were strange to them' (*Schule der Lebensweisheit*, 1990, p. 73). A plume of toxic gas is also supposed to have streamed out of one of the famous Indian crematoria, the meeting place of many *Maha Siddhas*. It was assimilated by the submarine fire of the doomsday mare (*Kalagni*) also mentioned in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (White, 1996, p. 234).

Since Auschwitz, the terror of gas is also associated with the fate of the Jews and it is not surprising that Asahara as an admirer of Hitler integrated an aggressive anti-Semitism into his system. In a special issue of the AUM journal, *Vajrayana Sacca*, entitled "Manual of Fear", war is declared on the Jewish people: "On behalf of the world's 5.5 billion people, *Vajrayana Sacca* hereby declares war on the 'world shadow government' that murders untold numbers of people and, while hiding behind sonorous phrases and high-sounding principles, plans to brainwash and control the rest. Japanese awake! The hidden enemy's plot has long since torn our lives to shreds" (Brackett, 1996, pp. 107-108).

### **The international contacts**

AUM Shinrikyo was not a purely Japanese phenomenon but rather an international one that spread explosively through several countries, principally Russia. The starving nation, hungry for any spiritual message after so many years of communist dictatorship, became a paradise on earth for the guru from the Far East. In 1992 he stood in front of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow with 300 of his followers, smiling and giving the victory salute. The pose had its effect. Within just a few months AUM was experiencing an unbroken rise in popularity across all of Russia. At its peak the number of members exceeded 30,000. Asahara enjoyed a surprisingly broad public recognition. He held a sermon on "Helping The World to Happiness with the Truth" before a packed crowd at the University of Moscow. He was introduced to the nascent capitalist power elite as "Japan's representative Buddhist leader (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, p. 70).

The guru even gained influence over leading Russian politicians. He maintained an especially warm relationship with the influential chairman of the Russian Security Council, Oleg Ivanovich Lobov, at this stage one of Boris Yeltsin's close friends. Lobov is said to have done not a little to assist the spread of the sect. Asahara also knew how to cultivate contacts with well-known scientists. Things were similarly successful on the propaganda front: in 1992, the government station Radio Moscow broadcast his program "The Absolute Truth of Holy Heaven" twice a day.

Of course, Asahara was not tightfisted when it came to donations, a gesture which at that time in Russia opened all doors. But that doesn't explain the large influx of enthusiasts who received nothing other than the pretty words of the "last messiah". One gains the impression that here an heir of Agvan Dorjiev's *Shambhala* vision- where the hidden kingdom was to be sought in Russia — was at work.

AUM Shinrikyo was the first religious sect from a highly industrialized country which with deliberate terror tactics turned on humanist society as such. It came from a religious milieu which espoused like no other the principle of nonviolence — that of Buddhism. Until then, people had known only occult groups like the 900 followers of Jim Jones in Jonestown, or the Sun Temple in Switzerland and Canada or the Branch Davidians from Waco, who had exterminated themselves but not uninvolved bystanders. Because of this new quality of religious violence, the events in Tokyo caused much dismay all around the world.

One might have thought that this would provoke global research into and discussion of the causes of and background to the Asahara phenomenon. If so one would have been forced to recognize the major influence *Vajrayana* had had upon the system of the *doomsday guru*. One would also have

discovered the close connection between the *Shambhala myth* and the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Although such links are overt, since Asahara refers to them explicitly in his writings, both the Western and the Eastern public have chosen to act blind and passively await the next catastrophe. In the press of the world the event has already been forgotten repressed. In Japan too, nobody wants to look behind the scenes, although Asahara's trial is currently in progress: "In general this contradiction between religion and violence is resolved here by simply saying that AUM is not a religion at all" writes Martin Repp, and continues, "One cannot make it so easy for oneself, then AUM Shinrikyo is in its own understanding and in its practice [a] religion and has an essentially Buddhist creed" (Repp, 1996b, p. 190).

### **The two different brothers**

In the light of our study one could rightly say that the AUM sect was a consistent and true to the letter pupil of the tantric teachings. The occult magic world view, *kundalini* yoga, sexual magic, the linkage of power and seed retention, the grasping for the *Siddhis*, the invocation of the gods, the hastening of the end of the universe, the glorification of destruction, the great fascination with fantastic machines of destruction, the military obsessions, the idea of redemption, hope for a paradise, the claim to world domination, the *Shambhala myth* — all of these *leitmotifs* that were so significant for Asahara are melodies from the repertoire of Tibetan Buddhism, in particular that of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. For Asahara, the tantric path to enlightenment began in the Himalayas and was supposed to also end there. In 1988 he wrote that "After the United States we will go to Europe. Finally we will establish a center in the Himalayas, the origin of Buddhism and yoga. At this point my mission will be at an end" (quoted by Repp, 1997, p. 27).

The story of Asahara demonstrates clearly that *Vajrayana* and the *Shambhala myth* contain an extremely demonic potential that can be activated at any moment. For the Asian side, especially for the Mongolians (as we have seen), the aggressive warrior ethos nascent in the idea of *Shambhala* has never been questioned and still continues to exist today in the wishful thinking of many. There is a definite danger — as we shall show in the next chapter — that it could develop into a pan-Asian vision of fascist-like character.

Things are different with Tibetan Buddhism in the West: there the lamas play only the pacifist card with much success. It is almost the highest trump with which His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama wins the hearts of the people. He is thus revered all over the planet as the "greatest prince of peace of our time".

What is the *Kundun's* position on Shoko Asahara now? The Dalai Lama needs the support of religious groups in Japan since the majority of Buddhist schools in the country are friendly to China and foster frequent changes with Chinese monasteries. It is said of the very influential Soka Gakkai sect that they are in constant contact with the Chinese leadership. The Agon Shun sect (to which Asahara originally belonged) which was formerly friendly to the Dalai Lama has also switched loyalties and is now oriented towards Beijing (Repp 1997, p. 95). Additionally, Asahara had transferred large sums of money to the Tibetans in exile — official sources put the total at US \$1.7 million. All of these are factors in the political calculations which might help explain the contact between the Dalai Lama and the Japanese guru. If, however, we regard the meeting (with Asahara) from a tantric point of view, we are forced to conclude that at one of their meetings the Dalai Lama, as the supreme master of the Time Tantra, initiated the *doomsday guru* directly into the secrets of his "political mysticism" (the *Shambhala myth*). The reports of people who have because of his magical aura experienced an audience with the *Kundun* as a kind of initiation are by now legion. Indeed, how could it be otherwise in the light of an "omnipotent" and "omniscient deity" in the figure of a "simple Tibetan monk". Hence, in interpreting the encounter between the two gurus in tantric terms, we have to assume it was an occult relation between a "god" (the Dalai Lama) and a "demon" (Asahara).

Now, in what does the relationship between these two unequal brothers consist? From a symbolic



point of view the two share the duties laid out in the tantric world view: the one plays the compassionate *Bodhisattva* (the Dalai Lama), the other the wrathful *Heruka* (Asahara); the one the “mild” *Avalokiteshvara* who “looks down from above” (the Dalai Lama), the other the god of death and prince of hell, *Yama* (Asahara). The anthropologist and psychoanalyst, Robert A. Paul, has been able to demonstrate with convincing arguments how profoundly this two-facedness of the “good” and the “evil” Buddha has shaped Tibetan culture. The two Buddha beings (the light and the dark) are considered to be the counterposed forms of appearance of the one and the same divine substance which has both a light and a shadowy side. We may recall that Palgyi Dorje wore a white/black coat when he carried out the ritual murder of King Langdarma.

On this basis then, is Asahara the outwardly projected shadow of the Dalai Lama? His two most important predecessors also had such “shadow brothers” in whom cruelty and criminality were concentrated. Under the Fifth Dalai Lama it was the Mongol, Gushri Khan. This counterpart transformed Tibet into a “sea of boiling blood”. The thirteenth hierarch was accompanied by the bloodthirsty Kalmyk “Vengeful Lama”, Dambijantsan. Is it really only a coincidence that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama appeared on the world stage together with the Japanese *doomsday guru*, Shoko Asahara?

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#### Footnotes:

[1] The names of the other members of the shadow cabinet aside from Shoko Asahara were Maha Kheema, Maitreya, Maha Angulimala, Milarepa, Sakula, Kisa Gotami, Punna.mantaniputta Saitama 3<sup>rd</sup>, Machig Lapdrön, Manjushrimitra, Mahakasappa, Kankha-Revata, Marpa, Naropa, Uruvela-kasappa, Siha, Vangisha, Sukka, Jivaka, Ajita, Tissa, Dharmavajiri, Vajratissa, Bhaddakapilani, Sanjaya (Bracket, 1996, p. 80).

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[14. CHINA'S METAPHYSICAL RIVALRY WITH TIBET](#)

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The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 14. China's metaphysical rivalry with Tibet

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## 14. CHINA'S METAPHYSICAL RIVALRY WITH TIBET

The Central Asian power which for centuries engaged the Tibetan Buddhocracy in the deepest rivalry was the Chinese Empire. Even if the focus of current discussions about historical relations

between the two countries is centered on questions of territory, we must upon closer inspection regard this as the projected object of the actual dispute. Indeed, hidden behind the state-political facade lies a much more significant, metaphysically motivated power struggle. The magic/exotic world of Lamaism and the outflow of the major and vital rivers from the mountainous countries to the west led to the growth of an idea in the “Middle Kingdom” that events in Tibet had a decisive influence on the fate of their own country. The fates of the “Land of Snows” and China were seen by both sides as being closely interlinked. At the beginning of the twentieth century, leading Tibetans told the Englishman, Charles Bell, that Tibet was the “root of China” (Bell, 1994, p.114). As absurd as it may sound, the Chinese power elite never completely shook off this belief and they thus treated their Tibetan politics especially seriously.

In addition the rulers of the two nations, the “Son of Heaven” (the Chinese Emperor) and the “Ocean Priest” (the Dalai Lama), were claimants to the world throne and made the pretentious claim to represent the center of the cosmos, from where they wanted to govern the universe. As we have demonstrated in the vision guiding and fate of the Empress Wu Zetian, the Buddhist idea of a *Chakravartin* influenced the Chinese Empire from a very early stage (700 C.E.). During the Tang dynasty the rulers of China were worshipped as incarnations of the Bodhisattva *Manjushri* and as “wheel-turning kings” (*Chakravartin*).

Besides, it was completely irrelevant whether the current Chinese Emperor was of a more Taoist, Confucian, or Buddhist inclination, as the idea of a cosmocrat was common to all three systems. Even the Tibetans apportioned him this role at times, such as the Thirteenth Dalai Lama for example, who referred to the Manchu rulers as *Chakravartins* (Klieger, 1991, p. 32).

We should also not forget that several of the Chinese potentates allowed themselves to be initiated into the tantras and naturally laid claim to the visions of power articulated there. In 1279 Chögyel Phagpa, the grand abbot of the Sakyapa, initiated the Mongolian conqueror of China and founder of the Yuan dynasty, Kublai Khan, into the *Hevajra Tantra*. In 1746 the Qian Long ruler received a Lamaist tantric initiation as *Chakravartin*. Further it was an established tradition to recognize the Emperor of China as an emanation of the Bodhisattva *Manjushri*. This demonstrates that two Bodhisattvas could also fall into earnest political discord.

Tibetan culture owes just as much to Chinese as it does to that of India. A likeness of the great military leader and king, Songtsen Gampo (617–650), who forged the highlands into a single state of a previously unseen size is worshipped throughout all of Tibet. It shows him in full armor and flanked by his two chief wives. According to legend, the Chinese woman, Wen Cheng, and the Nepalese, Bhrikuti, were embodiments of the white and the green *Tara*. Both are supposed to have brought Buddhism to the “Land of Snows”. [1]

History confirms that the imperial princess, Wen Cheng, was accompanied by cultural goods from China that revolutionized the whole of Tibetan community life. The cultivation of cereals and fruits, irrigation, metallurgy, calendrics, a school system, weights and measures, manners and clothing — with great open-mindedness the king allowed these and similar blandishments of civilization to be imported from the “Middle Kingdom”. Young men from the Tibetan nobility were sent to study in China and India. Songtsen Gampo also made cultural loans from the other neighboring states of the highlands.

These Chinese acts of peace and cultural creativity were, however, preceded on the Tibetan side by a most aggressive and imperialist policy of conquest. The king was said to have commanded an army of 200,000 men. The art of war practiced by this incarnation of the “compassionate” Bodhisattva, *Avalokiteshvara*, was considered extremely barbaric and the “red faces”, as the Tibetans were called, spread fear and horror through all of Central Asia. The size to which Songtsen Gampo was able to expand his empire corresponds roughly to that of the territory currently claimed by the Tibetans in exile as their area of control.

Since that time the intensive exchange between the two countries has never dried up. Nearly all the regents of the Manchu dynasty (1644–1912) right up to the Empress Dowager Ci Xi felt bound to Lamaism on the basis of their Mongolian origins, although they publicly espoused ideas that were mostly Confucian. Their belief led them to have magnificent Lamaist temples built in Beijing. There have been a total of 28 significant Lama shrines built in the imperial city since the 18th century. Beyond the Great Wall, in the Manchurian — Mongolian border region, the imperial families erected their summer palace. They had an imposing Buddhist monastery built in the immediate vicinity and called it the “Potala” just like the seat of the Dalai Lama. In her biography, the imperial princess, The Ling, reports that tantric rituals were still being held in the Forbidden City at the start of the twentieth century (quoted by Klieger, 1991, p. 55). [2]

If a Dalai Lama journeyed to China then this was always conducted with great pomp. There was constant and debilitating squabbling about etiquette, the symbolic yardstick for the rank of the rulers meeting one another. Who first greeted whom, who was to sit where, with what title was one addressed — such questions were far more important than discussions about borders. They reflect the most subtle shadings of the relative positions within a complete cosmological scheme. As the “Great Fifth” entered Beijing in 1652, he was indeed received like a regnant prince, since the ruling Manchu Emperor, Shun Chi, was much drawn to the Buddhist doctrine. In farewelling the hierarch he showered him with valuable gifts and honored him as the “self-creating Buddha and head of the valuable doctrine and community, *Vajradhara* Dalai Lama” (Schulemann, 1958, p. 247), but in secret he played him off against the Panchen Lama.

The cosmological chess game went on for centuries without clarity ever being achieved, and hence for both countries the majority of state political questions remained unanswered. For example, Lhasa was obliged to send gifts to Beijing every year. This was naturally regarded by the Chinese as a kind of tribute which demonstrated the dependence of the Land of Snows. But since these gifts were reciprocated with counter-presents, the Tibetans saw the relationship as one between equal partners. The Chinese countered with the establishment of a kind of Chinese governorship in Tibet under two officials known as *Ambane*. From a Chinese point of view they represented the worldly administration of the country. So that they could be played off against one another and avoid corruption, the *Ambane* were always dispatched to Tibet in pairs.

The Chinese also tried to gain influence over the Lamaist politics of incarnation. Among the Tibetan and Mongolian aristocracy it was increasingly the case that children from their own ranks were recognized as high incarnations. The intention behind this was to make important clerical posts *de facto* hereditary for the Tibetan noble clans. In order to hamper such familial expansions of power, the Chinese Emperor imposed an oracular procedure. In the case of the Dalai Lama three boys were to always be sought as potential successors and then the final decision would be made under Chinese supervision by the drawing of lots. The names and birth dates of the children were to be written on slips of paper, wrapped in dough and laid in a golden urn which the Emperor Kien Lung himself donated and had sent to Lhasa in 1793.

### **Mao Zedong: The Red Sun**

But did the power play between the two countries over the world throne end with the establishment of Chinese Communism in Tibet? Is the Tibetan-Chinese conflict of the last 50 years solely a confrontation between spiritualism and materialism, or were there “forces and powers” at work behind Chinese politics which wanted to establish Beijing as the center of the world at Lhasa’ expense? “Questions of legitimation have plagued all Chinese dynasties”, writes the Tibetologist Elliot Sperling with regard to current Chinese territorial claims over Tibet, „Questions of legitimation have plagued all Chinese dynasties”, writes the Tibetologist Elliot Sperling with regard to current Chinese territorial claims over Tibet, „Traditionally such questions revolved around the basic issue of whether a given dynasty or ruler possessed 'The Mandate of Heaven'. Among the signs that accompanied possession of The Mandate was the ability to unify the country and overcome all rival claimants for the territory and the throne of China. It would be a mistake not

to view the present regime within this tradition” (*Tibetan Review*, August 1983, p. 18). But to put Sperling’s interesting thesis to the test, we need to first of all consider a man who shaped the politics of the Communist Party of China like no other and was worshipped by his followers like a god: *Mao Zedong*.

According to Tibetan reports, the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese was presaged from the beginning of the fifties by numerous “supernatural” signs: whilst meditating in the Ganden monastery the Fourteenth Dalai Lama saw the statue of the terror deity *Yamantaka* move its head and look to the east with a fierce expression. Various natural disasters, including a powerful earthquake and droughts befell the land. Humans and animals gave birth to monsters. A comet appeared in the skies. Stones became loose in various temples and fell to the ground. On September 9, 1951 the Chinese People’s Liberation Army marched into Lhasa.



*The Panchen Lama, Mao Zedong, the Dalai Lama*

Before he had to flee, the young Dalai Lama had a number of meetings with the “Great Chairman” and was very impressed by him. As he shook Mao Zedong by the hand for the first time, the *Kundun* in his own words felt he was “in the presence of a strong magnetic force” (Craig, 1997, p. 178). Mao too felt the need to make a metaphysical assessment of the god-king: “The Dalai Lama is a god, not a man”, he said and then qualified this by adding, “In any case he is seen that way by the majority of the Tibetan population” (*Tibetan Review*, January 1995, p. 10). Mao chatted with the god-king about religion and politics a number of times and is supposed to have expressed varying and contradictory opinions during these conversations. On one occasion, religion was for him “opium for the people” in the classic Marxist sense, on another he saw in the historical Buddha a precursor of the idea of communism and declared the goddess *Tara* to be a “good woman”.

The twenty-year-old hierarch from Tibet looked up to the fatherly revolutionary from China with admiration and even nurtured the wish to become a member of the Communist Party. He fell, as Mary Craig puts it, under the spell of the red Emperor (Craig, 1997, p. 178). “I have heard chairman Mao talk on different matters”, the *Kundun* enthused in 1955, “and I received instructions from him. I have come to the firm conclusion that the brilliant prospects for the Chinese people as a whole are also the prospects for us Tibetan people; the path of our entire country is our path and no other” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 142)

Mao Zedong, who at that time was pursuing a gradualist politics, saw in the young *Kundun* a powerful instrument through which to familiarize the feudal and religious elites of the Land of Snows with his multi-ethnic communist state. In a 17-point program he had conceded the “national regional autonomy [of Tibet] under the leadership of the Central People’s Government”, and

assured that the “existing political system”, especially the “status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama”, would remain untouched (Goldstein, 1997, p. 47).

### *The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*

After the flight of the Dalai Lama, the 17-point program was worthless and the gradualist politics of Beijing at an end. But it was first under the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” (in the mid-sixties) that China’s attitude towards Tibet shifted fundamentally. Within a tantric conception of history the Chinese Cultural Revolution has to be understood as a period of chaos and anarchy. Mao Zedong himself had— like a skilled *Vajra* master — deliberately evoked a general disorder so as to establish a paradise on earth after the destruction of the old values: “A great chaos will lead to a new order”, he wrote at the beginning of the youth revolt (Zhisui, 1994, p. 491). All over the country, students, school pupils, and young workers took to the land to spread the ideas of Mao Zedong. The “Red Guard” of Lhasa also understood itself to be the agent of its “Great Chairman”, as it published the following statement in December 1966: “We a group of lawless revolutionary rebels will wield the iron sweepers and swing the mighty cudgels to sweep the old world into a mess and bash people into complete confusion. We fear no gales and storms, nor flying sands and moving rocks ... To rebel, to rebel, and to rebel through to the end in order to create a brightly red new world of this proletariat” (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 183).

Although it was the smashing of the Lamaist religion which lay at the heart of the red attacks in Tibet, one must not forget that it was not just monks but also long-serving Chinese Party cadres in Lhasa and the Tibetan provinces who fell victim to the brutal subversion. Even if it was triggered by Mao Zedong, the Cultural Revolution was essentially a youth revolt and gave expression to a deep intergenerational conflict. National interests did not play a significant role in these events. Hence, many young Tibetans likewise participated in the rebellious demonstrations in Lhasa, something which for reasons that are easy to understand is hushed up these days by Dharamsala.

Whether Mao Zedong approved of the radicality with which the Red Guard set to work remains doubtful. To this day — as we have already reported — the *Kundun* believes that the Party Chairman was not fully informed about the vandalistic attacks in Tibet and that Jiang Qing, his spouse, was the evildoer. [3] Mao’s attitude can probably be best described by saying that in as far as the chaos served to consolidate his position he would have approved of it, and in as far as it weakened his position he would not. For Mao it was solely a matter of the accumulation of personal power, whereby it must be kept in mind, however, that he saw himself as being totally within the tradition of the Chinese Emperor as an energetic concentration of the country and its inhabitants. What strengthened him also strengthened the nation and the people. To this extent he thought in micro/macrocosmic terms.

### *The “deification” of Mao Zedong*

The people’s tribune was also not free of the temptations of his own “deification”: “The Mao cult”, writes his personal physician, Zhisui, “spread in schools, factories, and communes — the Party Chairman became a god” (Li Zhisui, 1994, p. 442). At heart, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution must be regarded as a religious movement, and the “Marxist” from Beijing reveled in his worship as a “higher being”.

Numerous reports of the “marvels of the thoughts of Mao Zedong”, the countless prayer-like letters from readers in the Chinese newspapers, and the little “red book” with the sacrosanct words of the great helmsman, known worldwide as the “bible of Mao”, and much more make a religion of Maoism. Objects which factory workers gave to the “Great Chairman” were put on display on altars and revered like holy relics. After “men of the people” shook his hand, they didn’t wash theirs for weeks and coursed through the country seizing the hands of passers by under the impression that they could give them a little of Mao’s energy. In some Tibetan temples pictures of the Dalai Lama were even replaced with icons of the Chinese Communist leader.

In this, Mao was more like a red pontiff than a people’s rebel. His followers revered him as a

god-man in the face of whom the individuality of every other mortal Chinese was extinguished. “The ‘equality before god’”, Wolfgang Bauer writes in reference to the Great Chairman Mao Zedong, “really did illuminate, and allowed those who felt themselves moved by it to become ‘brothers’, or monks [!] of some kind clothed in robes that were not just the most lowly but thus also identical and that caused all individual characteristics to vanish” (Bauer, 1989, p. 569).

The Tibetans, themselves the subjects of a god-king, had no problems with such images; for them the “communist” Mao Zedong was the “Chinese Emperor”, at least from the Cultural Revolution on. Later, they even transferred the imperial metaphors to the “capitalist” reformer Deng Xiaoping: “Neither the term ‘emperor’ nor ‘paramount leader’ nor ‘patriarch’ appear in the Chinese constitution but nevertheless that is the position Deng held ... he possessed political power for life, just like the emperors of old” (*Tibetan Review*, March 1997, p. 23).

### *Mao Zedong’s “Tantrism”*

The most astonishing factor, however, is that like the Dalai Lama Mao Zedong also performed “tantric” practices, albeit *à la chinoise*. As his personal physician, Li Zhisui reports, even at great age the Great Chairman maintained an insatiable sexual appetite. One concubine followed another. In this he imitated a privilege that on this scale was accorded only to the Chinese Emperors. Like these, he saw his affairs less as providing satisfaction of his lust and instead understood them to be sexual magic exercises. The Chinese “Tantric” [4] is primarily a specialist in the extension of the human lifespan. It is not uncommon for the old texts to recommend bringing younger girls together with older men as energetic “fresheners”. This method of rejuvenation is spread throughout all of Asia and was also known to the high lamas in Tibet. The *Kalachakra Tantra* recommends “the rejuvenation of a 70-year-old via a *mudra* [wisdom girl]” (Grünwedel, *Kalachakra II*, p. 115).

Mao also knew the secret of semen retention: “He became a follower of Taoist sexual practices,” his personal physician writes, “through which he sought to extend his life and which were able to serve him as a pretext for his pleasures. Thus he claimed, for instance, that he needed *yin shui* (the water of *yin*, i.e., vaginal secretions) to complement his own *yang* (his masculine substance, the source of his strength, power, and longevity) which was running low. Since it was so important for his health and strength to build up his *yang* he dared not squander it. For this reason he only rarely ejaculated during coitus and instead won strength and power from the secretions of his female partners. The more *yin shui* the Chairman absorbed, the more powerful his male substance became. Frequent sexual intercourse was necessary for this, and he best preferred to go to bed with several women at once. He also asked his female partners to introduce him to other women — ostensibly so as to strengthen his life force through shared orgies” (Li Zhisui, 1994, pp. 387-388). He gave new female recruits a handbook to read entitled *Secrets of an Ordinary Girl*, so that they could prepare themselves for a Taoist rendezvous with him. Like the pupils of a lama, young members of the “red court” were fascinated by the prospect of offering the Great Chairman their wives as concubines (Li Zhisui, 1994, pp. 388, 392).

The two chief symbols of his life can be regarded as emblems of his tantric androgyny: the feminine “water” and masculine “sun”. Wolfgang Bauer has drawn attention to the highly sacred significance which water and swimming have in Mao’s symbolic world. His demonstrations of swimming, in which he covered long stretches of the Yangtze, the “Yellow River”, were supposed to “express the dawning of a new, bold undertaking, through which a better world would arise: it was”, the author says, “a kind of cultic action” which he “... completed with an almost ritual necessity on the eve of the ‘Cultural Revolution’” (Bauer, 1989, p. 566).

One of the most popular images of this period was of Mao as the “Great Helmsman” who unerringly steered the masses through the waves of the revolutionary ocean. With printruns in the billions (!), poems such as the following were distributed among the people:

*Traveling upon the high seas we trust in the helmsman  
As the ten thousand creatures in growing trust the sun.*

*If rain and dew moisten them, the sprouts become strong.  
So we trust, when we push on with the revolution,  
in the thoughts of Mao Zedong.*

*Fish cannot live away from water,  
Melons do not grow outside their bed.  
The revolutionary masses cannot stay apart  
From the Communist Party.  
The thoughts of Mao Zedong are their never-setting sun.*  
(quoted by Bauer, 1989, p. 567)

In this song we encounter the second symbol of power in the Mao cult alongside water: the “red sun” or the “great eastern sun”, a metaphor which — as we have already reported — later reemerges in connection with the Tibetan “*Shambhala* warrior”, Chögyam Trungpa. „Long life to Chairman Mao, our supreme commander and the most reddest red sun in our hearts”, sang the cultural revolutionaries (Avedon, 1985, p. 349). The “thoughts of Mao Zedong” were also “equated with a red sun that rose over a red age as it were, a veneration that found expression in countless likenesses of Mao’s features surrounded by red rays” (Bauer, 1989, p. 568). In this heliolatry, the Sinologist Wolfgang Bauer sees a religious influence that originated not in China but in the western Asian religions of light like Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism that entered the Middle Kingdom during the Tang period and had become connected with Buddhist ideas there (Bauer, 1989, p. 567). Indeed, the same origin is ascribed to the *Kalachakra Tantra* by several scholars.



*Mao Zedong as the never setting sun*

Mao Zedong’s theory of “blankness” also seems tantric. As early as 1958 he wrote that the China’s weight within the family of peoples rested on the fact that “first of all [it] is poor and secondly, blank. ... A blank sheet of paper has no stains, and thus the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it, the newest and most beautiful images painted on it” (quoted by Bauer, 1989, pp. 555-556). Bauer sees explicit traces of the Buddhist ideal of “emptiness” in this: “The 'blank person', whose presence in Mao’s view is especially pronounced among the Chinese people, is not

just the 'pure', but also at the same time also the 'new person' in whom ... all the old organs in the body have been exchanged for new ones, and all the old convictions for new ones. Here the actual meaning of the spiritual transformation of the Chinese person, deliberately imbuing all facets of the personality, bordering on the mystic, encouraged with all the means of mass psychology, and which the West with horror classifies as 'brainwashing', becomes apparent" (Bauer, 1989, p. 556).

As if they wanted to exorcise their own repellant tantra practices through their projection onto their main opponent, the Tibetans in exile appeal to Chinese sources to link the Cultural Revolution with cannibalistic ritual practices. Individuals who were killed during the ideological struggles became the objects of cannibalism. At night and with great secrecy members of the Red Guard were said to have torn out the hearts and livers of the murdered and consumed them raw. There were supposed to have been occasions where people were struck down so that their brains could be sucked out using a metal tube (*Tibetan Review*, March 1997, p. 22). The anti-Chinese propaganda may arouse doubts about how much truth there is in such accounts, yet should they really have taken place they too would bring the revolutionary events close to a tantric pattern.

### *A spiritual rivalry between the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Mao Zedong?*

The hidden religious basis of the Chinese Cultural Revolution prevents us from describing the comprehensive opposition between Mao Zedong and the Dalai Lama as an antinomy between materialism and spirituality — an interpretation which the Tibetan lamas, the Chinese Communists, and the West have all given it, albeit all with differing evaluations. Rather, both systems (the Chinese and the Tibetan) stood — as the ruler of the Potala and the regent of the Forbidden City had for centuries — in mythic contest for the control of the world, both reached for the symbol of the “great eastern sun”. Mao too had attempted to impose his political ideology upon the whole of humanity. He applied the “theory of the taking of cities via the land” and via the farmers which he wrote and put into practice in the “Long March” as a revolutionary concept for the entire planet, in that he declared the non-industrialized countries of Asia, Africa, and South America to be “villages” that would revolt against the rich industrial nations as the “cities”.

But there can only be one world ruler! In 1976, the year in which the “red pontiff” (Mao Zedong) died, according to the writings of the Tibetans in exile things threatened to take a turn for the worse for the Tibetans. The state oracle had pronounced the gloomiest predictions. Thereupon His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama withdrew into retreat, the longest that he had ever made in India: “An extremely strict practice”, he later commented personally, “which requires complete seclusion over several weeks, linked to a very special teaching of the Fifth Dalai Lama” (Levenson, 1992, p. 242). The result of this “practice” was, as Claude B. Levenson reports, the following: firstly there was “a major earthquake in China with thousands of victims. Then Mao made his final bow upon the mortal stage. This prompted an Indian who was close to the Tibetans to state, "That's enough, stop your praying, otherwise the sky will fall on the heads of the Chinese" (Levenson, 1992, p. 242). In fact, shortly before his death the “Great Chairman” was directly affected by this earthquake. As his personal physician (who was present) reports, the bed shook, the house swayed, and a nearby tin roof rattled fearsomely.

Whether or not this was a coincidence, if a secret ritual of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was conducted to “liberate” Mao Zedong, it can only have been a matter of the voodoo-like killing practices from the *Golden Manuscript* of the “Great Fifth”. Further, it is clear from the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's autobiography that on the day of Mao's death he was busy with the Time Tantra. At that time [1976], the Kundun says. „I was in Ladakh, part of the remote Indian province of Jammu and Kashmir, where I was conducting a *Kalachakra* initiation. On the second the ceremony's three days, Mao died. And the third day, it rained all morning. But, in the afternoon, there appeared one of the most beautiful rainbows I have ever seen. I was certain that it must be a good omen” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1990, 222)

### **The post-Maoist era in Tibet**



The Chinese of the Deng era recognized the error of their politics during the Cultural Revolution and publicly criticized themselves because of events in Tibet. An attempt was made to correct the mistakes and various former restrictions were relaxed step by step. As early as 1977 the *Kundun* was offered the chance to return to Tibet. This was no subterfuge but rather an earnest attempt to appease. One could talk about everything, Deng Xiaoping said, with the exception of total independence for Tibet.

Thus, over the course of years, with occasional interruptions, informal contacts sprang up between the representatives of the Tibetans in exile and the Chinese Party cadres. But no agreement was reached.

The Communist Party of China guaranteed the freedom of religious practice, albeit with certain restrictions. For example, it was forbidden to practice “religious propaganda” outside of the monastery walls, or to recruit monks who were under 18 years old, so as to protect children from “religious indoctrination”. But by and large the Buddhist faith could be practiced unhampered, and it has bloomed like never before in the last 35 years.

In the meantime hundreds of thousands of western tourists have visited the “roof of the world”. Individuals and travel groups of exiled Tibetans have also been permitted to visit the Land of Snows privately or were even officially invited as “guests of state”. Among them has been Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama’s brother and military advisor, who conspired against the Chinese Communists with the CIA for years and counted among the greatest enemies of Beijing. The Chinese were firmly convinced that the Kundun’s official delegations would not arouse much interest among the populace. The opposite was the case. Many thousands poured into Lhasa to see the brother of the Dalai Lama.

But apparently this “liberal” climate could not and still cannot heal the deep wounds inflicted after the invasion and during the Chinese occupation.

Up until 1998, the opposition to Beijing in Tibet was stronger than ever before since the flight of the Dalai Lama, as the bloody rebellion of October 1987 [5] and the since then unbroken wave of demonstrations and protests indicates. For this reason a state of emergency was in force in Lhasa and the neighboring region until 1990. The Tibet researcher Ronald Schwartz has published an interesting study in which he convincingly proves that the Tibetan resistance activities conform to ritualized patterns. Religion and politics, protest and ritual are blended here as well. Alongside its communicative function, every demonstration thus possesses a symbolic one, and is for the participants at heart a magic act which through constant repetition is supposed to achieve the expulsion of the Chinese and the development of a national awareness among the populace.

The central protest ceremony in the country consists in the circling of the Jokhang Temple by monks and laity who carry the Tibetan flag. This action is known as *khorra* and is linked to a tradition of circumambulation. Since time immemorial the believers have circled shrines in a clockwise direction with a prayer drum in the hand and the *om mani padme hum* formula on their lips, on the one hand to ensure a better rebirth, on the other to worship the deities dwelling there. However, these days the *khorra* is linked — and this is historically recent — with protest activity against the Chinese: Leaflets are distributed, placards carried, the Dalai Lama is cheered. At the same time monks offer up sacrificial cakes and invoke above all the terrible protective goddess, *Palden Lhamo*. As if they wanted to neutralize the magic of the protest ritual, the Chinese have begun wandering around the Jokhang in the opposite direction, i.e., counterclockwise.

Those monks who were wounded and killed by the Chinese security forces whilst performing the ritual in the eighties are considered the supreme national martyrs. Their sacrificial deaths demanded widespread imitation and in contrast to the Buddhist prohibition against violence could be legitimated without difficulty. To sacrifice your life does not contradict Buddhism, young monks from the Drepung monastery told western tourists (Schwartz, 1994, p. 71).

Without completely justifying his claims, Schwartz links the circling of the Jokhang with the vision of the Buddhist world kingship. He refers to the fact that Tibet's first Buddhist ruler, Songtsen Gampo, built the national shrine and that his spirit is supposed to be conjured up by the constant circumambulation: „Tibetans in succeeding centuries assimilated Songtsen Gampo to the universal [!] Buddhist paradigm of the ideal king, the *Chakravartin* or wheel-turning king, who subdues demonic forces and establishes a polity committed to promoting *Dharma* or righteousness” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 33).

A link between the world ruler thus evoked and the “tantric female sacrifice” is provided by the myth that the living heart of *Srinmo*, the mother of Tibet, beats in a mysterious lake beneath the Jokhang where it was once nailed fast with a dagger by the king, Songtsen Gampo. In the light of the orientation of contemporary Buddhism, which remains firmly anchored in the andocentric tradition, the ritual circling of the temple can hardly be intended to free the earth goddess. In contrast, it can be assumed that the monk's concern is to strengthen the bonds holding down the female deity, just as the earth spirits are nailed to the ground anew in every *Kalachakra* ritual.

After a pause of 25 years, the Tibetan New Year's celebration (Monlam), banned by the Chinese in 1960, are since 1986 once more held in front of the Jokhang. This religious occasion, which as we have shown above is symbolically linked with the killing of King Langdarma, has been seized upon by the monks as a chance to provoke the Chinese authorities. But here too, the political protest cannot be separated from the mythological intention. „Its final ceremony,” Schwartz writes of the current Mönlam festivals, „which centres on *Maitreya*, the Buddha of the next age, looks forward to the return of harmony to the world with the re-emergence of the pure doctrine in the mythological future. The demonic powers threatening society, and bringing strife and suffering, are identified with the moral degeneration of the present age. The recommitment of Tibet as a nation to the cause of Buddhism is thus a step toward the collective salvation of the world” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 88) The ritual circling of the Jokhang and the feast held before the “cathedral” thus do not just prepare for the liberation of Tibet from the Chinese yoke, but also the establishment of a worldwide Buddhocracy (the resurrection of the pure doctrine in a mythological future).

Considered neutrally, the current social situation in Tibet proves to be far more complex than the Tibetans in exile would wish. Unquestionably, the Chinese have introduced many and decisive improvements in comparison to the feudal state Buddhism of before 1959. But likewise there is no question that the Tibetan population have had to endure bans, suppression, seizures, and human rights violations in the last 35 years. But the majority of these injustices and restrictions also apply throughout the rest of China. The cultural and ethnic changes under the influence of the Chinese Han and the Islamic Hui pouring in to the country may well be specific. Yet here too, there are processes at work which can hardly be described (as the “Dalai Lama” constantly does) as “cultural genocide”, but rather as a result of the transformation from a feudal state *via* communism into a highly industrialized and multicultural country.

### **A pan-Asian vision of the Kalachakra Tantra?**

In this section we would like to discuss two possible political developments which have not as far as we know been considered before, because they appear absurd on the basis of the current international state of affairs. However, in speculating about future events in world history, one has to free oneself from the current position of the fronts. The twentieth century has produced unimaginable changes in the shortest of times, with the three most important political events being the collapse of colonialism, the rise and fall of fascism, and that of communism. How often have we had to experience that the bitterest of enemies today become tomorrow's best friends and vice versa. It is therefore legitimate to consider the question of whether the current Dalai Lama or one of his future incarnations can with an appeal to the *Shambhala myth* set himself up as the head of a Central Asian major-power block with China as the leading nation. The other question we want to consider is this — could the Chinese themselves use the ideology of the *Kalachakra Tantra* to

pursue an imperialist policy in the future?

The *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth* had and still have a quite exceptional popularity in Central Asia. There, they hardly fulfill a need for world peace, but rather –especially in Mongolia –act as a symbol for dreams of becoming a major power. Thus the *Shambhala* prophecy undoubtedly possesses the explosive force to power an aggressive Asia's imperialist ideology. This idea is widespread among the Kalmyks, the various Mongolian tribes, the Bhutanese, the Sikkimese, and the Ladhakis.

Even the Japanese made use of the *Shambhala myth* in the forties in order to establish a foothold in Mongolia. The power-hungry fascist elite of the island were generous in creating political-religious combinations. They had known how to fuse Buddhism and Shintoism together into an imposing imperialist ideology in their own country. Why should this not also happen with Lamaism? Hence Japanese agents strove to create contacts with the lamas of Central Asia and Tibet (Kimura, 1990). They even funded a search party for the incarnation of the Ninth Jebtsundampa Khutuktu, the “yellow pontiff of the Mongolians”, and sent it to Lhasa for this purpose (*Tibetan Review*, February 1991, p. 19). There were already close contacts to Japan under the Thirteenth Dalai Lama; he was advised in military questions, for example, was a Japanese by the name of Yasujiro Yajima (*Tibetan Review*, June 1982, pp. 8f.).

In line with the worldwide renaissance in all religions and their fundamentalist strains it can therefore not be excluded that Lamaism also regain a foothold in China and that after a return of the Dalai Lama the *Kalachakra* ideology become widespread there. It would then — as Edwin Bernbaum opines — just be seeds that had been sown before which would sprout. „Through the Mongolians, the Manchus, and the influence of the Panchen Lamas, the Kalachakra Tantra even had an impact on China: A major landmark of Peking, the *Pai t'a*, a white Tibetan-style stupa on a hill overlooking the Forbidden City, bears the emblem of the Kalachakra Teaching, *The Ten of Power*. Great Kalachakra Initiations were also given in Peking.” (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 286, f. 7) These were conducted in the thirties by the Panchen Lama.

#### ***Taiwan: A springboard for Tibetan Buddhism and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama?***

Yet as a decisive indicator of the potential “conquest” of China by Tibetan Buddhism, its explosive spread in Taiwan must be mentioned. Tibetan lamas first began to missionize the island in 1949. But their work was soon extinguished and could only be resumed in 1980. From this point in time on, however, the tantric doctrine has enjoyed a triumphal progress. The Deutsche Presse Agentur (dpa) estimates the number of the *Kundun's* followers in Taiwan to be between 200 and 300 thousand and increasing, whilst the *Tibetan Review* of May 1997 even reports a figure of half a million. Over a hundred Tibetan Buddhist shrines have been built. Every month around 100 Lamaist monks from all countries visit Taiwan “to raise money for Tibetan temples around the world” there (*Tibetan Review*, May 1995, p. 11).

Increasingly, high lamas are also reincarnating themselves in Taiwanese, i.e., Chinese, families. To date, four of these have been “discovered” — an adult and three children — in the years 1987, 1990, 1991, and 1995. Lama Lobsang Jungney told a reporter that “Reincarnation can happen wherever there is the need for Buddhism. Taiwan is a blessed land. It could have 40 reincarnated lamas.” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1995, pp. 10-11).

In March 1997 a spectacular reception was prepared for the Dalai Lama in many locations around the country. The political climate had shifted fundamentally. The earlier skepticism and reservation with which the god-king was treated by officials in Taipei, since as nationalists they did not approve of a detachment of the Land of Snows from China, had given way to a warm-hearted atmosphere. His Holiness was praised in the press as the “most significant visionary of peace” of our time. The encounter with President Lee Teng-hui, at which the two “heads of government” discussed spiritual topics among other things, was celebrated in the media as a “meeting of the philosophy kings” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 15). The *Kundun* has rarely been so applauded.

“In fact,” the *Tibetan Review* writes, “the Taiwan visit was the most politically charged of all his overseas visits in recent memory” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 12). In the southern harbor city of Kaohsiung the *Kundun* held a rousing speech in front of 50,000 followers in a sport stadium. The Tibetan national flag was flown at every location where he stopped. The Taiwanese government approved a large sum for the establishment of a Tibet office in Taipei. The office is referred to by the Tibetans in exile as a “*de facto* embassy”.

At around the same time, despite strong protest from Beijing, Tibetan monks brought an old tooth of the Buddha, which fleeing lamas had taken with them during the Cultural Revolution, to Taiwan. The mainland Chinese demanded the tooth back. In contrast a press report said, “Taiwanese politicians expressed the hope [that] the relic would bring peace to Taiwan, after several corruption scandals and air disasters had cost over 200 people their lives” (*Schweizerisch Tibetische Freundschaft*, April 14, 1998 - Internet).

The spectacular development of Lamaist Buddhism in Nationalist China (Taiwan) shows that the land could be used as an ideal springboard to establish itself in a China freed of the Communist Party. Ultimately, the *Kundun* says, the Chinese had collected negative karma through the occupation of Tibet and would have to bear the consequences of this (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 19). How could this karma be better worked off than through the Middle Kingdom as a whole joining the Lamaist faith.

#### *The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Chinese*

The cultural relationships of the *Kundun* and of members of his family to the Chinese are more complex and multi-layered than they are perceived to be in the West. Let us recall that Chinese was spoken in the home of the god-king's parents in Takster. In connection with the regent, Reting Rinpoche, the father of the Dalai Lama showed such a great sympathy towards Beijing that still today the Chinese celebrate him as one of their “patriots” (Craig, 1997, p. 232). Two of His Holiness's brothers, Gyalo Thundup and Tendzin Choegyal, speak fluent Chinese. His impressive dealings with Beijing and his pragmatic politics have several times earned Gyalo Thundup the accusation by Tibetans in exile that he is a traitor who would sell Tibet to the Chinese (Craig, 1997, pp. 334ff.). Dharamsala has maintained personal contacts with many influential figures in Hong Kong and Taiwan since the sixties.

Since the nineties, the constant exchange with the Chinese has become increasingly central to the *Kundun's* politics. In a speech made in front of Chinese students in Boston (USA) on September 9, 1995, His Holiness begins with a statement of how important the contact to China and its people is for him. The usual constitutional statements and the well-known demands for peace, human rights, religious freedom, pluralism, etc. then follow, as if a western parliamentarian were campaigning for his country's democracy. Only at the end of his speech does the *Kundun* let the cat out of the bag and nonchalantly proposes Tibetan Buddhism as China's new religion and thus, indirectly, himself as the Buddhist messiah: “Finally it is my strong believe and hope that however small a nation Tibet might be, we can still contribute to the peace and the prosperity of China. Decades of communist rule and the commercial activities in recent years both driven by extreme materialism, be it communist or capitalist, are destroying much of China's spiritual and moral values. A huge spiritual and moral vacuum is thus being rapidly created in the Chinese society. In this situation, the Tibetan Buddhist culture and philosophy would be able to serve millions of Chinese brothers and sisters in their search for moral and spiritual values. After all, traditionally Buddhism is not an alien philosophy to the Chinese people” (*Tibetan Review*, October 1995, p. 18). Advertising for the *Kalachakra* initiation organized for the year 1999 in Bloomington, Indiana was also available in Chinese. Since August 2000 one of the web sites run by the Tibetans in exile has been appearing in Chinese.

In recent months (up until 1998), “pro-Chinese” statements by the *Kundun* have been issued more and more frequently. In 1997 he explained that the materialistic Chinese could only profit from an adoption of spiritual Lamaism. Everywhere, indicators of a re-Buddhization of China were already

to be seen. For example, a high-ranking member of the Chinese military had recently had himself blessed by the Mongolian great lama, Kusho Bakula Rinpoche, when the latter was in Beijing briefly. Another Chinese officer had participated in a Lamaist event seated in the lotus position, and a Tibetan woman had told him how Tibetan Buddhism was flourishing in various regions in China.

"So from these stories we can see", the Dalai Lama continued, "that when the situation in China proper becomes more open, with more freedom, then definitely many Chinese will find useful inspiration from Tibetan Buddhist traditions" (*Shambhala Sun*, Archive, November 1996). In 1998, in an interview that His Holiness gave the German edition of *Playboy*, he quite materialistically says: "If we remain a part of China we will also profit materially from the enormous upturn of the country" (*Playboy*, German edition, March 1998, p. 44). The army of monks who are supposed to carry out this ambitious project of a "Lamaization of China" are currently being trained in Taiwan.

In 1997, the *Kundun* wrote to the Chinese Party Secretary, Jiang Zemin, that he would like to undertake a "non-political pilgrimage" to Wutaishan in Shanxi province (not in Tibet). The most sacred shrine of the Bodhisattva *Manujri*, who from a Lamaist point of view is incarnated in the person of the Chinese Emperor, is to be found in Wutaishan. Thus for the lamas the holy site harbors the *la*, the ruling energy of the Chinese Empire. In preparing for such a trip, the *Kundun*, who is a consistent thinker in such matters, will certainly have considered how best to magically acquire the *la* of the highly geomantically significant site of Wutaishan.

The god-king wants to meet Jiang Zemin at this sacred location to discuss Tibetan autonomy. But, as we have indicated, his primary motive may well be an esoteric one. A "*Kalachakra* ritual for world peace" is planned there. Traditionally, the Wutai mountains are seen as Lamaism's gateway to China. In the magical world view of the Dalai Lama, the construction of a sand mandala in this location would be the first step in the spiritual conquest of the Chinese realm. Already in 1987, the well-known Tibetan lama, Khenpo Jikphun conducted a *Kalachakra* initiation in front of 6000 people. He is also supposed to have levitated there and floated through the air for a brief period (Goldstein, 1998, p. 85).

At the end of his critical book, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, the Tibetologist and Buddhist Donald S. Lopez addresses the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's vision of "conquering" China specifically through the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Here he discusses the fact that participants in the ritual are reborn as Shambhala warriors. "The Dalai Lama", Lopez says, "may have found a more efficient technique for populating Shambhala and recruiting troops for the army of the twenty-fifth king, an army that will defeat the enemies of Buddhism and bring the utopia of Shambhala, hidden for so long beyond the Himalayas, to the world. It is the Dalai Lama's prayer, he says, that he will some day give the *Kalachakra* initiation in Beijing" (Lopez, 1998, p. 207).

The "Strasbourg Declaration" (of June 15, 1988), in which the Dalai Lama renounces a claim on state autonomy for Tibet if he is permitted to return to his country, creates the best conditions for a possible Lamaization of the greater Chinese territory. It is interesting in this context that with the renouncement of *political* autonomy, the *Kundun* at the same time articulated a territorial expansion for the *cultural* autonomy of Tibet. The border provinces of Kam and Amdo, which for centuries have possessed a mixed Chinese-Tibetan population, are now supposed to come under the cultural political control of the *Kundun*. Moderate circles in Beijing approve of the Dalai Lama's return, as does the newly founded Democratic Party of China under Xu Wenli.

Also, in recent years the numerous contacts between exile Tibetan politicians and Beijing have not just been hostile, rather the contacts sometimes awake the impression that here an Asian *power play* is at work behind closed doors, one that is no longer easy for the West to understand. For example, His Holiness and the Chinese successfully cooperated in the search for and appointment of the reincarnation of the Karmapa, the leader of the Red Hats, although here a Kagyupa faction did propose another candidate and enthrone him in the West.

Since Clinton's visit to China (in 1998) events in the secret diplomacy between the Tibetans in exile and the Chinese are becoming increasingly public. On Chinese television Clinton said to Jiang Zemin, "I have met the Dalai Lama. I think he is an upright man and believe that he and President Jiang would really get on if they spoke to one another" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 17, 1998). Thereupon, His Holiness publicly admitted that several "private channels" to Peking already existed which produce "fruitful contacts" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 17, 1998). However, since 1999 the wind has turned again. The "anti Dalai Lama campaigns" of the Chinese are now ceaseless. Owing to Chinese interventions the Kundun has had to endure several political setbacks throughout the entire Far East. During his visit to Japan in the Spring of 2000 he was no longer officially received. Even the Mayor of Tokyo (Shintaro Ishihara), a friend of the religious dignitary, had to cancel his invitation. The great hope of being present at the inauguration of the new Taiwanese president, Chen Shui-Bian on May 20, 2000, was not to be, even though his participation was originally planned here too. Despite internal and international protest, South Korea refused the Dalai Lama an entry visa. The Chinese even succeeded in excluding the Kundun from the Millennium Summit of World Religions held by the UN at the end of August 2000 in New York. The worldwide protests at this decision remained quite subdued.

### ***The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and communism***

The *Kundun's* constant attestations that Buddhism and Communism have common interests should also be seen as a further currying of favor with the Chinese. One can thus read numerous statements like the following from His Holiness: „The Lord Buddha wanted improvement in the spiritual realm, and Marx in the material; what alliance could be more fruitful?“ (Hicks and Chogyam, 1990, p. 143); "I believe firmly there is common ground between communism and Buddhism" (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 188); "Normally I describe myself as half Marxist, half monk" (*Zeitmagazin* 1988, no. 44, p. 24; retranslation). He is even known to have made a plea for a communist economic policy: "As far as the economy is concerned, the Marxist theory could possibly complement Buddhism..." (Levenson, 1992, p. 334). It is thus no wonder that at the god-king's suggestion, the "Communist Party of Tibet" was founded. The Dalai Lama has become a left-wing revolutionary even by the standards of those western nostalgics who mourn the passing of communism.

Up until in the eighties the Dalai Lama's concern was to create via such comments a good relationship with the Soviet Union, which had since the sixties become embroiled in a dangerous conflict with China. As we have seen, even the envoy of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Agvan Dorjiev, was a master at changing political fronts as he switched from the Tsar to Lenin without a problem following the Bolshevik seizure of power. Yet it is interesting that His Holiness has to continued to make such pro-Marxist statements after the collapse of most communist systems. Perhaps this is for ethical reasons, or because China at least ideologically continues to cling to its communist past?

These days through such statements the *Kundun* wants to keep open the possibility of a return to Tibet under Chinese control. In 1997 in Taiwan he explained that he was neither anti-Chinese nor anti-communist (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 14). He even criticized China because it had stepped back from its Marxist theory of economics and the gulf between rich and poor is thus becoming ever wider (Martin Scheidegger, speaking at the *Gesellschaft Schweizerisch Tibetische Freundschaft* [Society for Swiss-Tibetan Friendship], August 18, 1997).

### **Are the Chinese interested in the Shambhala myth?**

Do the Chinese have an interest in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth*? Let us repeat, since time immemorial China and Tibet have oriented themselves to a mythic conception of history which is not immediately comprehensible to Americans or Europeans. Almost nobody here wants to believe that this archaic way of thinking continued to exist, even increased, under "materialistic" communism. For a Westerner, China today still represents "the land of materialism" vis-à-vis Tibet

as “the land of spirituality”. There are, however, rare exceptions who avoid this cliché, such as Hugh Richardson for example, who establishes the following in his history of Tibet: “The Chinese have ... a profound regard for history. But history, for them was not simply a scientific study. It had the features of a cult, akin to ancestor worship, with the ritual object of presenting the past, favorably emended and touched up, as a model for current political action. It had to conform also to the mystical view of China as the Centre of the World, the Universal Empire in which every other country had a natural urge to become a part ... The Communists ... were the first Chinese to have the power to convert their atavistic theories into fact” (quoted by Craig, 1997, p. 146).

If it was capable of surviving communism, this mythically based understanding of history will hardly disappear with it. In contrast, religious revivals are now running in parallel to the flourishing establishment of capitalist economic systems and the increasing mechanization of the country. Admittedly the Han Chinese are as a people very much oriented to material things, and Confucianism which has regained respectability in the last few years counts as a philosophy of reason not a religion. But history has demonstrated that visionary and ecstatic cults from outside were able to enter China with ease. The Chinese power elite have imported their religious-political ideas from other cultures several times in the past centuries. Hence the Middle Kingdom is historically prepared for such ideological/spiritual invasions, then up to and including Marxist communism it has been seen, the Sinologist Wolfgang Bauer writes, “that, as far as religion is concerned, China never went on the offensive, never missionized, but rather the reverse, was always only the target of such missionizations from outside” (Bauer, 1989, p. 570). Nevertheless such religious imports could never really monopolize the country, rather they all just had the one task, namely to reinforce the idea of China as the center of the world. This was also true for Marxist Maoism.

Let us also not forget that the Middle Kingdom followed the teachings of the Buddha for centuries. The earliest evidence of Buddhism can be traced back to the first century of our era. In the Tang dynasty many of the Emperors were Buddhists. Tibetan Lamaism held a great fascination especially in the final epoch, that of the Manchus. Thus for a self-confident Chinese power elite a Chinese reactivation of the *Shambhala myth* could without further ado deliver a traditionally anchored pan-Asian ideology to replace a fading communism. As under the Manchus, there is no need for such a vision to square with the ideas of the entire people.

### *The Panchen Lama*

Perhaps the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet is not even needed at all for the Time Tantra to be able to spread in China. Perhaps the Chinese are already setting up their own *Kalachakra* master, the Panchen Lama, who is traditionally considered friendly towards China. „Tibetans believe,” Edwin Bernbaum writes, „that the Panchen Lamas have a special connection with Shambhala, that makes them unique authorities on the kingdom.” (Bernbaum, 1980, p. 185). In addition there is the widespread prophecy that *Rudra Chakrin*, the doomsday general, will be an incarnation of the Panchen Lama.

As we have already reported, the common history of the Dalai Lama and the ruler from Tashi Lunpho (the Panchen Lama) exhibits numerous political and spiritual discordances, which among other things led to the two hierarchs becoming allied with different foreign powers in their running battle against one another. The Panchen Lamas have always proudly defended their independence from Lhasa. By and large they were more friendly with the Chinese than were the rulers in the Potala. In 1923 the inner-Tibetan conflict came to a head in the Ninth Panchen Lama’s flight to China. In his own words he was „unable to live under these troubles and suffering” inflicted on him by Lhasa (Mehra, 1976, p. 45). Both he and the Dalai Lama had obtained weapons and munitions in advance, and an armed clash between the two princes of the church had been in the air for years. This exhausted itself, however, in the unsuccessful pursuit of the fleeing hierarch from Tashilunpho by a body of three hundred men under orders from Lhasa. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was so enraged that he denied the Buddhahood of the fleeing incarnation of *Amitabha*, because this was selfish, proud, and ignorant. It had, together „with his sinful companoins, who resembled mad

elephants and followed wrong path,” made itself scarce (Mehra, 1976, p. 45).

In 1932 the Panchen Lama is supposed to have planned an invasion of Tibet with 10,000 Chinese soldiers to conquer the Land of Snows and set himself up as its ruler. Only after the death of the “Great Thirteenth” was a real reconciliation with Lhasa possible. In 1937 the weakened and disappointed prince of the church returned to Tibet but died within a year. His pro-China politics, however, still found expression in his will in which he prophesied that “Buddha *Amitabha*’s next incarnation will be found among the Chinese” (Hermanns, 1956, p. 323).

In the search for the new incarnation the Chinese nation put forward one candidate and the Tibetan government another. Both parties refused to recognize the other’s boy. However, under great political pressure the Chinese were finally able to prevail. The Tenth Panchen Lama was then brought up under their influence. After the Dalai Lama had fled in 1959, the Chinese appointed the hierarch from Tashilunpho as Tibet’s nominal head of state. However, he only exercised this office in a very limited manner and sometimes he allowed to be carried away to make declarations of solidarity with the Dalai Lama. This earned him years of house arrest and a ban on public appearances. Even if the Tibetans in exile now promote such statements as patriotic confessions, by and large the Tenth Panchen Lama played either his own or Beijing’s part. In 1978 he broke the vow of celibacy imposed upon him by the Gelugpa order, marrying a Chinese woman and having a daughter with her.

Shortly before his death he actively participated in the capitalist economic policies of the Deng Xiaoping era and founded the *Kangchen* in Tibet in 1987. This was a powerful umbrella organization that controlled a number of companies and businesses, distributed international development funds for Tibet, and exported Tibetan products. The neocapitalist business elite collected in the *Kangchen* was for the most part recruited from old Tibetan noble families and were opposed to the politics of the Dalai Lama, whilst from the other side they enjoyed the supportive benevolence of Beijing.

As far as the Tibetan protest movement of recent years is concerned, the Tenth Panchen Lama tried to exert a conciliatory influence upon the revolting monks, but regretted that they would not listen to him. “We insist upon re-educating the majority of monks and nuns who become guilty of minor crimes [i.e., resistance against the Chinese authorities]” he announced publicly and went on, “But we will show no pity to those who have stirred up unrest” (MacInnes, 1993, p. 282).

In 1989 the tenth incarnation of the *Amitabha* died. The Chinese made the funeral celebrations into a grandiose event of state [!] that was broadcast nationally on radio and television. They invited the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to the burial which took place in Beijing, but did not want him to visit Tibet afterwards. For this reason the *Kundun* declined. At the same time the Tibetans in exile announced that the Panchen Lama had been poisoned.

The political power play entered a spectacular new round in the search for the eleventh incarnation. At first it seemed as if the two parties (the Chinese and the Tibetans in exile) would cooperate. But then there were two candidates: one proposed by the *Kundun* and one by Beijing. The latter was enthroned in Tashi Lunpho. A thoroughly power-conscious group of pro-Chinese lamas carried out the ceremonies, whilst the claimant designated by the Dalai Lama was sent home to his parents amid protests from the world public. At first, Dharamsala spoke of a murder, and then a kidnapping of the boy.

All of this may be considered an expression of the running battle between the Tibetans and the Chinese, yet even for the Tibetans in exile it is a surprise how much worth the Chinese laid on the magic procedure of the rebirth myth and why they elevated it to become an affair of state, especially since the upbringing of the Dalai Lama’s candidate would likewise have lain in their hands. They probably decided on this course out of primarily pragmatic political considerations, but the magic religious system possesses a dynamic of its own and can captivate those who use it



unknowingly. A Lamaization of China with or without the Dalai Lama is certainly a historical possibility. In October 1995 for example, the young Karmapa was guest of honor at the national day celebrations in Beijing and had talks with important heads of the Chinese government. The national press reported in detail on the subsequent journey through China which was organized for the young hierarch by the state. He is said to have exclaimed, “Long live the People’s Republic of China!” (*Tibetan Review*, November 1994, p. 9).

What a perspective would be opened for the politics of the *Kalachakra* deities if they were able to anchor themselves in China with a combination of the Panchen and Dalai Lamas so as to deliver the foundations for a pan-Asian ideology! At last, father and son could be reunited, for those are the titles of the ruler from Tashilunpho (the father) and the hierarch from the Potala (the son) and how they also refer to one another. Then one would have taken on the task of bringing the Time Tantra to the West, the other of reawakening it in its country of origin in Central Asia. *Amitabha* and *Avalokiteshvara*, always quarreling in the form of their mortal incarnations, the Panchen and the Dalai Lama, would now complement one another — but this time it would not be a matter of Tibet, but China, and then the world.

### *The Communist Party of China*

The Communist Party of China’s official position on the social role of religion admittedly still shows a Marxist-Leninist influence. “Religious belief and religious sentiments, religious ceremonies and organizations that are compatible with the corresponding beliefs and emotions, are all products of the history of a society.

The beginnings of religious mentality reflect a low level of production... “, it says in a government statement of principle, and the text goes on to say that in pre-communist times religion was used as a means “to control and still the masses” (MacInnes, 1993, p. 43). Nevertheless, religious freedom has been guaranteed since the seventies, albeit with some restrictions. Across the whole country a spreading religious renaissance can be observed that, although still under state control, is in the process of building up hugely like an underground current, and will soon surface in full power.

All religious orientations are affected by this — Taoism, Chan Buddhism, Lamaism, Islam, and the various Christian churches. Officially, Confucianism is not considered a faith but rather a philosophy. Since the Deng era the attacks of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution upon religious representatives have been self-critically and publicly condemned. At the moment, more out of a bad conscience and touristic motives than from religious fervor, vast sums of money are being expended on the restoration of the shrines destroyed.

Everyone is awaiting the great leap forwards in a religious rebirth of the country at any moment. “China’s tussle with the Dalai Lama seems like a sideshow compared to the Taiwan crisis” writes the former editor of the *Japan Times Weekly*, Yoichi Clark Shimatsu, “But Beijing is waging a political contest for the hearts and minds of Asia’s Buddhists that could prove far more significant than its battle over the future democracy in Taiwan” (Shimatsu, HPI 009).

It may be the result of purely power political considerations that the Chinese Communists employ Buddhist constructions to take the wind out of the sails of the general religious renaissance in the country via a strategy of attack, by declaring Mao Zedong to be a Bodhisattva for example (*Tibetan Review*, January 1994, p. 3). But there really are — as we were able to be convinced by a television documentary — residents of the eastern provinces of the extended territory who have set up likenesses of the Great Chairman on their altars beside those of *Guanyin* and *Avalokiteshvara*, to whom they pray for help in their need. A mythification of Mao and his transformation into a Bodhisattva figure should become all the easier the more time passes and the concrete historical events are forgotten.

There are, however, several factions facing off in the dawning struggle for Buddha’s control of China. For example, some of the influential Japanese Buddhist sects who trace their origins to

parent monasteries in China see the Tibetan clergy as an arch-enemy. This too has its historical causes. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century and under the protection of the great Mongolian rulers (of the Yuan dynasty), the lamas had the temples of the Chinese Buddhist Lotus sect in southern China razed to the ground. In reaction the latter organized a guerilla army of farmers and were successful in shaking off foreign control, sending the Tibetans home, and establishing the Ming dynasty (1368). “This tradition of religious rebellion”, Yoichi Clark Shimatsu writes, “did not disappear under communism. Rather, it continued under an ideological guise. Mao Zedong’s utopian vision that drove both the Cultural Revolution and the suppression of intellectuals in Tiananmen Square bears a striking resemblance with the populist Buddhist policies of Emperor Zhu Yuanthang, founder of the Ming Dynasty and himself a Lotus Sect Buddhist priest” (Shimatsu, HPI 009).

Many Japanese Buddhists see a new “worldly” utopia in a combination of Maoist populism, the continuation of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms, and the familiar values of (non-Tibetan) Buddhism. At a meeting of the Soka Gokkai sect it was pointed out that the first name of the Chinese Premier Li Peng was “Roc”, the name of the mythic giant bird that protected the Buddha. Li Peng answered allegorically that in present-day China the Buddha “is the people and I consider myself the guardian of the people” (Shimatsu, HPI 009). Representatives of Soka Gokkai also interpreted the relationship between Shoko Asahara and the Dalai Lama as a jointly planned attack on the pro-Chinese politics of the sect.

Like the Tibetans in exile, the Chinese know that power lies in the hands of the elites. These will decide which direction future developments take. It is doubtful whether the issue of national sovereignty will play any role at all among the Tibetan clergy should they be permitted to advance into China with the toleration and support of the state. Since the murder of King Langdarma, Tibetan history teaches us, the interests of monastic priests and not those of the people are preeminent in political decisions. This was likewise true in reverse for the Chinese Emperor. The Chinese ruling elite will in the future also decide according to power-political criteria which religious path they will pursue: “Beijing clearly looks to a Buddhist revival to fill the spiritual void in the Asian heartland so long as it does not challenge the nominally secular authorities. Such a revival could provide the major impetus into the Pacific century. Like all utopias, it could also be fraught with disaster” (Shimatsu, HPI 009).

The West, which has not reflected upon the potential for violence in Tantric/Tibetan Buddhism or rather has not even recognized it, sees — blind as it is — a pacifist and salvational deed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in the spread of Lamaism in China. The White House Tibet expert, Melvyn Goldstein, all but demands of the Kundun that he return to Tibet. In this he is probably voicing the unofficial opinion of the American government: “If he [the Dalai Lama] really wants to achieve something,” says Goldstein, “he has to stop attacking China on the international stage, he has to return and publicly accept the sovereignty over his home country” (*Spiegel* 16/1998, p. 118).

Everything indicates that this will soon happen, and indeed at first under conditions dictated by the Chinese. In his critique of the film *Kundun*, the journalist Tobias Kniebe writes that, “As little real power as this man [the Dalai Lama] may have at the moment — as a symbol he is unassailable and inextinguishable. The history of nonviolent resistance is one of the greatest, there is, and in it *Kundun* [the film] is a kind of prelude. The actual film, which we are waiting for, may soon begin: if an apparently impregnable, billion-strong market is infiltrated by the power of a symbol [the Dalai Lama] whose evidence it is unable to resist for long. If this film is ever made, it will not be shown in the cinemas, but rather on CNN” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 17, 1998). Kniebe and many others thus await a Lamaization of the whole Chinese territory.

A wild speculation? David Germano, Professor of Tibetan Studies in Virginia, ascertained on his travels in Tibet that “The Chinese fascination with Tibetan Buddhism is particularly important, and I have personally witnessed extremes of personal devotion and financial support by Han Chinese to both monastic and lay Tibetan religious figures [i.e., lamas] within the People’s Republic of China”

(Goldstein, 1998, p. 86).

Such a perspective is expressed most clearly in a posting to an Internet discussion forum from April 8, 1998: ““Easy, HHDL [His Holiness the Dalai Lama]”, it says, “can turn the people of Taiwan and China [into] becoming conformists of Tibetan Buddhism. Soon or later, there will be the Confederate Republics of Greater Asia. Republic of Taiwan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Tibet, Mongolia Democratic Republic, Eastern Turkestan Republic, Inner Mongolian Republic, Nippon, Korea ... all will be parts of the CROGA. Dalai Lama will be the head of the CROGA” (Brigitte, Newsgroup 10).

But whether the *Kundun* returns home to the roof of the world or not, his aggressive *Kalachakra* ideology is not a topic for analysis and criticism in the West, where religion and politics are cleanly and neatly separated from one another. The despotic idea of a world ruler, the coming Armageddon, the world war between Buddhism and Islam, the establishment of a monastic dictatorship, the hegemony of the Tibetan gods over the planets, the development of a pan-Asian, Lamaist major-power politics — all visions which are laid out in the *Kundun's* system and magically consolidated through every *Kalachakra* initiation — are simply not perceived by politicians from Europe and America. They let the wool be pulled over their eyes by the god-king's professions of democracy and peace. How and by what means His Holiness seeks to culturally conquer the West is what we want to examine in the next chapter.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] This is probably an invented *historia sacra*, as contemporary documents found in the library of Tunhuang do not say a word about the teaching of the Buddha being the state religion of the time. In the sources, the latter first emerges 150 years later under Trisong Detsen. It is also clear that Songtsen Gampo did not just marry two women, but rather five, from various neighboring states in order to bind these to himself and his dynasty.

[2] This sympathy of the Manchus for the Lamaist teachings was the sole reason why the Buddhist and yet very militant Mongolians remained peaceful for so long and bowed to the Chinese dominance. Shortly before its declaration of independence (in 1911), nobles and high lamas from the country sent a petition to the Russian Tsar, in which among other things it said: “Earlier, we respectfully subjected ourselves to the Manchu Khan because they fostered the Buddhist religion and spread the blessings” (Onon, 1989, p. 10).

[3] It has been adequately proven that the human rights violations exercised out by the Chinese forces of occupation between 1953 and the present day were significant. Monks were beaten, tortured, taken away, and executed, Nuns and girls were violated. During the rebellions villages were bombed and mass executions were carried out. The many and varied methods of torture included skinning alive. The scenes were terrible and are documented in numerous places (see for example, Joseph Campbell, 1973, pp. 509ff.). It is thus not in any way our intention to gloss over or hush up the attacks by the Chinese soldiery. All forms of killing and torture, but especially when it is inflicted on the helpless, must be condemned as strongly as possible. However, the bad politics of the Chinese Communists does not nullify their criticism of repressive social behavior in feudalistic Tibet. But it has led to a situation in which the Tibetans in exile can now offer a distorted history that in no way corresponds to historical reality prior to 1950.

[4] Strictly speaking, we are dealing with Taoist practices here. Nevertheless there are numerous similarities between the two systems, especially with regard to the male practices.

[5] The demonstrators burnt down a police station and a number of automobiles and shops. Between 6 and 20 Tibetans were killed when the police fired into the crowd. Some of the policemen on duty were also Tibetan.

Next Chapter:

### [15. THE BUDDHOCRATIC CONQUEST OF THE WEST](#)

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**The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 15. The buddhocratic conquest of the west**

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## 15. THE BUDDHOCRATIC CONQUEST OF THE WEST

[Robert A. Thurman: “The academic godfather of the Tibetan cause”](#)

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In the view of the Tibetan lamas, the spread of Buddhism in the West is predicted by an ancient prophecy. The historical Buddha is said to have made the following prognosis: “Two thousand and five hundred years after my passing the Dharma will spread to the land of the red-faced people” (Mullin, 1991, p. 145). This they take to be a reference to the USA and the continent’s native inhabitants, the North American Indians. There is an astonishingly similar prophecy by the founder of Tibetan culture, Padmasambhava: “When the iron bird flies and horses run on wheels ... the Dharma will come to the land of the Red Man” (Bernbaum, 1982, p. 33). Western cultural figures like the director Martin Scorsese cite a famous pronouncement of the Tibetan state oracle prior to the flight of the *Kundun* in the 1950s: “The jewel that grants wishes shines in the West” says the prophecy (*Focus*, 46/1997, p. 168) “The jewel that grants wishes” is an epithet for the Dalai Lama.

In the 1960s and 70s the spread of Tantric Buddhism in the West still proved difficult, especially with regard to its social acceptance. The Buddhist groups shared more or less the same fate as all the other “exotic” sects. No distinction was drawn in public between Hare Krishna, Bhagwan followers or Gelugpa monks. Yet thanks to the mobility, political skill, sophisticated manner and charismatic aura of the Dalai Lama, Lamaism’s isolation has in the meantime become transformed into its opposite and in recent years it has become a triumphal parade. Whilst for the other Eastern sects the number of new members has been stagnating or even declining since the 90s, Tibetan Buddhism has been growing “like an ocean wave” the news magazine *Spiegel* reports, continuing, “In the wake of sects and esoterica, Germans have [found] a new haven from the crisis of senselessness: Buddhism. In the [German] Federal Republic 300,000 people are sympathetic towards the far Eastern religion which discriminates against women, requires celibacy of its monks and nuns, and whose western teachers preach banalities as truths.” (*Spiegel*, 6/1994) Four years later the same magazine reports, this time in a leading article which over many pages reads like a hymn of praise for the *Kundun*, that half a million Germans now follow the Buddhist path already. The *Spiegel* says that, “Advertising copywriters and heads of business, university professors and housewives profess their faith in the far Eastern religion — a rapidly increasing tendency. ... Even in the new federal states, in Menz in Brandenburg for instance, prayer flags now flutter, freshly

converted mumble mantras [and] work on gilded Buddha figures” (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). The number of Tibetan centers in the Federal Republic increased from 81 to 141 within just six years (1998).

The German press has — probably unknowingly — become an instrument of propaganda for Tibetan Buddhism. The following short (!) collection of quotations is offered as a demonstration:

“Tibet is booming in the West. Buddhism is the religion *à la mode*.” (*Spiegel*, 13.4.1998); “In Germany too, Buddhism is becoming more and more of a topic” (*Gala*, 21.3.1998); “The victory march of the Dalai Lama leaves even the Pope pale with envy. In Hollywood the leader of is currently worshipped like a god ” (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998); “Buddhism is booming and no-one is really sure why” (*Bild* 19.3.1998); “ In Buddha’s arms more and more power women discover their souls behind the facade of success” (*Bunte*, 1.11.1997); “Buddhism is becoming a trend religion in Germany” (*Focus* 5/1994).

The USA and other western countries exhibit even higher growth rates than Germany. In the United States there are said to be 1.5 million Buddhists in the meantime. “An ancient religion grows ever stronger roots in a new world, with the help of the movies, pop culture and the politics of repressed Tibet” writes the news magazine *Time*. (*Time*, vol. 150 no. 15, October 13, 1997). Between New York and San Francisco Buddhist centers are springing up one after another, “religious refuges in which actors, but also managers and politicians flee for inner reflection. ... Nowhere outside of the Vatican do so many prominent pilgrims meet as in this ‘little Lhasa’ [i.e., Dharamsala]. Tibet is booming in the West. Buddhism is the religion *à la mode*. An audience with the god-king is considered the *non plus ultra*” reports the *Spiegel* (*Spiegel* 16/1998, pp. 109, 108). Tens of thousands of Americans and Europeans have performed some tantric practices, many hundreds have undertaken the traditional three-year *retreat*, and the number of ordained “Westerners” is constantly growing.

Tibetan Buddhism confronts Western civilization with an image of longing which invokes the buried and forgotten legacy of theocratic cultures (which in pre-modern times defined European politics as well). Here, after the many sober years of rationalism (since the French Revolution), half dead of thirst for divine revelation, the modern person comes across a bubbling spring. Lamas from “beyond the horizon”, revered in occult circles up until the middle of this century as enigmatic Eastern masters of a *secret doctrine* and who rarely met an ordinary person, have now descended from the “Roof of the World” and entered the over-sophisticated cities of western materialism. With them they have brought their old teachings of wisdom, their mystical knowledge, their archaic rites and secret magical practices. We can meet them in flesh and blood in London, New York, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Berlin, even in Jerusalem — as if a far Eastern fairytale had become true.

We have described often enough the political goal of this much-admired religious movement. It involves the establishment of a global Buddhocracy, a Shambhalization of the world, steered and governed, where possible, from Potala, the highest “Seat of the Gods” From there the longed-for Buddhist world ruler, the *Chakravartin*, is supposed to govern the globe and its peoples. Of course, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama would never speak so directly about this vision. But his prophet in the USA, Robert Thurman, is less circumspect.

### **Robert A. Thurman: “the academic godfather of the Tibetan cause”**

Robert Alexander Farrar Thurman, the founder and current head of the *Tibet House* in New York, traveled to Dharamsala in the early 1960s. There he was introduced to the Dalai Lama as “a crazy American boy, very intelligent, and with a good heart” who wanted to become a Buddhist monk. The Tibetan hierarch acceded to the young American’s wish, ordained him as the first Westerner to become a Tibetan monk, and personally supervised his studies and initiatory exercises. He considered Thurman’s training to be so significant that he required a weekly personal meeting. Thurman’s first teacher was Khen Losang Dondrub, Abbot of the Namgyal monastery which was

specifically commissioned to perform the so-called Kalachakra ritual. Later, the Kalmyk Geshe Wangal (1901–1983) was appointed as teacher of the “crazy” American (born 1941), who today maintains that he will be able to celebrate the Buddhization of the USA within his lifetime.

Having returned from India to the United States, Thurman began an academic career, studying at Harvard and translating several classic Buddhist texts from Tibetan. He then founded the “Tibet House” in New York, a missionary office for the spread of Lamaism in America disguised as a cultural institute.

Alongside the two actors Richard Gere and Steven Segal, Thurman is the crowd puller of Tibetan Buddhism in the USA. His famous daughter, the Hollywood actress Uma Thurman, who as a small child sat on the lap of the Tibetan “god-king”, has made no small contribution to her father’s popularity and opened the door to Hollywood celebrities. The *Herald Tribune* called Thurman “the academic godfather of the Tibetan cause” (*Herald Tribune*, 20 March 1997, p. 6) and in 1997 *Time* magazine ranked him among the 25 most influential opinion makers of America. He is described there with a telling ironic undertone as the “Saint Paul or Billy Graham of Buddhism” (*Time*, 28 April 1997, p. 42) Thurman is in fact extremely eloquent and understands how to fascinate his audience with powerful polemics and rhetorical brilliance. For example, he calls the Tibetans “the baby seals of the human right movement”.

In the Shugden affair, Thurman naturally took the side of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and proceeded with the most stringent measures against the “sectarians”, publicly disparaging them as the “Taliban of Buddhism”. When three monks were stabbed to death in Dharamsala he saw this murder as a ritual act: “The three were stabbed repeatedly and cut up in a way that was like exorcism” (*Newsweek*, 5 May 1997, p. 43).

Thurman is the most highly exposed intellectual in the American Tibet scene. His profound knowledge of the occult foundations of Lamaism, his intensive study of Tibetan language and culture, his initiation as the first Lamaist monk from the western camp, his rhetorical brilliance and not least his close connection to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, which is more than just a personal friendship and rests upon a religious political alliance, all make this man a major figure in the Lamaist world. The American is — as we shall see — the exoteric protagonist of an esoteric drama, whose script is written in what is known as the *Kalachakra Tantra*. He promotes a “cool revolution of the world community” and understands by this “a cool restoration of Lamaist Buddhism on a global scale”.

We met Robert Thurman in person at a Tibet Conference in Bonn (“Myth Tibet” in 1996). He was without doubt the most prominent and theatrical speaker and far exceeded the aspirations laid out by the conference. The organizers wanted to launch an academically aseptic discussion of Tibet and its history under the motto that our image of Tibet is a western projection. In truth, Tibet was and is a contradictory country like any other, and the Tibetans like other peoples have had a tumultuous history. The image of Tibet therefore needs to be purged of any occultism and one-sided glorification. Thus the most well-known figures of modern international Tibetology were gathered in Bonn. The proceedings were in fact surprisingly critical and an image of Tibet emerged which was able to peel away some illusions. There was no more talk of a faultless and spiritual Shangri-La up on the roof of the world.

Despite this apparently critical approach, the event must be described as a manipulation. First of all, the cliché that the West alone is responsible for the widespread image of Tibet found here was reinforced. We have shown at many points in our book that this blissful image is also a creation of the lamas and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama himself. Further, the fact that Lamaism possesses a world view in which western civilization is to be supplanted via a new Buddhist millennium and that it is systematically working towards this goal was completely elided from the debate in Bonn. It appears the globalizing claims of Tibetan Buddhism ought to be passed over silently. At this conference Tibet continued to be portrayed as the tiny country oppressed by the Chinese giant, and

the academics, the majority of whom were practicing Buddhists, presented themselves as committed ethnologists advocating, albeit somewhat more critically than usual, the rescue of an endangered culture of a people under threat. By and large this was the orientation of the conference in Bonn. It was hoped to create an island of “sober” scholarliness and expertise in order to inject a note of realism into the by now via the media completely exaggerated image of Tibet — in the justifiable fear that this could not be maintained indefinitely.

This carefully considered objective of the assembled Tibetologists was demolished by Thurman. In a powerfully eloquent speech entitled “Getting beyond Orientalism in approaching Buddhism and Tibet: A central concept”, he sketched a vision of the Buddhization of our planet, and of the establishment of a worldwide “Buddhocracy”. Here he dared to go a number of steps further than in his at that stage not yet published book, *Inner Revolution*. The quintessence of his dedicated presentation was that the decadent, materialistic West would soon go under and a global monastic system along Tibetan lines would emerge in its stead. This could well be based on traditional Tibet, which today at the end of the materialistic age appears modern to many: “Three hundred years before, this is the time, what I called modern Tibet, which is the Buddhocratic, unmilitaristic, mass-monastic society ...” (Thurman at the conference in Bonn).

Such perspectives clearly much irritated the conference organizers and immensely disturbed their ostensible attempt to introduce a note of academic clarity. The megalomaniac claims of Tibetan neo-Buddhism plainly and openly forced their way into the limelight during Thurman’s speech. A spectacular row with the officials resulted and Thurman left Bonn early.

Irrespective of one’s opinion of Thurman, his speech in Bonn was just plain honest; it called a spade a spade and remains an eminently important record since it introduced the term “Buddhocracy” into the discussion as something desirable, indeed as the sole safety anchor amid the fall of the Western world. Those who are familiar with the background to Lamaism will recognize that Thurman has translated into easily understood western terms the religious political global pretensions of the Tibetan system codified in the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The American “mouthpiece of the Dalai Lama” is the principal witness for the fact that a worldwide “Buddhocracy” is aspired to not just in the tantric rituals but also by the propagandists of Tibetan Buddhism. Thurman probably revised and tamed down his final manuscript for *Inner Revolution* in light of events in Bonn. There, the emotive terms *Buddhocracy* and *Buddhocratic* are no longer so central as they were in his speech in Bonn. Nonetheless a careful reading of his book reveals the Buddhocratic intentions are not hidden in any way. In order to more clearly give prominence to these intentions, however, we will review his book in connection with his speech in Bonn.

### **The stolen revolution**

Anybody who summarizes the elements of the political program running through Thurman’s book *Inner Revolution* from cover to cover will soon recognize that they largely concern the demands of the “revolutionary” grass roots movement of the 70s and 80s. Here there is talk of equality of the sexes, individual freedom, personal emancipation, critical thought, nonconformity, grass roots democracy, human rights, a social ethos, a minimum income guaranteed by the state, equality of access to education, health and social services for all, ecological awareness, tolerance, pacifism, and self-realization. In an era in which all these ideas no longer have the same attraction as they did 20 years ago, such nostalgic demands are like a balsam. The ideals of the recent past appear to have not been in vain! The utopias of the 1960s will be realized after all, indeed, according to Thurman, this time without any use of violence. The era of “cool revolution” has just begun and we learn that all these individual and social political goals have always been a part of Buddhist cultural tradition, especially Tibetan-style Lamaism.

With this move, Thurman incorporates the entire set of ideas of a protest generation which sought to change the world along human-political lines and harnesses it to a Tibetan/Buddhist world view. In this he is a brilliant student of his smiling master, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Tens of thousands

of people in Europe and America (including Petra Kelly and the authors) became victims of this skillful manipulation and believed that Lamaism could provide the example of a human-politically committed religion. Thousands stood up for Tibet, small and oppressed, because they revered in this country a treasure trove of spiritual and ethical values which would be destroyed by Chinese totalitarianism. Tibetan Buddhism as the final refuge of the social revolutionary ideals of the 70s, as the inheritance of the politically involved youth movement? This is — as we shall show — how Lamaism presents itself in Thurman's book, and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama gives this interpretation his approval. "Thurman explained to me how some Western thinkers have assumed that Buddhism has no intention to change society ... Thurman's book provides a timely correction to any lingering notions about Buddhism as an uncaring religion." (Thurman 1998, p. xiii)

But anyone who peeps behind the curtains must unfortunately ascertain that with his catalog of political demands Thurman holds a mirror up to the ideals of the "revolutionary" generation of the West, and that he fails to inform them about the reality of the Lamaist system in which used to and still does function along completely contrary social political lines.

### **Thurman's forged history**

In order to prevent this abuse of power becoming obvious, the construction of a forged history is necessary, as Thurman conscientiously and consistently demonstrates in his book. He presents the Tibet of old as a type of gentle "scholarly republic" of introspective monks, free of the turbulence of European/imperialist politics of business and war. In their seclusion these holy men performed over centuries a world mission, which is only now becoming noticeable. Since the Renaissance, Thurman explains, the West has effected the "outer modernity", that is the "outer enlightenment" through the scientific revolution. At the same time (above all since the rule of the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century) an "inner revolution" has taken place in the Himalayas, which the American boldly describes as "inner modernity": "So we must qualify what we have come to call 'modernity' in the West as 'materialistic' or 'outer' modernity, and contrast it with a parallel but alternative Tibetan modernity qualified as 'spiritualistic' or 'inner' modernity" (Thurman 1998, p. 247). At the 1996 conference in Bonn he did in fact refer to the "inner modernization of the Tibetan society".

Committed Buddhism, according to Thurman, is instigating a "cool revolution" (in the sense of 'calm'). It is "cool" in contrast to the "hot" revolutions of the Western dominated history of the world which demanded so many casualties. The five fundamental principles of this "cool revolution" are cleverly assigned anew to a Western (and not Oriental) system of values: transcendental individualism, nonviolent pacifism, educational evolutionism, ecosocial altruism, universal democratism.

For Thurman, the Tibetan culture of "sacralization", "magic", "enlightenment", "spiritual progress", and "peaceful monasticism" stands in opposition to a Western civilization of "secularization", "disenchantment", "rationalization", "profane belief in material progress", and "materialism, industrialism, and militarism" (Thurman 1998, p. 246). Even though the "inner revolution" is unambiguously valued more highly, the achievements of the West ought not be totally abandoned in the future. Thurman sees the world culture of the dawning millennium in a hierarchical (East over West) union of both. Upon closer inspection, however, this "cool revolution" reveals itself to be a "cool restoration" in which the world is to be transformed into a Tibetan-style Buddhist monastic state.

To substantiate Lamaism's global mission (the "cool revolution") in his book, Thurman had to distort Tibetan history, or the history of Buddhism in general. He needed to construct a pure, faultless and ideal history which from the outset pursued an exemplary, highly ethical task of instruction, aimed to culminate eschatologically in the Buddhization of the entire planet. The Tibetan monasteries had to be portrayed as bulwarks of peace and spiritual development, altruistically at work in the social interests of all. The image of Tibet of old needed to appear



appropriately noble-minded, “with”, Thurman says, “the cultivation of scholarship and artistry; with the administration of the political system by enlightened hierarchs; with ascetic charisma diffused among the common people; and with the development of the reincarnation institution. It was a process of the removal of deep roots in instinct and cultural patterns” (Thurman 1998, p. 231). A general misrepresentation in Thurman’s historical construction is the depiction of Buddhist society and especially Lamaism as fundamentally peaceful (to be played out in contrast to the deeply militaristic West): “[T]he main direction of the society was ecstatic and positive; intrigues, violence and persecution were rarer than in any other civilization” (Thurman 1998, p.36). Although appeals may be made to relevant sutras in support of such a pacifist image of Tibetan Buddhism, as a social reality it is completely fictive.

As we have demonstrated, the opposite is the case. Lamaism was caught up in bloody struggles between the various monastic factions from the outset. There was a terrible “civil war” in which the country’s two main orders faced one another as opponents. Political murder has always been par for the course and even the Dalai Lamas have not been spared. Even in the brief history of the exiled Tibetans it is a constant occurrence. The concept of the enemy was deeply anchored in ancient Tibetan culture, and persists to this day. Thus the destruction of “enemies of the teaching” is one of the standard requirements of all tantric ritual texts. The sexual magic practices which lie at the center of this religion and which Thurman either conceals or interprets as an expression of cooperation and sexual equality are based upon a fundamental misogyny. The social misery of the masses in old Tibet was shocking and repulsive, the authority of the priestly state was absolute and extended over life and death. To present Tibet’s traditional society as a political example for modernity, in which the people had oriented themselves toward a “broad social ethic” and in which anybody could achieve “freedom and happiness” (Thurman 1998, p. 138) is farcical.

Thus one shudders at the thought when Thurman opens up the following perspective for the world to come: “In the sacred history of the transformation of the wild frontier [pre-Buddhist] land of Tibet [into a Buddhocracy], we find a blueprint for completing the taming of our own wild world” (Thurman 1998, p. 220)

Thurman introduces the Buddhist emperor Ashoka (regnant from 272 to 236 B.C.E.), who “saw the practical superiority of moral and enlightened policy” (Thurman 1998, p. 115), as a political example for the times ahead. He portrays this Indian emperor as a “prince of peace” who — although originally a terrible hero of the battlefield — following a deep inner conversion abjured all war, transformed hate and pugnacity into compassion and nonviolence, and conducted a “spiritual revolution” to the benefit of all suffering beings. In the chapter entitled “A kingly revolution” (Thurman 1988, pp.109ff.), the author suggests that the Ashoka kingdom’s form of government, oriented along monastic lines, could today once again function as a model for the establishment of a worldwide Buddhist state. Thurman says that “[t]he politics of enlightenment since Ashoka proposes a truth-conquest of the planet—a Dharma-conquest, meaning a cultural, educational, and intellectual conquest” (Thurman 1998, p. 282).

Thurman wisely remains silent about the fact that this Maurya dynasty ruler was responsible for numerous un-Buddhist acts. For instance, under his reign the death penalty for criminals was not abolished, among whom his own wife, Tisyaraksita, must have been counted, as he had her executed. In a Buddhist (!) description of his life, a Sanskrit work titled *Ashokavandana*, it states that he at one stage had 18,000 non-Buddhists, presumably Jainas, put to death, as one of them had insulted the “true teaching”, albeit in a relatively mild manner. In another instance he is alleged to have driven a Jaina and his entire family into their house which he then ordered to be burnt to the ground.

Nonetheless, Emperor Ashoka is a “cool revolutionary” for Thurman. His politics proclaimed “a social style of tolerance and admiration of nonviolence. They made the community a secure establishment that became unquestioned in its ubiquitous presence as school for gentleness, concentration, and liberation of critical reason; asylum for nonconformity; egalitarian democratic

community, where decisions were made by consensual vote” (Thurman 1998, p. 117). To depict the absolutist emperor Ashoka as a guarantor and exemplar of an “egalitarian democratic community”, is a brilliant feat of arbitrary historical interpretation!

With equal emphasis Thurman presents the Indian/Buddhist *Maha Siddhas* (‘Grand Sorcerers’) as exemplary heroes of the ethos for whom there was no greater wish than to make others happy. However, as we have described in detail, these “ascetics who tamed the world” employed extremely dubious methods to this end, namely, they cultivated pure transgression in order to prove the vanity of all being. Their tantric, i.e., sexual magic, practices, in which they deliberately did evil (murder, rape, necrophagy) with the ostensible intention of creating something good, should, according to Thurman, be counted among the most significant acts of human civilization. Anyone who casts a glance over the “hagiographies” of these *Maha Siddhas* will be amazed at the barbaric consciousness possessed by these “heroes” of the tantric path. Only very rarely can socially ethical behavior be ascertained among these figures, who deliberately adopted asociality as a lifestyle.

But for Thurman these *Maha Siddhas* and their later Tibetan imitations are “radiant bodies of energy” upon whom the fate of humanity depends. “It is said that the hillsides and retreats of central Tibet were ablaze with the light generated by profound concentration, penetrating insights, and magnificent deeds of enthusiastic practitioners. The entire populace was moved by the energy released by individuals breaking through their age-old ignorance and prejudices and realizing enlightenment.” (Thurman 1998, pp. 227-228) When one compares the horrors of Tibetan history with the horrors in the tantric texts followed by the “enthusiastic practitioners”, then Thurman may indeed be correct. It is just that it was primarily dark energies which affected the Tibetan population and kept them in ignorance and servitude. Serfdom and slavery are attributes of old Tibetan society, just like an inhumane penal code and a pervasive oppression of women.

Padmasambhava, the supreme ambivalent founding figure of Tibetan Buddhism, is also celebrated by Thurman as an committed scholar of enlightenment. (Thurman 1998, 210). Nothing could be less typical of this sorcerer, who covered the Land of Snows with his excommunications and introduced the wrathful gods of pre-Buddhist Tibet in a horror army of aggressive protective spirits, not so that their terrible character could be transformed, but rather so that they could now protect with sword and fright the “true teaching of Buddha” from its enemies. Great scholars of the Gelugpa order have time and again pointed out the ambivalence of this iridescent “cultural founder” (Padmasambhava), among whose deeds are two brutal infanticides, and expressly distanced themselves from his barbaric lifestyle.

When the Indian scholar Atisha began his work in Tibet in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, he encountered a completely dissolute monastic caste in total chaos and where one could no longer speak of morals. At least this is what the historical records (the *Blue Annals*) report. Thurman suppresses this Lamaist moral collapse and simply maintains the opposite: “When Atisha arrived in Tibet, monastic practitioners were limiting themselves to strict moral and ritual observances” (Thurman 1998, p. 226). This is indeed a very euphemistic representation of the whoring and secularized monasteries against which Atisha took to the field with a new moral codex.

For Thurman, the Great Prayer Festival (Mönlam) institutionalized by Tsongkhapa and reactivated by the Fifth Dalai Lama, a raw Lamaist carnival in which monks were allowed absolutely everything and a truly horrible scapegoat ritual was performed, was a sacred event where “the power of compassion is manifest, the immediacy of grace is experienced” (Thurman 1998, p. 235). At another stage he says that, “[i]n Tibet, the Great Prayer Festival guaranteed the best of possibilities for everyone. People’s feelings of being in an apocalyptic time in a specially blessed and chosen land—in their own form of a “New Jerusalem”, a Kingdom of Heaven manifest on earth—had a powerful effect on the whole society” (Thurman 1998, pp. 238-239). When we compare this apotheosis of the said event with the already cited eyewitness report by Heinrich Harrer, we see the lack of restraint with which Thurman reveres the Tibet of old. Harrer, whose

portrayal is confirmed by many other travel accounts, regarded the scenario completely differently: “As if emerging from hypnosis”, writes the mentor of the young Dalai Lama, “at this moment the tens of thousands spring from order in to chaos. The transition is so sudden, that one is speechless. Shouting, wild gesticulation .. they trample over one another, almost murder each other. The still-weeping prayers, ecstatically absorbed, become ravers. The monastic soldiers begin their duty! Huge fellows with stuffed shoulders and blackened faces — so that the deterrent effect becomes even stronger. Ruthlessly they lay into the crowd with their batons ... one takes the blows wailing, but even the beaten return again. As if they were possessed by demons” (Heinrich Harrer, 1984, p. 142). — Thurman’s “New Jerusalem”, possessed by demons on the roof of the world? — an interesting scenario for a horror film!

We find a further pinnacle of Thurman’s historical falsification in the portrait of the greatest Lamaist potentate, the Fifth Dalai Lama. Of all people, this “Priest-King” attuned to the accumulation of external power and pomp is built up by the author in to a hero of the “inner revolution”. He paints the picture of a prudent and farsighted fathers of his country (“a gentle genius, scholar, and reincarnate saint” — Thurman 1998, p. 248), who is compelled — against his will and his fundamentally Buddhist attitude — to conduct a n horrific “civil war” (in which he lets great numbers of monks from other orders be massacred by the Mongol warriors summoned to the country). Thurman presents the conflict as a quarrel between various warlords in which the “peaceful” monks become embroiled.

Here again, the opposite was the case: the two chief Tibetan Buddhist orders of the time (Gelugpa and Kagyupa) were pulling the strings, even if they let worldly armies battle for them. Thurman misrepresents this monastic war as a battle between cliques of nobles and ultimately “the final showdown in Tibet between militarism and monasticism” (Thurman 1998, p. 249), whereby the latter as the party of peace is victorious thanks to the genius of the Fifth Dalai Lama and goes on to all but establish a “Buddha paradise” on earth.

All this is a pious/impudent invention of the American Tibetologist. The merciless warrior mentality of the Fifth Dalai Lama spread fear and alarm among his foes. His dark occult side, his fascination for the sexual magic of the Nyingmapa (which he himself practiced), his unrestrained rewriting of history and much more; these are all highly unpleasant facts, which are deliberately concealed by Thurman, since an historically accurate portrait of the “Great Fifth” could have embarrassing consequences, as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama constantly refers to this predecessor of his and has announced him to be his greatest example.

It would be wrong to deny the Fifth Dalai Lama any political or administrative skill; he was, just like his contemporary, Louis the Fourteenth, to whom he is often compared, an “ingenious” statesman. But this made him no prince of peace. His goal consisted of resolutely placing the fate of the country in the hands of the clergy with himself as the undisputed spiritual and secular leader. To this end (like the Fourteenth Dalai Lama today) he played the various orders off against one another. The Fifth Dalai Lama formulated the political foundations of a “Buddhocracy” which Robert Thurman would be glad to see as the model for a future worlds community, and which we wish to examine more closely in the next section.

### **A worldwide Buddhocracy**

At the conference on Tibet in Bonn mentioned above (“Mythos Tibet”, 1996) Robert Thurman with stirring pathos prophesied the “fall of the West” and left no doubt that the future of our planet lies in a worldwide, as he stressed literally, “Buddhocracy”. Europe has renounced its sacred past, demystified its natural environment, established a secular realm, and closed off access to the sacred “represented by monasticism and its organized striving for perfection”. Materialism, industrialization and militarization have taken the place of the sacred (Thurman 1998, p. 246).

At the same time a reverse process has taken place in Tibet. Society has become increasingly

sacralized and devoted itself to the creation of a “buddhaverse”. (In the wake of the Tibetologists’ criticisms in Bonn, Thurman appears to have opted for his own neologism “buddhaverse” in place of the somewhat offensive “Buddhocracy”; the meaning intended remains the same.) A re-enchantment of reality has taken place in Tibet, and the system is dedicated to the perfection of the individual. The warrior spirit has been dismantled. All these claims are untrue, and can be disproved by countless counterexamples. Nevertheless, Thurman presumes to declare them expressions of traditional Tibet’s “inner modernity”, which is ultimately superior to Europe’s “outer modernity”: “As Europe was pushing away the Pope, the Church, and the enchantment of everyday life, Tibet was turning over the reins of its country to a new kind of government, which cannot properly be called ‘theocratic’, since the Tibetans do not believe in an omnipotent God, but which can be called ‘Buddhocratic’” (Thurman 1998, p. 248). This form of government is supposed to guide our future. At the Tibet conference in Bonn, Thurman made this clearer: “Yes, not theocratic, because that brings [with it a] comparison to the Holy Roman Empire ... because it has the conception of an authoritarian God controlling the universe” (Thurman at the conference in Bonn). Thurman seems to think the concept of an “authoritarian Buddha” does not exist, although this is precisely what may be found at the basis of the Lamaist system.

For the author, the monasticization of Tibetan society was a lucky millennial event for humanity which reached its preliminary peak in the era in which the Gelugpa order was founded by Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) and the institution of the Dalai Lama was established. In Bonn Thurman praised this period as “the millennium of the fifteenth century of the planetary unique form of modern Tibetan society ... [which] led to the unfolding in the seventeenth century [of] what I call post-millennial, inwardly modern, mass-monastic, or even Buddhocratic [society]”. Tsongkhapa is presented as the founding father of this “modern Tibet”: he “was a spiritual prodigy. ... He perceived a cosmic shift from universe to buddhaverse” (Thurman 1998, pp. 232–233).

The Tibet of old was, according to Thurman, just such a buddhaverse, an earthly “Buddha paradise”, governed by nonviolence and wisdom, generosity, sensitivity, and tolerance. An exemplary enlightened consciousness was cultivated in the monastic Jewel Community. The monasteries provided the guarantee that politics was conducted along ethical lines: “The monastic core provides the cocoon for the free creativity of the lay Jewel Community” (Thurman 1998, p. 294).

This “monastic form of government”, pre-tested by Old Tibet, provides a vision for the future for Thurman: “I am very interested in this. I feel a very strong trend in this [direction]” (Thurman’s presentation in Bonn). The “monasticization” which was then (i.e., in the fifteenth century) spreading through Asia whilst the doors to the monasteries of Europe were closing, has once again become significant on a global political level. “And if you study Max Weber carefully... in fact what secularization and industrial progress brought had a lot to do with the slamming of the monastery doors. ... So, a monastic form of government is an unthinkable thing for Western society. We often say Tibet is frozen in the Middle Ages because Tibet is not secularized in the way the Western world is! It moved out of the balance between sacred and secular and went into a sacralization process and enchanted the universe. The concrete proof of that was that the monasteries provided the government” (Thurman in Bonn).

Here, Thurman is paraphrasing Weber’s thesis of the “disenchantment of the world” which accompanied the rise of capitalism. The “re-enchantment of the world” is a political program for him, which can only be carried out by Lamaist monks. Monasticism “is the shelter and training ground for the nonviolent ‘army’, the shock troops for the sustained social revolution the Buddha initiated ...” (Thurman 1998, p. 294, § 15). The monastic clergy would progressively assume control of political matters via a three-stage plan. In the final phase of this plan, “the society is able to enjoy the universe of enlightenment, and Jewel Community institutions [the monasteries] openly take responsibility for the society’s direction” (Thurman 1998, p. 296, § 24).

But this is no unreal utopia, since “Tibetan society is the only one in planetary history in which this

third phase has been partially reached” (Thurman 1998, p. 296, § 25). In this sentence Thurman quite plainly proclaims a Buddhocracy along Lamaist lines to be the next model for the world community! Elsewhere, the Tibetologist is more precise: “The countercultural monastic movement no longer needs to lie low and is able to give the ruling powers advice, spiritual and social. Enlightened sages can begin to advise their royal disciples on how to conduct the daily affairs of society, such as what should be their policies and practices. Likewise, after a long period of such evolution, the entire movement can reach a cool fruition, when the countercultural enlightenment movement becomes mainstream and openly takes responsibility for the whole society, which eventually happened in Tibet” (Thurman 1998, p. 166, footnote).

According to Thurman, the Lamaist clergy assumes political power with — as we shall see — the incarnation of a super-being at its helm, an absolute monarch, who unites spiritual and worldly power within himself. The triumphant advance of the monastic system began in India in around 500 B.C.E. and spread throughout all of Asia in the intervening years. But this, Thurman says, is only a prelude: “The phenomenal success of monasticism, eventually Eurasia-wide, can be understood as the progressive truth-conquest of the world” (Thurman 1998, p. 105). Pie in the sky, or a event soon to come? Thurman’s statements on this are contradictory. In his book he talks of a “hope for the future”. But in interviews with the press, he has let it be known that he will experience the Buddhization of America in his own lifetime. In 1997, his friend, the Hollywood actor Richard Gere, was also convinced that the transformation of the world into a Buddhocracy would occur suddenly, like an atomic explosion, and that the “critical mass” would soon be reached (*Herald Tribune*, 20 March 1997, p. 6).

According to the author, the Lamaist power elite of the coming “Buddhocracy” is basically immortal because of the incarnation system. They already pulled the political strings in Tibet in the past, and will, in the author’s opinion, assume this role for the entire world in future: “Whatever the spiritual reality of these reincarnations, the social impact of this form of leadership was immense. It sealed the emerging spirituality of Tibetan society, in that death, which ordinarily interrupts progress in any society, could no longer block positive development. Just as Shakyamuni could be present to the practitioner through the initiation procedure and the sophisticated visualization techniques, so fully realized saints and sages were not withdrawn by death from their disciples, who depended on them to attain fulfillment (Thurman 1998, p. 231).

One can only be amazed — at the impudence with which Thurman praises the “Buddhocracy” of the Lamas as the highest form of “democracy”; at how he portrays Tibetan Buddhism, which is based upon a ritual dissolution of the individual, as the highest level of individual development; at how he depicts Tantrism, with its morbid sexual magic techniques for male monks to absorb feminine energies, as the only religion in which god and goddess are worshipped as balanced equals; at how he glorifies the cruel war gods and warrior monks of the Land of Snows as pacifists; at how he presents the medieval/monastic social form of Tibet as an expression of the modern and as offering the only model for a global world-society.

### **Tibet a land of enlightenment?**

The Tibet of old, with its monastic culture was, according to Thurman, the cosmic energy body which irradiated our world in enlightened consciousness. “Hidden in the last thousand years of Tibet’s civilization”, the author says, “is a continuous process of inner revolution and cool evolution. In spiritual history, Tibet has been the secret dynamo that throughout this millennium has slowly turned the outer world toward enlightenment. Thus Tibetan civilization’s unique role on the inner plane of history assumes a far greater importance than material history would indicate” (Thurman 1998, p. 225). In Thurman’s version of history, it was not the Western bourgeoisie which fought for its freedoms and human rights in battle with the institutions of the Church; rather, all this was thought out in advance by holy men meditating among the Himalayan peaks: “The recent appearance of modern consciousness in the industrial world is not something radically new or unprecedented. Modern consciousness has been developed all over Asia in the Buddhist

subcultures for thousands of years” (Thurman 1998, p. 255). —And it flowed into the consciousness of the modern, Western cultural elite as an Eastern energy source. That is, to speak clearly, the Tibetan monks meditating were one of the causes of the European Enlightenment. A bold thesis indeed, in which a Tibet controlled by a belief in ghosts, oracles, torture chambers, the oppression of women, and human super-beings becomes the cradle of modern rationalism.

The enlightening radiation began, says Thurman, with the Tibetan scholar Tsongkhapa’s edifice of teachings and the founding of the Gelugpa order: “This tremendous release of energy caused by thousands of minds becoming totally liberated in a short time was a planetary phenomenon, like a great spiritual pulsar emitting enlightenment in waves broadcast around the globe” (Thurman 1998, p. 233). Accordingly, Thurman considers all of the great Tibetan scholars of past centuries to be more significant and comprehensive than their European “peers”. They were “scientific heroes”, “the quintessence of scientists in this nonmaterialistic civilization [i.e., Tibet]” (quoted by Lopez in *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, p. 81). As “psychonauts” they conquered inner space in contrast to the western “astronauts” (again quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 81). But the “stars” of modern European philosophy like Hume and Kant, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Hegel and Heidegger, Thurman speculates, could also at some future time turn out to be line-holders for and emanations of the Bodhisattva of knowledge, *Manjushri* (Lopez, 1998, p. 264). *Ex oriente lux* — now also true for occidental science.

This incorporation of the Western cultural heroes is an underground current which flows through the entire neo-Buddhist scene. It is outwardly strictly denied, through the Dalai Lama’s demands for tolerance in broad publicity. In contrast, writings accumulate in the milieu, which celebrate Jesus Christ as an avatar of the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* for example, the same super-being who has also been incarnated as the Dalai Lama. A recurrent image of modern myth building is the placement of the Tibetans on a par with the Nazarene.

### **Thurman as “high priest” of the Kalachakra Tantra**

A worldwide Buddhocratic vision of Tibetan Buddhism is contained in what is known as the *Kalachakra Tantra* (the “Wheel of Time”). We have studied and commented upon this central Lamaist ritual in detail. The goal of the *Kalachakra Tantra* is the construction of a superhuman being, the ADI BUDDHA, whose control encompasses the entire universe, both spiritually and politically, “a mythical world-conqueror” (Thurman 1998, p. 292, § 5).

From a metapolitical point of view, Robert Thurman appears to have been appointed to implant the ideas of the *Kalachakra Tantra* in the West. We have already noted that the teacher the Dalai Lama assigned him to was Khen Losang Dondrub, Abbot of the Namgyal monastery which is especially commissioned to perform the *Kalachakra* ritual. In the USA he was in constant contact with the Kalmyk lama Geshe Wangyal (1901–1983). Lama Wangyal was Robert Thurman’s actual “line guru”, and this line leads via Wangyal directly to the old master Agvan Dorjiev (Lama Wangyal’s guru). Dorjiev the Buriat, Wangyal the Kalmyk, and Thurman the American thus form a chain of initiation. From a tantric point of view the spirit of the master lives on in the form of the pupil. One can thus assume that Thurman as Dorjiev’s successor represents an emanation of the extremely aggressive protective divinity Vajrabhairava who is supposed to have become incarnate in the Buriat. At any rate the American must be drawn into the context of the global *Shambhala* utopia, which was the principal concern of Dorjiev’s metapolitics.

What Thurman understands by this can be most clearly illustrated by a vision which was bestowed upon him in a dream in September 1979, before he saw the Dalai Lama again for the first time in eight years: “The night before he landed in New York, I dreamed he was manifesting the pure land mandala palace of the Kalachakra Buddha right on top of the Waldorf Astoria building. The entire collection of dignitaries of the city, mayors and senators, corporate presidents and kings, sheikhs and sultans, celebrities and stars—all of them were swept up into the dance of 722 deities of the three buildings of the diamond palace like pinstriped bees swarming on a giant honeycomb. The

amazing thing about the Dalai Lama's flood of power and beauty was that it appeared totally effortless. I could feel the space of His Holiness's heart, whence all this arose. It was relaxed, cool, an amazing well of infinity" (Thurman 1998, p. 18).

The magic projection of the Tibetan "god-king" as ADI BUDDHA and world ruler cannot be illustrated more vividly. He reigns as some kind of queen bee in the middle of New York, and lets the world's greatest, whom he has bewitched with sweet honey, dance to his tune. It is typical that there is no mention of grass roots democracy here, and that it is just the political, business, and show business Establishment which performs the sweet dance of the bees. Anyone who is aware how much significance is granted to such dreams in the world of Tibetan initiation will without further ado recognize a metapolitical program in Thurman's vision. [1]

In 1992, as Director of Tibet House in New York City which he co-founded with Richard Gere, he sponsored "the *Kalachakra* Initiation at New York's Madison Square Garden." (Farrer-Halls 1998, p. 92) The Tibet Center houses a three dimensional *Kalachakra* Mandala and the only life sized statue of the *Kalachakra* deity outside of Tibet. Following the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, "The Samaya Foundation, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and the Port Authority jointly sponsored the Wheel of Time (*Kalachakra*) Sand Mandala, or Circle of Peace, in the lobby of Tower 1." (Darton 1999, p. 219) For over thirty days, many of the World Trade Center workers and visitors were invited by the Namgyal Monks to participate in the construction of the mandala. It is said that, "Its shape symbolized nature's unending cycle of creation and destruction and in the countless grains of its material, it celebrated life's energy taking ephemeral form, then returning to its source. At the end of the mandala's month long lifespan, the monks swept up the sand and "offered it to the Hudson River." This ritual, they believed, purified the environment. (Darton 1999, p. 219)

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**Report of a former participant of the *Kalachakra* Ceremony in New York: "Get a call from one of my *Kalachakra* sisters I haven't heard from since the Indiana *Kalachakra* in '99. [...] The topic shifted to the *Kalachakra* Mandala that was made at One World Trade Center. I was at the dissolution ceremony there, may be around '96. The monks gathered up all the sand from the Mandala at 1 WTC, put it in a vase, then carried it across the bridge into World Financial Center through the Winter Garden, then dumped the sand ceremoniously into the Hudson River for the sake of World Peace. The surface of the river glittered with the afternoon sun, and I cried. 5 years later, the whole building is gone, just like the sand Mandala."**

See: <http://home.earthlink.net/~kamitera/news.html>

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Thurman's devoted commitment as Lamaist initiand, his absolute loyalty to the Dalai Lama, his consistent vision of an earthly "Buddha paradise", his uncompromising affirmation of a Buddhocratic state, his involvement with the world of the Tibetan gods which reaches even into his own dreams, his systematic training by the highest Tibetan lamas over many years—all these certify Thurman to be a "Shambhala warrior", a Buddhist hero, who according to legend prepares for the establishment of the kingdom of Shambhala over our globe. This is the goal of the *Kalachakra* ritual (the "Wheel of Time" ritual) performed all over the world by the Dalai Lama. Thurman has, he reports, seen the Dalai Lama in a vision as the supreme time god above the Waldorf Astoria. But even here he conceals that the Shambhala myth is not peaceful, and can only be realized after a world war in which all nonbelievers (non-Buddhists) are destroyed.

Perhaps such a perspective frightens some Western intellectuals? No worries, Thurman reassures them, "who is afraid of the Dalai Lama? Who is afraid of Avalokiteshvara? No Tibetans are afraid" (Thurman in Bonn). How could one be afraid of the supreme enlightened being currently on earth? He, in whom all three levels are compressed, "that of the selfless monk, the king, and the great adept" (Thurman), who is (as great adept) preparing the creation of "a buddhaversal human society" (Thurman 1998, p. 39), even if he (as king and statesman) is still concentrating chiefly on the concerns of Tibet. Then, "Tibet's unique focus on enlightenment civilization makes the nation crucial to the world's development of spiritual and social balance" (Thurman 1998, p. 39).

Thurman is convinced that the Dalai Lama represents a projection of the ADI BUDDHA, who can

liberate the world from its valley of sorrows. He describes very precisely the micro- and macrocosmic dimensions of such a redemptive being in the form of the Fifth Dalai Lama. If humanity were to recognize the divine presence behind the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, it could calmly place its political matters in his hands, just as the Tibetan populace did in the time of the “Great Fifth”: “Small wonder”, Thurman tells to his readers. “Suppose the people of a catholic country were to share a perception of a particular spiritual figure as not simply a representative of God, as in the Pope being the vicar of Christ, but as an actual incarnation of the Savior—or, say an incarnation of the Archangel Gabriel. In such a situation it would not be strange for the nation to reach a point where the divine would actually take responsibility for the government. In Tibet, this moment was the culmination of centuries of grass-roots millennial consciousness, the political ratification of the millennial direction that had been intensifying since the Great Prayer Festival tradition had begun in 1409. The sense of the presence of an enlightened being was widespread enough for the people to join together after the last conflict and entrust to him their land and their fate” (Thurman 1998, pp. 250–251).

There is no need to read between the lines, simply paying close attention to the text of his book is enough to be able to recognize that, for Thurman, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama represents the quintessence of political wisdom and decisive power for the coming millennium. The author draws attention to the five principles of his planetary political program: “nonviolence, individualism, education, and altruistic correctness. The fifth [principle], global democratism, is exemplified in His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama himself” (Thurman 1998, p. 279). The Tibetan “god-king” as the incarnation of universal democracy—a true piece of bravura in Thurman’s “political theology”. No wonder the “god-king” applauds him so roundly in his foreword: “I commend him for his careful study and clear explanations, and I recommend his insights for your own reflections” (Thurman 1998, p. xiv).

According to Thurman, the USA is the first western country in which the lamas’ Buddhocratic vision will prevail: “Most of the teachers from the various enlightenment movements seem to agree on one thing: If there is to be a renaissance of enlightenment sciences in our times, it will have to begin in America. America is the land of extreme dichotomies: the great materialism and the greatest disillusionment with materialism; great self-indulgence and great self-transcendence” (Thurman 1998, p. 280). The Dalai Lama (“the fifth [principle of] global democratism”) as the next American president? —But if he dies?—No worries, thanks to the system of incarnation he may remain among us as priest and king for ever.

Thurman’s methods, adapting himself to the point of self-deception to the consciousness and the customs of his environment (in this case the western democratic environment), but without losing sight of the actual grand metapolitical goal, has a long tradition in Tibet. Padmasambhava, for instance, Buddhized the Land of Snows by integrating with aplomb the various tribal cultures which he encountered on his missionary travels into his tantric system, together with their particular ideas and cultic practices. In doing so he was so skillful that the pre-Buddhist inhabitants of Tibet believed Buddhism to be no more than the realization of their own traditional expectations of salvation. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is masterfully repeating this heuristic principle from his eighth-century incarnation on the world stage. In the meantime he knows all the variations and rules of the game of Western civilization and has managed to generate a public image as a great reformer and democrat who brilliantly combines modern political fundamentals with old Eastern teachings of wisdom. There are countless sermons from him in which he strongly advises his audience to stay true to their own religious tradition, since in the end they all come to the same thing. Such superior invitations have as we shall see a *double-bind* effect. People are so enthused by the ostensible tolerance of Tibetan Buddhism and its supreme representative that they become converts to the *Dharma* and ensnared in the tantric web.

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#### Footnotes:

[1] During the UN-organized Millennium Festival of Religions at the end of August 2000, at which over a



thousand religious representatives were present, the Dalai Lama was supposed to stay in the Waldorf Astoria. Without doubt, thanks to his charisma and pretended precept of tolerance, the Kundun would have become the center of the entire occasion. But after great pressure was applied by the Chinese he was not invited. At this, a segment of the organizers resolved to encourage him to take part in a kind of private rally at the end of the assembly in the Waldorf Astoria hotel. But the Kundun declined. Robert Thurman's vision of the *Kalachakra* Buddha at the summit of the Waldorf Astoria did not eventuate.

Next Chapter:

[16. TACTICS, STRATEGIES, FORGERIES, ILLUSIONS](#)

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 The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 16

**The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 16. Tactics, Strategies, Forgeries, Illusions**

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## 16. TACTICS, STRATEGIES, FORGERIES, ILLUSIONS

From a western point of view, religion and politics have been neatly and cleanly separated from one another since the modern era (18<sup>th</sup> century). In this sense a clear distinction is drawn here between the spread of Tantric Buddhism and the question of Tibet's international legal status. However, for an ancient culture like the Tibetan one, such a division is just not possible. In it, all levels — the mystic, the mythic, the symbolic, and the ritual — are addressed by every political event. From a Tibetan viewpoint it is thus completely logical that the liberation of the Land of Snows from the claws of the Chinese dragon be blown up into an exemplary deed that should benefit the whole planet. "To save Tibet means to save the world!" is a widespread slogan, even among committed Westerners.

Just like the teachings of the Buddha, the political issue of Tibet at first evoked little resonance among the western public. Those who broached the topic of the fate of the Tibetan people in American and European governmental circles generally encountered rejection and disinterest. But this dismissive stance changed in the mid-eighties. With increasing frequency, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was officially received by western heads of state who had previously refused to be in public contact with him for fear of Chinese protests.

### **The "Tibet Lobby"**

Since 1985 the so-called *Tibet lobby* has been at work in numerous countries. This is a cross-party collection of parliamentary representatives who in their respective parliaments advocate a Tibet resolution that morally condemns China for its constant human rights abuses and "cultural genocide". A recognition of Tibet as an autonomous state is not linked to such resolutions. At the

*Tibet Support Groups* Conference in Bonn (in 1996), Tim Nunn from England gave a paper on the methods (the *upaya*) of successful lobbying: well-groomed appearance, diplomatic language, proper dress, skilled presentation, and the like. Mr. Nunn was able to point to successes — 131 members of the British Lower House had engaged themselves for the cause of the Land of Snows in London (Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, 1996, pp. 77ff.).

In the USA the lawyer Michael van Walt van Praag has successfully argued the interests of the Tibetan government in exile to both Senators and Congressmen. He succeeded in getting a resolution on Tibet passed in the U.S. Senate. One of his greatest political successes was when in 1991 the *Kundun* was permitted to take his place in the rotunda and address the American House of Congress. Afterwards he met with President George Bush. Bush signed an official document in which Tibet was described as an “occupied country”. Since 1990 *The Voice of America* has begun broadcasting programs in Tibetan. A new broadcaster, *Free Asia*, which also has a Tibet department, has recently been approved by Congress. As of 1997, the *State Department* appointed a “special representative for Tibet” who is supposed to have the task of negotiating between the *Kundun* and China.

In early September 1995, the Dalai Lama smilingly embraced Senator Jesse Helms, renowned for his ultra-conservative stance. This was a high point in the thoroughgoing reverence the Republicans have shown him.

The Democrats barely acknowledged such conservative solidarity, since it was they who smoothed the way for the “liberal” god-king to reach a broad public. The American President, Bill Clinton, and his Vice-president, Al Gore, were initially reserved and ambivalent towards the Dalai Lama, whom they have met several times. The American government’s position is expressed unambiguously in a statement from 1994: „Because we do not recognize Tibet as an independent state, the United States does not conduct diplomatic relations with the *self-styled* the ‘Tibetan government-in-exile’“ it says there (Goldstein, 1997, p. 121).

But after several meetings with President Clinton and his wife Hillary the god-king was able to make a lasting impression on the presidential couple. Clinton committed himself as never before to resolving the question of Tibet. One of the major points of his trip to China (in 1998) was to encourage Jiang Zemin to take up contact with the Dalai Lama. Every western head of state who visits the Middle Kingdom now reiterates this, which has led to success: in the meantime the two parties (Beijing and Dharamsala) confer constantly behind closed doors.

In 1989 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel peace prize. The fact that he received this high accolade has less to do with the political situation in Tibet than, above all, the bloody events in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, where numerous Chinese students protesting against the regime lost their lives. The West wanted to morally condemn China and the Tibet lobby was successful in proposing an honoring of His Holiness as the best means of doing so.

From now on the god-king possessed an international prominence like never before. The Oslo award could almost be said to have granted him a passport and access to the majority of world heads of state. There was hardly a president who still in the face of Chinese protests refused to officially receive the god-king, at least as a religious representative. In Ireland, France, Liechtenstein, Austria, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Russia, the USA, Canada, England, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Israel, Japan, Taiwan, Gabun, Australia, New Zealand, several South American countries — everywhere the “modest monk” was honored like a pontiff.

In 1996 the lobbyists succeeded in maneuvering Germany into a spectacular confrontation with China through the passing of a resolution Tibet in the *Bundestag* (the German lower house). The resolution was supported by all parties in parliament, be they green, left, liberal, or conservative. The paradoxical side to this move was that both the Dalai Lama and the Chinese were able to profit from it whilst the naïve Germans had to pay up. This coup represents the *Kundun*’s party’s greatest

political success in the West to date. On the other hand, the Chinese succeeded in inducing the intimidated German federal government into continuing to grant China the much desired Hermes securities formerly refused them. For Beijing, with this agreement in hand, the question of Tibet in its relations with Germany was resolved for now. Even if we cannot speak of a direct cooperation here, according to the *cui bonum* principle the two Asian parties profited greatly by drawing an essentially uninvolved nation into the conflict.

The media management of the *Kundun's* followers is by now perfect. Numerous offices in all countries, above all the *Tibet Information Network* (TIN) in London, supply the press with material about the serious shortcomings in the Land of Snows, life in the community of Tibetan exiles, and the activities of the god-king. There is successful cooperation with Chinese dissidents. Reports from Beijing, which admittedly can only be treated with great caution but nonetheless include much important information, are uniformly dismissed by Dharamsala as communist propaganda. This one-sidedness in the assessment of Tibetan affairs has in the meantime also been adopted by the western press corps.

For example, when at the invitation of the Chinese the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, visited Lhasa as the first western head of government and afterwards announced that the situation in the Tibet capital was by no means so criminal as it was portrayed to be by the Dalai Lama's office, he was lambasted in the media, who declared that he was prepared to sell his morals for financial considerations. But when he was there, the former American President Jimmy Carter, renowned for his great commitment to human rights, also gained the same impression (Grunfeld, 1996, p. 232).

The issue of Tibet has become an important means of anchoring Tantric Buddhism in the West. As a *political issue* it appears in the West to be completely divorced from any religious instrumentalization. The *Kundun* appears in public as a campaigner for peace, a democrat, a humanist, as an advocate of the oppressed. This skillfully adapted western/ethical "mixture" gains him unrestricted access to the highest levels of government. Although some politicians may see a confirmation of their ideals in the (ostensible) behavior of the Dalai Lama, fundamentally it is probably power-political motives which determine Western policy on Asia. The West's relationship with China is namely extremely ambivalent. On the one hand there is a hope for good economic and political ties to the prospering country with its unbounded markets, on the other a deep-seated fear of a future Chinese superpower. The political situation in Tibet and the circumstances of the Tibetans in exile afford sufficient grounds to be employed as an argument against a potential Chinese imperialism.

### The "Greens"

In Germany the issue of Tibet was first taken up by *green* politicians, primarily by the parliamentary representatives Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian. Their pro-Tibetan intervention is still marked by a continuing success. "Major entertainers and environmentalists", wrote the *Spiegel* magazine, "have found a common denominator in their commitment to the kingdom on the roof of the world. *Hollywood* meets *Robin Hood* — Tibet's Buddhism is the common denominator" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 109). Petra Kelly's selfless engagement was later interpreted as a form of "engaged Buddhism" whose principle concerns were said to include the defense of human rights, ecological responsibility, and sexual equality. [1] The *Kundun* cleverly co-opted all these western demands and suddenly (at the end of the eighties) appeared on the political stage as a spearhead of the global ecological movement.

„Green politics" and environmental issues have in the meantime attained a central place within the political propaganda of the Tibetans in exile. There are hundreds of conferences such as the one introduced by His Holiness in 1993 under the title of „Ecological responsibility: A dialog with Buddhism". The *Kundun* is a member of the ecologically oriented *Goal Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival*. In 1992 he visited the *Greenpeace* flagship, the *Rainbow Warrior*. And at the „global forum" in Rio de Janeiro the Dalai Lama had far-reaching

things to say about the earth's problems: „This blue planet of ours is a delightful habitat. Its life is our life; its future our future. Indeed, the earth acts like a mother to all. Like children, we are dependent on them. ... Our Mother Earth is teaching us a lesson in universal responsibility”, the god-king announced emotionally. ([www.tibet.com/Eco/dleco4.html](http://www.tibet.com/Eco/dleco4.html))

Since the late eighties it has become normal at international environmental meetings all around the world to describe the Tibet of old as an ecological paradise, where wild gazelles and “snow lions” eat from the monks' hands, as the Dalai Lama's brother (Thubten Jigme Norbu) put it at a Tibet conference in Bonn (in 1996). For thousands of years, it says in edifying writings, the Tibetans have revered plants and animals as their equals. “Historical” idylls such as the following are taken literally by innocently trusting Westerners: „The Tibetan traditional heritage, which is known to be over three thousand years old[!], can be distinguished as one of [the] foremost traditions of the world in which ... humankind and its natural environment have persistently remained in perfect harmony” (Huber, 2001, p. 360).

What glowed in the past should also shine in the future. Accordingly many western followers of the *Kundun* imagine how the once flourishing garden will bloom again after his return to the Land of Snows. His Holiness is also generously accommodating towards this image of desire and promises to found the first ecological state on earth in a “liberated” Tibet — for many “Greens” a glimmer of hope in a world that constantly neglects its environmental responsibilities.

Today, among many committed members of the international “ecological scene”, being green, environmentally friendly, nature-loving, vegetarian, and Tibetan Buddhist, are all but identical. But is there any truth in such an equivalence? Was the Tibet of old really an “earthly garden of paradise”? Is the essence of Tantric Buddhism pro-nature and animal-loving?

#### *Tibetan Buddhism's hostility towards nature*

No complicated research is required to establish that the inhabitants of the Tibet of old, like all highlands peoples, had an ambivalent relationship with nature, in which fear and horror in the face of constant catastrophes (turns in the weather, cold, famines, accidents, illnesses) predominated. Nature, which was (and often still is) in fact experienced *animistically* as being inhabited by spirits, was only rarely a friend and partner; instead, most of the time it was a malevolent and destructive force, in many instances a terrifying demoness. We have presented some of these anti-human nature spirits in our chapter on *Anarchy and Buddhism*. Using violence, trickery, and magic they have to be compelled, tamed, and not un rarely killed.

In a comprehensive study (*Civilized Shamans*), the Tibet researcher Geoffrey Samuel has demonstrated that the violent subjugation of a wild nature is a drama constantly repeated within the Tibetan monastic civilization: beginning with the nailing down of the Tibetan primeval earth mother, *Srinmo*, by King *Songtsen Gampo* so as to erect the central shrines of the Land of Snows over her wounds, the construction of every Lamaist temple (no matter where in the world) was and is prefaced by a ritual that refreshes the dreadful stigmatization of the “earth mother”. *Srinmo* is undoubtedly the (Tibetan) emanation of “Mother Earth” or “Mother Nature” whom the Dalai Lama so emotionally pleads to rescue at international ecology congresses (“the earth acts like a mother to all”). It was the *Kundun* himself — if we take his doctrine of incarnation literally — who in the form of *Songtsen Gampo* many centuries ago nailed down “Mother Earth” (*Srinmo*). He himself laid the bloody foundations (the maltreated body of *Srinmo*) upon which his clerical and andocentric system rests. It is he himself who repeats this aggressive “taming act” at every public performance of the *Kalachakra* ritual: before a sand mandala is created, the local nature spirits (some interpreters say the earth mother *Srinmo*) are nailed to the ground with *phurbas* (ritual daggers).

The equation of nature with the feminine principle is an archetypical move that we find in most cultures. The Greek *Gaia* and Tibetan *Srinmo* are just two different names for the same divine substance of the earth mother. In European alchemy, nature is the starting point (the *prima materia*)

for the magic experiments and likewise a *principium feminile*. We have examined the close interconnection of alchemy and Tantrism in detail and proved that in both systems the feminine principle is sacrificed for the benefit of a masculine experimenter. By adopting for ourselves the tantric way of seeing things in which everything is linked to everything else, we were able to recognize the nailing down of *Srinmo* (the symbol-laden primal event of Tibetan history) as the historical predecessor of the “tantric/alchemic female sacrifice”. *Songtsen Gampo* sacrificed the “earth mother” so as to acquire her energies for himself, just as every tantra master sacrifices his *karma mudra* so as to absorb her *gynergy*.

In recent decades numerous books have appeared that address the disrespect, enslavement, and dismemberment of nature by the modern scientific world view and technology. Many of the analyses, especially when they are the work of feminist authors, indicate that the destruction and control of nature are to be equated with the superiority of the masculine principle over the feminine, of the god over the goddess, in brief with the supremacy of patriarchy. This critical view of the history of oppression and exploitation of the scientific age has largely obscured the view of atavistic religions’ hostility towards nature, especially when these come from the east, like Tibetan Buddhism.

But Buddhist Tantrism, we would like to unreservedly claim, is hostile to nature and therefore ecologically hostile *in principle*, because it destroys the natural, sensual, and feminine sphere so as to render it useful for the masculine. Further, in the performance of his enlightenment rituals, every tantra master burns up all the *natural* components of his own human body and, parallel to this (on a macrocosmic level), the entire *natural* universe. From a traditional viewpoint nature consists of a checkered mixture of the different elements (fire, water, earth, air, ether). In Tantrism, however, fire destroys the other elementary constituents. In the final instance it is the “fiery” SPIRIT which subjugates everything else, but NATURE in particular. Let us recall that *Avalokiteshvara*, the incarnation father of the Dalai Lama, acts as the “Lord of Fire” and the Bodhisattva of our age.

Nor were the centers of civilization in former Tibet at all environmentally friendly. The Lhasa of tradition, for instance, capital of the Lamaist world, could hardly be described as an exemplary ecological site but rather, as a number of world travelers have reported, was until the mid-twentieth century one of the dirtiest cities on the planet. As a rule, refuse was tipped unto the street. The houses had no toilets. Everywhere, wherever they were, the inhabitants unburdened themselves. Dead animals were left to rot in public places. For such reasons the stench was so penetrating and nauseating that the XIII Dalai Lama felt sick every time he had to traverse the city. Nobles who stepped out usually held a handkerchief over their nose.

It is even more absurd to describe the Tibetan monastic society as a vegetarian culture. The production and consumption of meat have always been counted among the most important branches of the country’s economy (not least because of the climatic conditions). It is indeed true that a devout Tibetan may not kill an animal himself, but he is not forbidden from eating it. Hence the slaughter is performed by those of other faiths, primarily Moslems. The *Kundun* is also a keen meat eater, albeit, if one is to believe him, not out of enthusiasm but rather for health reasons. Anyone who is also aware of the great contempt Buddhism in general shows for being reborn as an animal can only wonder at such eco-paradisiacal-vegetarian retrospection now on offer in the “scholarly history” of the exiled Tibetans.

But by now the Tibetans in exile themselves gladly believe in such ecological fairytales. For them it is alone the brutal Chinese (whose behavior towards Mother Earth is no better nor worse than any other capitalist country, however) who are the villains and stand accused (in this instance rightly) of destroying the ancient forests of the country and because they pay high prices for aphrodisiacs won from the bones of the snow leopard. But there are also some factual objectors to the opinion that the Tibet of old was an eco-paradise. The Tibetans were never more ecologically aware than other peoples, writes Jamyan Norbu, co-director of the Tibetan Culture Institute in Dharamsala, and warns against dangerous myth making (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 119).

### *Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian*

In this section, which we introduced with the two German “Greens”, Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian, we would like to draw attention to some interesting speculations in the Buddhist scene concerning the reunification of Germany. The Dalai Lama rarely becomes directly and openly involved in world politics aside from the issue of Tibet unless calling for peace in general. There are nevertheless numerous occult rumors in circulation among his followers that suggest him to be the political director of the world who holds the strings from “another dimension” in his hands. For example, there has been talk that the fall of the Berlin Wall was to be attributed to him. Among other things, the fact that at the exact point where the first break in the wall was created (a scene broadcast all around the world) there stood a graffiti reading *Long Live Dalai Lama* is offered as proof of this.

In fact, six months before the German reunification the *Kundun* had stood praying before the “wall of shame” with a candle in his hand. The pacifist, opponent of atomic energy, environmentalist and committed campaigner for the freedom of Tibet, Petra Kelly, had been able to motivate him to cross the East German border together with his entire retinue in December 1989. After the candle ceremony mentioned, the group were ferried to a *Round Table* discussion with citizens’ rights groups by the GDR state security service (the infamous *Stasi*, or secret police). [2]



*The first break in the “fall of the wall” of Berlin.  
See the graffiti “Long live Dalai [Lama]”*

Petra Kelly later described the situation as a political vacuum in which the democratic opposition presented the vision of transforming the former GDR into a non-aligned state without a military or nuclear weapons that would align itself with neither capitalist nor communist ideas. The Dalai Lama was assured that he would be the first guest of this new state and that Tibet’s autonomy would be recognized as the first act of foreign affairs. The German participants in this conversation regarded themselves as a kind of provisional government. All were said to have been deeply moved by the presence of His Holiness. “Only six months later, on 22 June 1990”, writes Stephen Batchelor, “his prayer was answered when Checkpoint Charlie was ‘solemnly dismantled’” (Batchelor, 1994, p. 378).

The Dalai Lama as a political magician who brought down the Berlin Wall with his prayers? Such conceptions lay the foundations for a “metapolitics” in which international events are influenced by

symbolic actions. Petra Kelly probably thought along these lines; her extraordinary devotion to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause is otherwise hard to comprehend.

The pacifist was certainly uninformed about the *Kalachakra Tantra's* aggressive/warlike core, the androcentric sexual magic of Tibetan Buddhism, and the dark chapters in the Tibetan and Mongolian history. Like thousands of others, she followed His Holiness's charm and messages of peace and was blind to the gods of the *Vajrayana's* obsessions with power at work through him. As she and her de facto, Gert Bastian, visited Dharamsala in 1988, they were both, despite having an eagle eye for every minor infringement of democracy in the German Federal Republic, "enormously impressed by the extremely democratic discussions" that had taken place in the parliament of the Tibetans in exile. This was a total misassessment of the situation — as we have already shown at length and as anyone who has the smallest insight into the inner political affairs of Tibetans in exile knows, their popular representation is a farce (*Tibetan Review*, January 1989, p. 15). But not for Petra Kelly — following her visit to Dharamsala she was so completely entranced by the *Kundun's* charm and humane political mask that the issue of Tibet became for her the quintessential "moral touchstone of international politics" (*Tibetan Review*, July 1993, p. 19). In concrete terms, that meant the politicians our world stood at a threshold: if they supported the Dalai Lama they would be following the path of morality and virtue; if they turned against the *Kundun* or simply remained passive, then they would be steering down the road to immorality!

The green politician Petra Kelly completely failed to perceive the religiously motivated power politics and the tantric occultism of Dharamsala. Like many other women she became a female chess piece (a queen) in the *Kundun's* game of strategy, one who opened doors to the German parliament and the upper political ranks for him.

### **The illusory world of interreligious dialog and the ecumenical movement**

Although dominated by culturally fixed images and rituals like every other religion, Tibetan Buddhism initially presents itself as a tradition that is tied to neither a culture, a society, nor a race. We hear from every lama that the teachings of the Shakyamuni Buddha consist exclusively in the experiences of each individual. Anybody can test their credibility in his or her own religious practices. Being of another non-Buddhist confession is no obstacle to such sacred exercises.

This, in the light of the tantric ritual system and the "baroque" Tibetan pantheon feigned, purist and liberal basic attitude allows His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to present himself as being so tolerant and open minded that he has been celebrated for years as the "most open minded and liberal ecclesiastical dignitary" on the planet. His readiness to engage in dialog has all but become a catchphrase.

In now presenting the *Kundun's* interreligious activities, we always have clearly in mind an awareness that at heart the entire Lamaist system is and wants to be incompatible with other faiths. Let us review the reasons for this once more, summarized in seven points. Tantric Buddhism, especially the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the associated *Shambhala myth*, includes:

1. **The extermination of those of other faiths**
2. **A warlike philosophy of violence**
3. **Foundations for a neofascist ideology**
4. **Contempt for the person, the individual (in favor of the gods), and especially for women (in favor of the tantra masters)**
5. **The linking of religious and state power**
6. **World conquest and the establishment of a global Buddhocracy via manipulative and warlike means**

In the face of these points the *Kundun's* ecumenical activity remains a lie for as long as he continues to abide by the principles of the tantric ritual system and the ideological/political

fundamentals of the *Shambhala myth* (and the associated grasp for the world throne). It is nonetheless of important tactical significance for him and has proved to be an excellent means of spreading the ideas of Lamaism all over the world without objection.

This *indirect* missionary method has a long tradition in Tibetan history. As Padmasambhava (*Guru Rinpoche*) won the Land of Snows over to Tantrism in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, he never went on a direct offensive by openly preaching the fundamentals of the *dharma*. As an ingenious manipulator, he succeeded in employing the language, images, symbols, and gods of the local religions as a means of transporting the Indian Buddhism he had brought with him. The tribes to whom he preached were convinced that the *dharma* was nothing more than a clear interpretation of their old religious conceptions. They did not even need to give up their deities (even if these were most cruel) if they were to “convert” to tantric Buddhism, since Padmasambhava integrated these into his own system.

Even the *Kalachakra Tantra*, based on a marked and pervasive concept of the enemy, recommends the manipulation of those of other faiths. Surprisingly, the “Time Tantra” permits the performance of non-Buddhist rites by the tantra master. But there is an important condition here, namely that the mystic physiology of the practicing yogi (his energy body) with which he controls the entire occult/religious event remain stable and keep strictly and without deviation to the tantric method (*upaya*). Then, it says in the time doctrine, “no form of religion from the way of one’s own or a foreign people is corrupting for the yogis” (Grünwedel, *Kalacakra II*, p. 177). With this permission, the way is free for one to externally appear tolerant and open minded towards any religious direction without conflicting with the power-political goals of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth* that want to elevate Buddhism to be the sole world religion. In contrast, the feigned “religious tolerance” becomes a powerful means of surreptitiously promoting one’s own fundamentalism.

Where does this leave the ecumenical politics of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama? Interreligious discussions are one of the *Kundun*’s specialties; there is not a major world ecumenical event of significance where his negotiating presence is not evident. He is one of the presidents of the “World’s Parliament of Religions” in Chicago. The god-king tirelessly spreads the happy message that despite differing philosophies all religions have the same motive, the perfection of humans. „Whatever the differences between religions,” he explained in Madras in 1985, „all of them want man to be good. Love and compassion form the essence of any religion and these alone can bring people together and provide peace and happiness to humanity” (*Tibetan Review*, January 1985, p. 9).

Yet (he says) for the sake of quality one should not gloss over the differences between the religious approaches. It is not at all desirable that we end up with a uniform, overarching religion; that can not be the goal of the dialog. One should guard against a “religious cocktail”. The variety of religions is a outright necessity for the evolution of humankind. “To form a new world religion,” the *Kundun* says, “would be difficult and not particularly desirable. But since love is essential for all religions, one could speak of a universal religion of love. Yet with regard to the methods for developing love and for attaining salvation or permanent liberation the religions differ from one another ... The fact that there are so many different depictions of the way is enriching” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 520). In general, everyone should stick with the religion he or she was born into.

For him it is a matter of deliberate cooperation whilst maintaining autonomy, a dialog about the humanity common to all. In 1997 the god-king proposed that groups of various religious denominations undertake a pilgrimage to the holy places of the world together in order to learn from one another. The religious leaders of the world ought to come together more often, as “such a meeting is a powerful message in the eyes of millions of people” (*Tibetan Review*, May 1997, p. 14).

### *Christianity*



In the meantime, exchange programs between Tibetan Buddhist and Christian orders of monks and nuns have become institutionalized through a resolution of the Dalai Lama, with all four major lines of tradition among the Tibetans (Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Kagyupa, and Gelugpa) participating. In the sixties, the American Trappist monk and poet, Thomas Merton (1906-1968), visited the *Kundun* in Dharamsala and summarized his experience together as follows: “I dealt primarily with Buddhists ... It is of incalculable value to come into direct contact with people who have worked hard their whole lives at training their minds and liberating themselves from passions and illusions” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 49).

In 1989 the god-king and the Benedictine abbot Thomas Keating led a gathering of several thousand Christians and Buddhists in a joint meditation in the West. The *Kundun* has visited Lourdes and Jerusalem in order to pray there in silent devotion. There is also very close contact between the Lutheran Church and the *Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs of H.H. the Dalai Lama*. At the so-called *Naropa Conferences* in Boulder, Colorado, topics such as “God” (Christian) and “Emptiness” (Buddhist), “Prayer” (Christian) and “Meditation” (Buddhist), “Theism” and “non-Theism”, the “Trinity” and the “Three Body Theory” are treated in dialog between Christians and Buddhists.

The comparison between Christ and Buddha has a long tradition (see Brück and Lai, 1997, pp. 314ff.). There are in fact many parallels (the virgin birth for example, the messianism). But in particular *Mahayana* Buddhism’s requirement of compassion allows the two founding figures to appear as representatives of the same spirit. *Avalokiteshvara*, the supreme Bodhisattva of compassion is thus often presented as a quasi-Christian archetype in Buddhism and also prayed to as such. This is naturally of great advantage to the *Kundun*, who is himself an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* and can via the comparison (of the two deities) lay claim to the powerful qualities of Christ’s image.

But His Holiness is extremely cautious and diplomatic in such matters. For a Buddhist, the Dalai Lama says, Christ can of course be regarded as a Bodhisattva, yet one must avoid claiming Christ for Buddhism. (Incidentally, Christ is named in the *Kalachakra Tantra* as one the “heretics”.) The *Kundun* knows only too well that an open integration of the archetype of Christ into his tantric pantheon would only lead to strong protests from the Christian side.

He must thus proceed with more skill if he wants to nonetheless integrate the Nazarene into his system as Padmasambhava once incorporated the local gods of Tibet. For example, he describes so many parallels between Christ and Buddha (*Avalokiteshvara*) that his (Christian!) audience arrive at the conclusion that Christ is a Bodhisattva completely of their own accord.

Just how successful the *Kundun* is with such manipulation is demonstrated by a conference held between a small circle of Christians and himself (in 1994), the proceedings of which are documented in the book, *The Good Heart: A Buddhist Perspective on the Teachings of Jesus*. In that the god-king repeatedly and emphatically stressed at this meeting that he had not the slightest intention of letting Buddhism monopolize anybody or anything, he in fact had the opposite effect. The more tolerant and respectful towards other religions he showed himself to be, the more he convinced his listeners that Buddhism was indeed the one true faith. With this Catch 22, the Dalai Lama succeeded in emerging at the end of this meeting as a Buddhist super monk, who in himself combined all the qualities of the three most important Christian monastic orders: „He [the Dalai Lama] brings three qualities to a spiritual discourse,” the chief organizer of the small ecumenical event, a Benedictine, says, „traits so rare in some contemporary Christian circles as to have elicited gasps of relieved gratitude from the audience. These qualities are gentleness, clarity, and laughter. If there is something *Benedictine* about him, there is a *Franciscan* side as well and a touch of the *Jesuit*” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1997, pp. 16–17). The *Kundun* appeared to the predominantly Catholic participants at this interreligious meeting to be more Christian than the Christians in many points.

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**Richard Gere: “Jesus is very much accepted by the Tibetans, even though they don’t believe in an**

**ultimate creator God. I was at a very moving event that His Holiness did in England where he lectured on Jesus at a Jesuit seminary. When he spoke the words of Jesus, all of us there who had grown up Christians and had often heard them before could not believe their power. It was ...” Gere suddenly chokes with emotion. For a few moments he just stares into the makeup mirror, waiting to regain his composure. “When someone can fill such words with the depth meaning that they are intended to have, it’s like hearing them for the first time.” (Schell, 2000, p. 57)**

Although the Dalai Lama indignantly rejects any monopolization of other religions by Buddhism, this is not at all true of his followers. In recent times an ever-expanding esoteric literature has emerged in which the authors “prove” that Buddhism is the original source of all religions. In particular there are attempts to portray Christianity as a variant of the “great vehicle” (*Mahayana*). Christ is proclaimed as a Bodhisattva, an emanation of *Avalokiteshvara* who sacrificed himself out of compassion for all living creatures (e.g., Gruber and Kersten, 1994).

From the Tibetan point of view, the point of ecumenical meetings is not encounters between several religious orientations. [3] That would contradict the entire tantric ritual system. Rather, they are for the infiltration of foreign religions with the goal (like Padmasambhava) of ultimately incorporating them within its own system. On rare occasions the *methods* to be employed in such a policy of appropriation are discussed, albeit most subtly. Two conferences held in the USA in 1987 and 1992 addressed the central topic of whether the Buddhist concept of *upaya* (“adroit means”) could provide the instrument “for more relaxed dealings with the issue of truth in dialog (between Christians and Buddhists)” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 281) “More relaxed dealings with the issue of truth” — that can only mean that the cultic mystery of the sexual magic rites, the warlike *Shambhala* ideology, and the “criminal history” of Lamaism is either not mentioned at all at such ecumenical meetings or is presented falsely.

An 800-page work by the two theologians Michael von Brück and Whalen Lai (*Buddhismus und Christentum* [Buddhism and Christianity]) is devoted to the topic of the encounter between Buddhism and Christianity. In it there is no mention at all of the utmost significance of *Vajrayana* in the Buddhist scene, as if this school did not even exist. We can read page after page of pious and unhurried *Mahayana* statements by Tibetan lamas, but there is all but nothing said of their secret tantric philosophy. The terms *Shambhala* and *Kalachakra Tantra* are not to be found in the index, although they form the basis for the policy on religions of the Dalai Lama whom the authors praise at great length as the real star of the ecumenical dialog. We can present this “theologically” highbrow book as evidence of the subtle and covert manipulation through which the “totalistic paradigm” of Tibetan Buddhism is to be anchored in the west.

Only at one single incriminating point, which we have already quoted earlier, do the two authors let the cat out of the bag. In it they recommend that American intellectuals who feel attracted to Chinese Hua-yen Buddhism should instead turn to the *Kundun* as the only figure in a position to be able to establish a Buddhocracy: “Yet Hua-yen is no longer a living tradition. ... That does not mean that a totalistic paradigm *could* not be repeated, but it seems more sensible to seek this in the *Tibetan-Buddhist tradition*, since the Tibetan Buddhists have a living memory of a real 'Buddhocracy' and a living Dalai Lama who leads the people as a religious *and* political head” (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 631). The authors thus believe, despite pages of feigned ecumenical Christianity, that a “totalistic paradigm” could be repeated in the future and recommend the god-king from Dharamsala as an example. They thus clearly and openly confirm the Buddhocratic vision of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth*, of which they themselves have not breathed a word.

The *Kundun* even seems to have succeeded in gaining access to the “immune” Judaism. After the Dalai Lama’s visit to Jerusalem (in 1996), groups were formed in Israel and the USA in which Jewish and Buddhist ideas were supposed to be brought together. A film has been made about the fate of the Israeli writer Rodger Kamenetz, who converted to Buddhism after he had visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala and then set about reinterpreting his own religious roots in Buddhist

terms. The so-called *Bu-Jews* (Buddhist Jews) are the most recent product of the *Kundun's* politics of tantric conquest. They are hardly likely to be aware of the interlinkage between Tantric Buddhism and occult fascism that we have described in detail.

### *Islam (The Mlecchas)*

In contrast Islam is proving more difficult for His Holiness than the Jews and Christians: “I can barely recall having a serious theological discussion with Mohammedans”, he said at the start of the eighties (Levenson, 1992, p. 288). This is only all too readily understandable in light of the apocalyptic battle between the *Mlecchas* (followers of Mohammed) and the Buddhist armies of the mythical general, *Rudra Chakrin*, prophesied in the *Shambhala myth*. A foretaste of this radical confrontation, which according to the *Kalachakra* prophecy awaits us in the year 2327, was to be detected as the Moslem Taliban in Afghanistan declared in 1997 that they would destroy the 2000-year-old statues of Buddha in Bamyán because Islam prohibited human icons. This could, however, be prevented under pressure from the world public who reacted strongly to the announcement. (We would like to mention in passing that the likenesses of Buddha carved into the cliffs of Bamyán, of which one figure is 60 yards high, are to be found in a region from which, in the opinion of reliable investigators like Helmut Hoffmann and John Ronald Newman, the *Kalachakra Tantra* originally comes.)

However, after being awarded the Nobel peace prize, the *Kundun* in his function as a world religious leader has revised his traditional reservation towards Islam. He knows that it is far more publicity-friendly if he also displays the greatest tolerance in this case. In 1998, he thus encouraged Indian Muslims to play a leading role in the discourse between the world religions. In the same, conciliatory frame of mind, in an interview he earlier expressed the wish to visit Mecca one day (Dalai Lama XIV, 1996b, p. 152). [4]

On the other hand however, His Holiness maintains very close contact with the Indian BJP (*Bhātiya Janata Party*) and the RSS (*Rashtriya Svayam Sevak Sangh*), two old-school conservative Hindu organizations (currently — in 1998 — members of the governing coalition) who proceed with all vigor against Islam. [5]

An honest renunciation of Tantric Buddhism's hostility toward Islam could only consist in the *Kundun's* clear distantiation from all the passages from the *Kalachakra* tradition that concern this. To date, this has — as far as we know — never happened.

In contrast, already today there are radical developments in the Buddhist camp that are headed for a direct confrontation with Islam. For example, the Western Buddhist “lama”, Ole Nydhal (a *Kagyupa*), is strongly and radically active in opposition to the immigration of Moslems to Europe.

As problematic as we perceive fundamentalist Islam to be, we are nonetheless not convinced that the *Kalachakra* ideology and the final battle with the *Mlecchas* (Mohammedans) prognosticated by the tantra can solve the conflict at the heart of the struggle between the cultures. A contribution to an internet-based discussion rightly described the idea of a *Shambhala* warrior as the Buddhist equivalent to the *jihad*, the Moslem “holy war”. Religious wars, which have the goal of eliminating the respective non-believers, have in fact, and for the West unexpectedly, become a threat to world peace in recent years. We return to this point in our conclusion, especially the question of whether the division of humanity into two camps — Buddhist and Islam — as predicted in the *Kalachakra Tantra* is just a fiction or whether it is a real danger.

### *Shamanism*

Up until well into the eighties, the encounter with nature religions played a significant role for the *Dalai Lama*. There was at that stage a lot of literature that enthusiastically drew attention to the parallels between the North American culture of the Hopi Indians and Tibetan Buddhism. The same terminology was even discovered, just with the meanings reversed: for example, the Tibetan word for “sun” was said to mean “moon” in the language of the Hopi and vice versa, the Hopi sun

corresponded to the Tibetan moon (Keegan, 1981, unnumbered). There are also said to be amazing correspondences among the rituals, especially the “fire ceremonies”.

For a time the idea arose that the Dalai Lama was the messiah announced in the Hopi religion. In the legend this figure had been a member of the “sun clan” in the mythical past and had left his Indian brothers so as to return in the future as a redeemer. “They wanted to tell me about an old prophecy of their people passed on from generation to generation,” His Holiness recounted, “in which one day someone would come from the east. ... They thought it could be me and had come to tell me this” (Levenson, 1992, p. 277).

In France in 1997 an unusual meeting took place. The spiritual representatives of various native peoples gathered there with the intention of founding a kind of international body of the “United Traditions” and presenting a common “charter” to the public. By this the attendees understood a global cooperation between shamanistic religions, still practiced all over the world, with the aim of articulating common rights and gaining an influence over the world’s conscience as the “circle of elders”. The Dalai Lama was also invited to this congress, organized by a Lamaist monastery in France (*Karma Ling*). Just how adroitly the organizers made him the focal figure of the entire event, which was actually supposed to be a union of equals, is shown by the subtitle of the book subsequently published about the event, *The United Traditions: Shamans, Medicine Men and Wise Women around the Dalai Lama*. The whole scenario did in fact revolve around the Dalai Lama. Siberian shamans, North, South, and Central American medicine men (Apaches, Cheyenne, Mohawks, Shuars from the Amazon, and Aztecs), African voodoo priests (from Benin), Bon lamas, Australian Aborigines, and Japanese martial artists came together for an opening ceremony at a Vajrayana temple, surrounded “by the amazing beauty of the Tibetan décor” (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 31). The meeting was suddenly interrupted by the cry, “His Holiness, His Holiness!” — intended for the Dalai Lama who was approaching the meeting place. The shamans stood up and went towards him. From this point on he was the absolute center of events. There were admittedly mild distantiations before this, but only the Bon priests dared to be openly critical. Their representative, Lopön Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, strongly attacked Lamaism as a repressive religion that has persecuted the Bon followers for centuries. In answer to a question about his attitude to Tibetan Buddhism he replied, “Seen historically, a merciless war has in fact long been conducted between us two. ... Between the 7th and the 20th century a good four fifths of Tibet was Buddhist. Sometimes this also meant violence: hence, in the 18th century, with the help of the Chinese, the Gelugpa carried out mass conversions in the border regions of Tibet which had long been inhabited by the Bon” (quoted by Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 141). Still today, the Bonpos are disadvantaged in many ways: “You should be aware, for instance, that non-Buddhist children do not see a penny of the money donated by international aid organizations for Tibetan children!” Nyima Rinpoche protested (quoted by Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 132).

But the Kundun knows how to deal with such matters. The next day he lets the Bon critic sit beside him, and declares the Bonpos to be “Tibet’s fifth school”. In his pride, Nyima Rinpoche forgot about any criticism or the history of the repression of his religion. The Dalai Lama takes the African voodoo representative, Daagpo Hounon Houna, in his arms and has a photo taken. The two book authors comment that, “Back home in Africa this picture will certainly receive great symbolic status” (Eersel and Grosley, 1998, p. 132). Then the Kundun says some moving words about “Mother Earth” he has learned from the New Age milieu and which as such do not exist in the Tibetan tradition: “These days we have too little contact to Mother Earth and in this we forget that we ourselves are a part of nature. We are children of nature, Mother Earth, and this planet is our only home” (quoted by Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 180). Let us recall that before the start of every *Kalachakra* ritual the earth spirits are nailed down with a ritual dagger. The Dalai Lama goes on to preach about the variety of races and the equality of the religions of the world. And he has already won the hearts of all. It is naturally *his* congress, he is the axis around which the “circle of elders” revolves.

Roughly in the middle of the book we suddenly learn that the delegates were invited in his name

and that “without the support and the exceptional aura of His Holiness” nothing would have been possible (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 253). Even the high priest from Benin, who smuggled the remains of an animal sacrifice into the ritual temple that was, however, discovered and removed, accepts the Tibetan hierarch as the central figure of the meeting, saying “I therefore greet His Holiness the Dalai Lama around whom we have gathered here” (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 199). One of the organizers (Jean-Claude Carrière) sums things up: “That was actually the motor of this meeting. Here for the first time peoples, some of whom have almost vanished from the face of the earth, were asked to speak (and act) and they have recognized the likewise degraded, disowned, and exiled Dalai Lama as one of their own. It is barely imaginable how important it was for them to be able to bow before him and present him with a gift” (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 254). Tibetan Buddhism is becoming a catch-all for all religions: “If the meeting of the United Traditions took place in a Buddhist monastery, it is surely because the spirit of the Way of Buddha, as embodied by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, encourages such meetings. His presence alongside the elders and the role of unifier which was accorded him on the Day of the United Traditions, is in the same category as the suggestions that he made in front of the assembled Christians in 1994 ...” (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 406). Thus Lamaism plays the tune to which those attending dance: “A more astonishing vision, in which we here, borne along by the songs and drums of the Tibetans, begin to ‘rotate’ along with the Asian shamans, African high priests, American and Australian men and women of knowledge” (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 176).

This meeting made two things apparent: firstly, that the traditions of the native peoples are fundamentally uninterested in a process of criticism or self-criticism, and secondly, that here too the Dalai Lama assumes spiritual leadership as a “king shaman”. A line from the joint closing prayer typifies the androcentric spirit of the “circle of elders”: “God our Father, we sacrifice and dedicate to you our Mother the Earth” (Eersel and Grosrey, 1998, p. 413). This says it all; even if a few women participate the council of elders remains a “circle of patriarchs”, and the female sacrifice which we have identified as the central mystery of Tantric Buddhism also essentially determines the traditional systems of ritual of the shamans gathered in France.

### *The occult scene and the New Age*

What then is the relationship like between the Dalai Lama and the so-called esoteric scene, which has spread like a bomb all over the West in recent years? In relations with various traditional occult sects (the Moonies, Brahmakumaris, Scientologists, Theosophists, Roerich groups) who in general do not enjoy a good name in the official press His Holiness is often more tolerant and intimate than the broad public realizes. We have already reported extensively about his connection to Shoko Asahara’s AUM sect. He also maintains lively contact with Theosophists of the most diverse schools. A few years ago His Holiness praised and introduced a collection of Madame Blavatsky’s writings with a foreword.

But it is his relationship with the religious subculture that became known worldwide as the *New Age Movement* which is of decisive significance. Already at the start of the seventies the youth protest movement of 1968 was replaced by the spiritual practices of individuals and groups, the left-wing political utopia of a classless society by a vision of the “community of the holy”. All the followers of the *New Age* saw themselves as members of a “soft conspiracy” that was to prepare for the “New Age of Aquarius” and the appearance of messianic saviors (often from non-European cultures). Every conceivable school of belief, politico-religious viewpoint and surreal fantasy was gathered up in this dynamic and creative cultural current. At the outset the *New Age* movement displayed a naive but impressive independence of the existing religious traditions. It was believed one could select the *best* from all cultic mysteries — those of the Indians and American Indians, the Tibetans, Sufis, the Theosophists, etc. — in order to nonchalantly combine it with one’s own spiritual experiences and further develop it in the sense of a spiritual and peaceful global community. Even traditionally based gurus from the early phase like Rajneesh Baghwan from India or the Tibetan, Chögyam Trungpa, were able to accept this “spiritual liberalism” and combined their hallowed initiation techniques with all manner of methods drawn from the modern western tradition, especially with those of therapeutic psychology. But after only a few years of creative

freedom, the orthodox ecclesiastical orientations and atavistic sects who put this “mystic-original potential” to use for their own ends, indeed vitally needed it for their own regeneration, prevailed in the *New Age* movement.

Buddhism was intensively involved in this process (the incorporation of the *New Age*) from the outset. At first the influence of Japanese Zen predominated, however, two decades later Tibetan Lamaism succeeded in winning over ever more *New Age* protagonists. The fact that since the 19<sup>th</sup> century Tibet has been the object of western fantasies, onto which all conceivable occult desires and mystic hopes have been projected, certainly helped here. The Theosophic vision of omnipotent *Mahatmas* who steer the fate of the world from the heights of the Himalayas has developed into a powerful image for non-theosophical religious subcultures as well.

For the Fourteenth Dalai Lama the *New Age Movement* was both the primary recruiting field for western Buddhists and the gateway to mainstream society. The double character of his religion, this mixture of Buddhocratic officialese and the anarchistic drop-out that we have depicted earlier, was of great advantage to him in his skilled conquest of the spiritual subculture. Then the “children of the Age of Aquarius”, who conceived of themselves as rebels against the existing social norms (their anarchic side) and were not infrequently held up to ridicule by the bourgeois public, also on the other hand battled fiercely for social recognition and the assertion of their ideas as culturally acknowledged values. A visit by the Dalai Lama lent their events considerable official status, which they would not otherwise have had. They invested much money and effort to achieve this. Since the Dalai Lama was only very rarely received by state institutions before the late eighties but nonetheless saw extended travels as his political duty, the *material* resources of the *New Age* scene likewise played an important role for him. “He opens Buddhist centers for *New Age nouveau riche* protagonists”, wrote the *Spiegel*, “whose respectability he cannot always be convinced about” (*Spiegel* 16/1998, p. 111). Up until the mid eighties, it was small esoteric groups who invited him to visit various western countries and who paid the bills for his expenses afterwards — not the ministers and heads of state in Bonn, Madrid, Paris, Washington, London, and Vienna.

Such an arrangement suited the governments well, since they did not have to risk falling out with China by committing themselves to a visit by the Dalai Lama. On the other hand, the exotic/magic aura of the *Kundun*, the “living Buddha” and “god-king”, has always exercised a strong attraction over Society. Hardly anyone who had a name or status (whether in business, politics, the arts, or as nobility) could resist this charming and “human” arch-god. To be able to shake the hand of the “yellow pontiff” and “spiritual ruler from the roof of the world” and maybe even chat casually with him has always been a unique social experience. Thus, on these somewhat marginalized *New Age* trips, time and again “secret” meetings took place “on the side” with the most varied heads of state and also very famous artists (Herbert von Karajan for example), who let themselves be enchanted by the smile and the exoticism of the *Kundun*. Countless such unofficial meetings laid the groundwork for the *Kundun's* Great Leap into the official political sphere, which he finally achieved at the end of the eighties with the *Tibet Lobby* and the award of the Nobel peace prize (1989).

Since then, it has been the heads of state, the famous stars, the higher ranks of the nobility, the rectors of the major universities, who receive the Tibetan *Kalachakra* master with much pomp and circumstance. The intriguing, original but naive *New Age Movement* no longer exists. It was rubbed out between the various religious traditions (especially Buddhism) on one side and the “bourgeois” press (the so-called “critical public”) on the other. For all the problems this spiritual heir and successor to the movements of 1968 had, it also possessed numerous ideas and life practices which were adequate for a spiritually based culture beyond that of the extant religious traditions. But the *bourgeois* society (from which the “Children of the Age of Aquarius” came) had neither recognized nor acted upon this potential. In contrast, the traditional religions, but especially Buddhism, reacted to the *New Age* scene with great sensitivity. They had experienced the most dangerous crisis in their decline in the sixties and they needed the visions, the commitment, and the fresh blood of a

young and dynamic generation in order to survive at all. Today the *New Age* is passé and the *Kundun* can distance himself ever further from his old friends and move over into the establishment completely.

In the following chapter we shall show just how decisive a role the *Kundun* played in the conservative process of resorption (of the *New Age*). He succeeded, in fact, in binding the intellectual and scientific elite of the *New Age* Movement to his own atavistic system. These were both young and elder western scientists trained in the classic disciplines (nuclear physics, chemistry, biology, neurobiology) who endeavored to combine their groundings in the natural sciences with religious and philosophical presentations of the subject, whereby the Eastern-influenced doctrines became increasingly important. This international circle of bold thinkers and researchers, who include such well-known individuals as Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, David Bohm, Francisco Varela, and Fritjof Capra, is our next topic. A further section of the *New Age* scene now serve as his dogsbodies through their commitment to the issue of Tibet, and are spiritual rewarded from time to time with visits from lamas and *retreats*.

### Modern science and Tantric Buddhism

In 1939 in a commentary on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the great psychologist Carl Gustav Jung wrote to the effect that to practice yoga on the 5th Avenue or anywhere else that could be reached by telephone would be a spiritual joke. Jung was convinced that the ancient yoga practices of Tibetan Tantrism was incompatible with the modern, scientifically and technologically determined, western world view. For him, the combination of a telephone and Tibet presented a paradox. “The telephone! Was there no place on earth where one could be protected from the curse”, a west European weary of civilization asks in another text, and promptly decides to journey to Tibet, the Holy Land, in which one can still not be reached by phone (Riencourt, 1951, pp. 49-50). Yet such yearning western images of an untouched Tibet are deceptive. Just one year after Jung’s statement (in 1940) the Potala had its own telephone line.

But there were also other voices in the thirties! Voices that dared to make bold comparisons between modern technical possibilities and the magic powers (*siddhis*) of Tantrism: Evans-Wentz, for example, the famous translator of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, enthuses about how “As from mighty broadcasting stations, the Great Ones broadcast over the earth that Vital Spirituality which alone makes human evolution possible” (Evans-Wentz, 1978, p. 18). These “Great Ones” are the *Maha Siddhas* (“Grand Sorcerers”) who are in hiding in the Himalayas (in *Shambhala*) and can with their magic reach out and manipulate every human brain as they will.

In the last thirty years Tibetan Buddhism has built up a successful connection to the modern western age. From the side of the “atavistic” religion of Tibet there is no longer any fear of contact with the science and technology of the West. All the information technologies of the Occident are skillfully and abundantly employed by Tibetan monks in exile and their western followers. There are countless homepages preaching the *dharma* (the Buddhist teaching) on the internet. The international *jet set* includes lamas who fly around the globe visiting their spiritual centers all over the world.

But Tibetan Buddhism goes a step further: the monastic clergy does not just take on the scientific/technical achievements of the West, but attempts to render them epistemologically dependent on its Buddhocratic/tantric world view. Even, as we shall soon show, the *Kundun* is convinced that the modern natural sciences can be “Buddhized”. This is much easier for the Buddhists than the Moslems for example, who are currently pursuing a similar strategy with western modernity. The doctrine of Mohammed is a revelatory religion and has been codified in a holy book, the *Koran*. The *Koran* is considered the absolute word of God and forms the immutable foundation of Islamic culture. It proves itself to be extremely cumbersome when attempts are made to subsume the European scientific disciplines within this revelatory text.

In contrast, Tibetan Buddhism (and also the *Kalachakra Tantra*) is based upon an abstract philosophy of “emptiness” which as the most general of principles can “include” *everything*, even western culture. “*Everything* arises out of *shunyata* (the emptiness)!” — with this fundamental statement, which we still have to discuss, the Lamaist philosophical elite gains access to the current *paradigm discussion* which has had European science holding its breath since Heisenberg’s contribution to quantum theory. What does this all mean?

„Paradigms gain their status,” Thomas Kuhn writes in his classic work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, „because they are more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute.” (Kuhn, 1962, p. 23). In his statement, Kuhn takes a *scientific* paradigm dispute (between “theories”) as his starting point, but at the same time opens the door for *articles of faith*, since in his investigation a paradigm does not need to *explain* all its assumptions. In very general terms, we can thus understand the basic foundations of a human culture, be they of a scientific or a religious nature, as a paradigm. The dogma as to whether it is a god or a goddess who stands at the beginning of creation is thus just as much a paradigm as René Descartes’ assumption of the separation of the thinking mind (*res cogitans*) from extended matter (*res extensa*), or the principle of natural causation of Newtonian physics. Just like the believers in the tantric *Shambhala myth*, traditional Christians who accept the doctrinal status of the Apocalypse of St. John interpret human history according to an *eschatological, intentional* paradigm. In both systems, all historical events are directed towards a final goal, namely the coming of a messiah (*Christ* or *Rudra Chakrin*) and the staging of a final battle between believers and unbelievers. The future of humanity is thus fixed for all time. In contrast, western historicism sees history purely as the interplay of various causes that together produce an open-ended, undecided future. It thus follows a *causal* paradigm. A democracy holds the principle of the freedom and equality of all people as its guiding paradigm, whereas a theocracy or Buddhocracy recognize the omnipotence of a god or, respectively, Buddha as the highest principle of their system of governance.

New paradigms first come to the fore in a society’s cultural awareness when the old dominant paradigmatic fundamentals come into crisis. The western world is currently being shaken by such a paradigmatic crisis. According to contemporary critics, the scientific “Age of Reason” in alignment with the ideas of René Descartes and Isaac Newton is no longer able to cope with the multiplex demands of a postmodern society. Neither is the mechanistic world view with the causal principle of classical physics sufficient to apprehend the complexity of the universe, nor does western “rationalism” help *meaningfully* organize human and natural life. “Reason” for instance, as the undisputed higher principle reigned over the emotions, intuition, vision, religiousness, erotic love, indeed even over humanism. The result has been a fundamental crisis of meaning and epistemology. Citing Oswald Spengler, some commentators talk of the *Fall of the West*.

Hence proposals for the new, “postmodern” paradigms of the third millennium have been discussed everywhere in recent years at conferences and symposia (not least in *New Age* circles). For example, rather than trying to explain nature through linear-causal models, as in Newtonian physics, one can consider holistic, synchronic, synergetic, ecological, cybernetic, or micro/macroc cosmic structures.

Such new models revolutionize perception and thought and are easier to name than to put into socially integrated practice. For a paradigm shapes *reality* as such to conform with its foundations, it “objectifies” it, so to speak, in its image; in other words (albeit only after it has been culturally accepted) it creates the “objective world of appearances”, that is, people perceive *reality* through the paradigmatic filter of their own culture. A paradigm shift is thus experienced by the traditional elements of a society as a kind of loss of reality.

For this reason, as the foundations of a culture paradigms are not so easily shaken. In order to abandon the “outdated” Newtonian world view of classical physics, for example, the reality-generating bases of its thinking (above all the causal principle) would have to be relativized.



But this — as Kuhn has convincingly argued — does not necessarily require that the new (postmodern, post-Newtonian) paradigm deliver an updated and more convincing scientific proof or a *rational* explanation, rather, it is sufficient for the new world view to *appear* better in total than the old one. To put it bluntly, this means that it is the *most powerful* and not necessarily the *most reasonable* paradigm that after its cultural establishment becomes the *best* and is thus accepted as the basis of a new culture.

Hence every paradigm change is always preceded by a deadly power struggle between various world views. Deadly because once established, the victorious paradigm completely disables its opponents, i.e., denies them any paradigmatic (or reality-explaining) significance. Ptolemy's cosmological paradigm ("the sun rotates around the earth") no longer has, after Copernicus ("the earth orbits the sun"), any reality-generating meaning. Thus, in the Copernican era the Ptolemaic views are at best considered to still be imaginary truths but are no longer capable of explaining *reality*. To take another example — for a Tibetan lama, what a positivist scientist refers to as reality is purely illusory (*samsara*), whilst the other way around, the religious world of the lama is a fantastic, if not outright pathological illusion for the scientist.

The crisis of western modernity (the rational age) and the occidental discussions about a paradigm shift primarily have nothing to do with Buddhism, they are a cultural event that arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in scientific circles in Europe and North America and a result of the critical self-reflection of western science itself. It was primarily prominent representatives from nuclear physics who were involved in this process. (We shall return to this point shortly.) Atavistic religious systems with their questionable wisdoms are now pouring into the "empty" and "paradigmless" space created by the self-doubt and the "loss of meaning" of the modern western age, so as to offer themselves as new paradigms and prevail. In recent decades they have been offering their dogmas (which were abandoned during the Enlightenment or "age of reason") with an unprecedented carefree freshness and freedom, albeit often in a new, contemporary packaging.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is just one of many (coming from the East) who present themselves and their spiritual meaning to the West as its savior in great need, but he is particularly adroit at this. Of course, neither the sexual magic doctrines of the *Kalachakra Tantra* nor the military ideology of the *Shambhala myth* are to be found in his *public* teachings (about the new paradigm), just the epistemological discourse of the two most important Buddhist philosophical schools (*Madhyamika* and *Yogachara*) and the compassionate, touching ethic of *Mahayana* Buddhism.

One must, however, admit without reservation that the Buddhist epistemological doctrine makes its entry into the western paradigm discussion especially easy. No matter which school, they all assume that an object is only manifest with the *perception* of the object. Objectivity (*reality*) and subjective perception are thus inseparable, they are in the final instance identical. This radical subjectivism necessarily leads to the philosophical premise that all appearances in the exterior world have no "inherent existence" but are either produced by an awareness (in the *Yogachara* school) or have to be described as "empty" (as in the *Madhyamika* school).

We are dealing here with two epistemological schools of opinion which are also not unknown in the West. The Buddhist *Madhyamika* philosophy, which assumes the "emptiness" (*shunyata*) of all being, could thus win for itself a substantial voice in the Euro-American philosophical debate. For example, the thesis of the modern logician, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), that all talk of "God" and the "emptiness" is nothing more than "word play", has been compared with the radical statement of the *Madhyamika* scholar, Nagarjuna (2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century), that intellectual discourse is a "word play in diversity" (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 443). [6]

Further, the *Yogachara* school ("everything is awareness") is presented as a Buddhist witness for the "quantum theory" of Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976). The German nuclear physicist introduced the dependence of "objective" physical processes upon the status of an (observing)

subject into the scientific epistemological debate. Depending upon the experimental arrangement, for example, the same physical process can be seen as the movement of non-material waves or as the motion of subatomic particles (*uncertainty principle*). Occult schools of all manner of orientations welcomed Heisenberg's *uncertainty principle* as a confirmation of their proposed spiritualization (subjectification) of all being and celebrated his observations as a "scientific" confirmation of their "just spirit" theories. ("Reality is dependent on the observing subject").

Even the Fourteenth Dalai Lama speaks *nonchalantly* about Heisenberg's theory and the subjectivity of atomic worlds: „Thus certain phenomena in physics”, we hear from the man himself, „are sometimes described as electromagnetic waves and on other occasions as particles. The description of the phenomenon thus seems to be very dependent upon the describer. Thus, in science we also find this concrete relationship to spirit, to the observing spirit which attempts to describe the phenomenon. Buddhism is very rich regarding the description of the spirit ... „ (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995, p. 52).

Surprisingly, such epistemological statements by the *Kundun*, which have in the meantime been taken up by every esoteric, are taken seriously in scientific circles. Even eminent authorities in their subject like the German particle physicist and philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker who was one of the leading *theoretical* founding fathers of the atomic bomb are enthusiastic about the self-assurance with which the god-king from Tibet chats about topics in quantum theory, and come to a far-reaching conclusion: „I [von Weizsäcker] therefore believe that modern physics is in fact compatible with Buddhism, to a higher degree than one may have earlier imagined” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995, 11).

On the other hand, in a charming return gesture the *Kundun* describes himself as the „pupil of Professor von Weizsäcker. ... I myself regard ... him as my teacher, my guru” (Dalai Lama XIV, 1995, p. 13), and at another point adds, “The fact is that the concepts of atoms and elementary particles is nothing new for Buddhism. Since the earliest times our texts speak of these and mention even more subtle particles. ... After numerous conversations with various researchers I have realized that there is an almost total correspondence between that which I from a Buddhist standpoint refer to as the subtle insubstantiality of material phenomena, and that which the physicists express in terms of constant flux and levels of fluctuation” (Levenson, 1992, pp. 246-247). In the cosmogony of the *Kalachakra Tantra* there is talk of “space particles” that contain the core of a new world after the destruction of a universe. One could see a parallel to the atomic structure of matter here.

It is somewhat bold of the Dalai Lama to describe a passage from the *Kalachakra Tantra*, where one can read that after the fiery downfall of the Buddhist universe “galactic seeds” remain, as an anticipation of western nuclear science. This would imply that centuries ago Buddhism had formulated what is now said by the elite of western science. The atomic theory of the Greek philosopher Democritus (around 460–370 B.C.E.), who lived 1500 years before the *Kalachakra Tantra* was written, has much more right to this status. At any rate such retrospective statements by the *Kundun* have the job of presenting his own (Buddhist) system as earlier, superior and more comprehensive than western culture. They are made with the power-political intention of anchoring the atavistic *Kalachakra* doctrine (the textbook for his tantric conquest of the world) as the paradigm for the new millennium.

The issue with such outwardly harmless conclusions by the *Kundun* ("The *Kalachakra Tantra* already knew about particle physics") is that they are thus part of a sublime power strategy on a spiritual level, not necessarily whether or not they are true. (We recall once more Kuhn's thesis that a paradigm need not be rationally proven, but rather solely that it must have the power to prevail over its opponents).

And the Dalai Lama has success with his statements! It surprises ones afresh every time with what self-assurance he and his lamas intervene in the current crisis in western thought with their

epistemological models and ethical (*Mahayana*) principles and know how to sell all this as originality. In this way the great Tibetan scholars of past centuries are evaluated by the Dalai Lama's American "mouthpiece", Robert Thurman, as more important and wide-reaching than their European "colleagues". They were "Hero Scientists: they have been the quintessential scientists of that non materialistic civilization [of Tibet]" (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 81). As "psychonauts", in contrast to the western "astronauts", they conquered inner space (quoted by Lopez, 1998, p. 81). But the "guiding lights" of modern European philosophy like Hume and Kant, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Hegel and Heidegger — Thurman goes on to speculate — will prove in a later age to have been the line holders and emanations of the Bodhisattva of science, Manjushri (Lopez 1998, p. 264). *Ex oriente lux* is now also true for the science of the occident.

In this, it is all too often overlooked from a western side that alongside the dominant materialist and mechanistic world view (of Newton and Descartes) there is an accompanying and unbroken *metaphysical* tradition in Europe which has been constantly further developed, as in German Idealism with all its variations. The classic *European* question of whether our world consists of mind and subjectivity rather than of matter and extended bodies has today been skillfully linked by Eastern-oriented philosophers to the question of whether the world conforms to the Buddhist epistemological paradigm or not.

The paradigmatic power struggle of the lamas is not visible from the outside but is rather disguised as interdisciplinary dialog, as in the annual "Mind and Life" symposia, in which the Dalai Lama participates with well-known western scientists. But is this really a matter of, as is constantly claimed, a "fruitful conversation" between Buddhism and contemporary science? Can Tibetan culture really, as is claimed in the *Tibetan Review*, offer answers to the questions of "western epistemologists, neurologists, physicists, psychoanalysts and other scientists"? (*Tibetan Review*, August 1990, p. 10).

We are prepared to undeservedly claim that a "rational" and "honest" discourse between the two cultures does not nor ever has taken place, since in such encounters the magic, the sexual magic practices, the mythology (of the gods), the history, the cosmology, and the political "theology" of Buddhist Tantrism remain completely omitted as topics. But together they all constitute the reality of Tibetan culture, far more than the epistemological theories of *Yogachara* or the *Madhyamika* philosophy, or the constant professions of love of *Mahayana* Buddhism do. That which awaits humanity if it were to adopt the paradigm of *Vajrayana*, would be the gods and demons of the Tibetan pantheon and eschatology and cosmogony laid out in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth*.

### **Buddhist cosmogony and the postmodern world view**

In every paradigmatic conflict, the determination of a cosmogony has pride of place. What does our world look like, is it round or quadratic, a disc or a sphere, a center or part of the periphery, is it the result of a big bang or the seven-day work of a demiurge? The Orientalist John Wenterbury from Princeton fears for example that Islamic fundamentalism could lead to a "new age of *flat earthism*". By "flat earthism" he means that the people from the Moslem cultures will start to believe again that the Earth is a disc (as the *Koran* teaches) and that every dissident opinion will be condemned as heresy. Should the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the Buddhist cosmology of *Abhidharma* associated with it become firmly paradigmatically established, we face something similar: a universe with Mount Meru in the middle, surrounded by the twelve continents and the planets orbiting it.

Such a model of the world contradicts the scientific discoveries of the West far more than the Ptolemaic system supplanted by Nicholas Copernicus, in which the sun circles the Earth. But how does His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama react to the incompatibility of the two world systems (the Buddhist and the western one)? He appears in this case to be prepared to make a revision of the tantric cosmology. Also with the justification that everything arises from the emptiness, we

may read that „I feel that it is totally compatible with the basic attitude of Buddhism to refute the literal interpretation of *Abhidharma* that says the earth is flat, because it is incompatible with the direct experience of the world as being round.” (Hayward, 1992, p. 37)

This statement is, however, in stark contradiction to the doctrine of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the entire cosmogonic design of which is aligned with the *Abhidharma* model. Yet more — since the microcosmic bodily structure of the tantra master simulates the macrocosmic world with Mount Meru at its center and the surrounding continents and oceans, a change in the tantric cosmology means that the mystic body of the Dalai Lama (as the supreme *Kalachakra* master) must also be transformed. This is simply inconceivable, since our modern cosmology rejects any anthropomorphic form of outer space! Also, with a fundamental rejection of the *Abhidharma*, the whole *Kalachakra* system would lose its sense as the synchronic connection between the yogi's body and the cosmic events of Buddhist “evolution”. Consequently, up until now all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism have stuck strictly to the traditional cosmogony (and its correspondence in the mystic body). Besides the *sand mandala* of the Time Tantra (which also represents the Buddhist universe) Tibetan monks far more frequently construct the so-called *Meru mandala*. This, as its name suggests, is a likeness of the Buddhist cosmos in miniature with the world mountain Meru as its central axis.

When the Dalai Lama, who institutes no fundamental changes in the ritual system of Tantric Buddhism, says in public that the cosmology of the *Abhidharma* is in need of revision, then this definitely does not seem to be intended sincerely. More likely one must be prepared for his radical subjectivist epistemology (“everything is awareness, everything arises from emptiness”) to suspend the natural scientific world as illusion (*samsara*) at any moment and replace it with the fantastic model of the world from the *Abhidharma* which it is capable of making appear sensible and “rational”. From a tantric point of view, cosmogonies do not possess any objectivity of their own, rather they are ultimately the result of subjective conceptions; this is of course also true of the Copernican system. Kalu Rinpoche, the Kagyu master of the *Kalachakra Tantra* whom we have already often cited, has clearly expressed this dependency of space upon an appropriate awareness in the following words: “Each of these cosmologies is perfect for the being whose karmic projections lead them to experience their universe in this way. There is a certain relativity in the way in which one experiences the world. ... Hence, on a relative level every cosmology is valid. At an ultimate level, no cosmology is absolutely true. It cannot be universally valid as long as there are beings in fundamentally differing situations” (Brauen, 1992, p. 109). But that also means that the cosmology of the *Abhidharma* would become obligatory for all should the world be converted to Buddhism after the final *Shambhala* battle as the *Kalachakra Tantra* predicts.

### The yogi as computer

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is especially interested in the phenomenon of artificial intelligence. Since the mind is independent of the body in the Buddhist teachings, a pattern of spiritual synapses so to speak, he is of the opinion that it is possible for it to be reborn not just in people but also in machines: „I can't totally rule out the possibility that,” the god-king says, „that all the external conditions and the karmic action were there, a stream of consciousness might actually enter into a computer. [...] There is a possibility that a scientist who is very much involved his whole life [with computers], than the next life [he would be reborn in a computer], same process! [laughter] Then this machine which is half-human and half-machine has been reincarnated.” (Hayward, 1992, p. 152) (Hayward, 1992, p. 152). In answer to a subsequent question by Eleanor Rosch, a well-known cognitive psychologist from California, as to whether a great yogi who stood before the best computer in the world would be able to project his subtle consciousness into it, His Holiness replied enigmatically: „I feel this question about computers will be resolved only by time. We just have to wait and see until it actually happens.” (Hayward, 1992, p. 153).

His Holiness casually grounds the possibility of taking the computer as a model for the spirit through a reference to an ancient magical practice of Tibetan Buddhism. This is known as

*Trongjug* and involves a yogi transplanting his consciousness into a “freshly” deceased cadaver and then using this reanimated corpse for his own purposes (Evans-Wentz, 1937, p. 184). „In this case”, His Holiness says, „there is a total change of the body. [...] It’s very mystical, but imagine a person, a Tantric practitioner who actually transfers his consciousness to a fresh corpse. His previous body is dead; it has left and is finished. Now he has entered the new body. So in this case, you see, he has a completely new body but it’s the same life, the same person” (Hayward, 1992, p. 155). Images of this kind can be translated into computer terms without father ado: The “fresh corpse” forms the *hardware* so to speak, which stores the awareness of the Tantric who uses the dead body for his own ends as *software*.

In addition, such Tantric Buddhist speculations can lead one to perceive a subjectivity independent of humans in the “Internet” and “cyberspace”, a kind of superconscious. Could not the spirit of the supreme *Kalachakra* master, independent of a human body, one day control the international network of all computers from the inside? As fantastic and uncanny as it may sound, it is at any rate a *theoretical* possibility within the tantric system that such a question be answered with a yes. For this reason it is also taken seriously in exile Tibetan lama circles, by the Namgyal institute for example. The Namgyal monks are essentially commissioned to conduct the *Kalachakra Tantra* and are under the direct authority of the Dalai Lama. This institution can also be described as a kind of Tantric Buddhist “elite university”.

On February 8, 1996, His Holiness’s tantra institute posted a “Curriculum on Cyberspace” online. This document is of interest in as far as it is about the occult relationship between Tantrism, especially the *Kalachakra Tantra*, and the Internet. We would therefore like to cite several lengthier passages from it: “Cyberspace is a dimension of space sustained by networked computers designed to extend the power of the mind. Remarkably, the Internet often appears almost mystically to have a life of its own that is more than the sum of its parts. Mental projections can of course yield both positive and negative uses and results. Tibetan Buddhism, known for its mastery of the mind, has an area of concentration called ‘tantra’ that specializes in bringing spiritual motivation to the realm of mental projections ...” (Namgyal, HPI 012). From this, the authors continue, follows the need to have a Buddhist influence upon the net, to bless it and purify it.

The document continues as follows: the monks of the Namgyal Institute, “the personal monastery of the Dalai Lama, [were asked] to discuss whether the blessing of cyberspace would be possible. They enthusiastically responded, noting that one tantric system in particular, the *Kalachakra Tantra*, ... would be highly appropriate as a blessing vehicle because it especially emphasizes space ... Coincidentally, the *Kalachakra* is also the most widely disseminated of the Tibetan Buddhist tantric systems...” (Namgyal, HPI 012). Cyberspace, we also learn, could be used as the vehicle for a tantric projection (i.e., of the *Kalachakra Tantra*).

Thus the Namgyal Institute conducted the first *Kalachakra* cyberspace blessing with a ritual on February 8, 1996: “The actual ceremony took about 30 minutes and consisted of the monks chanting blessing prayers from the *Kalachakra Tantra* while envisioning space as cyberspace, the networked realm of computers, in their imagination. An image of the *Kalachakra* mandala, actually a scanned photo of a sand painting made earlier by the monks, was present on a computer as a visual aid ... Future cyberspace blessings will likely be offered at other auspicious times ...” (Namgyal, HPI 012). It should be obvious that the monks’ prayers contained the constantly recited *Mahayana* wish to help all living beings. The vision of a global Buddhocracy discussed in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, however, is not openly mentioned. [7]

There is something both fascinating and frightening about Buddhist theoreticians and even the Dalai Lama depicting Tantrism as the potential awareness of a world-spanning megacomputer. In this an identity of the ADI BUDDHA as a global superbrain is implicit. Does it perhaps have something to do with this Buddhist vision that His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama made himself available for an advertisement by the computer manufacturer, Apple? (*Spiegel*, 16/1998). [8]

In reading the literature about the structures of consciousness and their relation to computer technology, it is notable that “tantra” and “net” are frequently compared with one another, not just because the Sanskrit word “tantra” can be translated as “something woven” or “network”, but because the two systems are somehow presumed to be fundamentally related. Surprisingly even such a complex thinker as the astrophysicist and systems theorist Erich Jantsch –probably out of ignorance of the matter — has (in the late seventies) equated the principle of “cybernetic leaning processes” with Tantrism (Jantsch, 1982, p. 324).

In October 1987, a small group of well-known Western scientists headed by Francisco Varela traveled to Dharamsala to take part in a several-day seminar on neurobiology, cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, and evolutionary theory with the Dalai Lama. There were daily meetings with an expert paper and subsequent discussion. The intention behind the whole event was however ultimately directed at just one question — how could the latest discoveries in the most advanced branches of scientific research be derived from Buddhism? After every expert paper one heard, yes, Buddhism already says that too! Admittedly, His Holiness spoke emotionally about a “combination of Western science and Eastern spiritual development”, but at heart it was not about cooperation, but rather the consolidation of the Buddhist paradigm described about. In the meantime such meetings between His Holiness and Western scientists have become institutionalized by Dharamsala and take place annually “Mind and Life”).

Many researchers from the West, starved of mystic experiences for decades, have finally found their spiritual master in the “living Buddha” from Dharamsala. They have become converts to Buddhism like Francisco Varela or the nuclear physicist David Bohm, or, like Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, they fall into a kind of private ecstasy when confronted with the *Kundun*. Although His Holiness’s “scientific” interventions remain very general and abstract and in fact repeatedly boil down to just a handful of epistemological statements, he is nonetheless treated as a “colleague” by a number of scientists, behind whom the omniscience of a yogi shines forth. „Well, as has often been the case in this conference,” Francisco Varela enthuses for example, „Your Holiness, seem to anticipate the scientists’ questions” (Hayward, 1992, p. 230).

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### Neuroscientists see red over Dalai Lama

[www.nature.com/news/2005/050725/full/436452b.html](http://www.nature.com/news/2005/050725/full/436452b.html)

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Whoever it is who can formulate and consolidate the “scientific” paradigms of an era in human history actually ought to be regarded as the “spiritual ruler” of the era; he represents the force which determines the awareness, the feelings and the thoughts of millions for centuries. Ptolemy, Copernicus, Descartes, Newton, Marx, Freud, and Einstein were such “spiritual giants”. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, a brilliant master of the workings of consciousness, knows full well about this historical force and the power-political significance of the paradigmatic conflict. Likewise, he knows that a “Buddhization” of western science would make him especially powerful in contrast to other religious orientations. The Buddhist epistemological theories furnish the ideal conditions for such a process of appropriation. Both the *Yogachara* school (“everything is awareness”) and the *Madhyamika* school (“everything arises from emptiness”) permit (at least in theory) a relativization of the scientific culture of the West and its replacement with the world view of the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

As subtly, philosophically, and rationally as the tantric world view is discussed among the Western scientific elite, the more spectacular, emotional, and mythical is the spread of Tantric Buddhism among the masses. The *Kundun* has in the last five years succeeded in engaging the greatest propaganda machine in the world, the Hollywood film industry, for himself and his cause.

### Hollywood and Tantric Buddhism

The exotic flair projected by the Tibetan god-king and his lamas with their mysterious doctrine and adventurous history has led to a situation in which Tibet and its religion have increasingly become

the stuff celluloid dreams are made of. First of all, the Italian film director, Bernardo Bertolucci, created a somewhat saccharine but highly regarded monument to the religious founder with his work, *Little Buddha*. The film provided great propaganda value for Tibetan Buddhism because it told the story of the reincarnation of a lama in an American boy and an Indian girl and thus paved the way for the spread of the doctrine in the West.

While we were writing this book two major films about His Holiness appeared. One of them, Martin Scorsese's *Kundun*, features the life story of the god-king from his discovery as a boy up until his flight from Tibet (in 1959), the other, *Seven Years in Tibet*, directed by Jean Jacques Arnaud, is about the adventures of the Austrian mentor of the Dalai Lama and SS member, Heinrich Harrer, with Brad Pitt in the lead role. "Tibet is the flavor of the season! ... In recent months around two million Germans have wanted to see the teenage idol Brad Pitt as the Austrian adventurer and Lama friend, Heinrich Harrer" the *Spiegel* enthused without once mentioning Harrer's SS past (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 110).

Whilst filming, Brad Pitt experienced something like a mystic shiver: "And then they shot this scene where they are saying: 'Give the Dalai Lama the power!' Everybody goes into this chant, and it was like something was going down and God was shining through the clouds. It was *heavy*" (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 25).

The Italo-American Scorsese was with irresistible, ambiguous humor accepted as a monk by His Holiness. After the filmmaker had visited him in Dharamsala at the end of an exhausting journey, the *Kundun* bantered that, "Martin seemed at once far calmer. No longer like a hectic New Yorker, but like a Tibetan monk" (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 40).

Scorsese himself is completely convinced that his film, *Kundun*, has a magic effect on its audience. "Kundun is reminiscent of a filmic prayer — as if you wanted to show what is invisible to the eye: spirituality. Can this succeed in the cinema?", asks the in spiritual matters otherwise extremely skeptical, even cynical German weekly magazine, *Spiegel*. "Absolutely", answered Scorsese, "If you put movements, rhythms, music, faces together in a particular way, then something like a *spiritual current* can arise from the totality of images" (*Spiegel* 12/1998, p. 261) This director has made a ritual film, which in his opinion can silently influence people's awareness (as Tibetan Buddhism would have it): "These rituals which I show in *Kundun*, for example, I don't need to explain. They are something wonderful and universal" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 14-15, 1998, p. 19).

However, in the USA the film was well received by neither the general public nor the critics. "The devastating reaction of the American mainstream press made me sick", the director said at the presentation of his missionary work in Munich. (*Münchener Abendzeitung*, March 19). In total contrast to their American colleagues, numerous German film critics let themselves be completely uncritically drawn into the "spiritual current" of the *Kundun*. The *Bild* newspaper, for example, raved: "He recounts his tale almost wordlessly, in magic images. And slowly. So slowly that one soon surrenders to the pull of the images, forgets the passing of time and savors every moment" (*Bild*, March 19, 1998, p. 6). The *Münchener Abendzeitung* had this to say: "Scorsese's film is *hypnotic* and lucid" (*Münchener Abendzeitung*, March 19). Even the "sober" German news magazine, *Spiegel*, had no reservations about letting itself be enchanted and spoke enthusiastically of the "impressive images" with which Scorsese created "the portrait of an exceptional person and a mystic dreamland [of] Shangri La — demanding, strongly emotional cinema" (*Spiegel*, 16/1998, p. 110). German political and artistic celebrities were out in force at the lavish premiere of the film in Munich.

Scorsese's film, the screenplay of which was edited by the Dalai Lama himself, is a work of exile Tibetan propaganda which falsifies or distorts recent Tibetan history in numerous scenes. There is no word of the CIA's assistance in the flight of the *Kundun*; that his father was poisoned by political factions, that the former regent Reting Rinpoche was brutally strangled in the Potala, that

at the time at least 200 monks from the Drepung monastery who wanted to free Reting Rinpoche from prison were killed by the machineguns of the Tibetan army — all these incidents either remained unmentioned or were falsely depicted. Mao Zedong appears as a decadent giant with the aura of a noble-born casino owner. Even in his own autobiography the *Kundun* writes that he much admired Mao, but in the film he encounters the “Great Chairman” with the constant, almost mistrustful attentiveness of a young, albeit still somewhat inexperienced, spiritual master.

Five further film about the *Land of Snows* were scheduled to appear in 1998/99: about the CIA in Tibet, the terrible yeti in Tibet, the terror in Tibet, a romantic love story in Tibet, the shattered dreams of youth in Tibet. IMAX, a company which produces gigantic 3D movies, has commissioned a film in which a Tibetan mountain-climber under dramatic circumstances unfurls the national flag of the Land of Snows at the highest point in the world (on Mount Everest). (We may recall that Mount Everest is worshipped by the populace as a goddess.) In addition to these feature films there are numerous documentaries, among others one about the “Bu-Jews”, or Jewish people who have decided to follow the Buddhist religious path. Denise Di Novi, whose production company has also conducted a “Tibet project” under the title of *Buddha of Brooklyn*, informs us that “The tale of the Dalai Lama and the struggle of the Tibetan people is the kind of story that captures the imagination of Hollywood” (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 24). Tibet film scripts are piling up in the editorial offices of the big film companies. “It's as though everybody who carries a camera wants to make a movie on Tibet”, Tenzing Chodak, director of the *Tibet Fund*, has commented (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 24).

Undoubtedly the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has gained an particularly notable victory in his entry into the Hollywood scene. “Tibet is looming larger than ever on the show business map”, we could read in the *Herald Tribune* (*Herald Tribune*, March 20, 1997, p. 1). In August 1996, Harrison Ford, Sharon Stone, Steven Segal, Shirley MacLaine, and other superstars queued to shake hands with the “living Buddha” in Los Angeles. Barbara Streisand and Alec Baldwin called upon President Bill Clinton to rebuke China for its human right abuses in Tibet. “Tibet is going to enter Western popular culture as something can only when Hollywood does the entertainment injection into the world system”, writes the journalist Orville Shell, “Let's remember that Hollywood is the most powerful force in the world, besides the U.S. military” (*Herald Tribune*, March 20, 1997, p. 6). In 1993, 88 of the 100 most-viewed films were made in the USA. Orville Schell, who is working on a book about “Tibet and the West”, sees the *Kundun's* Hollywood connection as a substitute for the absent diplomatic corps who would be able to represent the interests of the Dalai Lama internationally: “Since he doesn't have embassies, and he has no political power, he has to seek other kinds. Hollywood is a kind of country in his own, and he's established a kind of embassy there” (*Newsweek*, May 19, 1997, p. 24).

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**Orville Schell: “Undeniable, there was something of a craze brewing around Tibet. Like a radioactive core emitting uncontainable energy, Hollywood's sudden interest was helping to fuel what some observers started to call a *Tibet phenomenon*. Indeed, as the buzz about the film productions increased, media outlets of all kinds soon gravitated to the story, so that everywhere one looked the subject of Tibet had a way of popping up.” (Schell, 2000, p. 34)**

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The god-king primarily owes it to the actor Richard Gere that he has become a star for America's famous actors. “For the Tibetan people, Richard Gere, Hollywood, and the films are an absolute stroke of luck!”, His Holiness explained in the German edition of *Playboy* (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 38). Gere himself was initiated into the *Kalachakra Tantra* by the *Kundun*; we do not know to what level. He has spoken very openly about his initiation experiences in the journal *Tricycle* and also made reference there to the magic power of Tantrism, which drove him to the limits of his own existence (*Tricycle* 5 (3), p. 54). There is already a poem in which Gere is revered like a Tibetan deity: “The huge head of Richard Gere,” it says in this poem, “ a tsonga blossom in his hair, / comes floating like a Macy's Parade balloon / above the snowdapped summit of sacred Kailash” (*Time*, vol. 150 no. 15: October 13, 1997). The Dalai Lama, who is fully aware of the great significance of show business, has selected the Hollywood star as his personal pupil



and treats him, the actor says, with fatherly severity.

His Holiness does not even shrink from using the world of fashion „to bring Tibet and Buddhism to the notice of the international jet” (*Tibet Review*, January 1993, p. 7). “Blatant materialism is passé, Lamaism *en vogue!*”, the *Spiegel* tells us (*Spiegel* 16/1998, p. 109). In January 1993 the *Kundun* was responsible for an issue of the fashion magazine *Vogue* as *Exceptional Editor in Chief*. Fashion designers like Anna Sui, Todd Oldham, and Marc Jacobs sell outfits for “freedom in Tibet”. As a “celebrity cook” the god-king recommends “a likely hit recipe for dumplings” (*Spiegel*, special issue, 4/1998, p. 133).

An interview with the *Kundun* that appeared in the March (1998) issue of the German edition of *Playboy* is a highpoint in his “public relations”. The up-market sex magazine presents His Holiness in the introduction bombastically: “He is goodly, wise, and peaceloving — and is conquering the world [!]: The victory procession of the Dalai Lama leaves even the Pope pale with envy. The Tibetan leader is worshipped like a god in Hollywood at the moment. Now in *Playboy* he talks more openly than ever. About Buddhism, China, sex, and alcohol” (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 38). Even if a light ironic note is not to be overheard in this presentation, the statement is nonetheless unambiguous: The Dalai Lama is conquering the world (!) and is worshipped like a god in Hollywood, the mightiest center of the industry of the mind.

This *Playboy* interview has a further symbolic value, especially when we adopt the tantric/magic viewpoint that everything is interconnected. In this light there must be a reason why the pious statements and the photos of His Holiness are printed in the sex magazine together with numerous images of naked women and amid erotic and in places obscene texts. It immediately rouses up the image of a *ganachakra* with the central guru conducting his sexual magic rites surrounded by his *karma mudras* (wisdom consorts or *Playgirls*). When *Playboy* asks the supreme Tibetan tantra master, “Are you actually interested in the topic of sex?”, the *Kalachakra* master, initiated into all the secrets of sexual magic, replies, “My goodness! You ask a 62-year-old monk who has been celibate his entire life a thing like that. (*laughs out loud*) I don’t have much to say about sex...” (*Playboy* [German edition], March 1998, p. 46).

With equal euphoria and enthusiasm the German news magazine, *Spiegel*, devoted a cover story to the *Kundun* in April 1998. The front cover featured the head of a Buddha into which masses of Westerners were pouring. Was this the head of the *Kundun*, the incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* and the time god *Kalachakra*? The title story of this issue of *Spiegel* is at any rate to a large extent dedicated to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism, or rather to what the author (Erich Follath) understands this to be. It begins — coincidentally or not — on page 108, the holiest and most magical number in Tantric Buddhism. Follath probably asked the *Spiegel* editors to make the magic page number the start of his article deliberately, since he is well-informed about the holy number 108. In a travel report on Bhutan he mentions the numeral 108, and since this reference occurs in connection with an event that we have dealt with in detail in our study, we would like to quote the passage. “... half a dozen more lamas are keeping watch here in the Himalayan foothills at the place where the king, Songtsen Gampo, had the first of a total of 108 holy sites constructed in the 7<sup>th</sup> century: It was supposed to drive out the terrible devil in the form of a woman who at that time was up to her mischief all over the roof of the world, the residence of the gods” (*Spiegel*, special issue 4/1998, p. 60). The “terrible devil in the form of a woman” is no-one other than “Mother Tibet”, the stigmatized *Srinmo*, over whose body the sacred landscape of the Land of Snows is raised.

The Dalai Lama’s star is shining brighter than ever before. Nevertheless, since the *Shugden* rebellion the god-king’s aura has begun to darken, and it is an irony of fate that the serious accusations against him have come from a conservative faction within his own school (the Gelugpas). In addition, the followers of the recalcitrant protective god (*Shugden*) do not argue like “reactionaries” at all in public, but rather (just like the *Kundun*) appeal to democratic fundamentals,

human rights, and the freedom of opinion. Thus in certain circles the “greatest prince of peace of our times” has overnight become a despot, a political traitor, a nepotist, a hypocrite, even a potential murderer. His accusers do not just abuse him, but rather justify their claims with “hard” facts that are worth checking but for which the “official” West has up until now closed its eyes and ears.

In the ongoing *Shugden* debate (as of 1998), many previously repressed and unreappraised topics from the history of Tibet and the Tibetans in exile have been brought to the surface. Among other things His Holiness and the government in exile have been accused of constantly defaming Tibetan Opposition figures as Chinese spies (e.g. Dujom Rinpoche) so as to silence them politically; of undemocratic actions against 13 Indian branches of Tibetans in exile and the possible murder of their spokesman, Gungthang Rinpoche; of playing false with the national guerilla army, which is outwardly combated, but covertly supported and built up; of the political murder of opposition politicians (Gongtang Tsultrim); of power-politically motivated jealousy of the Fifteenth Karmapa, the head of the largest Kagyupa lineage; of nepotism and the absolute favoritism of members of the Dalai Lama’s family (the “Yabshi clan”); of misjudging the world political situation, especially in the years of delay in establishing good contacts with Taiwan; of cooperation with the Chinese over the enthronement of the new Karmapa; of secret diplomacy with Beijing in general, through which the country is sold out to China to the benefit of the Lamaist culture. Intrigues play just as major a role in Dharamsala (“little Lhasa”) as in the Lhasa of old. The centuries of struggle between the various sects have also not reached an end in exile, and the competition between the individual regions of the Land of Snows just as little. Corruption and sinister money dealings are everyday events among the Tibetans. Fresh accusations are being made every day. In particular, as a spokesperson for the government in exile laments, the Internet is filled with “an unprecedented amount of literature ... that criticizes the Dalai Lama and belittles the Tibetan Exile Government” (Burns, Newsgroup 1).

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#### Footnotes:

[1] The inspiration for “engaged Buddhism” come not from the Dalai Lama but rather from Thich Nhat Hanh, a Theravada monk born in central Vietnam in 1926. The causes of ignorance, egocentrism, violence, war, and environmental degradation were supposed to be overcome through meditation, social commitment and the practice of community with Christian groups all over the world.

[2] This was in the period where the Communist Party (the SED) had already lost control over the country.

[3] Pope John Paul II is also more reserved than progressive on the ecumenical front, despite the spectacular major event with representatives from all religions that took place at his invitation in Assisi on October 25, 1986 and at which the *Kundun* was also present. Almost ten years after this meeting, upon which many followers of the ecumenical movement had set great hopes, the Pope describes the teaching of Buddha Shakyamuni in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* as atheistic, negative, and unworldly and states that the “doctrines of salvation in Buddhism and Christianity are opposed” (*Tibetan Review*, June 1995, p. 12).

[4] It will never come to this, since the Muslims are just as well-versed and sensitive as His Holiness in matters concerning occultism and “world domination”.

[5] Members of the RSS were closely involved in the murder of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, of whom the Dalai Lama claims he was his greatest non-Buddhist teacher.

[6] With his *shunyata* doctrine, Nagarjuna, the founding father of *Madhyamika*, even gained admittance into the discourse of Christian theology, through Abe Masao’s concept of a “self-emptying, self-denying God”, for instance. (Brück and Lai, 1997, p. 448).

[7] As an aside, it must be noted, however, that the blessing of the Internet by the *Kalachakra* monks has not had the positive effect they intended. In thousands of the contributions that have been transmitted over the net since 1996 the Dalai Lama has for the first time been subject to strong criticism and attack.

[8] Apple ran a campaign under the slogan *Think Different* that featured living and past celebrities — including (alongside Pablo Picasso, Mohammed Ali, Mahatma Gandhi, Alfred Hitchcock, etc.) the Dalai Lama. Since the god-king’s likeness drew criticism in Asian countries, Apple withdrew the ad. This in its turn led to a spirited discussion on the Internet.

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 The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 17

## The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Part II – 17. Conclusion

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# 17. CONCLUSION

We have now reached the end of our detailed treatise on the Dalai Lama, Tantric Buddhism, and Tibetan history. The first part of our study (*Ritual as Politics*) was centered on the theme of gender, especially the sexual magic exploitation of the woman in the androcentric system of *Vajrayana* for the mytho-political accumulation of power. The derivation of Tibetan history and the Dalai Lama's politics from the cultic mysteries of Buddhist Tantrism (especially the *Kalachakra Tantra*) forms the content of the second part of our book (*Politics as Ritual*). In general, we have attempted to show that, in the world view of the Lamaist, sacred sexuality, magic, mysticism, and myth are united with his understanding of politics and history.

Tibetan Buddhism primarily owes its success in the West to two facts: first, the charm and brilliant self-presentation of its supreme representative, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, and second, the promise to lead people on the way to enlightenment. Although the tantric path to enlightenment explicitly involves a dissolution of the ego, it is at first the *I* of the pupil which is addressed. “*I* would like to overcome the senselessness and suffering of my earthly existence. *I* would like to experience liberation from *samsara* (the world of illusion).” When a western *sadhaka* is prepared to sacrifice his “little self”, he certainly does not have the same understanding as the lamas of the “greater self” (the higher self or Buddha consciousness) which the tantric philosophy and practices of *Vajrayana* offers him as a spiritual goal. The Westerners believe that enlightened consciousness still has something to do with a self. In contrast, a teacher of Tantric Buddhism knows that the individual identity of the pupil will be completely extinguished and replaced by a strictly codified, culturally anchored army of gods. It is the Tibetan Buddhas, herukas, Bodhisattvas, deities, demons (*dharmapalas*) and the representatives of the particular guru lineages who take the place of the individual pupil's consciousness. One must thus gain the impression that an “exclusive club” of supernatural, albeit culturally bounded, beings (Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, gods, etc.) has managed to survive by time and again occupying human bodies anew (until these wear out). Tibetan Buddhism is not aimed at the enlightenment of individuals but rather at the continuing existence of a culture of superhumans (yogis, gods) in the form of possessed people (the pupils). It is concerned here to

perpetuate a priestly caste that does not need to die because their consciousnesses can be incarnated into the human bodies of their followers again and again. This caste and their deities are considered sacrosanct. They live beyond all criticism. Their symbols, deeds, and history are set up as exemplary; they are the cultural inheritance which may not be analyzed but must be taken on blind faith by believers.

For these reasons Tibetan Buddhism's entire promise of enlightenment forms a trap with which intimate and religious yearnings can be used to magically push through the politico-religious goals of the monastic clergy. (We are not discussing here whether this is really possible, rather, we are talking about the intentions of the Lamaist system.) This corresponds exactly with what the Renaissance philosopher Giordano Bruno describes as "manipulation". Bruno, it will be recalled, indicated that a masterly manipulator may not speak about his actual power-political intentions. In contrast, he flatters the ego of the one to be manipulated (the ego the masses), so that the latter always believes he is following solely his own interests and pursuing his completely personal goals — but in truth he is fulfilling the wishes and targets of the manipulator (without knowing it). Applied to the Dalai Lama and his religion this means that people practice Tibetan Buddhism because they hope for enlightenment (liberation from personal suffering) from it, yet in reality they become agents of political Lamaism and the Tibetan gods at work behind it. The Dalai Lama is thus a particularly impressive example of a "manipulator" in Bruno's sense.

If people are used to serve as vessels for the Tibetan gods, then the energy which directly powers the mysto-political motor of the Lamaist system consists in the sacred sexuality, the erotic love, particularly in the *gynergy* of the woman (as fuel). Tibetan Buddhism is a mystery religion and its mysteries are the driving force behind its political decisions. Reduced to a concise formula, this means that sexuality is transformed via mysticism into power. The French poet Charles Péguy is supposed to have said that, "every mysticism ends up as politics". The dynamic of the tantric system cannot be better described. It is a large-scale "mystic ritual machine" whose sole aim is the production of the all-encompassing ADI BUDDHA and the establishment of his universal political control.

Just how closely intertwined Lamaism sees sexual magic and politics to be is demonstrated by the dual nature of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The sexual magic rituals, the cosmology, and the political program of the *Shambhala myth* are tightly interwoven with each other in this document. For a Western reader, the text seems unintegrated, at odds with itself, and contradictory, but for a Buddhist Tantric it forms a seamless unity.

Tantric rituals are thus politics, as we have described in the first part of our study. But in reverse, politics is also a ritual, i.e., every political event, be it the flight of the Dalai Lama from Tibet, the vandalistic actions the Chinese Red Guard, the death of Mao Zedong, or a film like Scorsese's *Kundun*, they all — from a traditional Tibetan and not from a Western point of view — form a performance along the *Kalachakra* master's progress toward the throne of the ADI BUDDHA.

If we judge the *politics* of Lamaist Buddhocracy from a Western point of view, especially those of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala myth*, then we arrive at the following nine assessment points:

1. **The *politics* of the Time Tantra is "inhuman", because it is conducted by gods and yogis, but not by people. These gods possess in part extremely destructive characteristics. They are nonetheless sacrosanct and may neither be criticized nor exchanged or transformed.**
2. **The goal of this tantra is the establishment of an androcentric, undemocratic, despotic monastic state headed by an autocrat (the ADI BUDDHA).**
3. **The Buddhocratic state is structurally based upon sacrifice: the sacrifice of the loving goddess, the woman, the individual, the pupil, the king, the scapegoat.**

4. **Buddhocracy skillfully manipulates several models of *temporary anarchism* in order to in the end turn them around into an authoritarian system.**
5. **In a Tibetan-style Buddhocracy, the state and its organs do not shrink from using black magic rituals to get political opponents out of the way.**
6. **Buddhocratic politics are aligned not towards democratic decision-making processes but rather towards divine commands, especially the pronouncements of oracles, of whom *Pehar*, the pre-Buddhist war god of the Hor Mongols, assumes the leading role (of state oracle).**
7. **The tantric state is pursuing an aggressive policy of war and conquest (the Shambhalization of the world).**
8. **The *Shambhala myth* contains an apocalyptic vision borne by a “fascistoid” warrior ethos, in which the faithful (the Buddhists) brutally annihilate all non-believers (above all the Moslems).**
9. **Tantric Buddhism manipulates the western masses with falsified images of peace, ecology, democracy, a pro-woman orientation, social justice, and compassion.**

In this connection we would like to (in warning) mention once more the significant influence that both Buddhist Tantrism in general and the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth* in particular have had over fascism and German national socialism, and continue to exert. In chapter 12 we reported on Heinrich Himmler’s occult interest in Tibet, about the former SS member Heinrich Harrer, the tutor of the young Dalai Lama, and about the significance of *Vajrayana* for the fascist ideology of Mussolini’s confidante, Julius Evola. But at the center of this chapter stood a detailed analysis of *Esoteric Hitlerism*, the world view of the Chilean diplomat and author Miguel Serrano who closely follows Buddhist Tantrism and combines it with occult doctrines of the Nazis. Most clearly of all, Serrano shows what awaits humanity if the *Kalachakra Tantra* were to gain control over the world: a racist autocracy of androgynous warriors who celebrate real female sacrifices as their supreme mystery and worship Hitler’s SS as their historical role-model. In warning, we would indicate that it is not a *coincidence* that His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has maintained contact with these fanatic worshippers of the SS and the German “Führer” since his flight from Tibet (in 1959), but rather because his tantric tradition corresponds with many of their ideological and visionary aspects.

Where Serrano’s *Shambhala visions* have up until now remained speculations, they have taken on a horrifying reality in the figure of the Japanese sect leader, Shoko Asahara. The world held its breath in the case of Asahara as he ordered the carrying out of a gas attack on Tokyo’s overfilled underground railway system in 1995 in which there were numerous injuries and several people died. It was the first militarily planned attempted murder by a religious group from an industrialized country which was directed outwardly (i.e. not against its own membership). The immense danger of such insidious attacks, against which the masses are completely unprotected, is obvious. For all the depth of feeling which the act stirred up among the international public, no-one has until now made the effort of investigating the ideological and religious bases and motives which led Asahara to commit his crime. Here too, the ways lead to Tibetan Buddhism, especially the *Shambhala myth* of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Asahara saw himself as an incarnation of the *Rudra Chakrin*, the raging wheel turner, who destroys one half of the world in order to (literally) rescue the other half through his *Shambhalization plan*. Not only was did he practice *Vajrayana*, he was also a “good friend” of the Dalai Lama, whom he met five times in person.

### **The atavistic pattern of Tibetan Buddhism**

Despite all these problematic points, the image of Tibetan Buddhism as the best of all religious systems and the Dalai Lama as the gentlest (!) of all beings continues to spread successfully. One of the latest high points in this glorification has been the cover story on *Buddhism* in the German news magazine *Spiegel* (April 1998). In the case of the Dalai Lama this magazine, well-known for its critical stance towards religion and anti-church articles which often did not shy away from a sharp cynicism, let itself be used as a propaganda instrument by an atavistic, autocratic religious

system. The author of the euphoric article, Erich Follath, was like so many of his colleagues completely captivated by the god-king's charm after a visit to Dharamsala. "I show old friends like you around my garden!", the *Kundun* had smiled at the *Spiegel* editor and shown him his flower beds (*Spiegel*, no. 16, April 13, 1998). The journalist Follath gratefully accepted this personal gesture by the divine charmer and in the same moment abandoned his critical awareness and his journalistic responsibility. His article is an embarrassing collection of historical distortions and sentimental celebration of the *Kundun*, his country, and his religion. [1]

If we were to characterize the obvious self-presentation of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama on the world political stage, we would soon recognize that he strictly abides by (a) four positive rules and (b) four negative ones which proves him to indeed be a masterful manipulator:

1. (a) In public, always argue using the terms of *Mahayana* Buddhism. Refer to compassion, love, and peace. (b) Never mention the sexual magic mysteries and power-political obsessions of *Vajrayana*.
2. (a) Lead all arguments that could in any manner be directed against Buddhism into the "emptiness" (*shunyata*) and in public "*shunyatize*" even your own religious approach: "nothing has an inherent existence" — that is, everything comes from nothingness and everything ends in nothingness. (b) In contrast, never mention in public the Tibetan gods, demons, and spirits (the *Nechung* oracle) or their power-political program (the *Shambhala myth*), who sink into this "emptiness" only to push through their "Buddhocratic" interests and tantric ideology globally.
3. (a) Apparently take on all progressive currents within western culture (democracy, freedom of opinion, human rights, individualism, women's rights, ecology, humanism, and so forth). (b) Never mention the autocratic clerical intentions of the tantric system, and under no circumstances the establishment of worldwide control by the androcentric Buddhist monastic state which can perpetuate itself via the doctrine of reincarnation.
4. (a) Smile and always appear friendly, ordinary, modest, humble, and human. Always play the gentle "Lord of Compassion", the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*. (b) Never display annoyance or pride in public, and thickly veil the destructive aspects of those gods and demons (*herukas*) whose emanation on earth you are. Be silent about the cruelty of Lamaist history.

The smile and the friendly words of the "living Buddha" are only the outer facade of his many-layered personality. But it is not what the Dalai Lama says, but rather the religious system which stands behind him and what his gods command that determine the politics of Tibetan Buddhism, as we have shown in the course of our study. It is not the new pseudo-Western constitution of the Tibetans in exile which counts, rather it is in the final instance the "political theology" recorded in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth* and the sexual magic practices prescribed there for the accumulation of power which are decisive. It is not the relaxed and friendly relations between His Holiness and western celebrities which are a problem, but rather his close contacts with occult sects like Shoko Asahara's AUM cult and with representatives of "esoteric Hitlerism" like Miguel Serrano. The reason they are extremely problematic and very dangerous is because both occultists (Asahara and Serrano) have placed the philosophy and practice of *Vajrayana* and the warlike *Shambhala myth* at the center of their destructive world view. It is not the conflict between the Dalai Lama and Beijing which poses a threat for the West and the world community, but rather in contrast a possible future cultural conquest of the "Chinese dragon" by the "Tibetan snow lion" (of Lamaism). The *Shambhala myth* provides the optimal ideological foundations for an aggressive, pan-Asian superpower politics and for the unleashing of a Buddhist *jihad* (holy war). It is not the gentle downward-looking *Avalokiteshvara* and the "simple monk" from Dharamsala, but rather *Yama* the god of death and *Kalachakra* the time god with his woman-destroying cult which are the problem, since they are likewise incarnated in the figure of the Dalai Lama. It is not that the Dalai Lama privately seeks advice from an oracle that is problematic, but rather that a Mongolian war god speaks through the state oracle. It is not the popularity that Hollywood has lent the *Kundun* which should be criticized, but rather the use of these media giants to distort historical facts.

Yet the atavistic and mythic pattern of Tibetan thought and Tantric Buddhism is completely ignored by people in the West (as long as they are not converted Buddhists). If it were to be examined, one would inevitably reach the conclusion that there is absolutely no freedom of opinion in the Lamaist culture of Tibet, and hence no real criticism either, since the Tibetan people have always been administered autocratically, and even in exile have no democracy, having “opted” for a constitutionally fixed(!) Buddhocracy instead. Further, since doctrine has it that the highest ruler of the country, the Dalai Lama, is not a state president but a living “god” (an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara* and the *Kalachakra* deity), his will must always be valued more highly than that of his subjects, even should they have a seat in the exile Tibetan government.

Additionally, Tibet has no ordinary history but rather a sacred one, with the *Shambhala myth* at its center and as its goal. For this reason, every political act of the *Kundun* and the Tibetans in exile must be subsumed within this eschatology. Lamaist culture is in its essence undemocratic, fundamentalist, and totalitarian, and sees nothing bad in this — in contrast, it holds itself to be the best system of all. Thanks to the doctrine of reincarnation, the ruling clerical elite views its absolutist exercise of power as unlimited even by death.

Every reform policy, every affirmation of democratization, every profession of peace remains a lie for as long as the Dalai Lama has not renounced the tantric ritual system, especially the *Kalachakra Tantra*. At heart this rests on the magic transformation of sexuality into power and ultimately aspires to the militarily enforced enthronement of a sacred/political world king. Nonetheless, without even the slightest concession and headed by the *Kundun*, all schools of Lamaism continue to hold fast to the — as we believe we have demonstrated them to be — extremely destructive and humanity despising rites and associated political ideology.

Even if the Tibetan clergy were to relinquish its political privileges for a time in a “liberated” Tibet, the idea of the hegemony of a patriarchal monastic dictatorship as the supreme goal would remain, as this is the core of the entire tantric ritual system. The theocratic system that can be found in all the past cultures of the world only survives today in Tibetan Buddhism and parts of Islam. In both cases it demands worldwide recognition and distribution. Among the Tibetans in exile it does so — grotesquely — from behind a mask of democracy, human rights, the ecumenical mission, and the protection of nature.

However, when they not in public, the Tibetan Gurus do not shrink at all from talking about their mystic envisionings, plans for conquest, apocalyptic battles, or the worldwide expansion of a Buddhocracy. In their followers’ circles the *Shambhala myth* has long since become a power-political factor. Yet it is not even mentioned in the world media. The lamas tailor their outwardly presented depictions of Tibet to their audience. If the tenor of an academic conference is one of sober discussion, then the arguments of the Tibetans in exile are likewise sober, analytic, and critical. If another meeting is more emotional and esoteric, then the very same people there subscribe to the fantastic historical myths of the eternally peaceful and mysterious, occult highlands (*Shangri La*) which at the first conference they claimed to be the invention of a errant “western orientalism”. In turn, at the congresses of “committed Buddhists”, the Tibet of old is built up as the sanctuary of all those values which are gaining ground in postmodern society. „Tibetan exiles”, Toni Huber writes, „have reinvented a kind of modern, liberal Shangri-La image of themselves”, in that they adopt images from the protest movements of the industrialized West „which are now transnational in scope and appeal: environmentalism, pacifism, human rights, and feminism” (Huber, 2001, p. 358). Yet Western values, like the separation of ecclesiastical and secular power, equality before the law, the rule of law, freedom of expression, social pluralism, political representation, equality of the sexes, and individualism, had no place in the history of Tibet.

But it is not just a result of pure naïveté when government sources in Europe and America express the opinion that autocratic Lamaism is compatible with the fundamentals of a modern constitution.

Behind this also lie the tactical politics of power with an “impending” Chinese threat. Washington in particular is most interested in making use of an oppressed Tibet as an argument in discussions with China, the USA’s greatest competitor.

This dangerous antagonism between the two superpowers (China vs. the USA) is efficiently stirred up by their respective internal politics, and Dharamsala does not let a chance pass without pouring gas on the flames. The *Kundun* with his loud and “heartfelt” criticism of China is a American king-piece in the political chess game between Washington and Beijing. In it, official posts in the USA are thoroughly informed about the “true” history of the old and the new Tibet as well as the “undemocratic” circumstances in Dharamsala. They are advised by such objective scholars as, among others, A. Tom Grunfeld and Melvyn C. Goldstein. In public, however, the State Department has until now followed the pro-Tibetan arguments of the Hollywood actor and *Kalachakra* initiate, Richard Gere.

### **“Clash of Religions”: The fundamentalist contribution of Lamaism**

In the last fifteen years, the West has to its great surprise discovered just how much political explosiveness religiously based strategies for world domination (like the *Shambhala myth*) and magic/mystic practices (like the *Kalachakra ritual*) have been able to develop today, on the threshold of the third millennium. Catching the western cultures unprepared, theocratic (and Buddhocratic) visions of the most varied schools of belief have burst forth explosively from the depths of the human subconscious, where they have survived in hiding since the bourgeois Enlightenment (of the 18<sup>th</sup> century). Events in Iran, the country where the mullahs established the first smoothly functioning Moslem religious state of the modern era, triggered a culture shock in the West. All at once the atavistic attitudes and rules of violence, the warrior ethic, racism, intolerance, discrimination against women, the dictatorship of the priesthood, the persecution of nonbelievers, inquisitions, visions of global wars and the end of the world, etc., with which theocratic (and Buddhocratic) systems are associated were once more (as in the Middle Ages) were very current issues.

In a widely respected book, *Clash of Civilizations*, the American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, has indicated with convincing arguments that the confrontations which await the world of the 21st century primarily have neither economic, class conflict, nor nationalistic causes. In their search for identity, people have since the eighties been grouping themselves around “cultures”, but most especially around religions.

Surprisingly, all religious traditions have in the meantime overcome their opposition to technology. “The West” and “technology” are no longer identified with one another as they once were. Even the most radical fundamentalists use high-tech gadgets and the latest means of communication. It is the students from the faculties of engineering and the natural sciences who fell particularly drawn to religious ideas. According to Huntington, social conflicts (rich against poor) are also no longer a primary factor in the causes of war. Cultural spheres, such as that of Islam for instance, can encompass both extremely rich and extremely poor countries at the same time. The critical factor is the common religion.

The West and its values, Huntington argues, is becoming increasingly weak as a central power, while other cultural power blocs are crystallizing. Of these the two most significant are Islam and China. Its universalistic claims are increasingly bringing the West into conflict with other cultural spheres, most seriously with Islam and China. ... Islam and China embody grand cultural traditions that are very different from those of the West and, in the eyes of these cultural spheres, vastly superior to them. The power and self-assurance of these two spheres are increasing in comparison to the West, and the conflicts of interest and values between them and the West are becoming more numerous and intense (Huntington, 1997, p. 19). Wars, under certain circumstances world wars, are for Huntington hardly avoidable.



If we take Huntington's suggestion seriously, we have to ask ourselves whether the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth* of the Dalai Lama do not represent an extremely dangerous ideological bomb which could set the whole world aflame. As we know, the Time Tantra predicts an eschatological apocalyptic war with Islam. In the year 2327, the prophecy says, *Rudra Chakrin*, the "wrathful wheel turner" from *Shambhala*, will lead his army into battle against the *Mlecchas* (Moslems). A contribution from the Internet has thus rightly compared the vision of the Time Tantra with the idea of an Islamic holy war (*jihad*). "The *Kalachakra* initiation", writes Richard P. Hayes, "seems to have been a call to the Buddhist equivalent of jihad ... the *Kalachakra* was interpreted externally as a call to Holy War (to preserve the Dharma against its enemies)" (Hayes, Newsgroup 11).

For historical reasons Islam has proven itself to be the most culturally aggressive counterforce to western culture. The struggles between the Christian Occident and the Islamic Orient are part of a centuries old tradition. With their explicit hostility towards Islam the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth* are thus stirring up a fire which is already glowing fiercely on the current world political stage and has even spread to the center of the greatest western power (the USA).

According to Huntington, China will very soon be the West's most potent economic and ethnic challenger. The country will develop into the core state and magnet of a Sinitic cultural sphere and will culturally dominate all its neighbors; the entire East Asian economy will be centered around China. Unification between the People's Republic and Taiwan is just a question of time. Huntington sees the "Middle Kingdom" as the one power that could one day cast doubt on the *global* influence of the West.

In contrast to Islam, the philosophy (which can hardly still be described as communist) currently dominant in China, that terms itself the "inheritance of Confucian thought" both on the mainland and in Taiwan, is not outwardly aggressive and oriented towards conquest. On a general level, the Confucian ethos stresses authority, hierarchy, a sense of family, ancestor worship, the subordination of the rights of the individual to the community, and the supremacy of the state over the individual, but also the "avoidance of confrontations", that is, wars as well.

We must nevertheless not forget that in the course of its history China has never been free from external ideological influences. Buddhism in its various forms, as well as Christianity and communism are cultural imports and have at times had a decisive influence on the politics of the country. In the 14th chapter of Part II of our study we thus posed the question of whether the Chinese might not also be susceptible to the *Shambhala myth's* global visions of power. The "Middle Kingdom" has always had spiritually and mythically based claims to world domination. Even if it has not tried to impose these militarily, the Chinese Emperor is nonetheless revered as a world king (a *Chakravartin*). As we have demonstrated in our detailed portrait of Mao Zedong, such a claim survived even under communism. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is most aware of this. For a good five years now his missionary work has been concentrated on Taiwan (Nationalist China). We have quoted several prophecies from his own lips which foretell a decisive codetermining role for Lamaism in shaping the Chinese future. Taiwan, which — according to all prognoses — will sooner or later return to the mother country, can be considered the springboard from which the Tibetan monks and the new Nationalist Chinese recruits ordained by them could infiltrate the Chinese cultural fabric.

### **Return to rationalism?**

Why is the West so helpless when it encounters the "battle of cultures", and why is it surprised every time violent eruptions of fundamentalist religious systems (as in Islam for instance) occur? We believe that the reasons for this must be of a primarily epistemological nature: Since the time of the Enlightenment, the occidental culture has drawn a clear dividing line between the church and the state, science and religion, technology and magic, politics and myth, art and mysticism. This division led to the assessment of all state, scientific, technical, political, and artistic phenomena

purely according to the criteria of reason or the aesthetics. Rationalism unconditionally required that the church, religion, magic, myth, and mysticism have no influence on the “scientific culture of the Enlightenment”. Naïvely, it also projects such conceptions onto non-Western cultural spheres. In the issue of Tibet, for example, the West neatly separates Tantric Buddhism and its mysteries (about which it knows as good as nothing) from the political questions of human rights, the concept of democracy, the national interests of the Tibetan people. But for the Dalai Lama and his system, politics and religion have been united for centuries. For him and for Lamaism, power-political decisions — of whatever kind — are tactical and strategic elements in the plan for world conquest recorded in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and *Shambhala myth*.

Since rationalism does not take the power-political effectiveness of myths and religions seriously enough, it refrains from the outset from examining the central contents of religious cults (such as the *Kalachakra Tantra* for example). The mysteries of the various religious orientations have never been more hidden and mysterious than in the Age of Reason, for the simple reason that this has never examined them.

To be successful, however, a critical analysis and evaluation of an ancient world view must fulfill three conditions:

1. First of all it must be able to immerse itself in the world view of the particular religion, that is, it must be capable of perceiving the world and the universe through the eyes and filters of the religious dogmata to be examined. Otherwise it will never learn what it is all about. In the specific case of Tibetan culture, this means that it must familiarize itself with the sexual magic and micro-/macrocosmic philosophy of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the political ideology of the *Shambhala myth* so as to be able to understand the politics of the Dalai Lama and his executive at all.
2. Only after obtaining exact knowledge about the basis, goals, and history of the religion in question should it compare these with western values so as to then make an evaluation. For example, it must relate the “female sacrifice” and the absorption of *gynergy* through yoga practices in Buddhist Tantrism to contemporary demands for the equality of the sexes. The West cannot overcome the myths by denying their power. It has itself had to experience their unbroken and enormous presence even in the twentieth century. In the case of national socialism (Nazism) the mythological world view developed an all but superhuman potency. Only if investigative thinkers risk entering into the heart of the religious cult mysteries and are prepared to engage with the innermost core of these mysteries can such “religious time bombs” be diffused. For this reason,
3. the requirements for a critical reappraisal of the cultures are that their mystery cults and their contents be brought into the arena for public discussion — a procedure which is sure to send a shiver down the spines of the majority of fans of the esoteric and fundamentalists. But such an open and public discussion of the mystery knowledge is not at all an achievement of our liberal-democratic age. If, for example, we consider the critical and polemic disputes of the fathers of the Christian church with the various religious currents of their times and the rejoinders of the latter, then we can see that between the 2nd and the 5th centuries there was — despite the very primitive state of communication technologies — a far larger openness about fundamental questions of how the world is viewed than today. These days, religions are either blindly adopted or rejected *per se*; back then religions were made, formed, and codified.

As absurd as it may sound, “western rationalism” is actually the cause of occultism. [2] It pushes the esoteric doctrines and their practices (the *New Age* for example) into the social underground, where they can spread undisturbed and uninhibited, and lay claim to one mind after another unnoticed, until one day when — as in the case of national socialism in Germany in the 30s, the Mullah regime in Iran in the 80s, and perhaps the *Shambhala myth* in Asia in the ??s — they burst forth with immense power and draw the whole of society into their atavistic wake. [3]

On the other hand, the “critical descent” into the mystery cults of the religious traditions makes possible valuable learning processes. We did not want to reach the conclusion in our analysis of Buddhist Tantrism that everything about traditional religions (Buddhism in this particular case) ought to be dismissed. Many religious teachings, many convictions, practices, and visions appear thoroughly valuable and even necessary in the establishment of a peaceful world community. We too are of the opinion that the “Enlightenment” and western “rationalism” alone no longer have the power to *sensibly* interpret the world, and definitely not to change it. Man does not live on bread alone!

Hence, in our view, the world of the new millennium is thus not to be demythologized (nor dis-enchanted or re-rationalized), but rather humans have the power, the right, and the responsibility to subject the existing myths, mysteries and religions to a critical examination and selection process. We can, may, and must resist those gods who exhibit destructive conceptions and dualist thoughts and deeds. We can, may, and ought to join those who contribute to the construction of a peaceful world. We can, may, and perhaps should even seek new gods. There is, however, a great danger that the time for a fundamental renewal of the religious process will disappear if the atavistic/warlike world views (with western help as well) continue to spread further and are not replaced by other, peaceful depictions of the world (and myths). The existing traditions (and the deities and mysteries behind them) may only be of help in such a process of renewal in as far as they adhere to certain fundamentals like mutual respect, peaceableness, openness, equality of the sexes, cooperation with nature, charity, etc.

The cultural critic Samuel P. Huntington rejects from the outset the idea of a universal culture, a new world culture as unrealistic and unwanted. But why actually? The general interconnection, the technologization, the interlacing of the economy, the expansion of international travel have like never before in the history of humankind generated the communicative conditions for the discussion of a global cultural beginning. This is, at least as far as certain western values like human rights, equality of opportunity, democracy, and so forth, already encouraged by the *world community* (especially the UN) with more or less large success. But on a religious level, everything remains the same — or will there be new mysteries, oriented to laws of human harmony without a need to sacrifice intercultural variety and colorful splendor?

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#### Footnotes:

[1] We will not go into the individual points raised in the article here as we have already discussed them at appropriate points throughout the book.

[2] The word “occultism” in its current sense first emerged during the age of rationalism.

[3] An interpretation of national socialism on the basis of its “occult and mythological background” is still considered highly dubious by the majority of established historians and cultural researchers in the West. But there is no political movement of the 20th century which more deliberately and effectively derived itself from myths. We are indebted to C. G. Jung for several articles on Hitler and his movement, in which the depth psychologist interpreted the “Third Reich” and the “Führer” as the epiphany (or incarnation) of the violent Germanic god *Wotan/Odin*, whose spirit descended into not just the dictator but also his followers. With this analysis, Jung — as Miguel Serrano saw clearly — comes close to a depiction of the Tibetan tulku principle. Since his article revealed a certain sympathy with the Nazis, it was withdrawn from circulation by the author after the Second World War. Even though we strictly distance ourselves from Jung’s fascist sympathies, we nonetheless consider his diagnosis of Hitlerism as a “*Wotan cult*” to be completely accurate. If we identify the deity who is pulling the strings behind a political movement, it does not mean in the slightest that we must therefore become followers of this deity and its mysteries (in the case in question a disciple of the *Wotan cult* and the Nazis). In contrast, only then can we gain a differentiated relation towards the mythic forces and powers that determine a culture — we can just as well combat it as follow it, just as well publicly condemn and accuse it as enter into a compromise with it.

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 POSTSCRIPT: CREATIVE POLARITY BEYOND TANTRISM

## The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Postscript: Creative polarity beyond tantrism

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# POSTSCRIPT: CREATIVE POLARITY BEYOND TANTRISM

As surprising as it may sound after our critical analysis of *Vajrayana*, we would in conclusion like to pose the question of whether Tantric Buddhism does not harbor a religious archetype the disclosure, dissemination and discussion of which could meet with great transcultural interest. Would it not be valuable to discuss as religious concepts such tantric principles as the “mystical love between the sexes”, the “union of the male and female principles”, or the *unio mystica* between god and goddess?

As we demonstrated at the start of our study, Tantrism in all its variants is based upon a vision of the polarity of being. It sees the primary cultic event on the path to enlightenment in a mystical conjunction of poles, specifically in the mystical union of the sexes. From a tantric point of view, all the phenomena of the universe are linked to one another through erotic love and sexuality, and our world of appearances is seen as the field in which these two basic forces (Tibetan *yab* and *yum*; Chinese *yin* and *yang*) act. They manifest themselves as a polarity in both nature and the realm of the spirit. In the tantric view of things, love is the great life force that pulsates through the cosmos, primarily as heterosexual love between god and goddess, man and woman. Their mutual affection acts as the creative principle.

“It is through love and in the face of love that the world unfolds, through love it regains its original unity and its eternal nondivision” — this statement is also proclaimed in *Vajrayana* (Faure, 1994, p. 56). For the Tantric, erotic and religious love are not separate. Sexuality and mysticism, *eros* and *agape* (spiritual love) are not mutually exclusive contradictions.

Let us once more repeat the wonderful words with which tantric texts describe the “holy marriage” between man and woman. In *yuganaddha* (the mystic union) there is “neither affirmation nor denial, neither existence nor non-existence, neither non-remembering nor remembering, neither affection nor non-affection, neither the cause nor the effect, neither the production nor the produced, neither purity nor impurity, neither anything with form nor anything without form; it is but the synthesis of all dualities” (Dasgupta, 1974, p. 114). In this synthesis “egoness is lost and the two polar opposites fuse into a state of intimate and blissful oneness” (Walker, 1982, p. 67).

A cooperation between the poles now replaces the struggle between contradictions (or sexes). Body and spirit, erotic love and transcendence, emotions and reason, being (*samsara*) and non-being

(*nirvana*) are wedded. In *yuganaddha*, it is said, all wars and disputes between good and evil, heaven and hell, day and night, dream and perception, joy and suffering, praise and contempt are pacified and stilled. Mirada Shaw celebrates the embrace of the male and female Buddha as "an image of unity and blissful concord between the sexes, a state of equilibrium and interdependence. This symbol powerfully evokes a state of primordial wholeness an completeness of being" (Shaw, 1994, p. 200).

Divine erotic love does not jut lead to enlightenment and liberation; the tantric view is that mystic gendered love can also free all suffering beings. All forms of time originate from the primordial divine couple. Along with the sun and moon and the "pair of radiant planets", the five elements also owe their existence to the cosmogonic erotic love. According to the *Hevajra Tantra*, "By uniting the male and female sexual organs the holder of the Vow performs the erotic union. From contact in the erotic union, as the quality of hardness, Earth arises; Water arises from the fluidity of semen; Fire arises from the friction of pounding; Air ist famed to be the movement and the Space is the erotic pleasure" (Farrow and Menon, 1992, p. 134). Language, emotions, the senses — all have their origin in the love of the primordial couple. In a world purged of darkness the couple stand at the edge of darkness, the *Kalachakra Tantra* itself says (Banerjee, 1959, p. 24).

Nevertheless, as we have demonstrated, this harmonious primordial image is misused in tantric rituals by an androcentric caste of monks for the ends of spiritual and secular power. We refrain from describing once more the sexual magic exploitation in *Vajrayana*, and would instead like to turn to a philosophical question raised by this topic, namely the relationship between the ONE (as the male principle) and the OTHER (as the female principle).

Since Friedrich Hegel, the OTHER has become a key topic of philosophical discussion. The absolute ONE or absolute mind is unable to tolerate any OTHER besides itself. Only when the OTHER is completely integrated into the ONE, only when it is "suspended" in the ONE is the way of the mind complete. For then nature (the OTHER) has become mind (the ONE). This is one way of succinctly describing one of the fundamental elements of Hegelian philosophy.

In *Vajrayana* terminology, the absolute ONE that tolerates no OTHER beyond himself is the androgynous ADI BUDDHA. The OTHER (the feminine) surrenders its autonomy to the hegemony of the ONE (the masculine). It is destroyed with one word. Yet the absolute ONE of the ADI BUDDHA is radically questioned by the existence of an OTHER (the feminine); his claims to infinity, cosmocentricity, omnipotence, and divinity are threatened. "All is ONE or all is the ADI BUDDHA" is a basic maxim of the tantric way. For this reason the OTHER frightens and intimidates the ONE. The Buddhist Ken Wilber (a proponent of the ADI BUDDHA principle) quotes the Upanishads in this connection: Wherever the OTHER is, there is dread (Wilber, 1990, p. 174) — and himself admits that everywhere where there is an OTHER, there is also fear (Wilber, 1990, p. 280).

As already indicated, behind this existential fear of the OTHER lies a fundamental gender issue. This has been taken up and developed primarily by French feminists. In the "otherness" (*autrui  *) of the female Simone de Beauvoir saw a highly problematic fixing of the woman created by the androcentric perspective. Men wanted to see women as the OTHER in order to be able to control them. The woman was forced to define her identity via the perspective of the man. Beauvoir's successors, however, such as the feminist Luce Irigaray, have lent "gender difference" and AUTRUIT   (otherness) a highly positive significance and have made it the central topic of their feminine philosophy. Otherness here all but becomes a female world unable to be grasped by either the male perspective or male reason. It evades any kind of masculine fixation. Female subjectivity is inaccessible for the male.

It is precisely the OTHERNESS which lets women preserve their autonomy. They thus escape being objectified by men (the male subject) and develop their own subjectivity (the female subject). Irigaray very clearly articulates how existing religions block women's path to a self-realization of

their own: “She must always be for men, available for their transcendence” (quoted by June Campbell, 1996, p. 155) — i.e., as *Sophia, prajna*, as the “white virgin”, as a “wisdom dakini” (*inana mudra*). In the male consciousness she lacks a subjectivity of her own, and is a blank screen (*shunyata*) onto which the man projects his own imaginings.

Yet the autonomy of the OTHER does not need to be experienced as separation, fragmentation, lack, or as an alienating element. It can just as well serve as the opposite, as the prerequisite for the union of two subjects, complementarity, or copula. The masculine and the feminine can behave in completely different ways toward one another, either as a duality (of mutually exclusive opposites = annihilation of the OTHER) or as a polarity (mutually complementary opposites = encounter with the OTHER). It is almost a miracle that the sexes are fundamentally permitted to meet one another in love without having to renounce their autonomy.

Buddhist Tantrism, however, is not about such an encounter between man and woman, but purely the question of how the yogi (as the masculine principle of the ONE) can integrate the OTHER (the feminine principle) within himself and render it useful by drawing off its gynergy. Occult feminism involves the same phenomenon in reverse: how can the yogini (here the feminine principle of the ONE) appropriate the androenergy of the man (here the OTHER) so as to win gynandric power.

The appropriation of the OTHER (the goddess) by the ONE (the ADI BUDDHA) is the core concept of Buddhist Tantrism. This makes it a phenomenon which, at this level of generality, also shapes Western cultures and religions: “Male religiosity masks an appropriation,” writes Luce Irigaray. “This severs the relationship to the natural universe, its simplicity is perverted. Certainly, this religiousness symbolizes a social universe organized by men. But this organization is based on a sacrifice — of nature, of the gendered body, especially that of the woman. It impels a spirituality cut off from its natural roots and its surroundings. It can thus not bring humanity to perfection. Spiritualization, socialization, cultivation require that we set out from what is there. The patriarchal system does not do this because it seeks to obliterate the foundations upon which it is based” (Irigaray, 1991, p. 33).

The solution to the riddle of its mysteries that Tantrism poses is obvious. It can only involve the union of the two poles, not their domination of one another. On its own the (masculine) spirit is not sufficient to become “whole”, instead nature *and* spirit, emotions *and* reason, *logos and eros*, woman *and* man, god *and* goddess, a masculine *and* a feminine Buddha as two autonomous beings must wed mystically (as *yab and yum*, *yin and yang*) as two subjects that fuse together into a WE. The ADI BUDDHA of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, however, is a divine SUBJECT (a SUPER EGO) that tries to consume the OTHER (the goddess). Not until ONE SUBJECT forms a copula with ANOTHER SUBJECT can a truly new dimension (WE) be entered: the great WE in which both egos, the masculine and the feminine, are truly “suspended”, truly “preserved”, and truly “transcended”. Perhaps it is this WE that is the cosmic secret to be discovered in the profoundest sections of the tantras, and not the ADI BUDDHA.

For in WE all the polarities of the universe fuse, subjectivity and objectivity, rule and servitude, union and division. The *unio mystica* with the partner dissolves both the individual and the transpersonal subjectivity (the human ego and the divine ego). Both poles, the masculine and the feminine, experience their spiritual, psychic and physical unity as intersubjectivity, as exchange, as WE. They join into a higher dimension without destroying one another. The mystic WE thus forms a more encompassing quality of experience than the ADI BUDDHA’s mystic EGO which seeks to swallow the OTHER (the goddess).

Were man and woman to understand themselves as the cosmic center, as god and goddess — as the tantric texts proclaim — were they to experience themselves together as a religious authority, then the androgynous guru in his role as the supreme god of “the mysteries of gendered love” would vanish. In an essay on tantric practices, the Indologist Doniger O’Flaherty describes several variants on androgyny and supplements these — not without a trace of irony — with an additional

“androgynous” model which is basically not a model at all. “A third psychological androgyne, less closely tied to any particular doctrine, is found not in a single individual but in two: the man and the woman who join in perfect love, Shakespeare’s beast with two backs. This is the image of ecstatic union, another metaphor for the mystic realization of union with godhead. This is the romantic ideal of complete merging, one with the other, so that each experiences the other’s joy, not knowing whose is the hand that caresses or whose the skin that is caressed. In this state, the man and the woman in tantric ritual experience each other’s joy and pain. This is the divine hierogamy, and, in its various manifestations — as *yab-yum*, *yin* and *yang*, *animus* and *anima* — it is certainly the most widespread of androgynous concepts” (O’Flaherty, 1982, p. 292).

When together — as Tantrism teaches us despite everything — power is concentrated in man and woman; divided they are powerless. WE equally implies both the gaining of power and its renunciation. In WE the two primal forces of being (masculine—feminine) are concentrated. To this extent the WE is absolute, the Omnipotent. But at the same time WE limits the power of the parts, as soon as they appear separately or lay claim to the cosmos as individual genders (as an androgynous Almighty God or as a gynandric Almighty Goddess). To this extent, WE is essentially relative. It is only effective when the two poles behave complementarily. As the supreme principle, WE is completely unable to abuse any OTHER or manipulate it for its own ends since every OTHER is by definition an autonomous part of WE. In political terms, WE is a fundamental democratic principle. It transcends all concepts of an enemy and all war. The traditional dualisms of upper and lower, white and black, bright and gloomy unite in a creative polarity in the WE.

As we have been able to demonstrate on the basis of both the ritual logic of *Vajrayana* and, empirically, the history of Tantric Buddhism (especially Lamaism), the androgynous principle of Buddhist Tantrism leads ineluctably to human sacrifice and war. The origins of every war lie in the battle of the sexes — this aphorism from Greek mythology is especially true of Tantrism, which traces all that happens in the world back to erotic love. Doesn’t this let us also conclude the reverse, that peace between the sexes can produce peace in the world? Global responsibility arises from mutual recognition and from respect for the position of the partner, who is the other half of the whole. Compassion, sensitivity towards everything that is other, understanding, harmony — all have their origin here. In the cosmogonic erotic love between two people, Ludwig Klages sees a revolutionary power that even has the strength to suspend “history”. “Were the incredible to happen, even if were only between two out of hundreds of millions, the power of the spirit’s curse would be broken, the dreadful nightmare of ‘world history would melt away’, and ‘awakening would bloom in streams of light’” (Klages, 1930, p. 198). The end of history via the love between man and woman, god and goddess: the concept would definitely be compatible with a tantric philosophy if it were not for the yogi’s final act of masculine usurpation.

Perhaps, we would like to further speculate, mystic gender love might provide the religious mystery for a universal “culture of erotic love” built upon both sensual and spiritual foundations. Such an idea is by no means new. In the late 1960s in his book *Eros and Civilization*, the American philosopher Herbert Marcuse outlined an “erotic” cultural schema. Unfortunately, his “paradigmatic” (as it would be known these days) approach, which was widely discussed in the late 1960s has become completely forgotten. Among the basic joys of human existence, according to Marcuse, is the division into sexes, the difference between male and female, between penis and vagina, between you and me, even between mine and yours, and these are extremely pleasant and satisfying divisions, or could be; their elimination would not just be insane, but also a nightmare — the peak of repression” (Marcuse, 1965, p. 239). This nightmare becomes real in the alchemic practices of the Buddhist tradition. In that *Vajrayana* dissolves all differences, ultimately even the polarity of the sexes, into the androgynous principle of the ADI BUDDHA, it destroys the “Eros” of life, even though it paradoxically recognizes this sexual polarity as the supreme cosmic force.

As we were working on the final proofs of our manuscript, the German magazine *Bunte*, which only a few weeks before had celebrated the Dalai Lama as a god on earth, carried an article by the

cultural sociologist Nicolaus Sombart entitled “Desire for the divine couple”. Sombart so precisely expressed our own ideas that we would like to quote him at length. “Why does the human project have a bipartite form in the divine plan? The duality symbolizes the polarity of the world, the bipolarity that is the basis for the dynamic of everything which happens in the world. *Yin* and *yang*. Apparently divided and yet belonging together, contradictory, and complementary, antagonistic but designed for harmony, synthesis and symbiosis. Only in mutual penetration do they complete each other and become whole. The model of the world is that of a couple eternally striving for union. The cosmic couple stand by one another in the interaction of an erotic tension. It is a pair of lovers. The misery of the world lies in the separation, isolation, and loneliness of the parts that are attracted to each other, that belong together; the joy and happiness lie in the union of the two sexes; not two souls, this is not enough, but two bodies equipped for this purpose — a pleasurable foretaste of the return to paradise” (*Bunte*, 46/1998, p. 40).

It is nonetheless remarkable how unsuccessful mystic gendered love has been in establishing itself as a religious archetype in human cultural history. Although the mystery of love between man and woman is and has been practised and experienced by millions, although most cultures have both male and female deities, the *unio mystica* of the sexes has largely not been recognized as a religion. Yet there is so much which indicates that the harmony and love between man and woman (god and goddess) could be granted the gravity of a universal paradigm and become a bridge of peace between the various cultures. Selected insights and images from the mysteries of Tantric Buddhism ought to be most useful in the development of such a paradigm.

Divine couples are found in all cultures, even if their religious veneration is not among the central mysteries. We also encounter them in the pre-Buddhist mythologies of Tibet, where the two sexes share their control over the world equally. Matthias Hermanns tells us about *Khen pa*, the ruler of the heavens, and *Khon ma*, the earth mother, and quotes the following sentence from an aboriginal Tibetan creation myth: “At first heaven and earth are like father and mother” (Hermanns, 1965, p. 72). In the times of the original Tibetan kings there was a god of man (*pho-lha*) and a goddess of woman (*mo-lha*). A number of Central Asian myths see the sun and moon as equal forces, with the sun playing the masculine and the moon the feminine role (Bleichsteiner, 1937, p.19). In one Bon myth, light and darkness are held to be the primordial cosmic couple (Paul, 1981, p. 49).

In Tantric Buddhism, the central Buddhist couple celebrated by the Nyingmapa School, *Samantabhadra* and *Samantabhadri* — in translation the “supreme male good” and the “supreme female good” — are such a potential primal couple. This Buddha couple are depicted in a *yab-yum* posture. Both partners are naked, i.e., pure and free. Neither of them is carrying any symbols which might point to some hidden magicoreligious intention. Their nudity could be interpreted as saying that *Samantabhadra* and *Samantabhadri* are beyond the world of symbolism and are thus an image of polar purity, freed of gods, myths, and insignia. Only the color of their bodies could be interpreted as a metaphor. *Samantabhadra* is blue as clear and open as the heavens, *Samantabhadri* is white as the light.

Were one to formulate such visions of the religious worship of the couple in Buddhist terminology, the four Buddha couples of the four directions might emanate from a primal Buddha couple, without this mystical pentad needing to be appropriated by a tantric master in the form of an androgynous ADI BUDDHA (or by a sexual magic mistress as a gynandric Almighty Goddess). In one Nepalese tantra text, for instance, the ADI BUDDHA (“supreme consciousness”) and the ADI PRANJNA (“supreme wisdom”) are revered as the primordial father and the primordial mother of the world (Hazra, 1986, p. 21). According to this text, all the female beings in the universe are emanations of the ADI PRAJNA, and all males those of the ADI BUDDHA.

Annex:


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 The Shadow of the Dalai Lama – Annex: Critical Forum Kalachakra

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## Critical Forum for the Investigation of the Kalachakra Tantra and the Shambhala Myth

In Sanskrit, *Kalachakra* means "The Wheel of Time ", but it is also the name of the supreme Tibetan "Time God". The *Kalachakra Tantra* is held to be the last and the most recent (10th century) of all the tantra texts that have been revealed, and is considered by the lamas to be "the pinnacle of all Buddhist systems".

Over more than 25 years, many hundreds of thousands have been "initiated" through the *Kalachakra Tantra* by the XIV Dalai Lama. Of these, large numbers are illiterate people from India. But even the "educated" participants from the West barely know anything about what this ritual actually entails, since alongside its public aspect it also has a strongly guarded secret side. In public, the XIV Dalai Lama performs only the seven lowest initiations; the subsequent eight of the total of 15 initiations continue to remain *top secret*.

There is no talk of these eight secret rites in the pamphlets, advertisements or brochures, and especially not in the numerous affirmations of the XIV Dalai Lama. Here, the *Kalachakra Tantra* appears as a dignified and uplifting contribution to world peace, which fosters compassion with all living beings, interreligious dialog, interracial and intersubjective tolerance, ecological awareness, sexual equality, inner peace, spiritual development and bliss for the third millennium ("*Kalachakra for World Peace*"). The motto for the whole show is quoted from the XIV Dalai Lama: "Because we all share this small planet earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature." The highly focused, extremely tantric initiation of Tibetan Lamaism thus garners the kudos of a "transcultural and interreligious meeting for world peace".

But are the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* myth truly pacifist? Do they really encourage harmony and cooperation among people? Do they make any real contribution to freedom and justice, equality of the sexes, religious tolerance or ethnic reconciliation? Are they a comprehensive, politically humanist, democratic and nonviolent contribution to world peace?

Over the past few years, increasing criticism has been leveled at Tibetan Buddhism, the history of Lamaism, conditions among the Tibetans in exile and the XIV Dalai Lama himself, criticism which is not from the Chinese quarter. Historians from the USA have begun questioning the widespread glorifying whitewash of Tibetan history (Melvin C. Goldstein, A. Tom Grundfeld). Critical Tibetologists have raised accusations of deliberate manipulation by official Tibetology (Donald S. Lopez Jr.). Tibet researchers have investigated the "dreams of power" that are activated and

exacerbated by the "Tibet myth" nurtured by Lamaists (Peter Bishop). Prominent politicians have had to admit the evidence of their own eyes that the Chinese are not committing "genocide" in Tibet, as the Tibetans in exile continue to claim (Antje Vollmar, Mary Robinson). Former female Buddhists have condemned, on the basis of personal experience and with great expertise, the systematic and sophisticated oppression and abuse of women in Tibetan Buddhism (June Campbell). Psychologists and psychoanalysts have investigated the aggressive and morbid character of Lamaist culture (Robert A. Paul, Fokke Sierksma, Colin Goldner). From within the Dalai Lama's own ranks, overwhelming evidence of his intolerant, superstitious and autocratic nature has been amassed since 1997 (Shugden Affair). Lamaism's rituals have also been subjected to strong criticism. The humanistic, peace-loving, tolerant and ecumenical intentions of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* myth it contains have been interrogated in a comprehensive study (Victor and Victoria Trimondi). Biting criticism of the XIV Dalai Lama and his system founded on magic has also been broadcast in German, Swiss and Austrian television (Panorama, 10 nach 10, Treffpunkt Kultur). In Munich, on the occasion of a visit by the Tibetan religious potentate (in May 2000), there was even a split in the SPD, whose "pro-Dalai Lama" wing had invited the Tibetan "God-King" to a gala event. The media as a whole has been equally divided: the Dalai Lama has been accused of, among other things, having an undemocratic and autocratic leadership style, suppressing any political opposition, acting to repress religious minorities; letting policy be determined by possessed oracles rather than through dialog and debate, deliberate falsification of the history of Tibet, maintaining uncritical relationships with former members of the SS and neo-nazis, defaming critics and conducting misogynist rituals. *Felix Austria* – this criticism seems to have floated by the beautiful mountains of Austria like a slim cloud that hardly turns a head.

**Here are some of the points raised by the critics of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* myth it contains that the Critical Forum Kalachakra is putting forward for discussion:**

The secret rites of the *Kalachakra Tantra* may not, under pain of medieval punishment for body and soul, be discussed with the uninitiated. The "head and heart" of whoever reveals its occult secrets "will burst asunder" and they will burn in the deepest hell. There are good reasons for this, then in the eight highest initiations there is talk of things that stand in complete contradiction to a humanist system of values (Michael Henss – *Kalachakra – ein tibetisches Einweihungsritual* – Zurich 1985, 46).

The *Kalachakra-Tantra* is anything but pacifist, rather, it prophesies and promotes a bloody religious war for world domination between Buddhists and non-Buddhists (*Shambhala* myth).

The text explicitly names the "leaders" of the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) as opponents of Buddhism: "Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, the White-Clad one [Mani], Muhammad and Mathani [the Mahdi]". The *Kalachakra Tantra* describes them as "the family of the demonic snakes" (*Shri Kalachakra* I. 154).

Thus, the *Kalachakra Tantra* is opposed to all religions of Semitic origin, and for this reason has been pressed into service by right-wing radical and anti-Semitic circles for their racist propaganda.

The *Kalchakra Tantra* invokes a global war between the Islamic and the non-Islamic world in which the followers of Mohammed are presented as the principal enemies of the Buddhists. The original text refers to Mecca, where the "mighty, merciless idol of the barbarians" lives as a "demonic incarnation" (*Shri Kalachakra* I. 154).

Murderous super-weapons possessed by the Buddhist Shambhala Army and employed against "enemies of the Dharma" are described at length and in enthusiastic detail in the *Kalachakra Tantra* (Shri Kalachakra I. 128 – 142). Modern Lamaist interpretations of these military arsenal fantasies indulge in spectacular comparisons to the weaponry of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The Buddhist art of war in the Shambhala battles is obviously at odds with basic human rights, and is instead described in the original text as "merciless" and "cruel". "The supremely ferocious [Buddhist] warriors will cast down the barbarian horde" and "eliminating" them "together with their followers". (Shri Kalachakra I. 163/165).

All the participants in a Kalachakra initiation (i.e., also those in Graz) have the questionable privilege of being reborn as "*Shambhala Warriors*" in order to be able to participate in the prophesied apocalyptic battle as either infantry or officers, dependant on rank. High lamas of particular lineages have already been assigned to commanding positions (E. Bernbaum – *Der Weg nach Shambhala – Auf der Suche nach dem sagenhaften Königreich im Himalaya* – Hamburg 1982, 252, 35).

According to a vision of the Tibetan Lama Kamtrul Rinpoche, it is the reincarnated Dalai Lama himself, who as wrathful field marshal will lead the Buddhist army into the Shambhala battle (*Rudra Chakrin*) to conquer all evil in the universe. Propagandists for the *Kalachakra Tantra* peddle a primitive martyr cult that resembles that of the Moslem jihad warriors: he who falls in the Shambhala war is rewarded with guaranteed entry to the Shambhala paradise (E. Bernbaum – *Der Weg nach Shambhala – Auf der Suche nach dem sagenhaften Königreich im Himalaya* – Hamburg 1982, 253).

At all levels, the *Kalachakra Tantra* fosters the postulation of (and negotiation with) a conceived "enemy" and – completely at odds with the original teachings of the historical Buddha or the ethical demands of Mahayana Buddhism – advocates war between "good" and "evil", between the "faithful" and the "unbelievers".

The *Kalachakra-Tantra* contains a Buddhocratic doctrine of state which is even more "theocratic" than the fundamentalist Islam concept of theocracy, then the Buddhist "Chakravartin" (world ruler) is seen as a direct "incarnation" or "emanation" of the Supreme Buddha (Adi Buddha), as a walking "God-Man" on earth, whilst the "Caliph" is only God's (Allah's) "representative" on earth, who does not even have the rank of a "prophet".

At the pinnacle of the authoritative Buddhocratic Kalachakra state, on the "Lion Throne" resides an absolute "Priest-King" (*Chakravartin*), who unites in his person religious, political, juridical and military might. There is absolutely no civil "separation of powers" here. Those familiar with the constitutional position of the Dalai Lama in traditional Tibet (up until 1959) know that the office of the Tibetan "God-King" corresponded to that of a Chakravartin in miniature. The highly questionable and half-hearted democratization reforms that the XIV Dalai Lama has introduced among the Tibetans in exile would be obliterated afresh through the Buddhocratic, state political consequences of the *Kalachakra Tantra* teachings.

The right to a Buddhocratic world supremacy is an explicit demand of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. Here too we find a fundamentalist correspondence to Islamist ambitions to global domination. If both systems are set to confront another as deadly enemies in a bloody apocalyptic battle, then this is a consequence of the logic of their theocratic-cum-Buddhocratic absolutism.

Modern Buddhocratic visions for our planet which are welcomed by the XIV Dalai Lama are built upon the foundations of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. See in this regard Robert A. Thurman's book – *Revolution von Innen – Die Lehren des Buddhismus oder das vollkommene Glück* (1999), where the author develops the authoritative political theory of a "Buddhaverse". As early as 1979, Thurman, described by Time magazine as the "spokesman of the Dalai Lama" in the USA, saw the Tibetan religious leader in a dream enthroned as a "Time God" over the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, while the great swarm of notables – mayors, senators, company directors and kings, sheiks and sultans, celebrities and stars buzzed around him; caught up in the maelstrom of the 722 dancing deities of the *Kalachakra Tantra* swarmed around him just like bees in pinstripes around a huge hive.

In the secret higher stages of initiation the *Kalachakra Tantra* demands the unconditional and unlimited surrender to the absolute will of the administering guru (in this case the Dalai Lamas as *Kalachakra* master). The "ego consciousness" and the personality of the initiand are extinguished step by step, so as to transform him into a human vessel for the in part warlike and aggressive tantric deities and Buddhist figures. Hence, the *Kalachakra Tantra* brings no "ennoblement", "transfiguration" or "integration" of the individual, but rather its systematic "elimination" in the interests of a codified religious pattern.

In the eight secret higher initiations of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, extreme mental and physical exercises are used to push the initiand into a state beyond good and evil. The original text thus requires the following misdeeds and crimes of him: killing, lying, stealing, infidelity, the consumption of alcohol, sexual intercourse with lower-class girls. As in all the other tantras, here too these requirements can be understood both symbolically and literally. Even the XIV Dalai Lama finds it legitimate for a *Kalachakra* adept to kill a person under special circumstances, "*who are harmful to the [Buddhist] teaching*". He insists, however, that this be "*motivated by compassion*" (Dalai Lama – *The Kalachakra Tantra – Rite of Initiation* – London, 1985, S. 348 ff.) .

In the highest magical initiations, what are known as "unclean substances" are employed. The *Kalachakra Tantra* recommends the consumption of the meat of various taboo animals. Human meat (*maha mamsa*) is also employed as a ritual substance. It is usually taken from the dead and, writes the tantric grand master and Shambhala King, Pundarika, in his traditional *Kalachakra* commentary, is the "*meat of those who died due to their own karma, who were killed in battle due to evil karma or and due to their own fault, or that of robbers and so forth who were executed*". He continues with the advice that it is sensible to consume these substances in the form of pills. The flesh of innocent people, who have been killed as sacrifices to the gods, out of fear, as part of an ancestor cult, out of desire (greed) or for money, is laden with "unspeakable sin" and may not be used in the rituals. "*But which falls in the bowl unasked-for is without unspeakable sin*" – and may therefore be put to use. (In: John Ronald Newman - *The outer wheel of time: Vajrayana Buddhist cosmology in the Kalacakra Tantra* - Madison 1987, 266 f.).

Numerous ritual objects employed in the ceremonies are made from corpses (bowls made from human skulls, trumpets made of leg bones, bone necklaces). A glance at the great *Kalachakra* thangka (wall tapestry) which will be hanging above the throne of the XIV Dalai Lama during the whole of the ceremony in Graz is enough to convince one of the wrathful character of this ritual. The Time God "*Kalachakra*" depicted there together with his consort, the Time Goddess "*Vishvamata*" in sexual union while standing, hold in their total of 32 hands 24 objects of an aggressive,

morbid or warlike nature (hooks, sword, machete, drums and vessels made of skull bowls, a scepter whose peak is adorned with three severed human heads, etc.)

In the secret higher initiations of the *Kalachakra Tantra* sexual magical rites take place, the aim of which is to transform "sexuality" into worldly and spiritual power. The real or imaginary women (both are possible) used in these represent particular forms of energy, whereby age plays an important role. One begins with ten-year-old girls. Up to the age of 20, the female sexual partners represent positive characteristics. If they are older they are regarded as the bearers of the negative energies of scorn, rage, hate etc. and as "demonesses". In the 8th to 11th levels of initiation into the *Kalachakra Tantra* sexual magic experiments are made with just "one" woman; in the 12th to 15th levels, the so-called *Ganachakra*, a total of 10 women take part in the ritual along with the master and the initiand. It is the pupil's duty to offer his Lama the women as a "gift". "Laiti" who are to be initiated into the ritual are supposed to offer up their female relatives (mother, sister, wife, daughter, aunt, etc.). One can read in the *Kalachakra Mûlatantra* that "If the pupil does not hand these wisdom consorts over to his master, in order to protect his family, then [the master] may not perform this ritual." Consecrated monks and novices, however, may make use of unrelated women from various castes. In the secret ritual itself the participants experiment with the masculine and feminine seed (sperm and menstrual blood). In the *Kalachakra Tantra* women are regarded as mere "energy donors" for the male practitioners and once the ritual is over they have no further role to play (see in this regard Nâropâ – *Iniziazione Kâlacakra* – Roma 1994).

In the current age, which according to the teachings of Lamaism is hastening towards an apocalyptic end (Kali yuga), the *Kalachakra Tantra* has a particularly destructive and aggressive character. It includes special rites which are supposed to accelerate the general decline through symbolic acts. "What is *Kalachakrayana* [the *Kalachakra Way*]?" – asks one of the leading experts in the field of Tantrism, the Indian Shashi Bhusan Dasgupta, and tellingly answers, "The word *kala* means time, death and destruction. *Kala-Chakra* is the *Wheel of Destruction*."

These are just some of the problematic aspects that critics object to in the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* Myth it contains. They ought to provide sufficient grounds to question whether this ritual can still be seen as having a humanistic, peaceful, tolerant, freedom-loving and ecumenical character. In addition, the *Shambhala* myth integrated into the *Kalachakra Tantra* has – insofar as it has been accorded historical and ideological relevance – led to extremely aggressive behavior patterns, megalomaniac visions, conspiracy theories and terrorist activity. But above all it exercises a special fascination for neo-fascist circles and provides a source of ideological inspiration for them.

In the wars between Byelorussians, Bolsheviks and Mongolians, the *Shambhala* myth was associated with ideas of the return of Genghis Khan at the beginning of the twenties. The Mongolians saw themselves in this conflict as "Shambhala warriors". Their military actions were extremely bloodthirsty.

The Italian fascist and right-wing extremist philosopher of culture, Julius Evola, saw in the mythic realm of *Shambhala* the esoteric center of a sacred warrior caste and suspected that the palace of the world king, whose escutcheon was the swastika, could be found there. He held lectures on these views for the the SS "Ahnenerbe".

In the occult literature (the "Nazi mysteries"), "masters" from *Shambhala* are depicted as the hidden string pullers who are supposed to have participated in the "magical" creation of the Nazi regime (Trevor Ravenscroft, Louis Pauwels and

Jacques Bergier u. a.).

In the ideological SS underground of the post-War period and in the "SS mysticism" of the nineties, the mythical kingdom of *Shambhala* is seen as a sanctuary for an aggressive and morbid "Nazi religion" (Wilhelm Landig, Jan van Helsing u. a.).

The *Shambhala* myth is one of the ideological pillars of "esoteric Hitlerism". This is the worldwide, racist, occult doctrine of the Chilean diplomat, Miguel Serrano, and the Indian by adoption, Savitri Devi ("Hitler's Priestess")

With his concept of the *Shambhala warrior*, the now deceased Tibetan Lama, Chögyam Trungpa (1940-1987), laid the first foundations for a potential "Combative Buddhism", already found in large parts of East Asia, in the West. Instead of monasteries, Trungpa's *Shambhala warriors* live in military camps, meditation is accompanied by military parades, in place of the begging bowl his pupils carry weapons and rather than monastic robes they wear military uniforms. The master himself no longer moved around in Buddhist style, with yellow and red monastic robe and walking staff and sandals, but rather rode forth on a white horse (in accordance with the apocalyptic prophecy of the Kalachakra Tantra) in peaked cap, tunic and high boots. The Shambhala coat of arms can be seen on the saddle of a horse in a photo of the martial Trungpa.

The *Shambhala Myth* provides the ideological basis for the terrorism of the Japanese apocalyptic guru, Shoko Asahara. He derives his apocalyptic visions from the teachings of the *Kalachakra Tantra*. His intention is to accelerate the onset of the Shambhala war and this is his justification for his poison-gas attacks on the Tokyo Underground. Asahara was the first leader of a sect to make the "uninvolved" from outside of his own organization the target of his deadly attacks and thus opened the floodgates for the religiously motivated international terrorism that has become the number one topic in the world community.

Even if these fascist and terrorist interpretations of the *Shambhala* myth are erroneous, it is therefore all the more pressing that the XIV Dalai Lama and his followers lay bare the Kalachakra ritual in all its detail, correct possible distortions, projections and misuses, and distance themselves publicly from its more problematic contents, that or edit them out of the traditional texts. Instead, however, there have in the past been numerous friendly meetings between the Tibetan religious leader and former SS figures (Heinrich Harrer, Bruno Beger), the founder of "esoteric Hitlerism", Miguel Serrano, and the terrorist, Shoko Asahara, whom even after the Tokyo attacks he described as his "friend, albeit an imperfect one". Only later did he distance himself from him. It is the duty of the city of Graz, the provincial government of Styria, the various political factions, the media, the intellectuals and not least the Christian institutions, to begin a broad public discussion of this ritual, so as not be drawn into something which is diametrically opposed to their original intentions.

Then, according to statements in numerous international media reports, Tibetan Buddhism is the "trend religion" of our time. Through the XIV Dalai Lama, through both his charismatic appearances and his ostensibly humanist speeches and writings, a gigantic, unreflective cultural import of Eastern concepts into the West is taking place, one which displays fundamentalist characteristics and serves as an ideological foundation for various fundamentalist camps and can continue to so serve in the future. The Buddhist leader appeals to people's deep need for harmony and peace, but the history of Lamaism itself, the contents of the Tibetan tantras and their complex of rituals, even the conditions which prevail among the Tibetans in exile, are anything but peaceful and harmonic. There are passages in the *Kalachakra Tantra* which brazenly call for a "war of the religions", which are intolerant and aggressive. In Tibetan Buddhism we have an archaic,

magic-based religious system, which has remained to a large extent untouched by the fundamentals of the Western Enlightenment. This is also the reason it is so attractive for right-wing extremists. For centuries it has led to social injustices that any freedom-loving citizen of today would be forced to reject. The equality of the sexes, democratic decision making and ecumenical movements are in themselves foreign to the nature of Tantric Buddhism, although the XIV Dalai Lama publicly proclaims the opposite.

In a reaction to 11 September 2001, *Der Spiegel* drew attention to aggressive elements and fundamentalist currents in the three monotheistic religions in an article entitled "Religious Mania – The Return of the Middle Ages". As is so often the case in such cultural critiques, Buddhism was spared. This is untrue! All of the topics criticized in this article (battles against unbelievers and dissidents, religious wars, armament fantasies, theocratic visions of power, apocalyptic predictions, misogyny, etc.) are to be found in a particularly concentrated degree in the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

The Critical Forum Kalachakra (CFK) demands that a wide-ranging cultural debate over the *Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Shambhala* myth. The CFK collects informations, distributes and translates documents.

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