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Exorcising the Mandala: Kālacakra and the Neo-Pentecostal Response

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Exorcising the Mandala: Kālacakra and the Neo-Pentecostal Response

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Abstract

Since the late 1990s, the Dalai Lama's "Kalachakra for World Peace" initiation has emerged as a central site where Tibetan Buddhism and its relationship to the West have been imagined and acted upon by a movement within evangelical Christianity called Spiritual Mapping. In Mapping understanding, the Kalachakra is a vehicle by which the current Dalai Lama prepares for the end times by seeking to transform America into "a universal Buddhocracy" called the Kingdom of Shambhala. Tibetan Buddhism is, in short, a missionary competitor for global religious domination. Here, the Tibetan-evangelical encounter is presented as the by-product of the simultaneous globalizations of Tibetan Buddhism and Evangelicalism with the human rights discourse in late twentieth century America. The "exorcism of the mandala" is read as both by-product and critique of globalization, and to engender a thoughtful re-evaluation of long-standing Buddhist Studies analytics.

In the spring of 2004, 5,000 people from around the world gathered in Toronto, Canada to attend the largest public Buddhist ritual in the contemporary world: the "Kalachakra for World Peace," an eleven day program comprising Tibetan Buddhist teachings, ritual dances and esoteric ritual empowerments that would authorize their participants to practice the advanced meditations of the Kālacakra Tantras. Few members of its audience were skilled enough to engage in such practices. Rather, they were there to watch and learn from its presiding lama: His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet.

The visual centerpiece of the initiation was a multi-colored, nine-foot sand mandala: "a symbolic representation of the Kalachakra deity, his palace, and 721 surrounding deities" (Capital Area Tibetan Association, 2011) publically constructed by a team of monks from the Dalai Lama's own Namgyal monastery (Fig 1 and 2). On the final day of the program, its colored sand particles—"blessed by the Buddhas residing in the mandala"—were poured by His Holiness into the waters of Lake Ontario "in an act of blessing the surrounding" and to further the Kālacakra's broader mission to "serve(s) as a universal prayer for the development of the ethics of peace and harmony within one's self and humanity" (Canadian Tibetan Association of Toronto, 2004) .

* This paper is indebted to the scholarship on Spiritual Mapping by Elizabeth McAlister, who brought the Mapping movement and its engagement with Tibetan Buddhism to my attention in 2010. Her published research (2005, 2012a, 2012b) as well as her generosity in sharing her unpublished work has been invaluable to my own analysis.

Across the Great Lakes, the creation and disbursement of the Kālacakra sand mandala was invoking a very different reception. A Pentecostal Christian minister named Apostle Jim Gosa¹ was leading a team in a chain of prayer sessions around the perimeter of the Lake to prevent the Tibetan spirits that would be poured into the waters from being dispersed into the adjacent lands. "With the authority and dominion by God" and "in the name of the Holy Spirit," Apostle Gosa later explained, "I commanded the spirits of the lake to shut their mouths...." (Gosa, 2008). These self-avowed Spiritual Warriors were seeking to avert the increased "territorial power of Buddhism" (The Original World Changers International, n.d.) and anti-Christian sentiment posed by Tibetan Buddhism in general, and by the Kālacakra initiation in particular.²



Fig. 1: Kālacakra sand mandala. Photograph by Martin Brauen. Reproduced with permission.

¹ "Jim Gosa" is a pseudonym.

² The larger history of Christian missionary engagement with Tibetan Buddhism is complex and outside of the scope of this work. One important strand of missionary perception saw Tibet as largely impervious to Christian conversion; even in the heyday of Western missions to Asia (1850 to 1950), "no mission society was able to establish a lasting base in central Tibet" (Bray in Dodin 2001, 21). Contemporary Christian missions continue missionary efforts in Tibet proper and towards Tibetan immigrants in the United States. Interestingly, some of the most vigorous efforts are by Asian missionaries.; for example, the Majority World movement of South Korea (Wan 2009).

This group was not acting alone. In communities throughout the United States, Kālacakra-centered exorcisms and prayer events were being staged by participants of a global movement in Neo-Pentecostal evangelical Christianity called "Spiritual Mapping" or "Spiritual Warfare."³ In anticipation of the end time, its adherents are committed to "[taking] the whole gospel to the whole world" by "breaking the spiritual strongholds" (The Lausanne Movement, 2011) of a hierarchy of invisible, demonic spirits that hold specific geographical centers and ethnic populations in their grip. Its leaders are considered apostles and prophets, gifted by God, and adept in the practice of locating these beings and using exorcism and other religious techniques to wage a territorial spiritual war against them. In the United States, some of their most visible adherents avowedly seek dominion over politics, business and culture in preparation for the end times and the return of Jesus (*Fresh Air from WHYY*, 4 August 2011). The movement came to the attention of the non-Christian American media in 2008, when an African Pastor named Apostle Thomas Muthee visited America and prayed over vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin (Blumenthal, 2008), and more recently, when Presidential candidates Rick Perry (Posner, 2011) and Michele Bachmann (Lizza, 2011) affirmed their own affiliation.

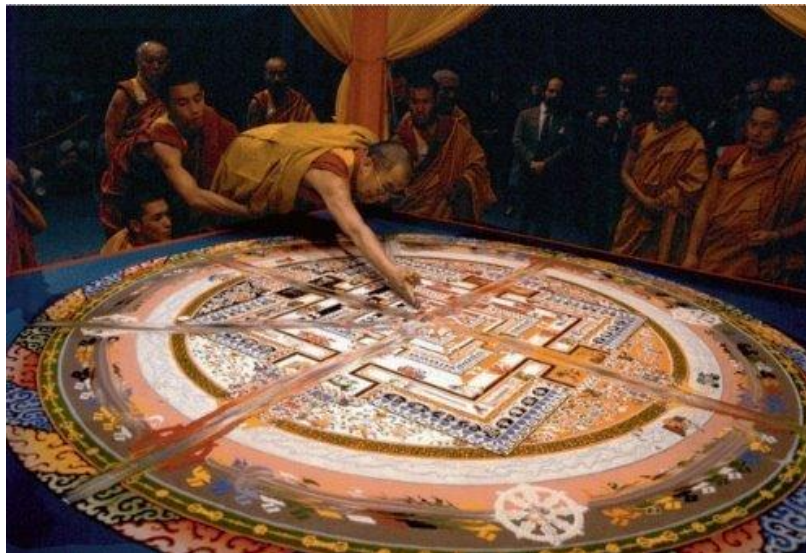


Fig. 2: Dalai Lama ritually disassembling mandala. Photograph by Don Farber. Reproduced with permission.

Since the late 1990s, the Dalai Lama's "Kalachakra for World Peace" initiation has emerged as a central site where Tibetan Buddhism and its relationship to the West have

³ According to Holvast (2009), "spiritual mapping as a "movement" originated in the 1980s in Colorado Springs. He argues that, while it is no longer a formal "movement," it is a worldwide practice among multiple Evangelical denominations, with especial influence in sub-Saharan African and South American Pentecostal and charismatic missions. Here, I use the term "movement" to denote a population that shares 1) a practical theology; 2) a corollary set of religious practices, and 3) a sense of community identity. In the United States, the practices of spiritual warfare and mapping have become identified with the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), headed by C. Peter Wagner, and so is again approaching "movement" status in Holvast's terms. For other cultural contexts, see Bernardi 1999; Jorgenson 2005; McAlister 2012a, 2012b.

been imagined and acted upon by this segment of evangelical Christians. In Spiritual Warfare parlance, the Kālacakra is not only the key initiation rite into tantric or Tibetan Buddhism, it is the primary vehicle by which the current Dalai Lama prepares for the end times by seeking to transform America—and the world—into "a universal Buddhocracy" (Truthspeaker, 2011) called the Kingdom of Shambhala. Tibetan Buddhism is, in short, a missionary competitor for global religious domination.⁴

There are a number of analytics historians of Buddhism routinely use to make sense of Buddhist-Christian encounters such as this. We might, for example write our analysis as a chapter in the longer history of Buddhist Modernism in its American incarnations.⁵ Alternately, we might contextualize the "exorcism of the mandala" within the broader history of Christian imaginings about Tibetan Buddhism—perhaps analogize the contemporary Spiritual Mappers' reading to previous instances of Christian missionaries "finding" in Tibetan Buddhists a dark counter version of themselves. These perspectives have their place, and inform the following discussion.

Yet the Tibetan-Evangelical encounter is more than another instance of strategic rhetoricizing or fantasizing by either of our protagonists. Its analysis opens a small yet compelling window into a larger study of how "globalization" shapes their shared experience. Over the last decades, the world has seen dramatic reconfigurations of social geography, marked by the growth of transplanetary or "supraterritorial" connections between various peoples (Scholte, 2005: 8). These connections, I argue at length elsewhere,⁶ palpably shape the content and reception of Tibetan Buddhist ritual in diaspora, and demand to be considered more fully than traditional analytics allow.

Accordingly, I take a different approach. Here, I present the "exorcism of the mandala" as the by-product of the simultaneous globalizations of Tibetan Buddhism and Evangelicalism with the human rights discourse that emerged in late twentieth century America. I begin with a brief genealogy of the Kālacakra initiation, highlighting its historical function as a vehicle by which Tibetans abroad have promoted models of Tibetan autonomy. Following its trail to the United States in 1981, I argue that the association of Tibetan Buddhism and the "Kalachakra for World Peace" with human rights politics in the 1980s was articulated with three interrelated processes: the globalization of Tibetan Buddhism, the transformation of Tibetan nationalism into an international movement, and the entry of Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama into 'global civil society.' It was this final process, I will suggest, that especially attracted the attention of the Spiritual Mapping movement, for whom global civil society is largely synonymous with liberal, anti-Christian politics and policies. From this perspective, I suggest that the "exorcism of the mandala" may be read as both by-product and critique of globalization, and so underscores the need for a thoughtful re-evaluation of long-standing Buddhist Studies analytics.

⁴ On Buddhism as/and contemporary missionary traditions, see Learman 2005.

⁵ McMahan characterizes Buddhist Modernism as "an actual new form of Buddhism that is the result of modernization, westernization, reinterpretation, image-making, revitalization, and reform..." (2008: p. 5).

⁶ Harrington and McAlister, forthcoming.

The Kālacakra Tantra and the Globalization of Tibetan Buddhism

The "Kalachakra for World Peace" initiation so inimical to Spiritual Mappers has its textual origins in the *Kālacakra Tantra* ("Wheel of Time"; Tib., *dus kyi 'khor*): an Indian Buddhist esoteric treatise belonging to the class of unexcelled yoga-tantras (Skt. *Anuttara-yoga-tantra*).⁷ Dating to the early decades of eleventh century C.E., the work is composed of five chapters that Tibetan tradition characterizes into three divisions: the Outer Kālacakra (Tib. *phyi'i dus 'khor*), dealing with its unique cosmology and astrology; the Inner Kālacakra (*nang gi dus 'khor*), centering on human psychophysiology and embryology, and the Alternative Kālacakra (*gzhan gyi dus 'khor*), dedicated to the Kālacakra's particular six-limbed yoga practice. It is in this final division that we find reference to the requisite initiation into the practice by means of its sand mandala.⁸

It is in the first two divisions of the *Kālacakra Tantra* that we find the textual source of the Spiritual Mapper's notion of Tibetan Buddhism's "end times," the Kālacakra's connection to a "Buddhocracy," and of the Dalai Lama's hidden commitment to warfare and world domination. According to its first chapter, the Buddha taught the Kālacakra in India to King Sucandra, the enlightened ruler of a vast hidden kingdom named Śambhala. There, the Kālacakra has been quietly preserved and propagated by a line of devout kings and *kalkins* (chieftains) to this very day. However, at the end of this world's current age of degeneration, Śambhala and its Kālacakra teachings will rise to global prominence: a great war will erupt, and the twenty-fifth Kalkin of Śambhala will lead his armies in a triumphant battle against hordes of barbarian invaders. This will usher in a new golden age, in which peace, harmony and the dharma will flourish, and those affiliated with the Kālacakra tradition will be reborn in Śambhala to partake in its benefits:

When eight Kalkins have reigned, the barbarian religion will certainly appear in the land of Mecca. Then, at the time of the wrathful Kalkin Cakrin and the vicious barbarian lord, a fierce battle will occur on earth.

At the end of the age Cakrin, the universal emperor, will come out from Kalāpa, the city the gods built on Mount Kailāsa. He will attack the barbarians with his four-division army...

Kalkin, with Viṣṇu and Śiva, will destroy the barbarians in battle with his army. Then Cakrin will return to his home in Kalāpa, the city the gods built on Mount Kailāsa. At that time, everyone on earth will be fulfilled with religion, pleasure, and prosperity. Grain will grow in the wild, and trees will bow with everlasting fruit—these things will occur. (Newman, 1995: 288–289)

⁷ According to its first chapter, the existing version of the *Kālacakra Tantra* is an abridged version of a larger original Tantra entitled the *Paramādibuddhatantra*, reportedly consisting of twelve thousand verses. Little of that work is extant. The version I refer to throughout as the *Kālacakra Tantra* is more formally entitled the *Laghukālacakrarajatantra*, and is comprised of approximately 1,050 verses. For Sanskrit and Tibetan edition, see Vira & Chandra, 1966. For discussion of the Tantra's textual history, see Wallace, 2001: 3–4; Newman, 1987.

⁸ The initiation and the sand mandala are referenced in the third "Empowerment Chapter" (Skt. *Abhiṣekapaṭala*; Tib. *mngon par dbang bskur ba*). However, substantive explication of the mandala and the initiation are traditionally derived from commentaries, most notably the *Vimalaprabhā*. For Sanskrit edition, see Upādhyāya et al., 1986.

The root text however, does not stop there. In a substantial auto-commentary in the *Kālacakra* Tantra's second chapter (II.48–50), the composer(s) re-frame the routing of the barbarians.⁹ The war, they contend, is an allegory for the *Kālacakra* yogin's inner experience. It is the individual who is the "battlefield" wherein "Kalki," the individual's correct knowledge, wages battle with the vicious king of the Barbarians, the path of non-virtue:

Cakrin is adamant mind in one's body; Kalkin is true gnosis...the demon army is the fourfold host of Death: malice, ill will, jealousy, and attachment and aversion. Their defeat in battle is the destruction of the terror of existence. Splendid victory is the path to liberation...Thus, the war with the barbarian lord definitely occurs within a living being's body; but the illusory, external war with the barbarians in the land of Mecca is certainly not a war. (Newman, 1995: p. 289)

In short, the routing of the barbarians symbolizes the victory of gnosis over ignorance. It is not an act of war, but "a mere magical show the Kalkin emanates to convert, not destroy, the Muslims" (Newman, 1995: 286). This interpretive emphasis on non-violence—on compassionate conversion over physical force—is one reason that, as in the current Dalai Lama's view, the *Kālacakra* and its Śambhala myth are understood to promote world peace.

The *Kālacakra* and its richly interpretable Śambhala narrative were transmitted from India to Tibet in the eleventh century. It gained particular prominence in the late thirteenth and fourteenth century when Tibet was under Mongol rule,¹⁰ and from that time forwards was disseminated and practiced within the Sakya, Kagyu, and Jonang traditions. By the sixteenth century however, the *Kālacakra* was especially identified with Geluk tradition, in part because several Panchen Lamas and Dalai Lamas gave public *Kālacakra* teachings and initiations—a notable departure from general Tantric practice, in which initiations are usually restricted to a select group of initiates.¹¹

Significantly, Geluk masters publically disseminated the *Kālacakra* outside of Tibet proper. Between 1925 and 1932, the ninth Panchen Lama repeatedly transmitted Śambhala prayers and gave *Kālacakra* initiations in large public rituals in Inner Mongolia and China.¹² In 1932, he travelled to Beijing's Forbidden City and gave the *Kālacakra* initiation to an audience of more than 100,000 people from the "Hall of Great Peace"—an

⁹ For a more general discussion of the commentarial strategies of the *Kālacakra* tradition, see Broido, 1988.

¹⁰ Central to its popularization at this time were the works of the Jonang master Dolpopa (*Dol po pa Shes rab Rgyal mtshan*, 1292–1361), who ordered a revised translation of both the root text and its primary commentary, and the contemporaneous Sakya master Buton (*Bu ston Rin chen Grub*, 1290–1363), who annotated and wrote extensively on the Tantra.

¹¹ Edward Henning has suggested that Dolpopa was the first master to conceive of the idea of giving the *Kālacakra* initiation as a public event. See Gyatso & Kilty, 2004: 3.

¹² The ninth Panchen Lama, Losang Thubten Choekyi Nyima (*Blo sangs Thub bstan Chos kyi Nyi ma*, 1883–1937) fled to China in 1924 in search of outside support for his bid to maintain a local rule, independent of the central Tibetan government. There, he was welcomed by a Nationalist government intent upon incorporating a *de facto* independent Tibet and Mongolia by re-framing Buddhism as a unified pan-Asian religion; a single tree with multiple, peacefully-coexisting ethnic branches, growing in the soil of the modern Chinese nation state. See Tuttle, 2007: 68 ff.

event punctuated by the construction of the Kālacakra sand mandala, there dubbed the "Peace Mandala of Shambhala." Two years later, he offered a Kālacakra initiation in Hangzhou, where he "prayed for world peace" and initiated an audience of up to 70,000 into the Kālacakra tradition. These gatherings furthered his efforts to advocate for a Tibetan vision of governance, characterized by a peaceful merging of religion and politics (*chos srid zung 'grel*) (Tuttle, 2008: 313, 318 ff; Tuttle, 2005: 227). In short, the Kālacakra initiation was a vehicle used by Tibetans abroad to promote a vision of Tibetan autonomy (Tuttle, 2007: 171; Tuttle, 2005: 212). It would reprise this role a half century later when Tibetan Buddhism came west.

The Kālacakra initiation came to the United States as part of the larger globalization of Tibetan Buddhism that followed China's occupation of Tibet in 1951, and the subsequent diaspora of hundreds of thousands of Tibetans after 1959. In the 1960s and 70s, a growing number of Tibetan lamas came to America and established dharma centers.¹³ In 1979, however, America was visited by a Geluk lama who was both a Kālacakra master and head of the Tibetan Government in Exile: Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama's dual identity as religious and political authority would become central to the characterization of Tibetan Buddhism by the Spiritual Mapping movement. It also framed his early activities in Euro-America. In his capacity as head of the Tibetan Government in Exile, the Dalai Lama traveled and lectured widely over the next decade to raise public awareness of Tibet's political situation, and to advocate for Tibetan freedom. In his role as Buddhist scholar and ritual specialist, His Holiness gave teachings on Tibetan Buddhism and offered public rituals. These latter events were an occasion for His Holiness to explicate his decidedly globalized vision of Tibetan Buddhism. In academic circles, this is sometimes characterized as a form of "Buddhist Modernism" insofar as it highlights Tibetan Buddhism's respect for reason and experience; its compatibility with democracy and modern science; its commitment to interfaith dialogue and rejection of religious conversion movements.¹⁴

For our purposes, the most salient feature of His Holiness' vision was its dual emphasis on global social engagement and world peace. His Holiness drew from the Buddhist notion of compassion—a "universal human responsibility"—to promote a secular ethics grounded on non-violence that could serve as a tool for global social transformation. Such an ethic presumed a supra-territorial vision of humanity – one that subsumed familial or national identity to a global one. Its cultivation was, in turn, intrinsic to the development of world peace. "Internal peace," he explained "is an essential first step to achieving peace in the world, true and lasting peace." How does one cultivate it?

¹³ Among the most famous lineage holders that came to the West in the 1970s are the Kagyu (bKa' brgyud) teacher Kalu Rinpoche (1975); the Nyigma (rNying-ma) Dujom Rinpoche (1972); Sakya Trizin Rinpoche (1974); and the Gyalwa Karmapa, head of the Karma bKa' brgyud school (1974). By 1987, there were approximately 180 Tibetan Tantric centers in North America alone. By 1997, that number has more than doubled. See Cabezon, 2006: 98-95; Batchelor, 1994: chapter 8.

¹⁴ On the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism in the West as Buddhist Modernist, see Lopez, 1999: 185 ff. For a critique of Lopez' characterization, see Dreyfus, 2005: 4 ff.

It's very simple. In the first place, by realising clearly that all mankind is one, that human beings in every country are members of one and the same family. In other words, all these quarrels between countries and blocs are family quarrels and should not go beyond certain limits. Just as there can be friction, disputes between man and wife in a union, but within specific limits, as each party knows deep down in the heart that they are bound together by a far more important sentiment. Next, it is important to grasp the real meaning of this brotherhood based on love and kindness.... (Cited in Mills, 2009: 197)

These emphases on global engagement and world peace would come to infuse the ideological backdrop of the nine Western-based public initiations into Kālacakra practice.¹⁵ His Holiness offered the first in 1981 to an audience of a few hundred in Deer Park Center, Wisconsin. Over its three-day period, its Western initiates learned that "[t]he Kalachakra has a special connection with all the people of the planet" but most particularly "with one land on this earth... Shambhala," where the Tantra had been preserved and propagated since the time of the Buddha" (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, 1981).¹⁶ In 1985, a crowd of thousands gathered in Rinkon, Switzerland to attend an event explicitly billed as "The Kalachakra Initiation for World Peace," and featuring the now ubiquitous Kālacakra sand mandala. His Holiness pointedly highlighted a "special connection" between the Tantra, Śambhala, and this world, and "the special significance of the initiation as a powerful force for the realization and preservation of world peace in this present time. Through participating in the initiation we ourselves can become vehicles for the peace-creating energies contained in this teaching." (n.a., 1985)

In the summer of 1989, when His Holiness offered the third Western-based Kālacakra initiation to an audience of more than three thousand participants in Los Angeles California, the vision of a free Tibet as a "Zone of Peace" that he had presented to a U. S Congressional Human Rights Caucus had been circulating in Tibet-centered communities and web sites for two years.¹⁷ Inevitably, a "Free Tibet" as a "Zone of Peace" and the legendary land of Shambhala were increasingly associated in the imagination of its American initiates. This connection was re-enforced in 1991 when His Holiness conferred the "Kalachakra for World Peace" to four thousand people in Madison Square Garden's Paramount Theater, and in 1999 when the "Kalachakra for World Peace"

¹⁵ It should be noted that His Holiness' Kālacakra initiations were not limited to North America. These rituals have been no less important to the building of a pan-Tibetan identity in exile, and to sustaining positive relations with culturally Tibetan residents of the Himalayan borderlands.

¹⁶ This was not the first time Euro-American audiences had learned about this association of Shambhala: Madame Blavatsky (1831–1891) and Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947) had promulgated a comparable vision.

¹⁷ "The Tibetan people are eager to contribute to regional and world peace, and I believe they are in a unique position to do so. Traditionally, Tibetans are a peace loving and non-violent people. Since Buddhism was introduced to Tibet over one thousand years ago, Tibetans have practiced non-violence with respect to all forms of life... But for China's occupation, Tibet would still, today, fulfill its natural role as a buffer state maintaining and promoting peace in Asia. It is my sincere desire, as well as that of the Tibetan people, to restore to Tibet her invaluable role, by converting the entire country—comprising the three provinces of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo—once more into a place of stability, peace and harmony. In the best of Buddhist tradition, Tibet would extend its services and hospitality to all who further the cause of world peace and the well-being of mankind and the natural environment we share." (T. Gyatso, 1987)

travelled to Bloomington, Indiana. By 2004, when our Spiritual Warriors were gathering on the banks of Lake Ontario to combat the mandala "spirits," the Dalai Lama's Kālacakra initiation had been associated in contemporary popular American thought with world peace and Tibetan nationalism for almost two decades.

Human Rights Politics: Globalizing Sovereignty

It was not only Tibetan Buddhism that was being globalized during this time. As the basic civil and political rights under contention in America were projected onto the global landscape, the United States had seen the emergence of a newly global discourse of human rights; a shift in concern for the sovereignty of the people (Sassen, 1996) to "the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of the members of the human family."¹⁸ By 1977, this trend was formalized in the idea of "third generation rights" – those associated with such rights as a right to national self-determination, a clean environment and, significantly, the rights of indigenous minorities.¹⁹ Thus it was that by the 1980s, when the Dalai Lama began to travel around the West to advocate for Tibetan freedom, this vision of human and minority rights had assumed its stature as the ultimate moral arbiter of international conduct.

This discursive shift took institutional form in an explosion of trans-national networks. American activists, working with partners around the world, had

devised ways to collect accurate accounts of some of the vilest behavior on earth that no one had bothered to document before. They invented ways to move this information to wherever activists had some chance to shame and pressure the perpetrators. Theirs was a politics of the global flow of key bits of fact (Cmiel, 1999: 1232).²⁰

These networks were formalized in a vast assemblage of non-governmental organizations that saw themselves as a "global civil society" dedicated to a range of progressive social and economic projects: the establishment of more equitable relations between the global North and South, the protection of global environments, women's issues and, of course, human rights. Global civil society thus challenged the claims of market globalism and its

¹⁸ Here, I am drawing on the language of the preamble to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948. Despite this mid-century pedigree, it is clear that the contemporary human rights movement only took off in the 1970s. See Moyn, 2010:200; Cmiel, 2004; Cushman, 2011.

¹⁹ The concept of so-called "third-generation human rights" is associated with French jurist Karel Vasak, former director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Division of Human Rights and Peace. In November 1977 at UNESCO, in a speech commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Vasak summarized the development of international human rights and made first mention of the concept of third-generation human rights. He pointed out that third-generation human rights are those born to the obvious brotherhood of men and their indispensable solidarity, and provide that "everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized" (Vasak, 1977: 29).

²⁰ The human rights movement was, in this sense, co-emergent with what Manuel Castells calls "the rise of the network society" where "the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks" (Castells, 2001).

neoliberal underpinnings. For these "justice globalists" (Steger, 2008), "another world is possible:" a "new world order based on a global redistribution of wealth and a "non-violent social resistance to the process of dehumanization the world is undergoing..." (World Social Forum, 2002). Amnesty International was arguably the most influential member of the human rights NGOs. It was however, only one of more than two hundred groups working on human rights in the United States by the end of the seventies.²¹

This backdrop had important consequences for Tibetan Buddhism and for the later Spiritual Warfare critique of the Kālacakra initiation. The Dalai Lama's unceasing advocacy of a peaceful resolution to Tibet's political situation—and by extension, to the suffering of all members of the human family – helped re-frame Tibetan Buddhism into an engaged Buddhism—a form of "justice globalism"—and his well-known notion of "universal human responsibility" as an iteration of "universal human rights."²² This latter association was galvanized in early 1987, when Roberta Cohen, formerly Carter's advisor on human rights, called for the human rights principle to be applied to the People's Republic of China (Cohen, 1987: 451). At about that time, the exiled leaders of the Tibetan Government in exile decided that the main principle to which the Dalai Lama would appeal in his foreign speeches would be the principle of human rights (Barnett, 2001: 310).

Within a year, "Tibet" was formally inducted into global civil society. Human Rights Watch in New York published its first reports dedicated to Tibet in 1988. Amnesty International followed soon after. The Tibet Information Network (TIN) was officially constituted in London in 1988 as a non-political research body. The Tibetan Government in Exile set up a Human Rights Desk within its Department of Information and International Relations (Barnett, 2001: 310). In 1989, this entry yielded what many supporters considered to be a long-overdue result: His Holiness was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for "peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people."²³

For Spiritual Mappers, however, the Dalai Lama's award would come to epitomize the hypocrisy of liberal thought, and the invidious workings of the Kālacakra initiation. To appreciate these concerns, let us turn to the roots and logic of the Spiritual Mapping

²¹ For example, the Ford Foundation began funding human rights work in 1973; the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights dates itself to 1975. Human Rights Watch opened in 1978.

²² "We must complement the human rights ideal by developing a widespread practice of universal human responsibility," he said. "This is not a religious matter. It arises from what I call the 'Common Human Religion'—that of love, the will to others' happiness, and compassion, the will to others' freedom from suffering..." Cited in Fields, 1992: 379.

²³ It should be noted that this concern with human rights was also playing out in Tibet proper. Ron Schwartz notes that "posters and pamphlets appearing around Lhasa from the autumn of 1988 onwards increasingly stress the theme of human rights (*gro ba mi'i thob thang*"). Tibetans described their protests not merely as a struggle for democracy and independence, but as a fight for human rights. The continuing flow of information from the outside world on democracy, human rights and other national struggles has provided Tibetans with an alternate point of reference, and an alternative vocabulary, to the Chinese. Thus they have come to regard their own struggle against Chinese rule in Tibet as representative of a contemporary worldwide movement. See Schwartz, 1994: 128.

movement.

Spiritual Mapping in the U.S.A.

Globalizing Pentecostalism

Three months before His Holiness flew to Stockholm to accept the 1989 Peace Prize, 4,400 Christians from 173 countries traveled to Manila to attend the Second International Congress on World Evangelization, often called Lausanne II.²⁴ This gathering lasted for ten days and presented a range of missionary strategies and theories in support of the conference's stated purpose: "to focus the whole church of Jesus Christ in a fresh way on the task of taking the whole gospel to the whole world" (The Lausanne Movement, 2011). It was here that "spiritual warfare" and "spiritual mapping" were put firmly on the international Evangelical missionary agenda, and the seeds planted for its modern demonization of the Kālacakra Tantra (Holvast, 2009: 60).

Lausanne II was in part an outgrowth of "Church Growth," an Evangelical movement that seeks to improve the effectiveness of its efforts by integrating detailed sociological information about target populations into its missionary strategies. It gained considerable momentum from the information explosion that swept America from the 1970s; as such, Church Growth—and as we will see, the Spiritual Mapping movement—was every bit as much "a politics of the global flow of key bits of fact" as was the contemporaneous human rights movement.²⁵

The Spiritual Warfare/Spiritual Mapping model presented at Lausanne II extended Church Growth logic and practice. The Spiritual Mappers at Lausanne II concurred that sociological data was important to successful evangelization; it was however, incomplete. The visible world also has an unseen supernatural dimension outside the purview of sociological research: a hierarchy of spirits that serve under the leadership of Satan (McAlister, 2012: 15–18; Holvast, 2009: chapter 3). In these end times—determined to be the 1990s – God has given a unique strategy to "break their domain," namely spiritual mapping. The demons needed to be researched, identified and physically located—literally "spiritually mapped"—and then exorcised by apostles who channeled the Holy Spirit. This would be a global effort whose central focus would be the "Resistance Belt": a band stretching across the eastern hemisphere whose inhabitants are primarily non-Christian and most resistant to evangelization.

²⁴ This timing reminds us that in the United States, human rights discourse and the explosion of Protestant evangelical political activity entered into the mainstream almost simultaneously. Recent scholarship has suggested that it was the 1977 inauguration speech of President Jimmy Carter—whose election prompted *Time Magazine* to dub 1976 the "Year of the Evangelical"—that placed "human rights" before the American public for the first time.

²⁵ While the Spiritual Mapping movement is profitably contextualized within the broader politicization of American evangelicalism that began under the Carter administration, it should not be conflated with contemporaneous evangelical efforts that self-consciously organize themselves as human rights themes. For more on these, see Castelli, 2004: chapter 6; Castelli, 2007. Similarly, the weakening of the traditional Cold War enmity between the Eastern Bloc and the West altered the political and global visions of many US evangelicals. Zoe Knox notes for many evangelicals and especially for SW practitioners, Islam—and the conflicts surrounding Israel and the Middle East—filled the slot once occupied by the Soviet Union. (Knox, 2011)

Spiritual Warfare thus conceptualizes evangelism—quite graphically—as the re-appropriation of demonically colonized territory; as McAlister notes, "Satan becomes the colonial power who must be overthrown" (McAlister, 2012: 1). This counter-colonization effort was promulgated at several fronts over the next decade. Lausanne's Spiritual Mappers met with the developer of an early PC-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and mapped a box between 10 and 40 degrees north latitude that became renowned in Spiritual Mapping circles as "the 10/40 Window." These were the central territories that needed to be re-taken—regions in which the majority of its residents were "enslaved by Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism" (cited in Judy Han, Ju Hui, 2010: 186). Its data was digitally integrated into a Mercator projection of the 10/40 Window, which was uploaded onto an enormous on-line network of prayer sites and information clearinghouses. Spiritual Mapping was graduating from a conversion strategy to a global movement.

By 1991, the technique of spiritual mapping was being prescribed for areas outside the 10/40 Window. In the United States, these efforts were most commonly directed at urban neighborhoods whose high rates of crime, prostitution, and drug use were seen to bespeak the presence of unseen demonic residents.²⁶ Spiritual Mapping thus tacitly framed itself as a form of community development, though its leaders pointedly subsumed social concerns to evangelical progress.

It was two years later that the movement began to give greater attention to a different breed of domestic demon: those evidenced by the growth of non-Christian beliefs and practices in "the West." A 1993 Intersession Working Group identified the key changes in Western society that fed this trend: "An Increased interest in Eastern Religion," the "Influx of Non-Christian Worldview" resulting from "the massive migrations of people from the Third World" and the "Sensationalization of the Occult" (Holvast, 2009: 231–234.) It was in this final category that Tibetan Buddhism was specifically referenced.

In 1996, The Dalai Lama travelled to Sydney, Australia to perform the "Kalachakra for World Peace." For the first time, the initiation was a source of active concern to a handful of local Spiritual Mappers. During that visit,

the Dalai Lama was involved in a number of ceremonies that involved the completion of several sand based murals which upon completion were thrown into Sydney Harbour as a means of "blessing" the city. There was limited response only from a few experienced Intercessors. That response was basically limited to following the Dalai Lama as he journeyed around Sydney cleansing the places he visited through prayer, and where water was involved the casting of salt into the water to purify and cleanse the waters according to the Biblical principle in 2 Kings 2: 19–22. (B. Pickering, 12 March 2012, personal communication)

²⁶ In the United States, the demand to "liberate" particular neighborhoods has spawned a cottage industry in guidebooks and video resources. See especially Cindy Jacobs' *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy: A Training Manual for Militant Intersession* (1991); John Dawson, *Taking Our Cities for God: How to Break Spiritual Strongholds* (1990); George Otis Jr., *Informed Intersession: Transforming Your Community Through Spiritual Mapping and Strategic Prayer* (1999) and his Transformations video series.

Spiritual Mapping anxiety about the Kālacakra blossomed three years later. In 1999, Victor and Victoria Trimondi (formerly Herbert and Victoria Röttgen) published a now infamous manifesto against Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama which placed especial emphasis on the Kālacakra tradition. In the Trimondi's highly rhetoricized and unscholarly presentation, "the Kalachakra Tantra and the Shambhala myth associated" are "the basis for the policy on religions of the Dalai Lama." Its goals included "the linking of religious and state power" and "the establishment of a global Buddhocracy via manipulative and warlike means." The "Kalachakra for World Peace" in New York City served as exemplar of the initiation, and had, they noted, explicitly anti-Christian undertones: "Christ is named in the *Kalachakra Tantra* as one the 'heretics'" though the Dalai Lama "knows only too well that open to integration of the archetype of Christ into his tantric pantheon would only lead to strong protests from the Christian (Trimondi, 2003).

The Trimondis' piece (Victor Trimondi and Victoria Trimondi, 1999) began to circulate at roughly the same time as the 1999 "Kalachakra for World Peace" in Bloomington, Indiana. Subsequently, an English translation (Victor Trimondi and Victoria Trimondi, 2003) proliferated across the internet which would be repeatedly quoted (though less-often attributed) in Spiritual Mapping literature over the next half decade. By the time our Spiritual Warriors gathered on the shores of Lake Ontario in 2004, the Trimondi's reading of the Kālacakra's putative political agenda had been naturalized into Mapping conceptions.

Unpacking the Logic

The Spiritual Mapping equation of Tibetan Buddhism with "the Occult" underscores an important point: in Mapping thought, Tibetan Buddhism does not connote the rationality and ecumenicism of Buddhist Modernism, but its rhetorical opposite: "a belief in spirits and demons, secret sexual practices, [and] occultism" ruled by a "God-King" (Truthspeaker, 2011). Here, Tibetan Buddhism is placed in rhetorical opposition to the modern Spiritual Mapper armed with social science methods and cutting-edge GPS technology. The Spiritual Warriors are apparently taking back the upper hand of modernity by re-casting Tibetan Buddhism as the primitive "Lamaism" of their 19th century missionary predecessors.

Yet their relegation of Tibetan Buddhism to the occult underscores a more telling perception. Buddhism's danger lies less in its religious teachings than in its ritual technology: it is by means of the sand mandala by which Tibetan Buddhists are waging battle for American territorial domination.²⁷ What is the thinking behind this conviction? Previously, I noted that Spiritual Mapping conceptualizes evangelism as the

²⁷ It should be noted that this symbolic association of Tibetan nationalism, world peace and land inhabitation was buttressed by a number of other territory-centric world peace projects by Tibetan Buddhists in diaspora. The World Peace Vase Project, introduced in 1987, involved the consecration of 6,200 "peace vases" to be buried across the globe. The World Peace Ceremonies, performed from 1989 onwards, included large scale prayers for World Peace at four principal pilgrimage sites associated with the Buddha's life. Since 1990, Stupas for World Peace constructed stupas at specific spots close to Tibetan monasteries in India and near various Tibetan religious establishments around the world. See Mills, 2009: 95–114.

re-appropriation of demonically colonized territory. I used the term "colonization" deliberately; concerns about the legitimacy of territorial rule are central to Spiritual Warfare literature, which is infused with the language and logic of legality.²⁸ The practice of Spiritual Warfare is constrained by "the laws of protocol"—what one might call Biblically derived "rules of engagement." Demons are not squatters to be evicted. They have been "invited" through the sinful actions of its residents, and so are considered to have legal dominion over the lands they inhabit, granted to them by Satan himself.²⁹ It is only in accordance with these laws of protocol that they can be removed—and supplanted—by an authority with greater legal claim than they.

In Spiritual Mapping understanding, the Dalai Lama is himself a high authority. The "God-King" of an "occult" tradition with geographical roots in the 10/40 Window, he is a powerful adept with dominion over a wide range of Tibetan spirits. This power is powerfully manifest in the Kālacakra initiation: from its preliminary rituals (*sta gon*), wherein the Dalai Lama formally invites the 722 "demons" ("buddhas" in Kālacakra textual parlance) to take up residence in the mandala, to the initiation itself, which he bestows through the power of those "demons" themselves. In Spiritual Mapping communities, whose leaders homologously channel the power of the Holy Spirit, there is no question that the Dalai Lama is an occult spirit master *par excellence*.

But it is not only his invocation of the mandala deities that alarms, it is his deployment of them when the initiation is over. At the close of the initiation, the Dalai Lama as Kālacakra master ritually disassembles the mandala, collects its sands in a silk-covered jar, and pours them into a nearby body of moving water. In "Kalachakra for World Peace" literature, this ceremony is framed as an act of symbolic environmental activism: His Holiness pours the sands "as a blessing for aquatic life and the greater environment" (Kalachakra for World Peace, 2011). In Mapping thought, the Dalai Lama's dissemination of the mandala sands is a blatant act of spiritual warfare. The Kālacakra mandala is nothing less than a Trojan Horse introducing into American territory the very demons the Spiritual Mappers seek to destroy.

This dispersal has profound consequences in the realm of the social. By planting Tibetan "demons" in local territory, the Dalai Lama is quietly establishing in America a non-Christian rule. What's more, according to the laws of protocol, this rule is tacitly

²⁸ Elizabeth McAlister analyzes the origins of law drawn from the Bible that "underlies and authorizes the cosmic order and all of reality for Third Wave evangelicals...When Satan's temptation of Eve in Genesis 3 leads to the Fall of Man from the Heavenly Kingdom...Legally, Satan gained the right to be "Prince of this world" (John 12:31) and to command an army of demons who maintain "strongholds"—geographic and spiritual bases of demonic power—throughout the world..." Drawing on fieldwork in Haiti, McAlister offers an important analysis of Spiritual Mapping as "a transnational cross-fertilization of an evolving spiritual geography," arguing that "theologians, together with ordinary people on the ground, are developing a corresponding new legal imaginary that hinges on its logics of possession and law, on the one hand, and its spatial imagery, on the other." See McAlister, Elizabeth. "Possessing the Land for Jesus: Evangelical Spiritual Geography and Legal Imaginary in Haiti." Forthcoming In *Spirited Things: The Work of "Possession" in Black Atlantic Religions*, 1–36. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²⁹ C Peter Wagner: "high-ranking territorial spirits which have been assigned by Satan to coordinate the activities of darkness over a certain area...." (Wagner, 1998: 11–12).

legitimate, for Americans themselves have invited it. It is we who have invited this Christian *doppelgänger* into our land, who have welcomed its demons into our nation's waters, who have showcased its mandalas in our nation's colleges and museums. Even worse, we usher it into the territorial locus of American power. In the summer of 2011 when the Dalai Lama gave a Kālacakra initiation in Washington D.C., the outrage and response of Spiritual Warfare communities was vehement.³⁰

How has this state of affairs come to pass? How have we become complicit in our own colonization? In Spiritual Mapping thought, it is the Dalai Lama who has effected this sleight of hand by equating Tibetan Buddhism with "world peace" and "universal human rights," and himself as a leader of global civil society. He uses his status as a political figure to gain access to world governments and disseminate his narrative across the globe. In actuality, however, he is the "God-king of Tibet": the leader of an occult religion in which politics and religion are indistinguishable, and who actively seeks to establish the Kingdom of Shambhala.

Here lies the underlying logic of the Mapping communities' resentment of the Dalai Lama's Peace Prize. The non-Christian press routinely associates "Tibetan nationalism," and "Tibetan Buddhism" with "human rights." Yet prevailing wisdom also claims that "human rights" is a universal, trans-national ideal. How can this contradiction be justified? "The separation of Church and State applies to us (Christians)," says one commentator. "Why doesn't it apply to him?" (James Stephens, 2010).³¹ This apparent double standard is the heart of Spiritual Warfare's animosity towards the Dalai Lama, and the leitmotif of virtually every Spiritual Warfare description of Tibetan Buddhism. It is also central to their presentation of the Kālacakra initiation as an act of spiritual warfare:

The Dalai Lama claims to be a Priest-King. As such, he is a competitor with Jesus, who is to us the high priest...This entire Kalacakra ceremony is meant to open up a spiritual "portal" that gives those 722 Bhuddist [sic] gods access to Washington D.C., supposedly to bring world peace. It was requested that they "return to their sacred homes," but what they do not tell you is that they open portals in this manner to make way for the Buddhization of America with the Dalai Lama as the King-Priest over America (God's Kingdom Ministries, 2011)

For Spiritual Mappers, the ramifications of this insight are clear: Christian spiritual warfare must fight fire with fire lest the Kingdom of Shambhala postpone the Kingdom of God—a conviction mirrored by the movement's deepening association with conservative Dominionism in the United States.³² For this group of American Neo-Pentecostals, the

³⁰ See, for example, Prophet TV, 2011a; Prophet TV, 2011b. For a Spiritual Mapper's description of his intercession of an earlier Washington-based Kālacakra mandala, see Sheets, 2008: 157–159.

³¹ Quote constructed from video sub-titles and graphics.

³² NAR leader C. Peter Wagner asserts: "...Satan has polluted the land and cursed it. Satan has deployed high-ranking demonic powers to darken the spiritual atmosphere over society and to block the freedom of heaven flowing to earth. ...We have now shed our inhibitions over theologizing about taking dominion. Dominion theology is not a flashback to Constantinian triumphalism, but it is a new call to action for a triumphant Church "Both of these arenas need to be and can be cleansed spiritually. We have the tools to do it, we have the gifted personnel to do it and we have the power of the Holy Spirit to do it. It will be done!" (Wagner, 2010) See also Tabachnick, 2011.

exorcism of the Kālacakra is an occasion to re-conceptualize the putative separation of church and state.

Conclusion: Globalizing the Critique

In my narrative of overlapping globalizations, the association of Tibetan Buddhism and the "Kalachakra for World Peace" with human rights politics in the 1980s fueled three interrelated processes: the globalization of Tibetan Buddhism, the transformation of Tibetan nationalism into an international movement, and the entry of Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama into "global civil society." It was, I suggest, the latter event that definitively propelled Tibetan Buddhism into the sights of Spiritual Mapping, for whom global civil society is largely synonymous with liberal, anti-Christian politics and policies. This may be one reason Tibetan Buddhism seems to garner greater attention in contemporary Spiritual Mapping communities than do other, differently politicized "Eastern religions."³³

The Dalai Lama's "Kalachakra for World Peace" and its mandala are conceptualized as a vehicle by which Tibetan Buddhism *cum* global civil society is disseminated. In Mapping thought, the sand mandala is not, as the non-Christian media would have it, a "topographical map of the cosmos" designed to "give peace a chance" (Cotter, 2011). Instead, it is a weapon of spiritual warfare—a Trojan Horse that smuggles anti-Christian colonizers into the American landscape under the pretense of promoting the liberal project through global civil society. In this sense, the "Kalachakra for World Peace" is also a competing mapping project. If, as Lipschutz suggests, "the growth of global civil society represents an ongoing project of civil society to reconstruct, re-imagine, or re-map world politics"(Cited in Pieterse, 2009: 82), the Kālacakra's mandala is a counter-map—an overlay atop the Mapper's Mercator projection. From this perspective, the internal logic of the Spiritual Mapping's perception of Tibetan Buddhism as a global missionary competitor—complete with its own territorial spirits and oddly homologous eschatological utopia – becomes clear.

This narrative makes equally clear that the Tibetan-Evangelical encounter is both by-product and critique of globalism. Insofar as Tibetan Buddhism in America is equated with so-called justice globalism, Spiritual Mapping may fruitfully be contextualized within broader fundamentalist critiques of globalization as an unfettered assault of liberal or secular values. As such, it may be more accurate to characterize our protagonists as competing "alter-globalization" projects— alternatives to the dominant neo-liberal vision of an integrated world based on free-market principles.

Such a perspective reminds us, as scholars of Buddhism, to be wary of dividing our protagonists along simple ideological lines. We are struck, for example, by the similarities of the Mapping conception of Tibetan Buddhism to decidedly secular critiques of global civil society. In their perception of Tibetan Buddhism as a missionary entity, we hear echoes of Rieff and Anderson's classic characterization of global civil

³³ Among non-Eastern world religions, the Spiritual Mapping movement is particularly preoccupied with Islam—a trend that has deepened since 9/11 (Holvast 2009: 166).

society as "a contemporary secular, post-religious missionary movement" (Anderson & Rieff, 2005: 31). In the Mapping discomfort with the Western popularization of Tibetan Buddhist mandalas and ideas, we hear an iteration of the post-modernist contention that global civil society is a covert hegemonic project to impose liberal western values and commodities upon local cultures—what Bourdieu calls a "conservative sociodicy" (Bourdieu, 1998: 35) disseminated by elites to justify their privilege and foster the neoliberal project.

These unexpected ideological resonances encourage us to re-visit some long-standing analytics in the study of contemporary Buddhism. Through a strict Buddhist Modernist lens, for example, the "Kalachakra for World Peace" would epitomize the Dalai Lama's larger effort to highlight Tibetan Buddhism's resonance with modern Western values and progressive movements, and so promote Tibetan nationalism. The Spiritual Warriors, by contrast, might have been cast as their decidedly anti-modern, Christian opponents who inevitably (or strategically) misconstrue modern Tibetan Buddhism; the Mapper's self-identification as spiritual colonizers would lend this narrative a convenient poetic balance. Alternately, historians of Buddhism might have contextualized the "exorcism of the mandala" within the broader history of Christian imaginings about Tibetan Buddhism—perhaps analogized the contemporary Spiritual Mappers' reading to previous instances of Christian missionaries "finding" in Tibetan Buddhists a dark counter version of themselves, of "see[ing] identity where it is absent" (Lopez, 1999: p. 28).

This global lens, however, highlights the inadequacy of analytics organized around binaries and oppositions, and compels us to consider to the shared experience of globalization on American religious practice, Tibetan Buddhist or otherwise. As Manfred B. Steger might have it, this is not your father's Buddhist Modernism: "There is something different about today's political belief systems: a new global imaginary is on the rise. It erupts with increasing frequency within and onto the familiar framework of the national, spewing its fiery lava across all geographical scales.... This global imaginary destabilizes the grand political ideologies codified by social elites during the national age" (Steger, 2008: viii-ix).

Put differently, our protagonists may have more in common with each other than a non-globalizing analytic allows. When Lama Tenzin Thutop, one of the Tibetan monks who created the Toronto Kālacakra mandala in 2004, heard about Apostle Jim Gosa's intercession, he shook his head sadly at their "ignorance." The mandala inhabitants, he explained, are "enlightened buddhas," not "ordinary spirits." Moreover, they were nowhere near Lake Ontario at the time the mandala sands were poured; the buddhas had "already left from [the] sand" to return to "Shambhala paradise." And while the sand particle offering was indeed "a blessing to the water," it was also an offering to spirits, *nagas*, "southern deities, normal people call [them]... linked with our weather... and four elements... [we're] requesting them to taking care of environment like water..." (Thutop, 2011).

This putative Buddhist Modernist is reminding us that the cosmology of the Kālacakra initiation presumes an unseen and omnipresent realm of non-human beings—a world of "gods and demons" (*lha 'dre*)—every bit as dynamic and efficacious as that of the

Spiritual Mappers.³⁴ As such, what may be most instructive for Buddhism historians predisposed to privilege difference may not be the dissimilarities of our protagonists, but their unexpected legibility to each other.

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³⁴ Kālacakra literature identifies additional post-ritual activities (*rjes chog*), including additional offerings and praises to the deities, the request that the deities return to Shambhala (*ye shes pa gshegs si gsol ba*), the dissolution of the visualized mandala into oneself and the physical destruction of the sand mandala (*dam tshig pa rang la bsdud te rdul tshon chur gshegs pa*). Thus, the initiation involves a plethora of invisible beings that are interpreted both literally and metaphorically.

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