

## Other People's Prophecies: Subversive Adaptations and Transformations of Śambhala Eschatology

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**Abstract:** This article aims to demonstrate the processes of adaptation and transformation of the original, Śambhala-related, prophetic narrative in the course of its transmissions from one religious tradition to another (from the Hindu tradition to a later form of Buddhism) and from one culture to another (from India and Tibet to Mongolia). The permutations of an eschatological narrative that will be discussed here reflect not only their historical, social, and doctrinal contexts, but also the undoing of other people's prophetic discourses through the ongoing and subversive reinterpretation and cultural signification. As we trace the development of the Kalkī-related eschatology from the *Mahābhārata* to its transformations in other Indic and Mongolian sources, we see that through recontextualization and creative production of new meanings, this eschatological narrative gradually grew from a brief, versified reference to elaborate prophetic accounts written in prose. Like the prophecies of other religious traditions, Śambhala-related prophecies come to us in the form of a revelatory dialogue.

In Indian Kālacakra tantric tradition, a prophecy of two eschatological events is mentioned. One is an apocalypse of cosmic proportions, in which the entire world is destroyed by fire kindled by collective winds of sentient beings' karma; and the other is a multilayered prophecy that culminates in the eschatological battle in which the enemies of the Buddha Dharma are vanquished and a new era of a global, Buddhist dynasty begins. As we will see, the purposeful, appropriation and recontextualization of eschatology presented in the *Kālacakatantra* is a subversive adaptation of the preexisting eschatological passages in the *Mahābhārata* (ca 4<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE-4<sup>th</sup> cent. CE), and Purāṇas, such as the *Viṣṇu*, *Agni*, *Bhāgavata*, and *Kalkī Purāṇas*.

In order to demonstrate the adaptations and transformations which Śambhala-related eschatology underwent, let us begin with a section of the *Mahābhārata* (Book 3, Chapter 188, vs. 89-93), which contains the earliest reference to Śambhala, together with a long description of the grievous conditions of the last phase of the degenerate *kali-yuga*, when the entire world, having become devoid of religious performances (*niṣkriya*), sacrificial rites (*yajñavarjita*),<sup>1</sup> and *śrāddha* ceremonies for ancestor,<sup>2</sup> will become barbarian (*mleccha*). We read that at that time,

<sup>1</sup> *Mahābhārata*, Book, 3, Ch.188, v. 29:  
*mlecchabhūtaṃ jagat sarvaṃ niṣkriyaṃ yajñavarjitaṃ |*  
*bhaviṣyati nirānandam anutsavam atho tathā ||*

<sup>2</sup> *Mahābhārata*, Book, 3, Ch.188, v. 45:  
*mlecchabhūtaṃ jagat sarvaṃ bhaviṣyati yuddhiṣṭhira |*  
*na śrāddhair hi pitṛiṃs cāpi tarpaviṣyanti mānavāḥ ||*

A *brāhmaṇa* by name Kalkī, Viṣṇuyaśas, [who] set in motion by time,  
Will arise, having great valor and the great intelligence and power.

[He will be] born in the village of Śambhala, in the pure abode of *brāhmaṇas*.

Vehicles, weapons, warriors, swords, and armors  
Will appear in accordance with his wish.

He will be a king triumphant in virtue, a universal emperor (*cakravartin*),  
And he will bring tranquility to this world together with its clans (*kula*).

Arisen as a blazing *brāhmaṇa* of profound intelligence, he will bring the  
end to destruction.

As a destroyer of everything, he will set in motion a [new] era (*yuga*).

Then that twice-born, surrounded by *brāhmaṇas*, will annihilate  
All of the barbarians (*mleccha*) wherever [those] vile ones have gone.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Purāṇic interpretations, Kalkī in his form as the last *avatāra* of Viṣṇu will appear at the end of the *kali-yuga*. Riding a white horse and holding a blazing sword, he will destroy the enemies of Dharma, bring peace, restore the good, and return to Śambhala. With this, a new era (*satya-yuga*) will begin, and Viṣṇu will depart for heaven.<sup>4</sup> In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (ca between the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> cent. CE) we read that at that time, the Dharma of *smṛtis* and *śrutis* will nearly perish and barbarians (*mleccha*), *sūdras*, and outcastes (*dasyu*),<sup>5</sup> will be kings ruling the world with cruelty; and different countries (*janapada*) will intermingle (*vimiśra*) with them. Therefore, a portion of the Lord Vāsudeva, who is of the nature of Brahmā, will descend into this world as Kalkī born in the *brāhmaṇa* family of Viṣṇuyaśas in the village of Śambhala. With his mighty power, he will annihilate all barbarians (*mlecchas*), the outcastes, and those of evil minds and conducts. He will establish all people in their virtues, and enlightened communities will become pure like a stainless crystal.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in the

<sup>3</sup> Mahābhārata, Book, 3, Ch. 188, vs. 89-93:  
*kalkir viṣṇuyaśā nāma dvijaḥ kālapracoditaḥ |*  
*utpatsyate mahāvīro mahābuddhiparākramaḥ ||*  
*saṃbhūtaḥ saṃbhalagrāme brāhmaṇāvasathe śubhe |*  
*manasā tasya sarvāṇi vāhanāny āyudhāni ca ||*  
*upasthāsyanti yodhās ca śastrāṇi kavacāni ca |*  
*sa dharmavijayī rājā cakravartī bhaviṣyati ||*  
*sa cemaṃ saṃkulaṃ lokaṃ prasādam upaneṣyati |*  
*utthito brāhmaṇo dīptaḥ kṣayāntakṛd udāradhīḥ ||*  
*sa saṃkṣepo hi sarvasya yugasya parivartakaḥ |*  
*sa sarvatra gatān kṣudrān brāhmaṇaiḥ parivāritaḥ |*  
*utsādayiṣyati tadā sarvān mlecchagaṇān dvijaḥ ||*

<sup>4</sup> According to the annotations on the *Kālacakratānta* (Ch. 1, v. 169) given in the *Padminīnāmapañ-jikā*, traditionally attributed to Indian master Kālacakrapāda, the Lord Cakrī and others have taken the names of Viṣṇu to assist sentient beings. See Newman, 1987, p. 587.

<sup>5</sup> *Dasyu* refers to a Hindu who has become an outcast by neglecting the rites.

<sup>6</sup> *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Vol. 2, 1989, pp. 661-664.

*Agni Purāṇa* (Ch. 16), the appearance of Kalkī as a son of Viṣṇuyaśas takes place in Śambhala at the time when those who abandoned the path of the Vedas and the demons who were deluded by Viṣṇu's previous *avatāra* as the Buddha became Buddhists and outcastes (*dāsyu*), devoid of good conduct. Also, at that time, Kalkī with his sword will destroy the barbarians (*mlecchas*) who became kings. The later eschatological account in the *Kalkī Purāṇa* counteracts the *Kālacakratāntra*'s eschatology that overrides the discourses of the *Mahābhārata* and earlier Purāṇas.<sup>7</sup> In the *Kalkī Purāṇa* (Ch. 14), Kalkī, a son of Viṣṇuyaśas, after enjoying married life in Śambhala for some time, will depart for the city of Kīkaṭa,<sup>8</sup> the abode of Buddhists, who reject the Vedas and the practice of honoring the ancestors and gods with sacrifices. With his army, he will conquer the Buddhist army led by the Conqueror (Jina, or Buddha), the king of Kīkaṭa.

As we will see, the *Kālacakra* tradition in India declares the Puranic prophetic teachings that identify the Buddha as Vāsudeva, or as the ninth *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, who led people away from ritual duties, and the Kalkī as the tenth *avatāra* as meaningless (*nīrarthaka*),<sup>9</sup> as the false utterances of corrupt sages, who devoid of reflection (*vicāra*), confuse childish people and aim at establishing the corrupt sages' own race.<sup>10</sup> It also seeks to counteract the "corrupt sages'" aim by trying to initiate them into the *Kālacakratāntra*.

In the *Mahābhārata* and Purāṇas, the word "barbarian" (*mleccha*) generally refers to those who do not follow the traditional Hindu system of values and ritual practices, who dwell in hills and mountain caves, or to non-*āryans*,<sup>11</sup> who lived outside the *āryāvarta* ("the abode of *āryans*"). In contrast, in the *Kālacakra* tantric tradition in India, the "barbarian" refers to a specific ethnic group—to Tājikas, also referred to as Tāyins, who worship Bishmillāh through animal sacrifices. Their belief in Rahman as the creator of the animate and inanimate worlds, who distributes the rewards of heaven and hell in accordance with people's karma performed in this life, is portrayed as deceptive and violent, leading to the infliction of harm to animals for the sake

<sup>7</sup> If scholars are correct in dating the *Kalkī Purāṇa* to the fifteenth to eighteenth century, then we can read the account as a response to the *Kālacakratāntra*'s eschatology. Interestingly, this *Purāṇa* is already mentioned in the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakratāntra*, Ch. 5, where it is said: "Purāṇas, begging with Matsya and so son up to the Kalkī [Purāṇa] are considered meaningless" (*matsyādīpurāṇam api kalkīparyantam vicāryamāṇam nīrarthakam*). *Śrī Laghukālacakratāntrarājasya Kalkinā Śrī Puṇḍarīkeṇa Viracitā Ṭikā Vimalaprabhā*, Vol. 3, 1994, p. 95.

<sup>8</sup> Kīkaṭa was the first time mentioned in the *Rg Veda* (3.53.14) as an ancient kingdom of southeastern tribes, and it is also mentioned in the *Atharva Veda* and *Mahābhārata* (Book 8, Ch. 30, 45). Most scholars place it in Magadha (now Bihar), where the Buddha Sākyamuni spent most of his time and taught.

<sup>9</sup> *Śrī Laghukālacakratāntrarājasya Kalkinā Śrī Puṇḍarīkeṇa Viracitā Ṭikā Vimalaprabhā*, Vol. 3, 1994, pp. 95-96.

<sup>10</sup> *Śrī Laghukālacakratāntrarājasya Kalkinā Śrī Puṇḍarīkeṇa Viracitā Ṭikā Vimalaprabhā*, Vol. 3, 1994, pp. 95-96.

<sup>11</sup> See the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Vol. 2, 1989, p. 662.

of meat consumption. Buddhists eating boiled rice are contrasted to the barbarians eating rice with beef and drinking an egg-yolk of hens and other birds.<sup>12</sup>

Rewriting the Hindu prophetic narrative in 1026, soon after a series of Mahmud of Ghazni's raids in India, the author of the *Kālacakratantra* transformed it into a Buddhist tantric, eschatological narrative, which begins with the Buddha Śākyamuni foretelling the arising of the king Mañjuśrī Yaśas, or Kalkī, who will be an emanation of the ten-stage, Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. According to Puṇḍarīka, the author of the *Stainless Light Commentary (Vimalaprabhā)* on the *Kālacakratantra*, Mañjuśrī Yaśas is not to be thought of as a son of the *brāhmaṇa* Yaśas for if he were to be a son of the *brāhmaṇa* Yaśas, he could not be a Kalkī because he would be without a clan (*kalka*). He is called "Kalkī" because he has a clan (*kalka*), and the clan is a unification of the castes and outcastes (*varṇavarṇaikakāraṇa*).<sup>13</sup> Mañjuśrī Yaśas will appear 600 years after the year of the Tathāgata's teaching of Dharma and will become the eighth king in the land of Śambhala, situated north of Śītā river, in order to mature brāhmaṇic sages.<sup>14</sup> Initiating into the *Kālacakratantra* the thirty-five million brāhmaṇic sages led by Sūryaratha, who reside in Śambhala's capital Kalāpa and observe the Vedas and Smṛtis, he will teach them the *Kālacakratantra*, which he himself abridged in accordance with their dispositions. He will establish them, together with the inhabitants of 960 million villages of Śambhala, in the Mahāyāna path.

This is the manner in which the entire Śambhala (which is here no longer a mere village but an immensely large territory) is transformed into a unified, Buddhist dynastic kingdom. Its future kings and *kalkīs*, who are the emanations of Bodhisattvas and of the kings of Krodhas (Wrathful Ones), bear the thirty-two marks of universal emperors (*cakravartin*) and promote the Buddha Dharma, especially the system of mantras (*mantra-naya*). They will be the ones who will in the future annihilate "the evil Dharma (*kudharma*) of barbarians (*mleccha*) and others."<sup>15</sup> By means of the initiation of the brāhmaṇic sages into the *Kālacakratantra*, Mañjuśrī Yaśas will unify all the castes (*varṇa*) into a single clan (*eka-kalka*), or into a *vajra*-family, and surely not into a brāhmaṇic line.<sup>16</sup>

While in the *Mahābhārata*'s prophecy, the event in which the world will become of a single caste at the final phase of the degenerate *kali-yuga* is a sign of the religious

<sup>12</sup> See the *Vimalaprabhā of Kalkī Śrī Puṇḍarīka on Śrī Laghukālacakratantrarāja* by Śrī Mañjuśrīyaśas, Vol. 1, 1986 Vol. 1, 1986, Ch. 2, vs. 89, 99, 164, and 174,

<sup>13</sup> *Śrī Laghukālacakratantrarājasya Kalkinā Śrī Puṇḍarīkeṇa Viracitā Ṭīkā Vimalaprabhā*, Vol. 3, 1994, p. 96.

<sup>14</sup> *Vimalaprabhā of Kalkī Śrī Puṇḍarīka on Śrī Laghukālacakratantrarāja* by Śrī Mañjuśrīyaśas, Vol. 1, 1986, pp. 21-22, 24.

<sup>15</sup> *Vimalaprabhā of Kalkī Śrī Puṇḍarīka on Śrī Laghukālacakratantrarāja* by Śrī Mañjuśrīyaśas, Vol. 1, 1986, pp. 21-22, 26, 29.

<sup>16</sup> *Vimalaprabhā of Kalkī Śrī Puṇḍarīka on Śrī Laghukālacakratantrarāja* by Śrī Mañjuśrīyaśas, Vol. 1, 1986, pp. 21-22.

and social degradation, in which the entire world will become barbarians (*mleccha*),<sup>17</sup> in the Indian Kālacakra tradition, the unification of all castes is a desirable outcome, necessary for withstanding the influence of the barbarian Dharma on the future generations of Śambhala's inhabitants, which could occur some 800 hundred years after Mañjuśrī Yaśas.<sup>18</sup> Ascended on a proper Vehicle (*samyak-yāna*) and with a spear in his hand (*sellapāṇi*), Mañjuśrī Yaśas will terrify the family of demons and make the *Kālacakra* manifest on the earth. Then, at the end of the era (*yuga*), among the twenty-five sequential reigns in Śambhala, Raudra Kalkī will appear in the lineage of *kalkīs*. To virtuous ones he will appear in a peaceful form and to the race of barbarians he will be death. Depicted similarly to Viṣṇuyaśas in the Purāṇas, Raudra Kalkī, mounted on a mountain horse, with a spear in his hand and with the radiance of the sun, will strike the barbarian enemy.<sup>19</sup>

After the eight generations of the descendants within the Kalkī's lineage pass, or 800 years after the passing of the king Mañjuśrī Yaśas into *nirvāṇa*, the barbarian Dharma (*mlecchadharmā*), the Dharma of *asuras*, identified as Tājikas in the *Stainless Light Commentary*, will arise in the region of Mecca (Makha), located south of the Śītā river and will last for 1,800 years. At the time of Raudra Kalkī's rule, a violent battle will take place on the earth. Accompanied by Hari (Viṣṇu) and Hara (Śiva) as his attendants, Kalkī will destroy the barbarian hordes on the entire earth with his fourfold army, consisting of 90 million mountain horses of various colors and swift like the wind, with the four hundred thousand mad elephants, and the five hundred thousand chariots. He will be accompanied by the minor kings of 96 clans in Śambhala and their six large armies (*akṣauhiṇī*).<sup>20</sup> Mahācandra, a son of Hanumān, will kill Aśvathāma, the general of barbarian army. Rudra will kill the protector of barbarian lords, and Raudra Kalkī will kill Kṛṇmatī, the king of barbarians.<sup>21</sup> After defeating the barbarians in the battle, Raudracakrī, also referred to as Cakrapāṇi (One Having a Wheel in His Hand), having established his own Dharma, will set out into the sections of the great earth on the back of Mt. Meru, where the Buddha Dharma has vanished and the degenerate era (*kali-yuga*) has advanced. Teaching the Dharma in those sections, he will initiate the era of perfection (*kr̥ta-yuga*).<sup>22</sup> Then, accompanied by Hari and Hara, the two main Hindu gods who are clearly demoted here to the status of his attendants, and by his entire army, he will depart to the city built by gods

<sup>17</sup> *Mahābhārata*, Book, 3, Chapter 188, v. 41, *pada* b:  
*ekavarṇas tadā loko bhaviṣyati yugakṣaye* |

<sup>18</sup> *Vimalaprabhā of Kalkī Śrī Puṇḍarīka on Śrī Laghukālacakratantrarāja by Śrī Mañjuśrīyaśas*, Vol. 1, 1986, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> *Akṣauhiṇī* is a large army, which consists of 21,870 chariots, the same number of elephants, 65610 horses, and 109350 foot soldiers.

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<sup>21</sup> *Kālacakratantra*, 1986, Ch. 1, v. 26, p. and the *Vimalaprabhā*, p. 77, vs. 157-167, pp. 154-155.

<sup>22</sup> See the *Kālacakratantra*, Ch. 1, v. 22 and the *Vimalaprabhā*, 1986, p. 74.

on Mount Kailāśa. At that time, all humans on the earth will be filled with Dharma, pleasure, and material prosperity (*dharmārthakāmapūrṇa*). Kalkī will attain the state of bliss, his two sons, Brahmā and Sureśa will comply with the Dharma in the north and south respectively; and the Buddha Dharma will endure for 18,000 years. After that, a caste division is prophesized to occur in the northern section of the earth where Kalkī's son Brahmā rules, causing the social decline and decrease of human lifespan to 100 years.<sup>23</sup>

Earlier, in the first chapter of the *Kālacakratantra* (Ch. 1, vs. 128-149), twenty-one verses are dedicated to Mañjuśrī's instruction on the manner of constructing diverse mechanical devices (*yantra*), or war machines, including catapults, military sailboats, horse-driven chariots, etc., and on the ways of applying various military tactics for destroying the enemy's strongholds (*durga*). In the words of Mañjuśrī Yaśas, this was previously foretold by Buddha Śākyamuni in the *Primordial Buddha Tantra* (*Ādibuddhatantra*) to king Sucandra, an emanation of Vajrapāṇi, so that the evil enemy would be subjugated and the righteous ones (*dhārmika*) be victorious on the earth. Mañjuśrī Yaśas instructs the converted Sūryaratha, the leader of the *brāhmaṇas* in Śambhala, to make use of the described war machines and tactics against the enemy not out of hatred or greed but to protect his region (*sthāna*). Puṇḍarīka, in his *Stainless Light Commentary* on the Ch. 1, v. 149, emphasizes that this restriction applies not only to Sūryaratha but also to others who fully understand the *Kālacakratantra*.<sup>24</sup> It is worth noting that none of the war machines and military tactics described in this chapter by Mañjuśrī Yaśas are mentioned in any other description of the Kalkī's army in the *Kālacakratantra* or in the *Stainless Light Commentary* or in the depiction of the great Śambhala war. Military devices such as catapults and the like described in the *Kālacakratantra* were invented as early as the fifth century BCE and were implemented in Europe and elsewhere centuries before the appearance of the *Kālacakratantra* in India. The internal textual evidence in the tantra suggests that the *Kālacakratantra*'s instruction on how to construct and utilize the military machines seems to have been intended for use in the face of the impending Muslim invasion of India and not for the great Śambhala war. This becomes even more clear when we examine sections of Puṇḍarīka's *Stainless Light Commentary* on the last, fifth chapter of the *Kālacakratantra*, where he takes a different approach in his interpretation of the eschatological Śambhala war to that in other chapters. In his alternative view, Raudracakrī will eradicate only the barbarians' Dharma but will not kill the barbarians. After he sees the prevalence of the barbarians' Dharma at the end of the era, Kalkī will become motionless like a mountain, and with his mind in a profound meditative concentration (*samādhi*) on the most excellent horses, he will emanate a limitless number of the most excellent horses. With them he will drive

<sup>23</sup> *Kālacakratantra*, 1986, Ch. 1, v. 26, p. and the *Vimalaprabhā*, p. 77, vs. 157-167, pp. 154-155.

<sup>24</sup> *Kālacakratantra*, 1986, Ch. 1, vs. 128-149, pp. 143-152.

away the doctrines of the barbarians and establish them in his Dharma.<sup>25</sup> We are further told that this will be done in order to captivate the minds (*cittāpakarṣaṇa*) of corrupt Hindu sages, because if their thoughts of doubt arise first, they will not be able to attain Awakening (*bodhi*). Therefore, the Buddha taught that a Bodhisattva must be equipped with skillful means (*upāya*).<sup>26</sup>

Seeing two different interpretations of Śambhala war, how are we to understand this later interpretation in light of the previous statements given in the root text and commentary regarding the Kalkī's annihilation of the barbarians with his fourfold army? Did Puṇḍarīka change his mind or does he want us to think of the eschatological battle as an illusory appearance? Or did he intend to point out the provisional and ultimate meanings of the eschatological event by means of two different interpretations as he did in his descriptions of the internal Śambhala war between the forces of good and evil waged within the person's own body until the full and perfect Awakening? As we will see, Mongolian Buddhist authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries opted for a more literal meaning of Śambhala war.

So far, we have seen that the eschatology of the *Kālacakratantra* tradition in India, which foretells the ascendance of the great universal emperor (*mahācakravartī*) Raudracakrī to the throne in Śambhala and the great war signifies a process of the social, religious, and material development of humankind, which will eventually revert to social decline and ills that come with that. In the *Kālacakratantra*'s eschatology in general, the nature of time, which is both destructive and productive, is imprinted on all events. It gives rise to the fortunate era of perfection (*kṛta-yuga*), a new phase in Buddhist history and to its eventual decline and a diminishing of the human lifespan, from 1,800 years to 100. In Mongolian Buddhist writings, the *Kālacakratantra*'s eschatology is fundamentally an optimistic eschatology, which offers a triumphal vision of the Buddhist mission and Buddhist identity, perceived as quintessentially esoteric and permanently preserved by the dynastic Dharma rulers of the kingdom of Śambhala.

Let us now briefly turn to Mongolian adaptations of the *Kālacakratantra*'s eschatology and the perspectives of Mongolian monastic authors on barbarian enemies of Dharma (*lal*, Tib. *la lo*), which emerged in the eighteenth to nineteenth century and continued in the first part of the twentieth century. In the *Crystal Mirror (Bolor Toly)*, composed by Jambadorj in 1848, the eschatological war between the army of Raudra Cakrī and the army of the barbarians' leader Kṛṇmati is not inspired by nationalistic or racial sentiments, as appears to be the case later in the first part of the twentieth-century Mongolian writings on this topic. Jambadorj interprets the word Maka

<sup>25</sup> Śrī Laghukālacakratantrarājasya Kalkinā Śrī Puṇḍarīkeṇa Viracitā Ṭīkā Vimalaprabhā, Vol. 3, 1994, p. 96.

<sup>26</sup> Śrī Laghukālacakratantrarājasya Kalkinā Śrī Puṇḍarīkeṇa Viracitā Ṭīkā Vimalaprabhā, Vol. 3, 1994, pp. 95-96.

(Mecca) to mean “Mongol,” and he writes, “those Barbarians (Muslims) (Mong. *lal. Tib. la los*)” are all Mongols,” whose “false view will increasingly proliferate after this period;” and as a result, “the majority of the countries of Jambudvīpa will adhere to the views of Islam.”<sup>27</sup> Jambadorj’s interpretation of the word *Maka* seems to come from his misunderstanding of the usage of the Tibetan ethnonym *sog po*, which in some contexts designates Mongols, and in another contexts, it is used as a synonym for a “Muslim,” as for instance, in Bu ston’s annotations to the *Kālacakratantra* and in the Tibetan translation of the *Padminīnāmapañjikā*, a word commentary on the *Kālacakratantra* and the *Vimalaprabhā*.<sup>28</sup> Jambadorj does not explain the falsity of the religious views of Muslims. Instead, similarly to the holders of the *Kālacakra* tradition in India, he focuses on their dietary customs, the manner in which they kill their livestock for food, and their faith in the god Bishmilla. Following the idea expressed in the *Stainless Light Commentary* on Chapter 1, where it is said that Buddhists should consume only the meat of animals that died due to natural causes, accidents, or killed in wars and not the meat of an animal killed for consumption or for sacrifices to ancestors, Jambadorj states, “In accordance with their false theory, they eat meat of the livestock that did not die on its own.” As a Mongol living in a pastoral society that subsists on meat, Jambadorj seems to be even more concerned with the manner in which Muslims kill the livestock and with the motivation behind their ritual killing. He tells us, “they slaughter cows and horses to the best of their ability, claiming that they will be saved by cutting the throat of the animal with a knife after reciting the *dhāraṇī* of their god Bisamali (Bishmilla).”<sup>29</sup>

Minjüür Dechin Shiirav<sup>30</sup> (Tib. ‘Mi ‘gyur Bde chen Shes rab, a teacher of Jalkhanz Khutugtu), a Mongolian monk-scholar from Ikh Khüree who lived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in his *Jewel Steps of a Fortunate Disciple: A Prayer for a Sure Rebirth in the Land of Śambhala of the Great Siddhi, in the Land that Captivates Peoples’ Minds, and [a Prayer] for the Definite Meeting with the Dharma of Raudra Kalkī*, is concerned primarily with Muslims’ false view, which he says, lies in dismissing the fruits of karma for the sake of committing a great sin, namely, the destruction of Buddhist monasteries and numerous innocent beings. With this view of Muslims, he compares Islam to a devil.<sup>31</sup> According to this author, when the *cakravartī* Raudra Cakrī ascends to the throne in Śambhala as the 25<sup>th</sup> Kalkī

<sup>27</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, Book 3: 292.

<sup>28</sup> The *Padminīnāmapañjikā* commentary on the *Kālacakratantra*, Ch. 1, v. 154, Peking ed. #2065, Vol. 47. See also Newman, 1987: 596-97, and p. 533, ft. 5; Tucci, 1940: 94, which interprets the *sog po* in this way: “In some places there as Muslimans, that is, *sog pos*” (*la la na mu sur man zhes pa sog po yod*).

<sup>29</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, Book 3: 292. Cf. the *Kālacakratantra*, 1986, Ch. 1, v. 155, p. 153.

<sup>30</sup> Minjüür Dechin Shiirav was a teacher of the famous Jalkhanz Khutukhtu Daminbazar and belonged to the Vizaya *aimag* of Ikh Küree.

<sup>31</sup> *Khüniī oyunyng barigch oron, deed бүтeliin Shambalyn orond magadtai törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvyn shashintai magad uirakhyn erööl, khuvitai taviin erdeniin gishgüür khemeekh orshvoi*, 2003:22.



in the Year of the Fire Sheep of the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the sixtieth cycle, he will govern Śambhala in accordance with the principle of a dual law, the law of Dharma and the law of the State, making the State and religion equally prosper. In his activities, he will be undifferentiated from the Buddha.<sup>32</sup> For him, Śambhala is the only place on earth where the line of *cakravartins*, the Dharma-kings is being continually present; hence, it is an “eternally strong”<sup>33</sup> Buddhist kingdom. Thus, we see that for Minjüür Dechin Shiirav, the strength of Śambhala kingdom rests on its theocratic foundation, characterized by the unified laws of State and Dharma embodied in its dynastic rulers, where the desirable features of the era of perfection are always present.

Both Minjüür Dechin and Jambadorj defend Raudra Cakrī’s involvement in the prophesized eschatological battle against the Muslim king, an incarnation of Asura, as a dharmic activity, and the battle as a defensive and just war. Jambadorj assures us that Raudra Cakrī, abiding in a profound *samādhi* and having completed his *bodhicitta* aspiration, will enter the battle *only* when the Muslim emperor sets out with his army in the direction of Śambhala, after he has already occupied half of Jambudvīpa, including the region to the south of the river Sītā and Tibet, killing many people, and especially livestock, such as camels, horses, cows, and sheep.<sup>34</sup> Jambadorj seems here to be concerned with the loss of livestock, traditionally considered as the “five treasures” (*tavan erdene/tabun erdeni*) when goats are added the aforementioned list of livestock, which are indispensable for survival in Mongolian pastoral life. He excuses Raudra Cakrī’s obliteration of the multitudes of those who will fight on the side of the Muslim army on the grounds that it will be impossible to tame those “extremely savage beings of this difficult age and to bring them to Dharma by peaceful means displayed by the Buddha Śākyamuni.”<sup>35</sup> Therefore, they will have to be tamed by fierce means. The inevitability of Raudra Cakrī’s resorting to violence will be confirmed when a self-manifest, iron wheel descends from the sky on the occasion of his ascendance to the throne of Śambhala, for which reason he is given the name of Raudra Cakrī, or the Fierce Wheel-Bearer. The image of an iron wheel as Raudra Cakrī’s weapon is, no doubt, used here as a contrast to a golden wheel, which is often said in classical Buddhist literature to descend upon the chosen *cakravartī*, to go ahead of his army and pacify the enemies with Dharma by peaceful means. Jambadorj also assures us that everyone who will be killed by Raudra Cakrī’s mighty army, even the grubs and bugs that will be crushed under the feet of that army, will obtain the path of pacification and will experience great peace in their next life.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Khüinii oyunig barigch oron, deed büteeliin Shambalin orond magadtai törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvin shashintai magad uchrakhin erööl, khuvitai shaviin erdeniin gishgütür khemeekh orshvoi*, 2003: 19-22.

<sup>33</sup> In the Mongolian *Wish-prayer for Śambhala*, translated by Charles Bawden, Śambhala is referred to as “eternally strong.” See Bawden, 1984-85, Mon. Ser. 36 (1984-85): 473.

<sup>34</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, Book 3: 293.

<sup>35</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, Book, 3: 294.

<sup>36</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, Book, 3: 294-94.

Similarly, the author of the anonymous text from Buryatia, titled titled *This is a Sūtra that Shows the Conditions of the Country of Śambhala, the Epoch of the Kings, and the Ways and Means of Travelling [There]*, wants us to understand that karmic consequences for those who will fight on the side of Raudra Cakrī's army and cause death to many on the enemy's side will be most desirable. He tells us that when the period of 150 years of the rule of Raudra Cakrī comes to an end, on the 22nd of the second month of the Horse Year, Raudra Kalkī will depart for Sukhāvātī, leading all the fortunate beings, including many gods who will fight on his side, the brave officials, soldiers, elephants, horses, ordinary humans, and animals. As soon as they join him in Sukhāvātī, they too will attain the supreme *siddhi*.<sup>37</sup>

The account of Raudra Cakrī, his iron wheel, the incorrigibly cruel barbarians, and the necessity of engaging in war is conspicuously evocative of the Mongolian seventeenth-to-early twentieth century narratives of Chinggis Khan, being predicted by Buddha Śākyamuni as the one who will turn “the wheel of power,” annihilate the twelve, cruel Muslim kings by harsh means, take the charge of the living beings in Jambudvīpa, administer the principle of two laws (the law of Dharma and the law of the State), and make “the milk of Dharma abundantly flow.”<sup>38</sup> In his early twentieth-century *Golden Book (Altan Devter)*, Mongolian monk scholar, Zawa Damdin Luvsandamdin (bLo bzang rta mgrin; bLo bzang rta dbyangs, 1867-1937) asserts that Chinggis Khaan brought the kings of Buddhist countries under his power by gentle means, while taking control over Muslim countries and the countries of Europe by means of fierce means due to their animosity toward the Buddha Dharma. Although in his external actions Chinggis Khaan displayed ferocity, internally he was free of mental afflictions and genuinely loved suffering sentient beings, and his thoughts were always dharmic.<sup>39</sup> According to Jambadorj's prophecy in the *Crystal Mirror*, Chinggis Khaan will again fight a just war along the side of Kalkī Raudra Cakrī. On the verge of the great battle between the army of Raudra Cakrī and the barbarian army, Chinggis Khaan will enter his bodily relics<sup>40</sup> and join the army of Raudra Cakrī. Some of Mongol khans and lamas will also enter their relics and tremendously help living beings.<sup>41</sup> Chinggis Khaan's participation in the eschatological war that

<sup>37</sup> *Shambala-yin orun-u baidal qayan-ud-un üy-e kiged jorčiqui-yin yosu ary-a jam nuγud-i üjügüilegsen sudur ene bolai*, MS: 18-19. According to the *Kālacakratantra*, 1986, Ch. 1, v. 161, Raudra Cakrī will depart to the city on Mt. Kailāśa fashioned by gods and there he will offer the female companions, mountain horses, the best of elephants, the kings in golden chariots, and the warriors with weapons in their hands to the Rudra, Skanda, Gaṇendra, and Hari.

<sup>38</sup> For the justifying narratives of Chinggis Khan's violent battles see the two seventeenth-century chronicles: Luvsandanzan's *Golden Summary (Altan Tobči)* and Sagang Setsen's *Precious Summary (Erdeni-yin Tobči)*.

<sup>39</sup> Blo bzang rTa dbyangs. *Ser gyi deb ther*, 1964, 83a2–4, 83b1–3. See also Lkhamsüreniin, 2006, 8–9.

<sup>40</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, Book 3: 294.

<sup>41</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, Book 3: 294-5. A legend says that Chinggis Khan's remains have been kept on the earth in a *čomčog-ger* because of the need for the existence of the bodily form of the clear light at the time when there will be a need for him to subdue the rebellious ones as a companion of the *kalkī* Raudra Cakrī.

brings about the new beginning of world history will also mark the new beginning of Mongolian national history. In Galdan's seventeenth-century chronicle, titled the *Precious Rosary (Erdeni-yin erike)* we read that at the time of Chinggis Khaan's death, everyone prayed that he would become a king in the country of Śambhala, having a holy origin.<sup>42</sup> Chinggis Khaan, regarded by Mongolian Buddhists as an emanation of the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, who, in turn, represents one of the three lineages of the Buddha Śākyamuni, has been also brought into connection with Śambhala through his lineage of emanations, which was initially introduced to Śambhala by the first king of Śambhala.<sup>43</sup>

Justifications for resorting to violence given in the previously mentioned Mongolian sources became central to Mongolian Buddhist political activity in the early twentieth century, especially among those who fought for liberation from the Qing and from the Chinese warlords who were encroaching on Mongolian lands. While the Mongolian writings of the pre-revolutionary period of the early twentieth century employed a futurist method of interpreting the *Kālacakatantra's* eschatological prophecies, the early twentieth-century Buddhist author took a historicist method, bringing the sense of immediacy by analyzing the events described in the *Kālacakatantra* as directly related to the current events of their time. When the Japanese army advanced on Manchuria, Mongolian lamas thought of it as the military force dispatched by the king of Śambhala himself to liberate Mongolia from the Qing. As already pointed out by Bawden<sup>44</sup> and Znamenski, this view was reinforced by the Ninth Panchen Lama, Dge legs Rnam rgyal (1883-1937), who declared that Mongols' happiness would come from the east, and encouraged them to worship the Japanese emperor and resist the Red menace. While the Ninth Panchen Lama was repeatedly travelling to the southern borders of Mongolia, initiating Mongols into the military ranks of Śambhala, rumors spread that he will come and lead them in the "yellow," or Dge lugs pa, war against the revolutionaries, the enemies of the Buddha Dharma.<sup>45</sup> There were confirmations of these reports in the writings of the Fourth,<sup>46</sup> Sixth, and Seventh Panchen Lamas,<sup>47</sup> who had promoted the idea that in one of his previous incarnations, Panchen Rinpoche" was Mañjuśrī Yaśas, the first *kalkī* king of Śambhala and that in

<sup>42</sup> Baldanjabova. P. B. and Vanchikovoi, Ts. P, 2012: 152.

<sup>43</sup> See Jambadorj. 2006, Vol. 2, Book 3: 294.

<sup>44</sup> See Bawden, 1989: 262-263.

<sup>45</sup> Znamenski, 2011: 209-10, 227.

<sup>46</sup> In his *Thub dbang zhal pad ma*, the Fourth Pan chen Bla ma eulogizes the Third Pan chen Bla ma, Blo bzang Don grub, Dben sa ba (1505-1568) as an incarnation of the first *kalkī* king of Śambhala, Mañjuśrī Yaśas. He also expresses his aspiration to be reborn in Śambhala and that the Third Pan chen Bla ma may become the *cakravartin* king who will annihilate the Asuras and Barbarians of the Black Direction. Later in the eighteenth century, Klong drol Bla ma in his history of the *Kālacakatantra*, identifies the Pan chen Bla ma with the 1st and the 25th *kalkī* kings. See TBRC, #23430, Blo bzang Chos kyi Rgyal mtshan's Collected Works (*gsung 'bum*), Vol. 1. See also Bawden, 1984-1985: 455-456.

<sup>47</sup> Their full names are Pan chen Blo bzang Chos kyi Rgyal mtshan (1569-1661), Blo bzang Dpal ldan Ye shes (1737-1780), and Bstan pa'i Nyi ma (1781-1852).

the future he would become the 25<sup>th</sup> *kalkī* Raudra Cakrī. This idea was later reiterated in various Mongolian writings, including the *Crystal Mirror*, the *Precious Crystal Staircase*, the previously mentioned anonymous, Buryat text,<sup>48</sup> in which, the Seventh Panchen Lama is said to declare: “. . . arriving to the southern border of the river Sītā, I, *kalkī* Raudra Cakrī will pierce the heart of Kṛṇmati, the leader of barbarian (Khuikhuin) tribe.”

In response to the increased influx of Chinese settlers in Mongolia as a result of the new Qing policy in Mongolia, a heightened national awareness emerged in response to the perceived threat of losing Mongolian national identity and culture. By the early twentieth century, the reports of the prophecy foretelling the Bogd Jebtsundamba Khutugtu's rebirth as the General Hanumān in the army of Panchen Erdene, who will be the *kalkī* Raudra Cakrī, were widely disseminated. After the death of the Eighth Bogd Jebtsundamba in 1924, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party exploited the prophecy of his rebirth in Śambhala for its own political agenda. As Palmer pointed out, to prevent the continuation of the line of his reincarnations and their reign, the party declared that a search for his new incarnation was needless since he will not return to the same line, but will reincarnate as the General Hanumān in Śambhala.<sup>49</sup> The widely popular Śambhala prophecy became the means of promoting Mongolian nationalistic cause against the Chinese as a righteous fight for Śambhala, which became a part of a national, heroic future. But with communist purges of Buddhism, resulting in the destruction of Buddhist monasteries and persecution of lamas in the mid 1930s on Stalin's initiative, Buddhists saw that period as a beginning of a Śambhala war and the revolutionary army as a prophesized enemy of the Dharma. Through the *Kālacakratantra*'s eschatology Mongolian lamas found meaning in the political and social crisis of their time.

When we look closely at the eschatological discourses related to Śambhala war in the Hindu sources, we notice that the authors dedicated more pages to the description of the events leading to the eschatological moment than in what comes after it. In contrast, the holders of the Kālacakra tradition in India and Mongolia seem to have been more concerned with the events taking place during and the eschatological war. While the *Kālacakratantra* offers a minimal account of the anticipated golden era that follows the eschatological battle,<sup>50</sup> later Mongolian writers developed their own perspectives on life in the new era, when the whole world becomes the extended land of Śambhala. According to the previously mentioned work composed by Minjüür Dechin Shiirav, people of the new golden era will have a pleasant appearance, will

<sup>48</sup> *Shambala-yin orun-u baidal qayan-ud-un üy-e kiged jorčiqui-yin yosu ary-a jam noyud-i üjügülegsen sudur ene bolai*, p. 1 in MS. The text was discovered by the Buryat lama physician L. Galbaabadraa and studied by Professor Sharavyn Choimaa.

<sup>49</sup> Palmer, James. 2009. *The Bloody White Baron*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 234-35.

<sup>50</sup> *Kālacakratantra*, 1986, Ch. 1, v. 164, *padas c* and *d*, and vs. 168-169, pp. 155-56. See also Newman, 1987, pp. 647-649.

be young and vigorous, and will have all the necessities of life, including ornaments. There will be neither poor nor socially low, and their sense-faculties will equal to those of gods in the Trayamstrimśa heaven. They will enjoy freedom, live in accordance with gentle rules, and dwell in peace. Harm, illness, demons of obstacles, disasters affecting livestock due to harsh winters, and so on will not befall them.<sup>51</sup> Minjüür Dechin's vision of life during the golden era echoes the description of the conditions of the inhabitants of Śambhala, depicted in Jambadorj's chronicle *Crystal Mirror*, where we are told that people born in Śambhala are beautiful and have abundant food, clothing, and ornaments. Residents of Śambhala live under gentle laws, and adversities such as killing, beating, disease, and cattle pestilence are unknown to them.<sup>52</sup> This description clearly has its basis in the Sixth Panchen Lama, Blo bzang Dpal ldan Ye shes's (1738-1780), *Guide to Śambhala*, which was influential in Mongolia, and which, in turn, has its source in Tārānātha's translation of the Nepalese text, *Kalāpāvātāra* (Tib. *Ka la par 'jug pa*).

In his aforementioned text, Minjüür Dechin informs us that although all the teachings of the Buddha Śākyamuni will be widely circulated in all the four continents of the Great Jambudvīpa during the era of perfection, it will be the Mahāyāna and the Unsurpassed Yoga Tantras (*niruttarayogatantra*), such as the *Guhyasamāja*, *Cakrasaṃvara*, *Yamāntaka*, and *Kālacakra tantras*, that will develop in an inconceivable manner. Among them, the *Kālacakratantra*, which will be re-disseminated by Raudra Cakrī, will be a *chief tantra*. Due to practicing the mentioned *tantras*, many will attain Awakening within a single lifetime.<sup>53</sup> Jambadorj's *Crystal Mirror* and the anonymous Mongolian text from Buryatia predict that at that time, Nāgārjuna will enter his relics, which he previously turned into a stone and upon which he placed his blessings. Likewise, Tsongkhapa will enter his relics after the teacher by name Ringchin Choyijil steals them away from Tsongkhapa's Gandan monastery. Having entered his relics, Tsongkhapa will proceed in the form of a great *siddha*.<sup>54</sup> According to the anonymous Buryat text, Nāgārjuna and Tsongkhapa will

<sup>51</sup> *Khünii oyunig barigch oron, deed büteeliin Shambalin orond magadtai törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvin shashintai magad uchrakhin erööl, khuvitai shaviin erdeniin gishgüür khemeekh orshvoi*, 2003: 25-27. According to the colophon, Baldan Jigmed wrote the inscription. Translated from Tibetan into Mongolian by the Third Nalandra, a monk of Dashchoinbel Datsan.

<sup>52</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, Book 3. See also Bawden, 1984-85, Mon. Ser. 36 (1984-85): 459-67.

<sup>53</sup> *Khünii oyunig barigch oron, deed büteeliin Shambalyn orond magadtai törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvin shashintai magad uchrakhin erööl, khuvitai shaviin erdeniin gishgüür khemeekh orshvoi*, 2003: 26-27. See also *Khünii oyunig barigch oron, deed büteeliin Shambalyn orond magadtai törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvin shashintai magad uirakhyn erööl, khuvitai taviin erdeniin gishgüür khemeekh orshvoi*, 2003: 25-27. To support this statement, he references Vagindra's *Wish-Prayer for Śambhala*, the *Response to Questions regarding Śambhala* written by the Second 'Jam dbyangs Bzhad pa, Dkon mchog 'Jigs med Dbang po, 1728-1791), and Darmabazar's *Composition of the Land of Sambhala* (the 18th century).

<sup>54</sup> Jambadorj, 2006, Vol. 2, 2006: 294. *Shambala-yin orun-u baidal qayan-ud-un üy-e kiged jorčiqui-yin yosu ary-a jam nujud-i üjügülegsen sudur ene bolai*, MS:18.

accompany the Kalkī Raudra Cakrī in illuminating the teachings of *sūtras* and *tantras* and will remain on earth for as long as Raudra Kalkī remains, that is, for 150 years.<sup>55</sup> Minjüür Dechin suggests that this is a reason why even Bodhisattvas in Sukhāvati pray for their rebirth in in the Mahāyāna-oriented Śambhala.

In conclusion, we can say that all of the mentioned variants of eschatological discourses connected to Kalkī's war, despite their differences, became means of bringing together the degenerative aspects of the religious, social, and political realms deemed as immanent to the final phase of the *kali-yuga*. In the context of Indian and Mongolian Kālacakra traditions, these three realms were inextricably tied together within the historical periods that were characterized by social crises, ominous political events, and destruction of the Buddha Dharma by external forces. However, in all the discussed eschatological narratives, Kalkī's war with barbarians is a triumphant religious war, the good and evil that are clearly demarcated are irreconcilable, leaving no room for peaceful solution. Creating the sense of historical plausibility and giving rise to suspenseful anxieties, these eschatological narratives have been influencing the rhetoric of the respective religious communities in which they emerged to this very day.

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<sup>55</sup> *Shambala-yin orun-u baidal qayan-ud-un üy-e kiged jorčiqui-yin yosu ary-a jam nuγud-i üjügüilegsen sudur ene bolai*, MS: 18-19.

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