

“Viewpoints of Female Embodiment in *Kālacakratāntra*”

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Abstract

This research concerns the *Kālacakratantra*, focusing on the role of females and their portrayal of participation in the tantra's practices. My aim is twofold: to identify various types of passages mentioning females in the Kālacakra system, including translated passages from the abridged root text, the *Laghukālacakratantra*, and essential commentary, the *Vimalaprabhā*, and to provide interpretive methods for women-inclusive readings of these passages. This thesis derives from methodology used by Miranda Shaw in her book titled *Passionate Enlightenment*. With a positive view towards equitability, Shaw examines *yoginītantras*—particularly the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra*—from a combined female and male authorship. Applying this technique to the *Kālacakratantra*, this research analyzes the text for objectionable, missing, practical, and inspiring passages as viewed from a female perspective. This information could help build a foundation from which those interested in reading from a female viewpoint can better do so, familiarity with the *tantra*'s levels and intentions, and confidence of audience by highlighting the *tantra*'s powerful female figures. I conclude this study by asserting that aspects regarding the examination of negative, neutral and positive female portrayals in the *tantra* lead to an amalgamation of knowledge and techniques allowing modern-day readers make sense of female-oriented passages and practices in Kālacakra.

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Introduction

Often whilst contemplating a Buddhist practice text, I find that I am not mentally grasping it. It is not hitting at my heart as it should. Over time, I have learned to get a pencil and mark it up. The first markings I make are to add an “s” to the beginning of every “he” where it makes sense for me, then reread. The second time around, I find that I comprehend the text more effectively and I feel that it is now including me in its readership. It is speaking to me.

This experience has close connection with “reception theory” developed by Hans Robert Jauss. Jauss believes that a piece of writing is able to be passed from one generation to the next if, and only if, it is deemed relevant by its successive audience.¹ This establishes the transformative power of literary work. In her dissertation, Diane Denis states that the translation necessarily implies an interpretation, and translations often reveal the interests and values of the cultures that translate.² When it comes to Kālacakra literature, at this point in time, an analysis with respect to its treatment of women seems essential. And, no one, to my knowledge, has written on this subject.

The *Kālacakratantra* (KCT), the latest of Indian Buddhist *tantras* to appear, is considered a *tantra* for today’s world.³ There are many contemporary practitioners who are

¹ Hans-Robert Jauss, “The Poetic Text within the Change of Horizons of Reading: The Example of Baudelaire’s ‘Spleen II,’” in *Literary Theories: A Reader and Guide*, ed. Julian Wolfreys (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 162–78, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxrcrgh.24>.

² Diane Denis, “Le Dharmaharmatāvibhāga, Texte Bouddhique de l’Inde Du IV^e Siècle, Traduction Des Stances et Du Commentaire de Mipham, Suivie d’un Examen Minutieux” (Laval University, 2013), 26.

³ John Ronald Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time: Vajrayāna Buddhist Cosmology in the Kālacakratantra” (Doctor of Philosophy (Buddhist Studies), University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1987), 60.

interested in its path as evidenced in both public initiations and lay practice group sessions.

The Kālacakra is most famously associated with the Gelug school of the Dalai Lama, but all schools of Tibetan Buddhism study and practice it to some degree.⁴ There are new studies being released on the Jonang school of Tibetan Buddhism, their main practice being the *Kālacakratantra*, and this has renewed interest in the Kālacakra within the last thirty years.

The *Kālacakratantra* is composed as a comprehensive world guidebook. Robert Thurman writes in his “Introductory Remarks” to Vesna Wallace’s translation of *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*,

the complexity of Kālacakra is immensely valuable [...] the Kālacakra sciences constituted a special branch of learning, including astronomy, mathematics, geometry, astrology, cosmology, history, psychoneurology, psychology, medicine, and alchemy. The Kālacakra complex of disciplines constituted an important part of what we might call the ‘natural science’ division of the many Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhist monastic universities.⁵

It compiles various Buddhist philosophies and sciences from a variety of disciplines. With this variety, the Kālacakra encourages a practitioner to equate the body and mind with the cosmos and the workings of the universe to achieve unity with an empty-form (Skt. *śūnyatābimba*) body.

To introduce the female viewpoint, this chapter provides a thesis outline and describes the existing literature and methodological approach for this research on the topic of female embodiment in the Kālacakra. It also includes the celebration of the lives of Machik Tulku Jobum (b. late 11th c. – d. mid 12th c.) and Jetsun Kunga Trinle Wangmo (1585 -

⁴ Regarding the current 14th Dalai Lama, Karma Lekshe Tsomo notes, “[the] H.H. Dalai Lama prefers to not be associated with a particular school since he practices all four schools.”

⁵ Robert Thurman, “Introductory Remarks,” in *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, by Vesna Wallace, Bilingual edition (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2004), xx.

1668), historical female Kālacakra practitioners, leaders, and lineage holders. With a methodological view that the *tantras* were written equally, whether explicitly or implicitly, by and for women and men, this research attempts to lay a foundation for modern-day scholar-practitioners to better interpret female-specific passages in the *Kālacakratantra* with an emphasis on the roles of females in its midst.

Outline

This research identifies, categorizes, and examines aspects of female concerns in the *Kālacakratantra* including passages considered to be negative, neutral and positive toward its treatment of women. The first chapter discusses a negative aspect by identifying textual examples of women being utilized as mere objects (for example, sensual pleasure or blame). The second chapter discusses a neutral aspect by examining physical gynocentric issues mentioned in the text. This chapter also examines sections where female practitioners are ignored. The third chapter discusses a positive aspect through presenting the many and varied enlightened female figures mentioned in the *Kālacakratantra*. Therefore, this research considers, as an important part of its readership, women living today, and gives a foundation with which to engage the Kālacakra teachings. It draws emphasis to aspects of the practice where females might be better served and gives reception to passages where females are celebrated. It lays an interpretive foundation for those interested in the female embodiment within the Kālacakra. But before starting the analysis, let's look at the background and history of Kālacakra.

Overview of *Kālacakratantra* - Background and History

The root text for the Kālacakra system is called the *Paramādibuddhatantra*—also referred to as the *Mūlakālacakratantra* (“Root Kālacakratantra”), which is no longer extant. The name of the text is commonly translated into English as the *Wheel of Time* or *Cycle of Time Tantra*. The KCT literature offers a clear narrative of its own composition.⁶ It presents itself as having been taught by the Buddha Śākyamuni, emanating as the Kālacakra deity, at the request of King Sucandra, the first king from the Dharma land of Shambhala, in the Dhānyakāṭaka *stūpa* near present-day Amarāvātī in Andhra Pradesh, India.⁷ The Buddha was concurrently giving a teaching on the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (*Prajñāpāramitā*) to a group of monks and *bodhisattvas* in Rajgir in present-day Bihar.⁸

In a succession of kings, the seventh king of Shambhala is said to have converted the last non-Buddhist brahmins and from then on Shambhala was replete with Buddhist practitioners of the Kālacakra.⁹ King Yaśas, referred to as the First Kalkī King for his achievement, wrote a condensed version of the *Paramādibuddhatantra* called *Laghukālacakratantra* (“Light” or “Short” Kālacakra).¹⁰ His son, Puṇḍarīka, the second

⁶ This is not unusual, especially for late-era *tantras* and/or *Yoginītantras*, e.g., Ronald M Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism. A Social History of the Tantric Movement*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). on the *Buddhakapālatantra*.

⁷ Vesna Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra: A Buddhist Tantric View of the Individual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3. This kingdom is referred to as “Sambhala” in the Sanskrit literature. This is in contrast with the Tibetan texts that refer to it as Śambhala, replacing the ‘S’ with ‘Ś’ because “it agreed with their own etymological explanation.” Andresen, 13. See Grönbold (1991: 390-391, “Das Datum des Buddha nach trantrischen Texten”) and in the Hindu *Sambhala-māhātmya* (New Delhi, 1985)

⁸ Geshe Lhundup Sopa, Roger R. Jackson, and John Newman, *The Wheel of Time: Kalachakra in Context*, 1st edition (Ithaca, N.Y., USA: Snow Lion, 1991), 53. Newman says “Rajgir in Bihar”. Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra*, 16. Wallace clears this up saying “the Tibetans accounts, however, indicate that even though the Kālacakra tradition initially may have started in south India, its sphere of influence in India was confined to Bengal, Magadha (Bihar), and Kaśmīr, wherefrom it was transmitted to Nepal, Tibet and eventually Mongolia...”

⁹ Thurman, “Introductory Remarks,” xviii.

¹⁰ Even though uncommon in Sanskrit, the name Yaśas does end in the letter ‘s’ as attested in all reliable sources

Kalkī King, wrote its accompanying commentary, the *Vimalaprabhā* (“Stainless Light”).

This commentary is so vital to the Kālacakra tradition that it is treated as effectively as part of the *tantra* itself.¹¹ For this reason, I will use *Kālacakratantra* or KCT to refer to the combined *Laghu-tantra* and *Vimalaprabhā* treatise. The KCT reveal date is thought to have been 1027 CE in northern India by Jamyang Dorje with the help of Mañjuśrī during a meeting of the eleventh king of the Shambhala lineage.¹² It is thought that around the time of the Muslim Ghurids invasion of India, the Kālacakra was brought to Tibet and subsequently propagated there.¹³

The *Kālacakratantra* is considered an *anuttarayoga tantra*, the highest class of *tantras*. This classification is further divided into “father and “mother” *tantras*, “according to whether the tantric method (Skt. *upāya*) or the tantric wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*) predominates in the *tantra*’s practice.”¹⁴ According to Newman, “the Kālacakra belongs to a third ‘nondual’ (Skt. *advaya*) class among the *anuttarayoga tantras*.”¹⁵ In the *Vimalaprabhā*, it is said,

The image of compassion and emptiness, Time essences phenomenal form.
Emptiness is called "the Wheel." The Kālacakra is accepted as nondual.¹⁶

The Kālacakra is self-designated as a nondual *tantra* in terms of compassion and emptiness.

The oneness of wisdom and method are required as well, as evident in the following passage,

... it is not the case that the word yoga speaks the meaning of method or

herein mentioned.

¹¹ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra*, 3.

¹² Jonang Foundation, “A Brief History,” accessed December 2, 2018, <https://jonangfoundation.org/brief-history>. Also, John R. Newman, “A Brief History of the Kalachakra,” in *The Wheel of Time: Kalachakra in Context*, 1st edition (Ithaca, N.Y., USA: Snow Lion, 1991).

¹³ Johan Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, Encounters with Asia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 131.

¹⁴ Sopa, Jackson, and Newman, *The Wheel of Time*, 139.

¹⁵ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 171.

¹⁶ Newman, 2.

speaks the meaning of wisdom — the word *yoga* speaks the meaning of wisdom and method. Furthermore, it is said [in the *Ādibuddha*]: "Yoga cannot occur due to the body of method, or by wisdom alone. The Tathāgatas call the absorption of wisdom and method *yoga*."¹⁷

In this passage, the correspondent and evenly proportioned aspects associated with male (method) and female (wisdom) is outlined. These ideas serve as a foundation for the egalitarian view that as practitioners, women and men are to be treated as equal.

Newman's translation continues,

Thus, a *tantra* whose subject consists of wisdom and method is ultimately neither a wisdom *tantra* nor a method *tantra*. From the point of view of worldly, phenomenal (truth), the Tathāgata spoke [with intention] of the side of wisdom and method, in accordance with the dispositions of dull sentient beings. He did this from the point of view of the purity of the aggregates and elements, by means of the divisions mirror-like gnosis and so forth. The same is also true for the one named *yogini*.

Here, because it has a *yoge* disposition, it is *yogi*, and likewise for *yogini*. Thus, from consideration of others, there is *yogatantra* and *yoginitantra*.

Therefore, from the point of view of ultimate truth, Kālacakra is the *yogatantra* that consists of wisdom and method — without partiality.¹⁸

The KCT is referred to here as a non-dual *tantra* in terms of wisdom and method, and it explains that there cannot be one without the other. Refreshingly, it also includes *yoginīs* in its discourse. In the last sentence, the term *yogatantra* refers to either *yogatantra* as method or *yoginītantra* as wisdom. In this enlightening paragraph from a non-dual perspective, the importance of the equivalency between male and female in the KCT is shown. Wallace concurs. She states,

This is one way in which the *Kālacakrat Tantra* system substantiates its self-designation as unexcelled (*anuttara*). Likewise, interpreting *yoga* as the union,

¹⁷ Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time," 275–76.

¹⁸ Newman, 276.

or absorption, of bliss and emptiness, or of method and wisdom, this tantric tradition presents itself as a non-dual (*advaya*) *yoga-tantra*, which is ultimately neither a wisdom *tantra* nor a method *tantra*. It views its non-duality of wisdom and method as an expression of non-dual gnosis, without which Buddhahood could never occur.¹⁹

The “one way” referred to by Wallace is the fact that the Buddha provided all the needed information in the *Paramādibuddhatantra* as it was written for higher beings in the ideal land of Shambhala. Understood here is that other *tantras* do not necessarily have the complete teachings because they were not necessarily written for higher beings. Since they were not written for higher beings, some key parts were left out so that if someone that was not as “pure” happened to read the text, even if they thought they had understood it without initiation or oral instruction, no harm would be caused. Because *Kālacakratāntra* is a complete *tantra*, it is considered to be an *annuttarayoga* (non-dual) *tantra*. That the KCT tradition self-designates as a non-dual *tantra* is an important factor in the assessment of the scope of female involvement.

The available root text for the *Kālacakratāntra* consists of five major chapters. The first chapter, called the *Chapter on the Cosmos* (Skt. *lokadhātupaṭāla*), describes the outer world: cosmology, astronomy, and calendrical system. The second chapter, called the *Chapter on the Individual* (Skt. *adhyātmapaṭāla*), describes the inner world: theories on the body and mind, and its relationship to the outer cosmos. The third through fifth chapters as a whole are commonly referred to as the alternative *tantra*. The third chapter, called the *Chapter on Initiation* (Skt. *abhiṣekapaṭāla*), describes the empowerment of the disciple to attain the state of the deity. Generation stage preliminaries and practices constitute the fourth

¹⁹ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratāntra*, 7.

chapter, called the *Chapter on Sāadhanā* (Skt. *sāadhanapaṭala*). The fifth and final chapter, called the *Chapter on Gnosis* (Skt. *jñānapaṭala*), describes completion stage practices of becoming a buddha by yogic emanation of body, speech, and mind of the Kālacakra deity. Because of the broad nature of its topics, one can begin to see why Newman describes the *Kālacakratantra* as “not a treatise—it is an encyclopedia along the lines of the *purāṇas*.”²⁰ Understanding this, let’s turn to the state of academic research in connection with the KCT.

Literature Review

The KCT is a complex text, and many authors have explored its interpretation and philosophies. For the purpose of this research, I used different translations for each of the five chapters of the *Kālacakratantra* since there is no one single English translation available. I used John Newman’s dissertation and translation “The Outer Wheel of Time: Vajrayāna Buddhist Cosmology in the Kālacakratantra” for chapter 1, Vesna Wallace’s published translations of chapter 2 called *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual together with the Vimalaprabhā* and of chapter 4 called *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on Sāadhanā, Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, and Jensine Andresen’s dissertation and translation “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives” for chapter 3.²¹ Chapter 5 is restricted to initiates and as such I will only be using scholarly works that

²⁰ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 214.

²¹ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time.” King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, trans. Vesna Wallace, Bilingual edition (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2004). King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, trans. Vesna Wallace (American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2011). Jensine Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives” (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University, 1997).

describe its contents, such as the six-branch yoga (Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*), as discussed in various articles such as those by Kālacakra scholars Wallace and Giacomella Orofino.²²

A number of women today are practicing the Kālacakra, as can be seen from attendance at initiations.²³ A number of female academics are researching and writing about Kālacakra; however, there has been little investigation on the specific topic of female embodiment in the *tantra*. The closest research I could find is Andresen's section called the "Changing Patterns of Gender Participation" in her dissertation from 1997. Andresen writes on the problem as it was thirty years ago and observes,

Future research is necessary to uncover the political, economic and social forces that coalesced since the inception of the Kālacakra tradition in the eleventh century to exclude women from any recorded participation in this tradition's empowerment ceremony, oral lineage instructions, and practice. Although we have many biographical anecdotes concerning the participation of institutionally-powerful and renowned men in Kālacakra's six-branch yoga (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*), as mentioned previously, the long chapter on Kālacakra written by 'Gos Lo tsa ba in his *Blue Annals* during the late fifteenth century only specifies the participation of one lone woman in the Kālacakra tradition, Dharmesvara's daughter Jo 'bum. ('Gos Lo tsa ba (1976: 768)) And although the *Blue Annals* ('Gos Lo tsa ba (1976: 780)) also reports that Bo dong provided guidance to numerous disciples in the practice of Kālacakra's *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*, and that these disciples included "priests and laymen, males and females," biographical accounts of women practitioners are uncommon, if not completely absent.

Now, however, roughly half of the participants in Western renditions of the Kālacakra Empowerment are women, gender hierarchy still prevails among the monastic participants. Nuns on the stage at the Kālacakra Empowerment sit behind the monks, who significantly obstruct shorter nuns' ability to view the ceremony.²⁴

²² Vesna Wallace, "The Six-Phased Yoga of Abbreviated Wheel of Time Tantra (Laghukālacakratānta) - According to Vajrapāṇi," n.d. Giacomella Orofino, "On the Ṣaḍaṅgayoga and the Realisation of Ultimate Gnosis in the Kālacakratānta," *East and West* 46, no. 1/2 (June 1996): 127–43.

²³ Andresen, "Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives," 232. and this author's own observations.

²⁴ Andresen, 232–33.

Her modern contemplation on the 1000-year-old *tantra* resonated with my own experiences, and was the catalyst for further exploration.

Sources

The sources utilized for this research are of two types, titles on the Kālacakra and works regarding females in Tantric Buddhism. Notable academic women writing on the Kālacakra included in this review are Vesna Wallace, Giacomella Orofino and Jensine Andresen. Their translations of the *Kālacakratantra* are used to form a basis for this research. In parallel with Kālacakra sources, other writings about tantric works besides the *Kālacakratantra* that deal specifically with female issues have been published. Those such as written by Miranda Shaw, Jeffrey Hopkins, Judith Simmer-Brown and Rita Gross will be examined for their applications of feminine viewpoint to the *Kālacakratantra*.

Vesna Wallace has so far translated two of the five chapters of the *Kālacakratantra* into English. That said, her most relevant book for this thesis is *The Inner Kālacakratantra: A Buddhist Tantric View of the Individual*.²⁵ This book is an analytic study and explanation of the second chapter of the *Kālacakratantra* and how it relates to the other chapters. Wallace provides a model of in-depth analysis of the intricacies of Kālacakra that I admire and attempt to emulate. However, besides giving her reasoning for not using gender neutral words in her author's preface for the *Chapter on Sāadhanā*, there is no other mention of the gender divide in any of her works so far.

Articles written by other prominent academic Kālacakra authors include those by

²⁵ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra*.

Jensine Andersen and Giacomella Orofino. Andersen's section on the "Changing Patterns of Gender Participation" in her dissertation "Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives" planted the seed for this thesis.²⁶ Andersen summarizes the gender participation changes, "For the first thousand years of this tradition's history, textual and ritual participation were the exclusive domain of men. In the past twenty years, however, women have increased their participation in various aspects of this tradition."²⁷

Orofino's articles on the six-branch yoga (Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) of the completion stage of *Kālacakratāntra* are important glimpses into the contents of the fifth chapter for which no English translation has been published.²⁸ Orofino provides a technically adroit translation, but without including analysis of what the passages might mean for female practitioners.

The Jonang school, whose main focus is the Kālacakra, is more widespread in both the West and in Tibet now than it was thirty years ago. This is evidenced by the number of books that have been released regarding Jonang philosophy and practices. In his 2010 book, *The Buddha from Dölpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltsen*, Cyrus Stearns describes the environment of Jonang information at the time as sparse, "When the first edition of this book was published in 1999 very little had been written in European languages about Dölpopa, the *shentong* view, and the Jonang tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan texts concerning these topics were also quite rare. None of

²⁶ Andersen, "Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives," 231.

²⁷ Andersen, 10.

²⁸ Orofino, "On the Ṣaḍaṅgayoga." Giacomella Orofino, *Sekoddeśa: A Critical Edition of the Tibetan Translations*, Serie Orientale Roma, LXXII (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1994), https://www.academia.edu/32727677/SEKODDESA_A_Critical_Edition_of_the_Tibetan_Translations_SOR_L_XXII_Roma_IsMEO_1994_pdf.

Dölpopa's major works had ever been translated.”²⁹ The school is now recognized by the Central Tibetan Administration as an official Tibetan school in exile.³⁰ The advent of Jonang reemergence and subsequent translation of works by Dölpopa and Tāranātha has opened up further historical and practical resources for Kālacakra research.³¹ Alternative positioning of empty-of-other / *shentong* (Tib. *gzhan stong*) philosophy provides additional information with which to study this complex *tantra*.³² The Jonang school is the only Tibetan school with an unbroken lineage transmission of the six-branch completion-stage yoga practice (Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) of Kālacakra.³³

Works have been written about the female viewpoint for other *tantras*; for example, *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism* by Miranda Shaw where she writes about the *yoginītantra* Cakrasaṃvara.³⁴ This book does not specifically address the non-dual Kālacakra tradition, however Shaw's work in particular is used as a methodological reference for this paper. Additional Tantric Buddhist sources on gender issues include *Tibetan Arts of Love* by Jeffrey Hopkins and Dorje Yudon Yuthok that introduces and translates Gedün Chöpel's revealing work *Treatise on Passion*.³⁵ Chöpel writes a tribute to women in a modified Kāma Sūtra-type book. His interpretation as a sensualist is a refreshing look at

²⁹ Cyrus Stearns, *The Buddha from Dolpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen* (Snow Lion, 2010), vii.

³⁰ Staff Reporter, “Kyabje Jonang Gyaltsab Rinpoche on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Four Core Commitments,” *Central Tibetan Administration* (blog), December 7, 2020, <https://tibet.net/kyabje-jonang-gyaltsab-rinpoche-on-his-holiness-the-dalai-lamas-four-core-commitments/>.

³¹ Jonang Foundation, “Works,” accessed May 7, 2023, <https://jonangfoundation.org/works-list/>.

³² Susan K. Hookham, *The Buddha Within* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991).

³³ Jonang Foundation, “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ),” accessed May 7, 2023, <https://jonangfoundation.org/faq>.

³⁴ Miranda Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism*, Fourth printing and first paperback printing (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994).

³⁵ Gedün Chöpel, *Tibetan Arts of Love*, trans. Jeffrey Hopkins and Dorje Yudon Yuthok (Ithaca, N.Y., USA: Snow Lion, 1992).

equality in heterosexual relations in Tantric Buddhism, and serves as an example of gender equality.³⁶

Other books that serve as resources for the female tantric viewpoint are David Gordon White's *Kiss of the Yogini*, Serenity Young's *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts*, and Judith Simmer-Brown's *Dakini's Warm Breath*.³⁷ White's book is a deep-dive into the origins of tantric sexual yoga in detail. The latter half of Young's book provides a look into how women are viewed in tantric texts, biographies, and iconography. Simmer-Brown's book presents the Tibetan account of the meaning of *ḍākinī*.

Sources that do not necessarily address *tantra* but are helpful in presenting female perspectives are Liz Wilson's *Charming Cadavers* that explores the male gaze of grotesque female meditational images, and Karma Lekshe Tsomo's *Women in Buddhist Traditions* and other writings that provided eye-opening details regarding the current status of Buddhist nuns.³⁸

There are some vexing passages from the *Kālacakratāntra* that bring immediate questions to mind regarding females and the Kālacakra, which this research addresses. Andresen states, "In contrast to specified female agency, women are mentioned in the *Śrī Kālacakra* and its various commentaries in an unspecified manner. Women are described as a

³⁶ Chöpel, *Tibetan Arts of Love*.

³⁷ David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yoginī* (Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Serenity Young, *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts: Sexualities in Buddhist Narrative, Iconography, and Ritual* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004). Judith Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism*, 1st ed (Boston: New York: Shambhala, 2001).

³⁸ Liz Wilson, *Charming Cadavers: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Indian Buddhist Hagiographic Literature*, *Women in Culture and Society* (Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Karma Lekshe Tsomo, *Women in Buddhist Traditions*, *Women in Religions* (New York: New York University Press, 2020). William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield, eds., *Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 437–48.

category, and they often are designated in terms of their caste affiliations and physical characteristics, basically as entities with which male practitioners may, under certain circumstances, interact.”³⁹ Even though the KCT, or *Śrī Kālacakra* as Andresen refers to it, contains seemingly controversial statements, I found little mention of the treatment of women in current academic literature. Although Andresen notes that Kālacakra, “presents blurred boundaries with respect to patterns of gender-participation,” amongst scholars featured in the Kālacakra academic arena, few are talking about female perspectives for this *tantra*.⁴⁰

Passionate Enlightenment, in contrast, outlines a positivist perspective for females and males in the *yoginītantras*. This view applied to the KCT creates a foundation for female-inclusive interpretations to the Kālacakra. This may help future studies in Kālacakra to treat as equal women and men, and it may help practitioners of all kinds navigate its complexities in a positive manner. Instead of each of us developing our own theories from scratch, let us build a body of knowledge in this area to draw upon.

Methodology

Miranda Shaw’s 1994 book, *Passionate Enlightenment*, examines Buddhist *yoginītantras* in a way that emphasizes the female viewpoint by interpreting female figures as active participants in *tantra* as opposed to characters being acted upon.⁴¹ I argue here for the recovery of her book from academic detractors through emulating, and thereby testing,

³⁹ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 10.

⁴⁰ Andresen, 10.

⁴¹ Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*.

her methodology. The importance of three strategies in her work demand an academic reintroduction of the book to scholarly circles. These strategies include a long-awaited sense of equality, an expanded definition of “texts,” and attention given to what is not said or absent in the discourse. Shaw controversially asserts in her book that tantric literature and rituals are a product of women and men working in cohesion, and promotes the idea that women played an equal role in *tantra*’s creation and dissemination. In support of records left by women, Shaw uses a broad definition of “texts” to include visual arts, inscriptions, oral traditions, correspondences, and crafts. Uniquely, Shaw emphasizes that what is absent from the texts is just as important as what is present. For instance, she notices that condemnation of women is missing from tantric texts. I take these three strategies and apply them to my analysis of the Kālacakra to best inform its female viewpoints and interpretations.

Sara McClintock’s article “Ethical Reading”, speaks of the hermeneutics of recovery and the hermeneutics of suspicion, “Many argue for the need to combine both interpretative strategies, using a hermeneutics of recovery to find what is of value within the text and a hermeneutics of suspicion to discover its hidden agendas.”⁴² In her mind, both come under the umbrella of what she calls “ethical reading”.⁴³ Her article approaches ethical reading from the experience of the reader, a form of autopoiesis “in which individuals fashion and refashion their subjectivity in relation to both self and world through a process of more-or-less conscious reflection on issues of moral significance.”⁴⁴ In the same way, in recovering Miranda Shaw’s methodology, I would like to highlight women’s role in *tantra* outlined by

⁴² Sara McClintock, *Ethical Reading and the Ethics of Forgetting and Remembering* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

⁴³ Sara McClintock, *Ethical Reading*, 1.

⁴⁴ Sara McClintock, 1.

her research arguing equal footing between women and men in highest *tantra*.

Miranda Shaw's book has been controversial in academic circles. Notable reviews written by J.W. de Jong, André Padoux, and Judith Simmer-Brown are telling. J. W. de Jong completely pans Shaw's work as not scholarly for "no evidence of serious research conducted."⁴⁵ De Jong cites three reasons for his severe critique. First, some scholars argue that Shaw's translations are poor. De Jong provides alternate translations of some passages as examples in both Tibetan and Sanskrit. Some of Shaw's translated passages de Jong faults for stressing an active role for women. Second, Shaw is selective in the parts of the texts that she does translate. And third, Shaw does not provide enough specificity for her sources, namely the way in which she conducted her research. For this last point, de Jong wants to know the credentials of those Shaw interviews, as well as more information on the forty found texts written by women. While these points may be valid, this critique does not invalidate Shaw's overall methodology, just her execution in certain aspects of it.

André Padoux writes a measured critique of *Passionate Enlightenment* mostly for its doubting of the male patriarchy that created and propagated Tantric Buddhism, and Shaw's failure to take into account the social milieu encasing it.⁴⁶ What is at stake in his critique is the extent to which Shaw takes her interpretation, in other words, Padoux implies that women were probably not as involved as Shaw portrays. He agrees that this type of research has value, but that it should not go so far as to venture out of historically recorded social norms.

Judith Simmer-Brown's review of Shaw's book states that she has methodological

⁴⁵ J. W. de Jong, *Review of Passionate Enlightenment. Women in Tantric Buddhism - De Jong*, by Miranda Shaw, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 39, no. 2 (1996): 184–87.

⁴⁶ André Padoux, *Review of Passionate Enlightenment. Women in Tantric Buddhism - Padoux*, by Miranda Shaw, *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 42, no. 100 (1997): 128–128.

concerns regarding Shaw's research, but she does not explicitly list what those are.⁴⁷

Gleaning from her writing, there are a few critiques that stand out. Simmer-Brown focuses on Shaw's reference to gynocentric cults as if this were the main premise. Another reason is that Simmer-Brown feels *tantra* is too complex, and written in "twilight" language, which makes it impossible, according to Simmer-Brown, for Shaw to interpret the texts properly on her own.⁴⁸ Simmer-Brown would appreciate Shaw using Indian Buddhist tantric commentaries in her work. In places, she critiques Shaw for mixing Hindu with Tibetan Buddhist *tantra*. Simmer-Brown feels that Shaw misses out by not explicitly mentioning *mahāmudrā*, the ultimate state of empty-union in *tantra*. This omission, in her opinion, overly sexualizes *tantra*. Her last critique is that Shaw unwittingly re-sexualizes *tantra* as "the yoga of sex" from the 1970's. Her review is quite critical, but then states in the end that Shaw's work will "no doubt inspire further work" and move the study of women in Tantric Buddhism to the next level. Simmer-Brown goes on to cite Shaw's book as a reference for her own book, *Dakini's Warm Breath*, in 2002.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, while these critiques are valid, equally valid is the need for compelling scholarship that invites women and female perspectives into the conversation on tantric Buddhism. This research seeks to revitalize Shaw's project by exploring similar questions in the KCT and fearlessly engaging with the female viewpoint as it appears in tantric works. This research belongs to Shaw's lineage of scholarship. Not many academic sources for

⁴⁷ Judith Simmer-Brown, *Review of Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism* - Simmer-Brown, by Miranda Shaw, *Journal of Ritual Studies* 9, no. 1 (1995): 145–48.

⁴⁸ Newman comments on this concept of *saṃdhyābhāṣā*, "Semantically ambiguous expressions that require interpretation to be fully understood." Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time," 38.

⁴⁹ Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm Breath*.

females sufficiently describe their role in tantric texts. Women need to be aware of this role.

Passionate Enlightenment comes closest to what might be regarded as the missing oral teachings for females. Applying this methodology to KCT literature is surprisingly revealing.

Newman, in his ground-breaking Kālacakra dissertation (1987) “Methodology” section, is wary of scholars interpreting *tantras* on their own. This is also a criticism of Shaw’s book as noted by Simmer-Brown. When reading closely, this criticism does not apply because textual as well as contextual references are given. The importance here is that *Passionate Enlightenment* comes to terms with traditional treatises from female perspectives. If there is an initial block to the teachings by women because of offense at some of its passages, women’s learning is greatly hindered from the outset. A foundation is valuable because it gives women a way with which to engage the material.

I believe *Passionate Enlightenment* to be a valid, if eye-opening, academic contribution to Tantric Buddhism. Buddhism in general is in dire need of more research regarding females. The majority of its treatises are too one-sided for it to be able to fully convince half the modern world of its legitimacy precisely because of its problem with inclusion. It would do well for scholars to revisit this book, as well as its methodology and topics, to be built upon by subsequent generations.

There are as many different views of Shaw’s book, good and bad, as there are reviews. This, to me, is a sign of great possibility for further exploration in an innovative area of tantric Buddhist academia. Shaw’s book received the James Henry Breasted Prize award for a study in long-neglected texts given by the American Historical Association in Summer

1996 for best book on a study prior to 1000 AD.⁵⁰ Her book also won the 1994 *Tricycle* Prize for Excellence in Buddhist Scholarship.⁵¹

In her two reviews, Serenity Young, an author of several books on women, Buddhism and Hinduism, praises Shaw's work. In one review, Young praises Shaw's work as a "high degree of scholarship."⁵² She calls Shaw's research as using an "innovative methodology" and cites its concern for equality and emphasis on what is absent as her strong points.⁵³ Young states that Shaw's book is "well-researched, deeply thought out and beautifully articulated."⁵⁴ It a book for modern Buddhists. In her other review, Young disagrees with Shaw's belief in equality between women and men and doubts they will ever be regarded as equals, but she praises Shaw for her important contributive work. She notes Shaw's tenacity in research (which itself proves men do admit women into *tantra*'s secrets), and her contribution of many tantric works by and about women.

Herbert Guenther thinks Shaw is "not radical enough" for not eschewing certain traditional technical Buddhist terms, he does not specify which ones. He defines *tantra* and describes four important points that Shaw demonstrates in her "painstaking" research. These points are: Buddhist *tantra*'s evolution was a corrective to monasticism, sources of *tantra* go back to Upanishadic and Vedic ideas, workers in the field are disinclined to give credit to the

⁵⁰ Review of *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism*, by Miranda Shaw, *The Historian* 58, no. 4 (1996): 843–843.

⁵¹ Janice L. Poss, *Claiming Notability for Women Activists in Religion*, ed. Colleen D. Hartung, vol. 1, Women in Religion (Chicago: Atla Open Press, 2020), 41, <https://books.atla.com/atlapress/catalog/book/40>.

⁵² Serenity Young, "Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism by Miranda Shaw; Meeting the Great Bliss Queen: Buddhists, Feminists, and the Art of the Self by Anne Carolyn Klein," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 1, no. 1 (April 1997): 213.

⁵³ Serenity Young, "Passionate Enlightenment," 213.

⁵⁴ Serenity Young, "In Search of Enlightenment," ed. Kathryn Ann Tsai et al., *The Women's Review of Books* 12, no. 6 (1995): 29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4022127>.

female, and she provides ample proof of realized female partners.⁵⁵

Jacob N. Kinnard write a positive article appreciating the angle of Shaw's book. For example, Kinnard writes that Shaw stresses, "to show how women acted, as opposed to how women were acted upon."⁵⁶ Quotes of his describing Shaw's work include, "real women actively engaged in the production of tantric literature and ritual."⁵⁷ He understands that Shaw is not claiming this by purely textual evidence. He notes the Tibetan originals of the texts by tantric women adapts are printed in the notes in the back. A complaint that he has is that the illustrations are inconsistent. He would like them to better match her sources. Another critique is that if Shaw is trying to debunk the Western impression of *tantra* from the 1970's, she's failing at it. It is all about sex, and the sexual nature of women shines through in Shaw's book.

Similar to *Passionate Enlightenment*, I start with the baseline that the premise of the KCT and its intentions are true: leading people to enlightenment if they follow its path. From there, I look at the text with a hermeneutical reading of women applied to it. One needs to apply a reading of women's interpretations because women are often portrayed as objects and so do not show as having viewpoints within the KCT stanzas. Furthermore, my methodology is foundationalist because I do assume the KCT verses are valid, but it is also a heuristic leaning-in to glean the female point of view since this is not explicitly stated.

One disadvantage to be noted here is the fact that I am mostly looking at textual

⁵⁵ Herbert Guenther, *Review of Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism - Guenther*, by Miranda Shaw, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115, no. 4 (1995): 693–94, <https://doi.org/10.2307/604743>.

⁵⁶ Jacob N. Kinnard, *Review of Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism - Kinnard*, by Miranda Shaw, *The Journal of Religion* 75, no. 3 (1995): 456.

⁵⁷ Jacob N. Kinnard, *Review of Passionate Enlightenment*, 456.

Kālacakra resources. Shaw argues successfully that the female viewpoint is often found more in an expanded definition of texts (visual arts, inscriptions, oral traditions, correspondences, and crafts, etc.). If time allowed, a thorough search for female references in all corners of Kālacakra lore would hopefully reveal much more information regarding female involvement in this *tantra*.

For all my excitement with Shaw's revelations, the questions for me still pertained to the Kālacakra. How would this assumption, of men and women having equal hand in its creation, pertain to the KCT? How well would Shaw's methodology transfer to a non-dual *tantra*? Are there passages for which her interpretations can be applied? And what will this perspective reveal for Kālacakra practitioners?

Foundation

It is important to gather knowledge about female viewpoints in the KCT to help revitalize its audience of scholars, practitioners, as well as society at large. Such an endeavor helps those reading from a female viewpoint to make sense of the text. It can also help females and males to better understand the *tantra*'s many levels and intentions. One of the goals of Kālacakra is to bring about peace in the world.⁵⁸ By being more inclusive in its interpretations, it may induce confidence of balance by bringing to notice the *tantra*'s many powerful and varied female and male figures. A study of this type can also lend voice to other areas of Buddhism, such as the research that is being conducted on the fundamental

⁵⁸ Alexander Berzin, "Kalachakra, Tantra and Their Relation with World Peace," accessed November 23, 2021, <https://studybuddhism.com/en/advanced-studies/vajrayana/kalachakra-advanced/kalachakra-tantra-and-their-relation-with-world-peace>.

misogyny of many Buddhist texts and communities, along with, from within the tradition, the nun's ordination debate.⁵⁹

My aim for this research is twofold: to provide a reference of the various types of passages mentioning females in the KCT, and to provide an interpretive foundation for the reading of those passages, to lay a foundation and contribute tools to allow readers to make sense of female-specific passages. This research adopts and adapts the methods and previous findings from research applied to other Buddhist *tantras* and lets them inform a viewpoint of female embodiment in the KCT. A discussion of ways of interpreting these types of passages is justified. The female point of view needs to be kept in the conversation of Buddhism in general, Tantric Buddhism specifically, and Kālacakra specially. Therefore, utilizing verses of the *Kālacakratantra*, this paper aims to fill this gap in scholarship.

The title of this thesis, “Viewpoints of Female Embodiment in the *Kālacakratantra*,” includes the word “embodiment” because it encompasses several important concepts. Embodiment refers to the incorporation of females into the *tantra*, giving them a voice. It refers to concretizing the female perspective. The way in which females engage in the activities as stated in the KCT are a form of embodiment. It also is used to refer to Viśvamātā, Kālacakra's consort, and her role. Therefore, the word “embodiment” nicely captures aspects of the KCT having to do with interpretations of the female viewpoint. This multi-layered viewpoint is also referred to as the “female gaze” in this research.

I prefer the term “female” over “feminine.” The use of the word “feminine” often

⁵⁹ See Tsomo, *Women in Buddhist Traditions*., Rita M. Gross, *Buddhism After Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993)., Lama Tsultrim Allione, ed., *Women of Wisdom*, Rev. and enlarged ed (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2000)., etc.

implies soft and weak, faint and frilly connotations. “Female” fits the aspect as it is, female, not male. This could be in physical form, subtle form, or symbolically. The term “feminine,” even used symbolically, does not necessarily evoke all of “female’s” more powerful meanings.⁶⁰ Additionally, I interchange female viewpoints with one singular female viewpoint when appropriate. I believe there exists a valid singular female viewpoint. If the reader, practitioner, or person is reading, practicing, or living as a female, then their viewpoint is female as opposed to male. They have a shared perspective of life as female.

It is not my intention that a comparison need be made of every mention of man or woman in the KCT and that these mentions should be exactly even. This would be impossible given linguistic insufficiencies let alone ridiculous. My intention is to highlight those areas where females are discussed, but not necessarily seemingly included in its audience.

Narrative Outline

Three major chapters of this thesis look at women as objects, women as practitioners, and women as *buddhas* as portrayed in the Kālacakra. The first chapter, “Women as Objects,” examines passages for the way women have been utilized as objects in the texts. Examples of these types of problematic passages include those that purport giving of one’s wife (Skt. *kāmadāna*) to the guru and those in which women are blamed for men’s downfall are cited and interpretively explored. This chapter also touches upon the categorical representation of women as the thirty-six *yoginīs* referred to during a Kālacakra initiation.

⁶⁰ See discussion of these two words from Simmer-Brown, *Dakini’s Warm Breath*, 296 n13.

This chapter concludes with a call for inclusiveness and a need for revision and new interpretations of some of Kālacakra more problematic and offending verses.

The second chapter, “Women as Practitioners,” examines the categorization of females by age, physical gynocentric concerns in the text, and passages where women are simply left out. This chapter remarks on the designations of maturity for females. Passages on women’s health are also of great concern in the *Kālacakratantra*, from menstruation to giving-birth, as well as passages with suggestions of specific anointments and other remedies for female health issues are highlighted and explored. This aspect is important considering the changing face of gynocentric issues is more public now than in the past few decades. Passages for which the female viewpoint is not mentioned, such as specific instructions pertaining to non-emission in the attainment of union with a partner, are highlighted. The chapter concludes by outlining the current situation of women practicing the *Kālacakratantra* and a call for providing a greater profile for notable women.

The third chapter, “Woman as Buddhas,” examines a multitude of depictions of female *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* in the *Kālacakratantra*. The categorizations of women into thirty-six *yoginīs*, the different types of identification for initiation, are active in the *kālacakra-maṇḍala*. We become familiar with the *tantra*’s many and varied female deities who exist in its *maṇḍala*, as well as the mother deity herself, Viśvamātā, the important consort of Kālacakra. Positive passages honoring women’s enlightened qualities and abilities are identified and explored. The chapter concludes with a summary of realized female power that these *buddhas* embody and how females can draw on that information in their studies and practice.

The thesis concludes with a summary of findings highlighting the results of each

chapter and suggested interpretation methods or contemporary readings of specific passages of the *Kālacakratantra* regarding female embodiment. Additionally, a call is made for further research regarding female-oriented Buddhist studies in general, and searches for increased female-oriented resources, such as interpretation of dance perhaps, as applicable in the annals of Kālacakra. A personal reflection on findings concerning women in Buddhist *tantra* is offered.

Kālacakra Foremothers

Before examining specific verses in the KCT, it's worth looking at historical female Kālacakra masters for which, so far, we have record. Dan Martin reflects about the approach in studying women in Tibetan history,

[...] it is not entirely necessary to adopt any particular theoretical line. The minimum is a basic recognition that at any given point in time women have formed slightly less or, more likely, slightly more than half the population. Any attempt to do history without taking account of what women were accomplishing and contributing will be unsatisfactory, and will fail to do justice to the period under consideration.⁶¹

This section looks at the sacred biographies (Tib. *Namthar*) for two known historical women of Kālacakra. For decades past, there was just one known female Kālacakra practitioner and lineage holder, Machik Tulku Jobum.⁶² Thanks to research accomplished in the last few years, another female Kālacakra practitioner and teacher has emerged, Jetsunma Kunga Trinle Wangmo.

⁶¹ Dan Martin, "The Woman Illusion? Research into the Lives of Spiritually Accomplished Women Leaders in Tibet of the 11th and 12th Centuries," in *Women in Tibet: Past and Present*, ed. Janet Gyatso and Hanna Havnevik (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 2.

⁶² Not to be confused with the famous female of the Chöd tradition with the same first name, Machik Labdron.

Machik Tulku Jobum

A brief biography of Machik Tulku Jobum is written in the Blue Annals, and a slightly more detailed account is provided in Tāranātha's history of Kālacakra.⁶³ Machik Jobum is also the only woman included in Dro lineage (Tib. *'bro lugs*) of supplication prayers.⁶⁴

In the late 11th to early 12th century, Machik Jobum was born to an important family in the early transmission history of Kālacakra in Tibet.⁶⁵ Her father, Dharmesvara, (known as Chokyi Wangchuk in Tibetan) was the son of Yumo Mikyo Dorje, whom Tāranātha attributes the origination of *shentong* (other-emptiness) philosophy.⁶⁶ Jobum had two brothers, her older brother, Namkha Ödzer, and younger brother, Semo Chewa Namkha Gyeltsen.⁶⁷ Her older brother was well-versed in *sūtra* and *tantra*. Her younger brother was also a master of Kālacakra. Machik Jobum memorized every word of the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on the *Kālacakratāntra*.⁶⁸

⁶³ George N. Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals*, Second Edition, vol. VII, Monograph Series (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), 768.

⁶⁴ Martin, "The Woman Illusion?" 2, and the author's own Jonang practice texts.

⁶⁵ Martin, "The Woman Illusion?" 2.

⁶⁶ "Yumo Mikyo Dorje," The Treasury of Lives, accessed May 1, 2023, <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Yumo-Mikyo-Dorje/4301>. Christopher Hatchell, *Naked Seeing: The Great Perfection, The Wheel of Time, and Visionary Buddhism in Renaissance Tibet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 22–49. Stearns, *The Buddha from Dolpo*, 42–46. Yumo is famous for his *Cycle of the Four Radiant Lamps* treatises on the *śaḍaṅgayoga* of Kālacakra. Tāranātha cites Yumo as an advocate, prior to Dolpopa, of the Jonang "other-emptiness" (Tib. *gzhan stong*) philosophy.

⁶⁷ Michael R. Sheehy, "A Lineage History of Vajrayoga and Tantric Zhentong from the Jonang Kālacakra Practice Tradition," in *As Long as Space Endures: Essays on the Kālacakra Tantra in Honor of H.H. the Dalai Lama*, ed. Edward A. Arnold (Ithaca, N.Y: Snow Lion Publications, 2009), 222.

⁶⁸ Sheehy, "A Lineage History," 222 and "Machik Jobum," The Treasury of Lives, accessed April 30, 2023, <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Machik-Jobum/1628>. Both of these citations, at the present time they were accessed, have a caveat, such as "known to have" or "said to have," in reference to Jobum's accomplishments.

Without providing as many details, the early story of Machik Jobum is reminiscent of that of Tibet's famous *yogī*, Milarepa.⁶⁹ Influenced by her mother, Jobum learned to perform black magic and killed many enemies wielding it. The full account of Machik Jobum in the Blue Annals simply says,

Dharmesvara's daughter Jo-'bum: in her childhood she was influenced by her mother, practiced magic, and caused the death of many enemies. After that she practiced meditation (according to the method) of the Sadaṅga-yoga (Yan-lag drug-gi rnal-'byor) and in this actual life she became an āryā, equal to a natural yoginī (ārya or 'phags-pa are called those who had attained the stage of darśana-mārga).⁷⁰

She practiced in isolation and survived for weeks without food. The difference with Milarepa being instead of taking many years to work off her bad karma, Jobum was able,

after meditating on her father's instructions on the sixfold vajrayoga, she is said to have perfected the ten signs of inner radiance in a day. After practicing for seven more days, she then is said to have dissolved the vital winds into her central channel and was able to accomplish extraordinarily beneficial feats.⁷¹

A severe sickness brought about her change of heart, and she subsequently practiced the Kālacakra completion-stage *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* practices. She eventually attained mastery through these practices, having "become a natural *yoginī*, one who had attained the stage of the path

⁶⁹ "Milarepa," The Treasury of Lives, accessed April 30, 2023, <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Milarepa/3178>.

⁷⁰ Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, VII:768. There is another instance of the name Jobum being referenced in the Blue Annals. I do not know if this is the same Machik Jobum of Kālacakra. Dates and places would need to be checked. "At the age of 17, he [Khrul-žig Rin-po-čhe] studied with great assiduity the dGons-'dus (the bLa-ma dGons-'dus, the treatise belonging to the rNin-ma school). Further, his (father) bDe-gsēgs chen-po bestowed on him the exposition of the complete doctrines possessed by him. When they brought Jo-'bum, he exclaimed: "I don't need a wife!" and turned away. His father said: "You will need a female assistant (rig-ma) endowed with (proper) signs for the practice of the Mahāyānic Tantras! This girl possesses the required signs." Then again the girl was brought in. He then obtained the complete Cycle of the Zi-byed system and a sudden experience was produced in him." Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, VII:960–61.

⁷¹ Sheehy, "A Lineage History," 222. It is interesting to note the title of this section of Sheehy's article is called "Tibetan Forefathers of the Jonang." A linguistic ambiguity that glosses the fact that one of them is a woman.

of seeing (*darśanamārga*).’’⁷²

In the Dro lineage supplication prayers, Machik Jobum is preceded by her father and followed by her student, Jamsar Sherab Ozer, having transmitted the Kālacakra to him. The *Blue Annals*, however, lists him as the disciple of her brother instead.⁷³ Her supplication line reads, “Chief of all who live their lives in the sky [the *ḍākinīs*], [attainer of the] rainbow body, Jo-‘bum-ma.’’⁷⁴

A translation of Jobum’s account as found in the Kālacakra history by Tāranātha follows,

Of the three children of Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug, there were two who served animate beings. The Lady Lha-rje Jo-‘bum was renowned as being the emanation body of Indrabodh’s Lady Lakṣmīkāra. She had such great knowledge that she had thoroughly mastered the tantras and commentaries of the Kālacakra. In her younger years she engaged in all kinds of activities. When she became a young woman, at her mother’s urging, she practiced the Yamāntaka Gesture of Vanquishing and beheld His visage. She coerced Life Lord (Tshe-bdag) and Great God Blazing Glory (Lha-chen Dpal‘bar) into her service. She practiced life magic (*srog mthu*). She made magical displays, hail and so forth. She spent all her time on this. The magical powers of her coercive mantras were extremely great. During her 36th year (i.e., age 35) she was suffering from a severe illness which convinced her that nothing was of any importance apart from realizing the way things truly are. She meditated on the Six Limbed Yoga which she had learned from her father and during the first day she completed the ten signs. In the 7th day, the internal winds dissolved into the central vein. She became a great woman *siddha* (*grub-thob chen-mo*). In her retreats she would go entirely without human food for about half a month or about a month, but her physical strength would become much better. She stayed in rock shelters at Srin-po-ri, and travelled in areas impassable to humans, meditating. She was able to stop outbreaks of contagious diseases simply by pronouncing the Power of Truth. A simple touch of her hand would free the sick from their sicknesses. These and other such signs [of her accomplishments] became known.⁷⁵

⁷² Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 173. Andresen mentions Jobum twice in her dissertation, but missed listing her in Appendix C: Tibetan Kālacakra Practitioners.

⁷³ “Machik Jobum.”

⁷⁴ Martin, “The Woman Illusion?” 12.

⁷⁵ Martin, 12.

This more detailed account of her life shows what a truly remarkable woman of Kālacakra prowess was Machik Tulku Jobum.

Jetsunma Kunga Trinle Wangmo

Jetsunma Kunga Trinle Wangmo (1585–1668) was a *yoginī*, author, and lineage-holder of the Jonang order of Tibetan Buddhism. She was a close disciple and secret consort of Tāranātha, and a key figure in the transmission of the Shentong philosophy of emptiness. Trinle Wangmo wrote an autobiography called *The Secret Gnosis*, of which Michael Sheehy inspiringly acquired a hand-written copy, along with many other manuscripts, in 2006.⁷⁶

Tringle Wangmo's account is unique in several ways. She is a rare female author for her time period. Her overlapping familial, spiritual, and political relations have made her an eyewitness to tragic events in the history of Jonang. Finally, her style of writing weaves her waking and dreaming experiences as a *yoginī*.

Of very few female Tibetan authors that have been recovered from that time period, Tringle Wangmo's work is "among the earliest known autobiographical accounts by a woman writing in Tibet."⁷⁷ So far in recovery and research of Tibetan literature, women account for less than 1% of all biographers, including literature written by and about women in long-life prayers and supplications.⁷⁸ From her time period, Trinle Wangmo is one of these

⁷⁶ Thank you to Michael Sheehy, most of the information in this section was taken from his exposé: Michael R. Sheehy, "Materializing Dreams and Omens: The Autobiographical Subjectivity of the Tibetan Yoginī Kun Dga' 'Phrin Las Dbang Mo (1585-1668)," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 56 (2020): 263–92.

⁷⁷ Sheehy, "Materializing Dreams and Omens," 270.

⁷⁸ Karl Brunnhölzl, "Dreadful Dākinīs, Headless Housewives, and Psycho Princesses -- Awakened Women in the Dohā Tradition" (Symposium, Reflections on Buddhist Tantric Poetry, Rangjung Yeshe Institute, April 3, 2023).

few exceptional women.

Trinle Wangmo was born into Tibetan royalty. Her parents are not known, but it is thought that she stayed in the royal household as a child. Not only was she a Jonang proponent, it seems that she was possibly the cousin of the Fifth Dalai Lama's mother.⁷⁹ This put her in an ideal situation within the political climate of the time in which to be a witness to, and eventual elder of, the historical tensions. She witnessed the death of Tāranātha and the Geluk overthrowing of the Jonang order in Gstang fifteen years later. She was also consulted in regards to the Jonang move to the Amdo region.⁸⁰ After Tāranātha's death, she was a spiritual guide "to many of his main disciples and one of the leaders of the Jonang order."⁸¹ Sheehy recounts that during her later life, "she was a mentor to the generation of masters who were instrumental in transplanting the Jonangpas," from Gstang in central Tibet to Dzamtang in Amdo, on account of the takeover of their monastery by the Gelugpas.⁸² With a possibility of making amends, near the end of her life in 1664, Tringle Wangmo visited the Fifth Dalai Lama who thereby bestowed upon her several initiations. Sheehy summarizes, "These historical episodes in her autobiography make it clear that certainly by the end of her life, [Trinle Wangmo] was considered not only an elder of the Jonang order, but a mediator in the real politic of her time."⁸³

As secret consort, Tringle Wangmo was privy to Tāranātha's "secret autobiographical

⁷⁹ Sheehy, "Materializing Dreams and Omens," 275.

⁸⁰ Sheehy, 276.

⁸¹ "Jetsunma Kunga Trinle Wangmo," The Treasury of Lives, accessed April 30, 2023, <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Jetsunma-Kunga-Trinle-Wangmo/11183>.

⁸² I encourage a reading of this article, and hope for translations in many languages of *The Secret Gnosis* in the near future. Sheehy's article contains the names of at least several other potential female Kālacakra practitioners yet to be researched. Sheehy, "Materializing Dreams and Omens," 263.

⁸³ Sheehy, 277.

experiences and realizations.” The “secret” in the title of “secret consort” does not mean that their relationship was hidden. As Holly Gayley reveals in her article on secret consorts, “The title is used before the names of the publicly acknowledged and esteemed consorts of great Buddhist masters.”⁸⁴ “Secret” describes the close relation of the, usually male, Buddhist lama’s point-of-view, that she holds his secrets, and not to the consort’s status of that as someone hidden. That Trinle Wangmo was a secret consort of Tāranātha assures her influence, power and authority, and confirms an unelaborated account of her attainment and experiences. As a multi-faceted elder stateswoman and “formidable intellectual” of the Jonang order in 17th century Tibet, she lived a contemplative life immersed in yogic practice while she wrestled with the real-time political and social unrest of her time.

Regarding her writing, Sheehy describes it as having value for its content as well as for its aesthetic effect. He says, “she actively involves herself both as a yoginī in the interiority of her self-transformation as well as an author in the process of her self-representation. [...] For [Trinle Wangmo], the practice of authorship is transformative.”⁸⁵ I suspect that this is how she approached all things in life, and it is to our benefit that writing was one of them.

Sheehy provides two translated passages in which Trinle Wangmo mentions Kālacakra. The first is in regards to the visualization and *maṇḍala* of the Kālacakra interjected with a dream,

Then, on one occasion, while performing a brief practice during a lunar eclipse, I analyzed [my dreams] a little. Increasingly, my dreams became

⁸⁴ Holly Gayley, “Revisiting the ‘Secret Consort’ (Gsang Yum) in Tibetan Buddhism,” *Religions* 9, no. 6 (2018): 6, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9060179>.

⁸⁵ Sheehy, “Materializing Dreams and Omens,” 288.

mildly worse. When I was writing my commentary on the visualization and *maṇḍala* of the Kālacakra, in a dream one night, there were hordes of people taking-up weapons and going into battle. A young lady friend said to me, ‘Get up right now! Put on this outfit!’ She gave me five different types of gear to wear, and handed me a full armor. After a moment elapsed, I went into battle. When I woke-up my mind was filled with disturbing thoughts again. At that same time, in a dream, someone said to me, ‘You must stay for six years.’ There were many such complications to examine.⁸⁶

A few remarkable aspects are revealed in this text. The first is how approachable she seems from the prose of her text. Her fallacies in full view, the reader can relate to her as a person, but with the dreamscapes intermingled, her magic as a *yoginī* shines through. The second is that she wrote a commentary on the visualization and *maṇḍala* of Kālacakra. Whether this is extant or not remains to be known. The third is that she liked to solve puzzles. In the examination of semiotics, she employed learned occult techniques to divine outcomes.

The second passage mentioning the Kālacakra also weaves her waking and dreaming lives. Additionally, it reveals another possible commentary. This one on the completion stages of the Kālacakra,

On another occasion, while I was composing my commentary on the completion stages of the Kālacakra, a young lady appeared in my dream and said, ‘Do you have someone that you can trust? Soon it will be time to send him in a different direction.’ Ornamented with bones, she danced in zigzags. According to this dream, there is someone to send in the eastern direction.⁸⁷

This dream clearly forecasts an event, perhaps the move to Amdo. Sheehy notices that these passages demonstrate the way “dynamics work within her autobiography at different registers to form a selfhood that is not autonomous but is rather contingent and relational [...]

⁸⁶ Sheehy, “Materializing Dreams and Omens,” 283.

⁸⁷ Sheehy, 284.

her relational selfhood operates through a plurality of voices that narrate her life story.”⁸⁸ I find reading these few passages by a wise woman quite relatable and inspirational for prompting personal compositions to be as vulnerable and fluid as one’s full life.

There are definitely more female Kālacakra adepts. I believe more will be revealed in the coming years. Two is hardly a number to celebrate, yet their stories are stimulating. Further research in this area needs to continue.

⁸⁸ Sheehy, “Materializing Dreams and Omens,” 285.

Chapter One: Women as Objects (Utilization of Females)

The introductory chapter provided background to the Kālacakra, and pointed to the missing element in academic discussions of the KCT, female embodiment. The KCT is no stranger to utilizing women as objects within its pages. Liz Wilson, in her book *Charming Cadavers*, writes about gross depictions of women used as objects of meditation. In that research focusing on texts prior to *tantra*, she analyzes this phenomenon as a literary convention, coining the Buddhist view as seen through the “male gaze.”⁸⁹ While poignant points are made in her work, my research is wholly interested in *tantra* and the female gaze. The expression “female gaze” here refers to a focus, which is not on how men view women, nor necessarily on how women view themselves, but on how women are to be viewed from a tantric perspective. My premise here is that a Buddhist tantric perspective is egalitarian in essence.

In reading from this perspective, there are three techniques that can be applied to disparaging passages: avoiding, modifying or changing. Readers must necessarily court problematic passages. Ignoring the words means to wave it off as past history that no longer applies today and try to make sense of the text without feeling demoralized by it. This technique is quickest but not ideal as many questions are left unanswered. Modifying the text is to read it as if it applies either to any gender, in the case of female embodiment, perhaps altering the ‘he’ to a ‘she’ or similar, and rereading. This technique works in a great number of cases where gender need not be specified. Another technique employed when reading

⁸⁹ Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*, 3.

problematic passages is to change them altogether, to reinterpret the passage to fit a modern context. If ignoring or modifying the troubling parts of a text does not make sense, there might be a need to change it. Let's see how these techniques might apply to problematic passages in the KCT and how we can use this as data in our interpretations.

This chapter examines what can be considered negative aspects of the KCT by looking at passages that present women as objects. The chapter then moves forward by responding with, and therefore carving an opening for, the female gaze. Thus, such passages enable exploration of different hermeneutical strategies that offer an egalitarian interpretation. In the KCT, problematic passages examined here include those in which men offer their wives to their teacher (Skt. *kāmadāna*), the downfall of a man blamed on a woman, and the classification of *yoginīs* into thirty-six types based on a variety of features. This chapter has three sections, one for each of these topics, and concludes with a discussion on methods to better frame these stanzas.

Given

Some of the most alarming passages in Buddhist texts are those where women are given away as property (Skt. *kāmadāna*). In reviewing these types of passages, many questions arise. How can we as contemporary readers and/or practitioners engage with these passages? What can we learn from them? And at the very least, how can we learn to talk about them without feeling uneasy or fearful? If one assumes that the KCT has something important to bring to today's world, the goal is to move constructively through these types of passages.

A quote from the *Kālacakratāntra* shows the use of *kāmadāna* within its pages,

In the family of the progenitor of the Jinas, generosity and ethical discipline are accomplished, and patience and zeal are accomplished. Meditative stabilization, wisdom, method, aspiration, power, and gnosis are swiftly accomplished in this life for the *yogī* whose mind is joyful due to offering his wife. Deluded are the men who, having produced a bond of attachment to her, go to hell.⁹⁰

A literal and quick reading of this passage suggests that if a man does not offer his wife, apparently to his guru, he goes to hell. Upon closer inspection, this passage is stating that for a *yogī* (i.e., male practitioner) who has a joyful mind, seemingly because he has offered his wife, he then is able to swiftly accomplish the ten *pāramitās* (perfections).⁹¹ The next sentence states that if a man does not offer his wife, because of his bonds of attachment to her, he goes to hell.

The above stanza is found in the *Chapter on Sāadhanā* of the KCT in a section regarding diverse *sādhanas*. This section discusses various rituals that a practitioner engages in with devotion to Vajra Vega deity. Vajra Vega is the wrathful form of Kālacakra. It thus relates to a rite of pacification which is mentioned along with other rites aimed at developing prosperity, destruction, domination, and attraction. In this series, there is also a rite related to killing.⁹²

⁹⁰ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 253.

⁹¹ Although the term *yogin* is defined in Sanskrit-English dictionaries, Monier-Williams, Apte, and Edgerton do not define the term *yogi*, with or without a long 'ī' at the end. www.wisdomlib.org, "Yogi, Yogī: 17 Definitions," September 28, 2008, <https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/yogi>, which provides samples of both forms in use, seems to indicate that *yogī* generally refers to a male *yogin* but can be either gender, whereas *yoginī* refers to a female *yogin*. In this research, I reference the format used by Wallace.

⁹² King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 200. "Brought into the glorious cremation ground at the command of the Lord of Jinas, the vultures, crows, and jackals suck the blood from the whole body of the person against whom the *sādhana* is practiced, and they eat his flesh and all of his bodily constituents. Thus, in [the rite of] killing, one should meditate on all this on the precious earth. If, owing to this meditation, Śakra [can be made to] depart to the city of Yama, then how much more can a person born from a womb?"

Depending on the practitioner's Buddha family, assigned at initiation, different rites thus pertain. Additionally, in the Kālacakra system, such rites regarded as impure are not for beginners. They are reserved for those who have demonstrated the ability to transmute impurity into purity through the power of their mind.⁹³ Taking such a passage away from this transmuting context is misleading.

Even when reading such passages in their context, the treatment of females is no better, although nuances and complexities of Buddhist *tantra* begin to emerge. A theme evolves in the use of extremes as “the violation of ritual purity.”⁹⁴ These extremes were used as a medium for contemplating purity and gnosis in *tantra*. Newman, a KCT scholar, aptly describes the reasoning around tantric Buddhist use of extremes, saying,

Vajrayāna Buddhism evokes an emotional response because it utilizes human emotion as an element in its soteriological path. Sex, violence, liquor, and scatology elicit much stronger motive forces than do the abstract principles of an abstruse metaphysics. In the Vajrayāna a yogi sublimates passions such as lust, hatred, intoxication, and revulsion, and transforms them into divine qualities. The practices used to generate and transmute the passions are sometimes graphically depicted in the tantras.⁹⁵

According to Wilson's male gaze, references to women as objects abound with sexual intercourse as one of the “stronger motive forces” used to compel someone to follow the tantric path.⁹⁶ Given some context, a first response from a female gaze is to ignore the way women are treated in this passage as past history. One then considers that perhaps with more familiarity with the historical background of this Buddhist trope, will allow one to evaluate

⁹³ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratāntra*, 121–22.

⁹⁴ Christian K. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism: History, Semiology, and Transgression in the Indian Traditions*, South Asia across the Disciplines (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 119.

⁹⁵ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 32.

⁹⁶ Wilson, *Charming Cadavers*.

these types of passages with a more critical eye. An easy defense of the tradition arises thinking that it is cultural and not really Buddhist in nature. The culture is the excuse or explanation for why these types of passages have often been accepted by contemporary translators and scholars. Such a position places the blame on societies as opposed to Buddhism. Yet the fact remains, these passages, considered by some traditions as the words of the Buddha, are still in the texts used in today's practices. So, let's examine the etymology of the word *kāmadāna*.

In analyzing *kāmadāna*, the giving of desire, from a linguistic perspective, we look first to the definition of the two Sanskrit terms that comprise it, *kāma* and *dāna*. The term *kāma* has two meanings. According to Monier-Williams, *kāma* means wish, desire, or longing in reference to pleasure and enjoyment. More precisely, it can pertain to love, especially sexual love or sensuality.⁹⁷ The other meaning offered by Edgerton for *kāma* is “object of desire.”⁹⁸ There is an important distinction between the two, one in which Yoshiko Andō has evaluated for the *Sutta Nipāta*, which states, “On one side is the mechanism of the person wanting something, and on the other side are the things made into wanted objects by this mechanism.”⁹⁹ Andō found that most uses of the word *kāma* in the *Sutta Nipāta* indicated “things were considered objects of desire through the mechanism of wanting something.”¹⁰⁰ In this case, the *kāma* in *kāmadāna* in a tantric context could indicate “things

⁹⁷ M. Monier Williams, *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary 1899 Basic*, 1899. <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MWScan/2020/web/webtc/indexcaller.php>.

⁹⁸ Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, William Dwight Whitney Linguistic Series (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), 176.

⁹⁹ Yoshiko Ando, “On the ambivalence of *kāma* in Suttanipāta,” *Journal of Indian Studies* 67, no. 1 (2018): 477-474, <https://doi.org/10.4259/ibk.67.1.477>. [安藤淑子, “Suttanipātaに見られるkāmaの両義性について,” 印度學佛教學研究 67, no. 1 (2018): 477-474, <https://doi.org/10.4259/ibk.67.1.477>.]

¹⁰⁰ Ando, “On the ambivalence of *kāma* as seen in Suttanipāta.” [安藤, “Suttanipātaに見られるkāmaの両義性

considered desirable because there is longing for them,” meaning that it is not the “thing” itself that is the issue.¹⁰¹

Like *kāma*, the term *dāna* has two similar meanings. It can refer to a gift or to the act of giving. From a Vedic perspective, it can mean sacrifice or alms and counts for karmic points. There are obviously different types of *dāna*. The horizon of meaning covers a wide range of giving in a variety of ways: the act of giving, giving in marriage, giving up, communicating, imparting, teaching, distribution of food, paying back, or restoring. It can mean a donation, gift, oblation, bribe, sacrificial meal, or purification. The epitome of giving in such Indian context is the act of giving the physical body, whether one’s own or someone else’s.¹⁰²

Reiko Ohnuma’s book analyzing *dāna*, called “Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood,” describes the literary use of giving of the body in exquisite detail.¹⁰³ In it, she recounts stories about giving of one’s own body. Although her analysis is not necessarily the gift of the body of another, this analysis helps in understanding about the importance of “giving” in Buddhism. Ohnuma divides these types of stories into two main categories, that of *jātakas* or stories of perfection and compassion, and that of *avadānas* or stories of devotion. These categories are both *dāna*: involve giving to both worthy and unworthy participants, and

について.”]

¹⁰¹ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 220. For completeness, “*kāma*” is often used in reference to the three worlds (Skt. *trailokya*) or realms in Buddhism in which beings are reborn: desire (Skt. *kāma*), form (Skt. *rūpa*), and formlessness (Skt. *arūpa*). The desire world refers to the realms of rebirths that rely on the senses.

¹⁰² Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit*, 263. “Gift” as in one of the four *saṃgrahavastu* (*dāna*, *priya-vacana* (or the like), *artha-caryā* (or *-kriyā*), and *saṃnārthatā* (or *saṃānasukhaduḥkhatā*)) is the article of attraction or means by which the Buddha or *bodhisattva* attracts beings, draws them to him or herself, and so to religious life.

¹⁰³ Reiko Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

giving with or without expectations, whether for tangibles or karmic merit.¹⁰⁴ She concludes that the act of giving in these two categories of stories is what truly pushes the reader to change, it moves the reader to action. This is what is referred to by Sara McClintock as “ethical reading.”¹⁰⁵

This book also charts some of the discourse of giving things away that are not necessarily appropriate for giving away, which is related to the KCT passages with which we are concerned. Even though the treatment of females as objects and the narrative of giving them away is not addressed directly in her work, her investigation shows the weightiness of *dāna* in Buddhism and further shows her position in how to read such passages. In other words, she indicates through historical research that the use of these stories is an extreme form of ethical reading, moving the reader to action through the use of ethical extremes.

As opposed to interpreting these types of passages as historical, cultural, or symbolical, Shaw interprets them in reverse. She describes a philosophy in which men are reverential towards women, thereby giving the higher seat, so to speak, to the physically weaker sex. She explains, “This philosophy challenges a woman to recognize her own divinity, while it requires a man to purify his vision, [and] approach women with deferential behavior...”¹⁰⁶ The terms used to express the man’s actions towards his companion, including *dāna*, are devotional. Shaw continues,

They include reliance and dependence upon her as his religious refuge (*niśraya*, *āśraya*), honor and service (*sevā*), reverence and devotion (*bhakti*, *śraddhā*), devotional servitude (*upāsanā*, *upacāra*), and giving gifts (*dāna*), as

¹⁰⁴ I couldn’t help thinking throughout reading the book about stories of giving unconditionally, which she touches upon as “pure,” but always seem to have some baggage attached to them in her analysis.

¹⁰⁵ McClintock, *Ethical Reading and the Ethics of Forgetting and Remembering*.

¹⁰⁶ Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, 47.

well as ritual worship (*pūjā*).¹⁰⁷

The passage in which *dāna* is referenced is one of the more criticized passages in Shaw's book, whereby she is uncompromisingly forthright in her explanation of the dominance of women in Tantric Buddhism.

My reading of the Kālacakra supports Shaw's estimation. In the same chapter, one can read: "The bliss that arises due to the nonemission of drops is the worship of someone else's wife out of passion."¹⁰⁸ The *Vimalaprabhā* explanation for this passage states,

The bliss that arises due to the nonemission of a drop of semen is the worship of someone else's wife. "Someone else's wife" is the transcendence of wisdom, which transcends the cycle of transmigration; and "someone else" is Vajrasattva, who also transcends the cycle of transmigration. "Someone else's wife" is his wife. The worship of her is due to the yogīs' passion, as a result of imperishable bliss. Furthermore, in terms of the external [practice], worship of someone else's wife out of passion is the worship of the wife or of someone else who is offered at the time of initiation by a donor. This means, since those who have pledges are themselves free from attachment, for them, there is no breaking of pledges.¹⁰⁹

Even though Shaw explains that "respect for women is the cornerstone of Tantric gender relations," her work is criticized for creating a situation where females can generally be seen as the more dominant partner. Shaw counters this kind of criticism when she writes, "...the relationship between a man and a woman is delineated as a relationship between a devotee and a deity." Reading it this way, it seems as if the man is to worship the woman, however Shaw is utilizing this interpretation to empower the woman. The woman is acting in the role of the enlightened one in trying to free her companion from his mind of attachment and ego.

¹⁰⁷ Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, 47.

¹⁰⁸ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 167–68.

¹⁰⁹ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 169.

Especially in sexual relations between a man and a woman, for the woman to feel they have authority over their own body is vital.

To conclude this section, in KCT, another instance of *kāmadāna* is found in the *Chapter on Sāadhanā*,

Long ago, for the sake of buddhahood, buddhas gave their lands, elephants, horses, chariots, and numerous golden items. They even gave their heads, blood, and flesh. Since the desired buddhahood still did not come about, they offered a gift of sensual love. This kind of *men's* secret offering generates buddhahood in the family of the Progenitor of the Jinās.¹¹⁰

This stanza requires some close reading and explanation. There are three levels of “giving up” operating in this passage. The first level is where practitioners give up what is external and outside of themselves hoping it would lead them to eternal truth. For example, this passage mentions land and livestock and gold. Material things accumulate over the course of a lifetime. Perhaps, for some practitioners, attachment to those items is what creates suffering. When this training is accomplished, one can go further to cut through subtle forms of attachments, the second level is then mentioned, the giving up of what is internal and part of their individual beings. This type of giving up can lead one to the ultimate truth. It includes parts of one’s physical body that is not normally given. It is given here to such a degree that it seems grotesque, for example, the giving of one’s blood, flesh, and even (mental or physical) heads. When this training is accomplished, the subtlest form of attachment is addressed. Practitioners look to a third level of “giving up.” One trains in giving up what is nearest and dearest to one’s heart, attachment to what one holds most in

¹¹⁰ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 247. Wallace notes that the Mongolian translation reads “holy ones” instead of “men.”

this world, one's beloveds. One realizes giving up this attachment, and all other attachments, finally frees them completely from all worldly concerns. This type of giving up makes sense only if the loved one's hold is possessive. What if the act of love is attachment free? There is no doubt that *kāmadāna* statements warrant rewording for our contemporary age so as not to offend but rather teach. The truth in their message is buried deep in historical, cultural, and symbolic context and requires considerable explanation.

For *kāmadāna*, modification of the passage by switching genders may not produce an equitable interpretation, however it is a great tactic in demonstrating that no one likes to be treated as an object of possession. It would be nice to have concrete historical evidence about how females were treated, but all we have are narratives. These narratives tell us a few things. They tell us about the attitudes on the part of authors towards women. They show us the rhetoric that we have to deal with and move forward in the proper context. They do not excuse history, but push us to answer how this can be used as data. What is clear is that these types of passages cannot be ignored.

To read the passage in its full context with historical considerations and uses of other narratives helps to create an understanding. To see it from a reverse point of view, which is missing from textual sources, the pieces of the female embodiment puzzle start to fit together, but this alienates men. To change the passage to read something different might change the Buddha's words. The preferred technique would be to ignore these types of passages as old, and leave them out of future revisions.

If the passages are left in, warning labels might help. *Kāmadāna* should not be written about or quoted without major citations giving the reader a brief explanation and ample sources with which to research if they so choose. Without citation and explanation, it is as if

we are still purporting this activity today.

It is not as if *kāmadāna* is a recurring theme throughout the discourse, but it is used as a key metaphor for the section describing diverse *sāadhanās*. Perhaps it was put there to appease one group or another that was trying to be brought into the Kālacakra fold. Perhaps it was essentially instructive at the time. Either way, this type of passage is not instructive, and may be destructive, for the contemporary age.

Catalogued (36 *Yoginīs*)

Kāmadāna and blame are the more obvious ways in which females are objectified within the pages of Buddhist tantric literature. Within its verses, the KCT also employs another slightly more subtle type of objectification: a categorization of females. In the *Chapter of Initiation* of the *Kālacakratāntra*, thirty-six different types of *yoginīs*, “who dwell on the surface of the earth,” are categorized in various ways.¹¹¹ This section looks at the history and context of the *yoginīs*.

Overall, let’s just say that for now these thirty-six types of females are grouped into five major categories: four castes, six senses, eight who give birth to spirits, ten wrathful females, and eight very wrathful animal-faced females. These five categories are matched with five *dharma* figures: four Buddhas, six *bodhisattvas*, eight hungry ghosts, ten wrathful protectors, and eight demons from the *nāga* realm. Interestingly enough, every female in the *maṇḍala* is associated with an occupation, something besides being a homemaker. It is the only descriptive component provided for each type of female.

¹¹¹ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 130.

When examining the list from a female gaze, it is not completely objectionable as women are shown to be active members of society in a wide variety of ways. It is not quite clear why such a list is considered useful for practicing the Kālacakra, but let's just say for now that the caste-level members are occupied as priestesses, merchants, warriors, and laborers. The sense-level members are copper workers, wine sellers, goldsmiths, *mālā* makers, weavers, and jewelers. Butchers, pot makers, load carriers, prostitutes, seamstresses, fisherwomen, and dancers comprise the eight who give birth to spirits. In more detail, the wrathful occupations are washerwomen, painters, and dyers of cloth, makers of scabbards, oil pressers, tanners, wood workers, wives of barbers, makers of reeds, well-diggers, and women who are very blue. The extremely wrathful occupations are those that reside in cemeteries, sweep excrement, generate heat, assist a Tajik, live on the edge, cremators, wild women, and those that are jungle or mountain dwellers.¹¹²

Where the list seems to wander into objectionable territory is in its description of animal-faced extremely wrathful females. Verse 141 begins with, "Now the characteristic of the body is described."¹¹³ The physical qualities of females in the castes range from being thin-limbed and delicate to being thick, short, and solid-limbed. These are further described in the next verse and a half,

Auspicious noble woman is thin-limbed with fine hair, delicate hands and feet, and affectionate. Lotus-possessors {Tārā} is somewhat thin, pendulous, but [her] eyes are unwavering, with curly hair.

Conch-possessor is immodest, with intense desire, fond of many quarrels, with little hair. Variegated one is tall, full in all limbs, indeed, one by whom sense objects are taken lightly, [with] long hair.

¹¹² Andresen, "Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives," np v130-138.

¹¹³ Andresen, v141.

Elephant is thick, short, solid-limbed, [one] to whom sense objects are very hard, with thick hair. The purified group of the female envoys, somewhere, here, indeed, should be always a mixed group.¹¹⁴

The leading type of female is described as thin and delicate whereas the wrathful type is compared to an elephant. This passage is describing mostly the physical characteristics of the different types of females, and their varying effect on the senses of men. Animal-types are also used in describing extremely wrathful female facial features. The descriptions are telling in the types of attributes that the Kālacakra finds important for females, and their obsequious function to men practitioners.

Andresen states that the KCT describes women as something to be categorized. “In contrast to specified female agency, women are mentioned in the *Srī Kālacakra* and its various commentaries in an unspecified manner. Women are described as a category, and they often are designated in terms of their caste affiliations and physical characteristics, basically as entities with which male practitioners may, under certain circumstances, interact.”¹¹⁵ According to Andresen, this list of thirty-six *yoginīs* is used to aid men in their practice by punishing or rewarding them. She states,

It is these *yoginīs* who are responsible for punishing bad *yogīs* by tying them up and rewarding good *yogīs* by granting them the twelve great *karmas*, probably referring to the twelve "siddhis," i.e., extraordinary accomplishments such as precognition and clairaudience. Bad *yogīs* are those who break the

¹¹⁴ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” v141-142. Contrarily, the middle of verse 142 and continuing through verse 143 includes descriptions of caste males as animal types. “And Lion lives in a solitary place devoid of sense objects, fearless, with the disposition of renunciation. Rabbit goes quickly, sense objects are perishable and light, [with a] mind of fear, and he is very timid. Horse indeed is fickle in desire, subordinate, and smells of urine, seeking the [best] interest of others. The bull should have immobile eyes, moves slowly, is dull in his qualities and nature, [and] smells of fish. Elephant is amorous, indeed, slow moving, indeed, [with a] putrid smell, very stupid. The natures of the smells of the castes are divided according to the 36 divisions on the abode of the surface of the earth.”

¹¹⁵ Andresen, 232.

vows due to ignorance, and good *yogīs* are those who keep the vows and practice their yoga.¹¹⁶

The *siddhis*, or extraordinary accomplishments, are received by the men from the women via their interactions with them.

By contrast, Wallace finds that the Kālacakra tradition follows ancient Indian Buddhism whereby, in theory, they eschew categorizations altogether, claiming anyone can attain to the highest goal.¹¹⁷ Therefore, these categorizations are used to show that all categories are acceptable, to see everyone as equal. The KCT indicates that: “On the earth, a jewel is called by different names from country to country, but there is no difference in the jewel itself.”¹¹⁸ As a whole, Wallace claims,

Buddhist scriptures often refer to the populace as the intended audience of Buddhist teachings. [...] Among the renowned male and female Arhats, Bodhisattvas, and Siddhas, many are said to have been born into families of barbers, fishermen, cowherds, hunters, courtesans, and outcasts.¹¹⁹

This list of families of arhats supports her supposition that all can attain to enlightenment if they so wish.

Another reason for categorization of females is given in the Kālacakra itself. The *Vimalaprabhā* says that when a practitioner is starting out, they should not give up the customs of their homeland just yet. It is only after they have been practicing for a while that they are then able to use contrasting life instances as yogic teachings. Wallace explains, “The tantric beginner is advised to eat, drink, and have sexual relations according to the customs of

¹¹⁶ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 130.

¹¹⁷ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra*, 109.

¹¹⁸ From the *Paramādibuddhatantra* as cited in the *Vimalaprabhā*. Wallace, 120.

¹¹⁹ Wallace, 109.

his own country until he attains the *mantra-siddhi* or the *gnosis-siddhi* and thereby becomes a tantric *yogī*.”¹²⁰ Out of protection for oneself and for one’s family, the practitioner should conform to one’s social class without being attached to it. Continuing, she says,

Therefore, in the Kālacakra tantric system, the substances that are generally regarded as impure and poisonous are not to be prescribed by a *vajrācārya* to beginners but only to *yogīs*, who are not ordinary sentient beings (*prakṛta-satwa*) and who by the power of their *mantras* and meditative concentration are able to transmute these poisons into ambrosias (*amṛta*).¹²¹

Once the *yogī* status has been attained, to that effect, the *Paramādibuddhatantra* as cited in the *Vimalaprabhā* states, “The Vajrī who perceives reality has prescribed food, drink, and unsuitable sexual intercourse in order to destroy attachment to one’s own lineage.”¹²² In this specific case, Wallace states,

As the earlier-cited verse from the *Paramādibuddhatantra* attests, freedom from attachment to one’s own caste and family is posited in this tantric system not only as a moral qualification for joining the unified vajra-family but also as one of the main goals of the *Kālacakratantra* practice.¹²³

The initiate is instructed to unsuitable circumstances so as to destroy any attachment they may have to their old ways and habits. Ultimately, in this same text, the aim is to see everything, and everyone, as equal and non-dual,

The tantric pledges of all the *anuttara-yoga-tantras* equally involve the transgression of social conventions and cultural boundaries in order to cultivate a perception of one’s own social environment in a non-dual fashion.¹²⁴

Although Wallace’s point is well-made, it does not explain why females are the ones being

¹²⁰ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra*, 121.

¹²¹ Wallace, 121.

¹²² From the *Paramādibuddhatantra* as cited in the *Vimalaprabhā*. Wallace, 120.

¹²³ Wallace, 120.

¹²⁴ Wallace, 121.

categorized unnecessarily. A brief look into Indian philosophical origins is warranted to further understand this phenomenon. David White sheds light on this subject in his book *Kiss of the Yoginī*. White's findings on the origin of five, seven, and eventually thirty-six representative or types of *yoginīs* shows that they originated from ancient Indian belief in seeing the female form in the land, i.e., not just bumps and mounds of an area mimicking a woman's body, but also a chasm in the soil seen as the vagina. In order for their crops to grow, they "watered" it. Ancient Indians believed associating these signs with sexual rituals was needed to appease the mother earth that controlled the land.¹²⁵

The *Kālacakratantra* has its own explanation on the derivation of the thirty-six *yoginīs*,

When three years of time are multiplied by the number of the days of the year and are divided by the halves of the year, there are six families [of *yoginīs*]. Due to the classification of thirty-six months, there are thirty-six families of *yoginīs*. Dividing them by the days of the week, one obtains the obvious and definite deities in the Kālacakra. O king, upon dividing them by a fortnight, a list of names with male and female deities comes about.¹²⁶

It associates the *yoginīs* with units of time as opposed to shapes in the land. The

Vimalaprabhā summarizes,

Due to the multiplication of six by six, there are thirty-six families of *yoginīs*, the *yoginīs* who belong to the method [beings] (*upāya*).¹²⁷

Appendix C found in this present document charts the thirty-six *yoginīs* and their characteristics. Creating such a chart in accordance with the detailed descriptions as given in

¹²⁵ The connections between semen and rain have a long history in the ancient world, and both are also connected to fecundity and thus to power. Young, *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts: Sexualities in Buddhist Narrative, Iconography, and Ritual*, 105.

¹²⁶ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 62.

¹²⁷ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 62.

the KCT may seem to defeat the desired purpose of not portraying women as objects, however, it also highlights their plight. Reading methods can be utilized to dampen some of the effects of such demeaning passages. To ignore this list of thirty-six in the *sādhana* is impossible because it is so pervasive. To modify the list slightly, changing the gender to what is attractive to the practitioner, would work in most cases. Modifying the gender-specific terms where appropriate creates an understanding and connection with the text, and therefore, with the practice, but does it dilute the blessings of the original?

The thirty-six *yoginīs* will be looked at again in a later chapter with regard to their status as goddesses in the *maṇḍala*, but for now, this section can be summarized by saying that assigning the designation to females specifically relegates women to mere objects and demeans them.

Blamed

Objects of blame are a peculiar way for women to be portrayed in the KCT because Buddhists are taught through their compassionate mind training (Tib. *lojong*) practices to take all blame onto oneself.¹²⁸ However, there are a series of passages in the *Chapter on the Cosmos* whereby women are blamed for a man's downfall. The first passage considers the bliss of women as non-virtuous,

The bliss of women draws his mind to the non-virtuous paths of despair, killing, and so forth. His bliss of Śrī Prajñā is destroyed. His thunderbolt word is destroyed. He is overcome by external pleasures.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Jamgon Kongtrul, *The Great Path of Awakening: The Classic Guide to Using the Mahayana Buddhist Slogans to Tame the Mind and Awaken the Heart* (Boston, Mass. London: Shambhala, 2000), 17.

¹²⁹ Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time," 228.

Although, women, specifically, are not the objects rebuked in this passage, “the bliss of women” is used as the object of male downfall. Such passages can lead to unfortunate and stereotypical views. This given downfall has nothing to do with the women per se, just as the object of desire as we saw in the section on *kāmadāna*, does not necessarily have anything to do with the desire. Attachment is in the eye of the beholder. A female gaze acknowledges the incredible power and influence women have in relationships. The following stanzas in this series of passages also blames women,

The great mudrā of Vajradhara is the only one that gives the bliss of omniscience. It is the object that properly destroys the obscurations of the aggregates and so forth. It is like the eight prognostics. One may abandon that and serve a deceitful woman attached to wealth, or an imaginary woman, for Buddhahood. But because of that woman whose mind is full of ideas, one will just be reduced to ejaculation.¹³⁰

In this stanza, what is at stake is the motivation towards enlightenment and omniscience, yet blame is aimed towards the woman who has a mind full of ideas. A “mind full of ideas” could mean a woman thinking for herself, or it could mean what is commonly known nowadays as “the monkey mind,” the incessant chattering of thoughts. Are women here necessarily associated with ceaseless chattering? What is the consequence of one’s state of mind on one’s partner? One could say that, the ideal woman (or ideal man) is one whose mind is calm and without discursive thoughts, whether she is deceitful and attached to wealth or an imaginary figure representing Buddhahood. In this sense, the woman is looked to always be the more enlightened of the two. The problem with such passages is that it does not include the female perspective - it is gender exclusive. A female reading necessarily goes

¹³⁰ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 229–30.

through a translation process - the danger here is one's motivation. In another stanza, blame is expressed towards her vulva,

Even a sleeper who is bitten by a snake does not live. An ascetic ruined by a powerless woman's vulva is similar, because he does not retain his semen.¹³¹

This verse sounds as if the blame of the man's demise is put on the vulva of a "powerless" woman. In the preceding stanzas, an ascetic is likened to one who ejaculates only in wet dreams, therefore the "powerless woman" referred to is the ascetic's own dream, and not a living, breathing female. It is an imagined one. This stanza and the preceding stanza citing an imaginary woman refer to "women" in a make-believe sense, one who has been solely created by the thoughts and attachments of the practitioner. Whatever the case may be, we see a tendency in this part of the text to use female figures to make a point about problems encountered on the path.

As these stanzas show, female agency is of great import to practitioners in the KCT. These types of passages can be looked at from a male gaze as a dire warning against desiring women, as these are considered dangerous to the seeker. A female gaze deduces from this type of passage the amazing power women wield. There is such a thing as female's innate strength.

Any type of Buddhist passage involving blame on another entity seems quite out-of-place. I believe the *Kālacakratantra*, at this point in its teaching, is trying to say that rote scholarly knowledge will not lead one to attainment. One needs to become a sincere practitioner to follow its path. However, because the text often uses females as objects for its

¹³¹ Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time," 232.

metaphors, which may have worked at the time in which it was written, these metaphors have limitations in a contemporary setting. To ignore these statements is passing the problem off to another generation. To modify these statements, in switching the gender, is passing the blame to the men, also useless. Change is required for these statements to not be greatly misconstrued. There are an infinite number of ways to illustrate giving up the material way of life in order to practice the Kālacakra path that do not involve placing blame on another.

Instances where females are treated as objects exist within the pages of the KCT. Changes to passages touting *kāmadāna*, and certainly to those placing blame, are warranted. Modifications to ubiquitous lists of qualities in favor of females is justified. Sections of the *Kālacakratāntra* indicate that all can follow its path to completion. The treatises should be as welcoming.

In the narrative of the KCT, the world was largely seen as female. Objects considered to be female are found in the sky, under the ground, on the ground, they consist of all kinds of animals, body parts, elements, etc. The female form is projected onto every kind of phenomena, internal and external, good and bad. The KCT is rife with objects seen as female. Projecting female attributes onto so many objects, it is no wonder then that females as humans were objectified - given, listed, blamed. There is more to say about the female gaze, and women as practitioners is explored next.

Chapter Two: Women as Practitioners (Half the Sky)

This chapter looks at the second and possibly neutral aspect of the KCT as it pertains to female practitioners. Passages were chosen based on their interest in females as humans. Three types of passages are examined. The first are passages where women are designated as consort or courtesans according to their female-specific stage of life. The second type of passage relates to what a female body produces. From uterine-menstrual blood to the birth of a child, the KCT does not shy away from female's physical gynocentric specifics. The third, passages where females have been concealed or ignored, are examined. The female gaze here refers to ways that females engage with certain activities as stated in the KCT.

In terms of a modern reading, replacement, clarification, and inclusion are three reader or writer's techniques to court such passages. Replacement refers to choosing alternative, up-to-date linguistic techniques of equal effect that do not detract any meaning, nor audience. In terms of metaphors, other analogies can be chosen instead of questionable or offending ones. Clarifying the text is to correct, and footnote, those passages that are clearly incorrect, specifically in this case regarding female anatomical processes. The KCT is a meticulous text that encourages its practitioners to sweat the details along its path, therefore every effort should be made to righten passages that have been found to be confusingly wrong, in this case of gynocentric biology. Inclusion may be the most important technique utilized when composing or translating passages to fit a modern context. If there was only one technique that could improve interpretations of an ancient text, then replacement and clarification fall under the umbrella of inclusion. Let's look at some specifics from the KCT.

Designated

The KCT designates four levels of maturity regarding females. This section looks at how these four levels are defined, and analyzes two common metaphors involving these designations, the prognostic mirror and the barren woman.

Certain age designations in the KCT are provided for a female's role in rituals. At twelve, sixteen, twenty, and thirty years of age, females are assigned different roles as a courtesan, a mistress, an independent woman, and a wife. For example,

A respectable courtesan is an actual consort. A mistress and someone else's wife are pledge [consorts]. An independent woman is a Dharma consort. One's own wife who delights in many sexual pleasures is a gnosis consort. A respectable courtesan is twelve years old and delights in supreme bliss. A woman from a good family is sixteen years old. An independent woman is twenty years old. One's own wife who has her own daughter is thirty years old.¹³²

Designating a twelve-year-old girl as a courtesan or “actual consort” is difficult to comprehend in modern times, but twelve is the age, as stated in the *Chapter on the Cosmos*, in which she starts to menstruate.¹³³ Wallace notes an interpretation of this passage from translator Buton Rinchen Drub that views the twelve-year-old “courtesan” as “the actual consort because she does the work of assisting all people.”¹³⁴ Young cites Hindu scholar Wendy Doniger who explains that a consort “is usually implied to be a mere appendage, far inferior in power and status to his or her spouse.”¹³⁵ In the KCT *Chapter on Sāadhanā*, a stanza explains two important things regarding this age designation. It states,

¹³² King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 247.

¹³³ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 401. Males are designated men at age 16 when they start to ejaculate.

¹³⁴ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 247.

¹³⁵ Young, *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts*, 141.

Therefore, the goddess who is meditated upon as if she were a twelve-year-old becomes a boon giver. Likewise, a god who is meditated upon as if he were a sixteen-year-old becomes a boon giver. Thus, all of the yogi's rites, *siddhis*, and joys become accomplished.¹³⁶

First, this passage clearly shows that consorts are either female or male. Second, the age of the consort is in the mind of the beholder. Saying “meditated upon as if” indicates that the text is not referring to actual twelve and sixteen-year-olds.

Serenity Young, in her book *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts: Sexualities in Buddhist Narrative, Iconography, and Ritual*, explains a few reasons why ancient Indians preferred younger females. Her research states,

It is believed that younger women have more female seed than older women. In a tantric context this means the male adept will receive greater benefits from a young woman. Women are also believed to be more sexual than men; indeed, they are thought to be insatiable and sexually aggressive, thus mature women pose a real threat to men by taking their semen.¹³⁷

According to Young, ancient Indian men viewed women according to their age corresponding to the amount of power that they wielded. The older the female, the more of a threat to the man.

There is a descriptive simile mentioned several times in the KCT regarding the use of a young female virgin gazing into a prognostic mirror. We see it in a series of stanzas in the *Chapter on the Cosmos*,

That which is taught in accordance with ultimate truth is devoid of phenomena imagined by one's own mind in order to achieve the transcendental *māhamudrā siddhi* that possesses the best of all aspects. Like a maiden's prognostic image in a mirror and so forth, the clear light of the yogis' own minds appears manifest in the sky.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 191.

¹³⁷ Young, *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts*, 141.

¹³⁸ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 367.

It has thoroughly forsaken intellection of existence and nonexistence. Like a prognostic in a maiden's mirror, it is not imagined by one's own mind. It is directly seen; an object of confidence.¹³⁹

...the divine image that consists of emptiness and compassion — the pure mind that is like a maiden's prognostic image — is not characterized by form...¹⁴⁰

The prognostic mirror is part of an Indian *pratisenā* divination, “a ritual in which a young girl sees images arise spontaneously on the surface of a mirror.”¹⁴¹ The expression “on the surface of the mirror” is quite an informed translation, as it clears up confusion that it is not the girl seeing her future self in the mirror, but spontaneous images of any sort. This divination is done using the power of *mantras* and blessings of a deity.

The KCT uses this metaphor to describe the ineffable states of the six-branch *yogas*.

As quoted by Sheehy, Stearns writes,

Throughout the Kālacakra literature, the use of the phrase “image of emptiness” or “reflection of emptiness” draws a simile from the Indian prognostication rite wherein a young virgin girl divines prognostic images (*pratisenā*, *pra phab*) from a mirror divination (*phra 'bebs*). These are said to be experienced only during the prognostication ritual and are a simile for the image of emptiness that is perceived to be the Kālacakra during the sixfold vajrayoga practice.¹⁴²

Wallace has also looked at this metaphor as she explains that it is because the young virgin has not experienced sexual bliss with emission, that she is able to be empowered (by the one chanting the *mantras*) to see appearances in a mirror that foretells the future. She explains,

¹³⁹ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 369.

¹⁴⁰ Newman, 371.

¹⁴¹ Hatchell, *Naked Seeing*, 34.

¹⁴² Michael R. Sheehy and Klaus-Dieter Mathes, eds., *The Other Emptiness: Rethinking the Zhentong Buddhist Discourse in Tibet*, First edition (Albany: SUNY Press, 2020) c3n14.

Such bliss is believed to empower one's mind, just as the mind of a young virgin, who has not experienced sexual bliss with emission, can be empowered by deities and *mantras* that enable her to see appearances in a prognostic mirror.¹⁴³

This is a female age designation brought forth from ancient India. Rather than a child's virgin-ness being the vital factor, it may just be the joy of imagination that is required.

Contemporary reading of such passages require replacement. The famous image of "sky-flower" is a much better metaphor than "virgin maiden" looking in to a prognostic mirror. At least, one can leave out "maiden" and "virgin" when utilizing the metaphor, the important aspect being the prognostic image, not whether or not the one looking into it is female or male and virgin or not. Including the unnecessary details recalling the "maiden's" or "young woman's" prognostic mirror throws the female reading it from its true meaning into the throngs of inequality and injustice. I look forward to the day when a woman is able to read the text without donning armor.

Another metaphor, utilizing the status of female in a certain age group, describes nonexistent phenomena. This is shown in the KCT while chronicling a method for ridding of exceptionally evil inhabitants,

This is for [bringing forth] the sons of barren women and for the relief and strength of people who are struck by *grahas*.¹⁴⁴

Grahas are "particular evil demons or spirits who seize or exercise a bad influence on the body and mind of man, causing insanity etc.; it falls within the province of medical science to expel these demons."¹⁴⁵ The "sons of a barren woman" is an impossibility. Buddhists

¹⁴³ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra*, 12.

¹⁴⁴ Wallace, 216.

¹⁴⁵ Williams, *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

oftentimes use this metaphor to describe things that do not exist. In this case, it is describing entities without form. As it is used here, the word “barren” means unable to bear children or being infertile, but it can also mean not producing or incapable of producing offspring. Therefore, a female could be barren up until she has children. In the English dictionary, “barren” means “infertile” as much as it means “unproductive, unfruitful, waste, impoverished, uncultivable, bleak, and lifeless.” It is usually used in context with describing desert land. This term, when seeing its full definition, is demeaning in the way it qualifies certain women, both for the fact that females are labeled, and with such an ungracious term. The comparison of a barren woman to a desert land may not be intended as a statement on the inherent value of that woman, but regardless, this metaphor is mainly archaic.

From a contemporary perspective, it is essential to give more credit to childless adult females. Substituting the term “childless,” while not perfect, also makes the metaphor easier to understand for those who are not familiar with the old-fashioned term “barren.” Moreover, a multitude of terms can be used to exemplify a nonexistent phenomenon. Puṇḍarīka, for example, employs phrases like “sky-flower” (Skt. *khapuṣpa*) among others.¹⁴⁶ It is certainly a more uplifting image. So, why the emphasis on female age designations with male practitioners in the KCT? Does the text see fertility as a woman’s primary purpose? And are land and women comparisons respectful? This aspect is examined in more detail in the next section on women as producers of life, similarly to land.

In speaking about the suspect study of *tantra* from the mid to late 20th century,

¹⁴⁶ Vesna A. Wallace, “Authenticating the Tradition Through Linguistic Arguments,” in *Buddhism and Linguistics*, ed. Manel Herat (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 105, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-67413-1_6.

because of prejudices on the part of Western researchers, Newman states, “If the student of the Vajrayāna is unable to temporarily set aside his own personal values, he may find demons and monsters where there are none.”¹⁴⁷ This statement may seem to apply to females and their call for change in Buddhism, however if enough instruction is not provided to be able to assimilate correct technique, change is required. Plus, females have been “temporarily” setting aside their personal values for centuries, so much so that their history has been voided. Andresen summarizes the modern context saying, “as the Kālacakra tradition accommodates to One World, the role of women in the tradition is changing significantly.”¹⁴⁸ Out-dated passages should be deprecated in favor of those that do not necessarily change the meaning but align with the sensibilities of modern audiences.

Producing

KCT’s *Chapter on the Individual*, overall, has more substantial information for women than men. This is because of its concentration on matters of the development of human life form, from conception to birth and death. This section aims at understanding why uterine blood is so important and its use within the KCT. The majority of the *Chapter on the Individual* reads like a medical text book; it is informative, but impersonal. Much is said about care in conception, of pregnant women, giving birth, the newborn, and there are plenty of remedies presented in the text for ailing children. The thing missing is care for the woman after she has conceived.

There are plenty of land / body references given in the KCT. The beginning of the

¹⁴⁷ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 32–33.

¹⁴⁸ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 4.

Chapter on the Individual states,

Earth holds the seed present in the lotus, and water makes it sprout from there. Afterwards, heat makes it blossom and consumes the six flavors. Wind causes its growth, and space provides the room for growth. Thus, O king, in the course of time, there is completion. In due time, the divine conditions assist at the time of birth, in childhood, and so on.¹⁴⁹

To understand this passage, some background on the Kālacakra belief in the cosmos and individual as reflections of one another is crucial. The KCT employs an important slogan: “as it is without, so it is in the body” (Skt. *yathā bāhye tathā dehe*).¹⁵⁰ As Thurman likes to represent it, “As is in the individual, so is in the cosmos. And vice versa.”¹⁵¹ Newman explains, “In the Kālacakra there is a special emphasis on the correlation of the elements of the cosmos with the parts of the body.”¹⁵² The six elements (earth, water, fire, wind, space, and gnosis) shape the cosmos and also the individual. Therefore, in the Kālacakra, the human birth cycle is fashioned as a soteriological rite. The *Vimalaprabhā* explains the moment of origination,

Here in the cycle of existence, the moment of emission (*cyuti-kṣaṇa*)—which induces the origination of sentient beings, is accompanied by blood and semen in the womb, and has the characteristic of consciousness—causes the occasion of birth from the womb, the condition of an infant, child and so on.

The moment of emission, accompanied by uterine blood and semen, seed elements from the mother and father, is the key moment producing origination, the creator of conventional reality. The consciousness that is a characteristic of the origination is the “store-house” repository consciousness (Skt. *ālayavijñāna*). The *Vimalaprabhā* continues,

¹⁴⁹ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratāntra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 7.

¹⁵⁰ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 115.

¹⁵¹ Thurman, “Introductory Remarks,” xix.

¹⁵² Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 115.

Afterwards, that very moment of emission—a *kālacakrī*—and not the sun, causes the creation and destruction of the body in the world—in heaven, in the human world, and in the underworld. This is the meaning; the sun, or blood, and the moon, or semen, without the repository consciousness, without *kālacakra*, do not induce [the creation and destruction]. Why do they not include them? The sun and moon have the characteristics of blood and semen.¹⁵³

The word *kālacakrī* is the feminine form of the word *kālacakra*. Creation is not necessarily caused by conventional, physiological substances and activity, but is produced by a *kālacakrī* and a *kālacakra* accompanying the blood and semen, respectively. In the paradigm of body as *maṇḍala* and *maṇḍala* as world of *Kālacakra*, the sun is uterine blood and the moon is semen. This phraseology is found all throughout the KCT, and I could not find any instances where sun and moon or blood and semen were not mentioned together.

The KCT presents uterine blood in three categories, as a medicinal substance, a metaphysiological or subtle body element called drops, and a philosophical concept. There is much to say regarding uterine blood in pan-Indian religions, enough to fill a tome. In this brief analysis, the reason why “red” pertains to women is revealed. This aspect of “red” pertaining to women is certainly not a surprise, but it also does not make biological sense in the case of reproduction. Pairing red uterine blood with white semen will not create life form, but it may perhaps create a medicinal libation. The KCT outlines a remedy for old age,

...Uterine blood, combined with semen and ingested, eliminates the disease in a year.¹⁵⁴

Uterine blood, as Wallace defines the term *rajas*, is the essential female discharge. This term is also the second of the Ayurvedic tripartite qualities (Skt. *guṇas*: *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*).

¹⁵³ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratāntra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 129.

¹⁵⁴ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 179.

Monier-Williams, among other definitions, associates *rajas* with impurity, meaning the menstrual discharge of a woman.¹⁵⁵ Other scholars interpret this term in different ways depending on the context: Newman uses the term “menses” to equate it with its lunar properties of the cosmos, Shaw denotes it as “endocrinal fluid” so as not to misinterpret its stated red color, and White notes that the term could also refer to “lochia,” (blood, tissue, and mucus discharge after childbirth).¹⁵⁶ Andresen, in describing the creation of the sand *maṇḍala* for initiation, translates “rajas” as “dust” or “dust particles.” In the section on invoking a protector being, the *Vimalaprabhā* states,

In the dust, the Buddhas, which have a single taste, should be visualized according to the form of dust. And in the deposited thread, the goddesses should be visualized in the form of a thread. That is the precept.¹⁵⁷

“Thread” here refers to a “five-threaded ‘gnosis line’ set along the perimeter of the *maṇḍala*” to “chalk out the geometrical design of the *maṇḍala* before the sand is applied.”¹⁵⁸

In the case of describing the creation of the body *maṇḍala* in the KCT, in accordance with *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva*, this is known as ethereal space. Andresen translates verse 40 of the *Chapter on Initiation* as such,

The door of the "womb" {the mind *maṇḍala*} is doubled. In accordance with the three-fold qualities, {from darkness (Skt. *tamas*), [one has the door of] the mind *maṇḍala*; due to space (Skt. *rajas*), the door of the speech *maṇḍala* is double [the size of the door of the mind *maṇḍala*]; in accordance with goodness (Skt. *sattva*), the door of the body *maṇḍala* is quadruple [the size of the door of the mind *maṇḍala*]}. Even here, one should create the outer door, and likewise, indeed, one should create the walls, etc.. And one should fashion the three circles {water, fire and wind} by means of 24 [measures].¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Williams, *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

¹⁵⁶ Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*. White, *Kiss of the Yoginī*, 298 n150.

¹⁵⁷ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives” v35.

¹⁵⁸ Andresen, 213 & 226.

¹⁵⁹ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives” v40. Andresen’s translation includes brackets and curly braces. My additions are in parenthesis clarifying her use of the Sanskrit terms; *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*.

Starting with “womb” and consistently increasing in size depending upon certain conditions, this reads as if it could be describing a pregnancy.

The Kālacakra notably bridges subtle body elements with physical bodily fluids. In its most common usage in the KCT, *rajas*, or the red element, is juxtaposed with semen (Skt. *śukra*), the white element, throughout the text. For example, in the *Vimalaprabhā* these terms are used to describe the process of developing life form,

The marrow, bones, *nāḍīs*, and sinew originate from semen. The skin, blood, and flesh originate from uterine blood, from a single drop of blood.¹⁶⁰

It seems that, at least in some cases, menstrual blood was thought to be the substance that creates life.¹⁶¹ Shaw proposes that Indian medical knowledge was sophisticated enough to know the difference, but that “red” was chosen for its “endrocrinal content of the female sexual fluid rather than its color.”¹⁶² She defends her terminology by explaining that “red” refers to the mother’s contribution to the fetus, which includes the “red” elements of the body such as blood, flesh, and marrow, whereas the father contributes the “white” elements such as bone, brain, and fat in Ayurvedic medical theory.

Shaw also notes other terms used to describe female sexual fluid: “*śukra* (sexual fluid), *strīśukra* (female sexual fluid), *strīkāmadravam* (‘liquid of a woman’s desire’), and *madhu* (honey).”¹⁶³ These synonyms better describe the nature of *rajas* depending on the

¹⁶⁰ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 12. Because the male element creates the bones, which are longer lasting, than the flesh of the body that is created by the female element, Young states that Tibetans and northern Indians believe the ancestry of a person is carried through the paternal line. Young, *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts*, 167.

¹⁶¹ Young, *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts*, 167.

¹⁶² Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, 158.

¹⁶³ Shaw, 249 n82.

context in which it is issued. It seems a misunderstanding has been created by an ambiguity in the use of the term *rajas* for both menstrual blood and sexual fluid. Shaw does note that there are some Hindu tantric practices whereby ritual union takes place during the woman's menstruation, but she has not found this to be the case as yet in Buddhist practices.¹⁶⁴ The rhythm method makes sense, if indeed the practice is done purely for spiritual illumination and not procreation.

In consummating the affair, a mutual embrace of wisdom and method is emphasized in the KCT. As translated by Wallace from the *Chapter on the Individual*,

Wisdom and method in the precious body are the bones and flesh, water and blood, fire and urine, wind and excrement, space and semen. Splendid blood is the spirit [of awakening] itself. Sound and so on are different from the ear. The nature of speech and the like are due to the efficacy of their own families of Jinas. Thus, one should know the goddesses in the *maṇḍala*, together with the Buddhas, as the sense-objects and sense-faculties.¹⁶⁵

Opposites are placed with one another representing wisdom and method. For example, sound is wisdom and the ear is the method. This aligns with objects being referred to as female, which we saw earlier. Uterine blood in this stanza stands alone, the *Vimalaprabhā* explicates,

In the precious body, splendid uterine blood is the spirit of awakening (*bodhicitta*) itself, whose object is the sphere of phenomena (*dharmadhātu*).¹⁶⁶

Uterine blood in this instance symbolizes a substance of completion-stage practices.

In summary, we have seen varied interpretations that shape fluidic substances of female sexual emissions, and biological misinterpretations that these can create. Now, we investigate not misinterpretations, but what is missing from females as humans in the KCT.

¹⁶⁴ Shaw, n81.

¹⁶⁵ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratāntra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 37.

¹⁶⁶ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 37.

What is missing in the *Chapter on the Individual* are cures for ailments of a woman having just given birth. The remedies extend to the children after birth, but not the mother. There is a stanza that refers to what are called “Mother-diseases.” Despite the name, these stanzas are not to be mistaken as cures for ailments of a woman who has just given birth, but instead, are cures for the children who have taken ill— “pained by or seized by Mothers.”

For example,

Recognizing these signs of “Mother-diseases” of those children—due to the word “very,” [it refers to the diseases] of children who are seized with cruel grips—one should perform oblations, and the like, in the *maṇḍala*. Otherwise, if we do not give the offerings, the previously mentioned Mothers, born as demons, will not release [the children] due to the efficacy of the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*.¹⁶⁷

These are severe diseases, involving convulsions, fever, vomiting, and the rest, and are said to be caused by female demons. It is interesting to note that what is missing are remedies for an ailing mother after having just given birth, with the focus being more on the child.

Could it be true that, “in tantra it is not women who are wanted, but their bodily products?”¹⁶⁸ It may have become the social reality, but I do not believe this to be the ideal with which *tantra* originated. However, reiterating the words of Lama Tsultrim Allione, women need a spiritual path that speaks to their sense of themselves biologically.¹⁶⁹ This aspect is important considering the changing face of gynocentric issues in the public domain now more than before. Knowing the correct biological processes and anatomy of a woman is also imperative for their health. Further instances of the disregard for women within the

¹⁶⁷ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 211–12.

¹⁶⁸ Young, *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts*, 174–75.

¹⁶⁹ Allione, *Women of Wisdom*, 96.

pages of the KCT are presented as the next topic.

Concealed

We have looked at several ways in which females are utilized as objects in the KCT. We have also looked at females as practitioners and their role in creating life, but not much more. A close relative to being treated as an object is perhaps being ignored. This happens often, not just in Buddhist texts, but mainly because of linguistic inequities. For example, proper names in Tibetan can denote either the name of a man or a woman.¹⁷⁰ It is a mistake to render names in the male gender, and yet this often happens. In preliminary work on this topic, Brunnhölzl mentions while reading *dohās* (songs of realization), it is obvious from their content that they were written by a female. Brunnhölzl also notices times when the colophon is different (includes female names) from what appears as the actual author (always male), or notices a consort in the picture without mention of her name. He, therefore, no longer assumes male authors are indeed male.¹⁷¹

Additionally, in many languages, including Sanskrit and English, a group of “men” can mean “men and women,” even if only one man exists in the group. Whereas a group of “women” means “women only”. In the English language, the use of the word “mankind”, at first blush, seems like it is excluding women. Misunderstandings abound with this antiquated uneven linguistic rule. Saying “he” when meaning “she and he” has moved women to the periphery of society, sight unseen. This research does not go further into these linguistic

¹⁷⁰ Martin, “The Woman Illusion?” n3.

¹⁷¹ Brunnhölzl, “Dreadful Dākinīs, Headless Housewives, and Psycho Princesses -- Awakened Women in the Dohā Tradition.”

challenges, but recognizes their importance to include a mention.

Rather, the principle of non-emission, discussed in detail in the fifth *Chapter on Gnosis* of the KCT, is such a case where women are ignored. This is also found in verse 119 of the *Chapter on Sāadhanā* in a section called “Stage of Completion,”

Purified by means of the [yoga of] recollection, he is a stainless disc of light itself [emanating from] the reflection of gnosis. Thereafter, purified in the *samādhi*, he becomes the Gnostic Body (*jñānakāya*), achieved in several days. If the *siddhi* desired by the *mantrīs* is not attained by means of the retraction and so on, then he can achieve it after the *nāda* practice accompanied by the *haṭha*[-yoga], and after holding the drops in the vajra jewel within the lotus.¹⁷²

The *Vimalaprabhā* does not provide the female viewpoint any help either. It states,

Here, when the [empty] form is perceived through the retraction and so on, but the immutable moment does not arise due to *prāṇas* being unrestrained, then having brought the *prāṇa* into the central channel by means of the *nāda* practice, together with *haṭha*[-yoga], he should bring about imperishable bliss because of holding the drop of *bodhicitta* in the vajra jewel present in the lotus of the wisdom [consort], without vibration. This is the *haṭha*-yoga.¹⁷³

How might a contemporary woman follow these instructions? This stanza might be better understood from a women’s point of view with slight modifications and a change (i.e., replacement),

Purified by means of the [yoga of] recollection, **she** is a stainless disc of light itself [emanating from] the reflection of gnosis. Thereafter, purified in the *samādhi*, **she** becomes the Gnostic Body (Skt. *jñānakāya*), achieved in several days. If the *siddhi* desired by the *mantrīs* is not attained by means of the retraction **meditation** and so on, then **she** can achieve it after the *nāda* practice accompanied by the *haṭha*[-yoga], and after holding the drops in **the lotus surrounding the vajra jewel**.¹⁷⁴

It is slightly different for women, but with these modifications and a slight change, it is easier

¹⁷² King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 159.

¹⁷³ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 160.

¹⁷⁴ The words in **bold** demonstrate my sample modifications and changes.

to decipher how the principle of non-emission might apply.

From this perspective, women have semen, too, as has been noted in works from ancient India. Newman notes that “Some Indian theories hold that women, too, possess semen,” citing the *Samvarodaya-tantra* as well as prolific writer, Indologist and Gender and Sexuality scholar Wendy Doniger.¹⁷⁵ In her research, Shaw examines the term *śukra*. She states, “The same term (*śukra*) is used for the male and female sexual fluids, although the usual translation of the term into English as ‘semen’ has led to widespread misunderstanding that only a male fluid is designated.”¹⁷⁶

Additionally, Gedun Chöpel as translated by Jeffrey Hopkins with Dorje Yudon Yuthok says that the whole of a women’s body becomes the sexual organ when greatly aroused.¹⁷⁷ Others report that female sexual discharge is continuous from the beginning of the sexual experience until the fluids run out.¹⁷⁸ These insights could lead to greater, more sublime and pertinent inclusions for females to the textual instructions.

Depending on the capacities of the individuals, different levels of interpretation were intended. Specifically with the emergence of Tantric Buddhism most probably influenced by that of Hindu techniques, Buddhists internalized and spiritualized the methods. White explains,

This is precisely what we find in the *Kalacakra Tantra* tradition: the external manipulation of metals and mercurials, which it calls gold making (*gser 'gyur*), has been declared mundane and inferior to the transmudane inner alchemy (*rasāyana*) of channels and winds, which can lead to direct enlightenment.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 37 n11.

¹⁷⁶ Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, 157.

¹⁷⁷ Chöpel, *Tibetan Arts of Love*, 198.

¹⁷⁸ White, *Kiss of the Yoginī*, 105 n66.

¹⁷⁹ David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India* (Chicago: University of

In terms of the individual psychophysiology, *cakras*, *nāḍīs*, and the like, emission can be viewed in several ways. It can be viewed as similar to *phowa* whereby the practitioner's consciousness is released into the state of *dharmakāya* from their crown, or it can be released out the eyes as a *darśan*, or one could use ejaculation then "urethral suction and the 'hydraulic' raising of the semen along the spinal column," known to Hindu *yogins* as *vajrolī mudrā*.¹⁸⁰ The *Kālacakratāntra* instructs the practitioner to attain enlightenment in this life while in the body, to then view the beauty of the world through the eyes of realization.

As we have seen, sexual yoga can be seen as physical or theoretical, involving the workings of the subtle body.¹⁸¹ In the case of attainment with a *mahāmudrā* (sublime consort), Yumo Mikyo Dorje believed that it is a spontaneous vision arising from emptiness, not an object made up of the five elements.¹⁸² In his explanation, a *mahāmudrā* is not a material body.

An additional interpretation combines both the theoretical and physical aspects into divisions of body, speech, and mind. Orofino describes the process of the *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* as "channels ... interconnected in a relationship of wisdom and means, related to the male and female essence, semen and menstrual blood."¹⁸³ The body is the most material level of sexual activity, speech is semi-tangible, and mind is the most subtle level of sexual non-activity. The *Vimalaprabhā* similarly describes three types of wisdom, explaining that the final

Chicago Press, 1996), 71.

¹⁸⁰ White, *The Alchemical Body*, 72. Tony Chui, "Conceptualization of 'Taking the Essence' (Bcud Len) as Tantric Rituals in the Writings of Sangye Gyatso: A Tradition or Interpretation?," *Religions* 10, no. 4 (March 28, 2019): 5, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10040231>.

¹⁸¹ Chui, "Conceptualization of 'Taking the Essence,'" 5.rel

¹⁸² Hatchell, *Naked Seeing*, 46.

¹⁸³ Orofino, "On the *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga* and the Realisation of Ultimate Gnosis in the *Kālacakratāntra*," 132.

wisdom, *mahāmudrā*, is the only valid consort leading to enlightenment. It states,

Here, in the Vajrayāna, resorting to the mundane and transcendent truths, the Venerable One said that wisdom is of three kinds: the action *mudrā* (actual consort), gnosis *mudrā* (imagined, divine consort), and *mahāmudrā* (sublime consort). Among these, the bliss from the action *mudrā* and gnosis *mudrā* is characterized by vibration (*spanda*), whereas the bliss of *mahāmudrā* is characterized by the *yogī*'s non-vibration (*niḥspanda*).¹⁸⁴

Wallace summarizes, “therefore, the bliss that comes from an action *mudrā* or from a gnosis *mudrā* is not the all-good, supreme, imperishable bliss.”¹⁸⁵

Puṇḍarīka continues the above explanation by examining wisdom's gnosis (female consort) and method's gnosis (male consort) in Nāgārjuna-style logic,

If the gnosis of wisdom that is characterized by seminal emission is a gnosis that belongs to wisdom (female consort), then it is a result that has arisen from wisdom; if, however, the gnosis of wisdom belongs to method (male consort), then method's gnosis of wisdom is a result arisen from method. Thus, due to their mutual consideration there are two kinds of gnosis. If each has its own individual gnosis, then there is an absence a non-dual gnosis; and due to this absence of non-dual gnosis, there is the absence of Buddhahood because of the absence of the pure, supreme, imperishable gnosis. If the wisdom of gnosis is a gnosis that belongs to wisdom, then the gnosis of method would be the gnosis that belongs to method; thus, there is a fault as in the previous case.”¹⁸⁶

Here the text is saying that if there were two gnosess, one for each wisdom and method, they would need to be separate by definition. Therefore, Buddhahood would be an impossibility.

There must be a non-dual gnosis of *mahāmudrā*. Moreover, this portion of the text is speaking to both female and male practitioners. It directly addresses the so-far missing component of the male, method, consort.

¹⁸⁴ Vesna A. Wallace, “Practical Applications of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra and Madhyamaka in the Kālacakra Tantric Tradition,” *Emmanuel/A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy*, 2013, 23.

¹⁸⁵ Wallace, “Practical Applications.”

¹⁸⁶ Wallace, “Practical Applications.”

What is telling about this chapter is what is missing. Andresen implores that future research is, “necessary to uncover the political, economic, and social forces that coalesced since the inception of the Kālacakra tradition in the 11th century to exclude women from any recorded participation in this tradition's empowerment ceremony, oral lineage instructions, and practice.” It may also be necessary to use collective knowledge to invite female inclusivity so that the Kālacakra wish for all beings to embrace a Golden Age can be fulfilled.

Shaw emphasizes that the history of females in Buddhism cannot be discovered via treatises alone. Texts must also include visual arts, inscriptions, oral traditions, correspondences, and crafts. This research does not cover these other materials; however, Andresen makes a point regarding modern Kālacakra participants. She notes that modern females are also those who sponsor many of the rituals.¹⁸⁷ Further research is required in looking at, not just the KCT treatises and commentaries, but other tangible assets of women's contributions to Kālacakra culture as well.

Currently, as far as I can tell, there are no female Kālacakra masters.¹⁸⁸ In fact, all teachers that are able to give Kālacakra initiation are Tibetan and male.¹⁸⁹ This does not bode well for females wanting to learn, practice, and master the Kālacakra to lead all sentient beings to enlightenment. Women are inherently represented in a more symbolic and ritualistic manner in Tibetan Buddhism than a doctrinal or institutional one.¹⁹⁰ Therefore,

¹⁸⁷ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 235.

¹⁸⁸ If someone knows of a current female Kālacakra master, please let me know! I would enjoy meeting and taking instruction from them.

¹⁸⁹ Email exchange with administrator of IKN, a site dedicated to the Kālacakra, requiring proof of initiation to access many of its pages.

¹⁹⁰ Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm Breath*, 21.

very few treatises address their concerns. And, contemporary books that do address their concerns run the risk of “wrong interpretation” for not parroting the traditional viewpoint. From the contemporary female gaze, there is not enough that can be said.

At the time of her writing in 1997, Andresen points out that women were not allowed to obtain the oral-lineage instructions on the practice of Kālacakra’s six-branch completion-stage yoga (Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*).¹⁹¹ This is a shame because there is evidence that there were historical female practitioners and masters. Andresen states that Bodong Paṅchen Chokle Namgyel (1376-1451), a renowned Kālacakra translator and commentarial author, “provided guidance to numerous disciples in the practice of Kālacakra's six-limbed yoga.”¹⁹² These disciples included “priests and laymen, males and females,” Andresen adds, “biographical accounts of women practitioners are uncommon, if not completely absent.”¹⁹³ With the passing of time amid the popularity of Kālacakra initiation propagating around the world, women have now received at least the first of the six-branch yoga initiations from a qualified Jonang Master, Shar Khentrul Jamphel Lodrö, known as Khentrul Rinpoche.¹⁹⁴ Also, within the last few decades, Wallace and Orofino, among others, have written extensively about *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*.

All of the Tibetan schools claim Kālacakra masters, but as far as I know, only two females are historically represented. If the Kālacakra was taught to hundreds and thousands of people, where are all the women masters? More women need to be known. Women need

¹⁹¹ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 236.

¹⁹² Andresen, 232.

¹⁹³ Andresen, 232.

¹⁹⁴ Personal acquaintance.

to come out of their meditation hut and get involved in propagating female legacy.¹⁹⁵ This is even apparent to Tibetan masters, like Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, who insist on the fact that women need to teach women and that women need to initiate strong meditative lineages.¹⁹⁶

I here call the academic community to give credit where credit is due. Humility is an enviable quality in Buddhism, but not at the expense of losing the teachings. Women have been raised to be very humble as to give it all away. Yet, it is a 50-50 deal. In texts, the person who asks the question is as important as the one who answers. Let us not leave women out of the readership, out of sight. Let us not view their humility as weakness, especially as women have been taught to do so for generations. It is time females take some credit.

In brief, this chapter explored passages from the KCT: that designate females by age; that impart, in places wrong, knowledge of female biology; and where women are simply left out. Metaphorical passages of old that are disconcerting to women exist in the KCT. Replacements for clearly offensive yet ancient declarations are justified. Some statements on gynocentric biology in the KCT are past their expiry date. Clarifications need to be made so that these passages make sense to the modern practitioner, otherwise the text runs the risk of seeming foolish. In a writing on Buddhist feminism, Tsomo states,

With greater feminist awareness, Buddhist can redress the debilitating gender

¹⁹⁵ For example, Sangyum Kusho Rigdzin Wangmo who “has been in retreat for many years, upstairs in a brownstone in the middle of New York City, in this one room with one window. She never goes out.” Michaela Haas, *Dakini Power: Twelve Extraordinary Women Shaping the Transmission of Tibetan Buddhism in the West*, First edition (Boston: Snow Lion, 2013), 215–16.

¹⁹⁶ Diane Denis MFA thesis, *Performance as Charnel Ground*, Naropa University in 1994, 26.

imbalance that not only betrays their own tradition's egalitarian values but also neglects half their potential for relieving the sufferings of the world.¹⁹⁷

Unfortunately, half of the audience required to completely fulfill the *tantra*'s instructions are not included, and for this reason, the KCT literature runs the risk of becoming obsolete. I believe, with the right motivation there is still a chance to recover from this deficiency. As has been shown, women as practitioners are a necessary component of the *Kālacakrat Tantra*.

¹⁹⁷ Edelglass and Garfield, *Buddhist Philosophy*, 444.

Chapter Three: Women as Buddhas (Recognition of Power)

In the previous chapters, stanzas were provided regarding how female embodiment in the KCT is either ignored, reduced to objectivity, or relegated to gynocentric concerns. Now let's acknowledge the many women that KCT literature counts among its ranks of female goddesses, *bodhisattvas*, and Buddhas in its vast *maṇḍala*. Thus, this chapter outlines the positive aspect of the KCT by listing those passages that feature females in leading roles, and last but certainly not least, those passages that present the quintessential female Kālacakra representative, embodying the female gaze, Viśvamātā.

There is a pressing need for scholars to emphasize, reveal, and research females in the modern study of Buddhist *tantra*.¹⁹⁸ Females exist in *tantra*, although oftentimes are hidden or exist as part of the background. Instead, females deserve recognition, and the way to foster this recognition is by emphasizing their presence, numbers, and contributions. For example, recent research in anthropology has debunked the belief that only males were the hunters in the hunter-gatherer theory of ancient human history.¹⁹⁹ By questioning standing assumptions and rechecking the data, it has now been revealed that females played a large part in hunting.²⁰⁰ Scholars of Buddhist *tantra* are poised to reveal similar findings. It is time to go the extra step to purposely research females in Buddhism, to confirm the gender of historical

¹⁹⁸ Shaw, Simmer-Brown, Young, Brunnhölzl, Martin and Sheehy have been cited in this paper and are a few examples of recent scholarship in this area.

¹⁹⁹ Nurith Aizenman, "Men Are Hunters, Women Are Gatherers. That Was the Assumption. A New Study Upends It.," *NPR*, July 1, 2023, sec. Goats and Soda, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2023/07/01/1184749528/men-are-hunters-women-are-gatherers-that-was-the-assumption-a-new-study-upends-i>.

²⁰⁰ Brunnhölzl, "Dreadful Dākinīs, Headless Housewives, and Psycho Princesses -- Awakened Women in the Dohā Tradition."

and historiographical figures instead of relying on past assumptions or easy data. This section serves to document and recognize females of the KCT, and proposes some interpretations.

Worshipped (36 *Yoginīs*)

In looking again at the thirty-six *yoginīs* within the third chapter of the KCT, called *Chapter on Initiation*, one finds a description exposed by the Buddha Śākyamuni of the *kālacakra-maṇḍala*, a teaching requested by King Sucandra. All of the characters mentioned are part of the *kālacakra-maṇḍala*. Females are represented occupationally, physically, and symbolically. In some cases, females have very “low” status. As we saw earlier, these particular descriptions aim at counteracting attachments to the caste system and other prejudices.

Thirty-six is the number used from “social classes of Indian society of that time.”²⁰¹ Andresen explains the connection between the *yoginīs* occupations with visualizing the *kālacakra-maṇḍala* saying,

because they were ubiquitous in the external social environment, occupational caste distinctions may have been employed mnemonically to facilitate visualization practices that depended upon the detailed elements of tantric physiology.²⁰²

Wallace aptly summarizes the representational structure of the *kālacakra-maṇḍala* as purposefully and meaningfully integrating all walks of life, all social classes. This outward depiction is also inwardly symbolized in the body of the Kālacakra deity. She states,

[...] the Kālacakra tradition sees the social body as non-dual from the cosmic body. It even classifies the different types of soil with which one constructs the *kālacakra-maṇḍala* in terms of social classes, according to their colors,

²⁰¹ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratāntra*, 83.

²⁰² Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 132.

smells, and tastes. [...] Thus, one may infer that in terms of conventional reality, the material body of the *kālacakra-maṇḍala* itself is symbolically made of the mixture of castes and outcasts. In this respect, it is also a symbolic representation of the socially integrated society. Likewise, the body of the Buddha Kālacakra visually depicted as the *kālacakra-maṇḍala* metaphorically consists of a mixture of social classes.²⁰³

Everything in the external environment is a reflection of body and, hence, of Kālacakra.

In Appendix C of the present research, one can find a chart of all female members - the thirty-six *yoginīs*, matched with their corresponding goddesses in the deity *maṇḍala* of the subtle body, matched also with the representative circle that replicates the *maṇḍala*. With this chart, one begins to see the roles implied in the KCT for some of the *yoginīs* as summarized in the following stanzas from the KCT,

After taking the person for whom the *sādhana* is practiced away from that [home], let these two enter the lord's *maṇḍala*. Having received the lord's permission, delighted Locanā and the other [four *mātrikās*] bathe the person for whom the *sādhana* is practiced with the vases of ambrosia. The ten principal *śaktis* worship him. Rūpa[vajrā] and the others make him thrive. Lāsyā and the others, along with the ten [*śaktis*], clearly gratify him. Those known as the female *bhūtas* do not frighten him. Ten excellent [goddesses] related to the *krodhas* guard him. The female *nāgas* kiss him, the twelve young goddesses embrace him, and the *caṇḍās* protect him. Thus, for the sake of pacification and prosperity on the entire earth, the *yogī* should meditate on all those who bring about the supreme bliss to the person for whom the *sādhana* is practiced.²⁰⁴

Although there are many females depicted in the *kālacakra-maṇḍala*, these two stanzas expose some of the thirty-six represented. Named here are Locanā of the four castes who bathe the *yogin*, Rūpavajrā of the six senses who help the *yogin* to thrive, and the *krodhas* or the *yoginīs* born from wrath who protect the *yogin*. The status of these female figures is

²⁰³ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratāntra*, 139.

²⁰⁴ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 194–95 v145 & 146.

deified. Although outwardly their purpose is to serve the *yogī* who has just entered the *maṇḍala* in a purification ritual fit for a king, the practitioner relies on these females for their power, bliss, and protection. The text then instructs the *yogī* to meditate upon them. The embodied females hold the keys to the *yogī*'s attainment.

The KCT generally employs twelve cosmic and bodily pilgrimage sites that are further divided into thirty-six subcategories. Wallace explains,

It presents thirty-six pilgrimage sites as the dwelling places of thirty-six families of *yoginīs*, who are the sublimated aspects of thirty-six social classes (*jāti*), thirty-six bodily constituents of the individual, and thirty-six factors of spiritual awakening (*bodhi-pāṅśika-dharma*).²⁰⁵

As opposed to physical places on earth, the cosmos and the individual's body along with the *kālacakra-maṇḍala* are all pilgrimage sites in the KCT. The main *yoginī* groupings are Tārā (representing the four castes), Rūpavajrā (representing the six senses), Carcikā (born from the *bhūtas* or spirit realm), Jambhukāśyā (*krodhas* or wrathful beings), and Śvānāśya (*asuras* or extremely wrathful ones) in the *kālacakra-maṇḍala*. Each of these corresponds to astrological and astronomical parts of the cosmos and specific parts of the individual's body.²⁰⁶ Viewing all of these abodes as pure, they become sacred pilgrimage sites. Starting in verse 149, they are described symbolically,

Now, by means of the change of the form of the *yoginīs*, the 36 vows are described.

Dog {Tārā}, horse {Pāṇḍarā}, cow {Māmakī}, elephant {Locanā}, sheep {speech vajra}, also a ram {touch vajra}, gazelle {taste vajra}, donkey {form vajra}, hog {smell vajra}, camel {*dharmadhātu* vajra} — the {ten} directions are these. Pitcher {Carcikā}, mouse {Vaiṣṇavī}, crab {Vārāhī}, fish {Kaumārī}, crocodile {Aindrī}, frog {Brahmāṇī}, tortoise {Īśvarī} and conch

²⁰⁵ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratāntra*, 83.

²⁰⁶ Wallace, 84.

{Mahālaksmī} — {these are the eight born of harmful spirits.}²⁰⁷

This verse and the following four verses continue to list each of the thirty-six *yoginīs* and their correspondence to either an animal (“earth-goer”) or bird (“sky-goer”). How these animals or birds are related to vows is not explicitly outlined here. The concluding verse to this symbolic representation states that the *yogī* should eat, dine on, all of these “commitments.” If they fail to eat them and renounce them instead, then “quick death” ensues.²⁰⁸ These verses reinforce the notion that the female is therein considered exceedingly powerful.

The thirty-six *yoginīs* can also be referred to by their instruments, such as the vajra, dagger, mirror, vessel, etc. Verse 159 begins to combine the occupations with the *yoginīs* possessions,

Moreover, the symbol[s] of the laborers, etc. are in accordance with the qualities. The blue lotus or plough [and] the jewels and cloth are of [i.e., belong to] the warrior woman, O Lord of Men. The drawing implement [and] the rosary of jewels

are of the merchant woman. In this way, thus, a copper vessel together with the conch is of the Brahmin woman. The symbol of the mother is four-fold, a small drum, a large drum, the diadem, indeed, [and] the counting rosary.²⁰⁹

Continuing with symbolic representation of a gross nature, different types of purifications are listed in terms of the thirty-six *yoginīs* matched with the body and bodily substances,

Now is described the purification of the goddesses of earth, etc., [which employs] the substances of the commitments, which are feces, etc.

Excrement, urine, blood and flesh are the goddesses' four substances. The two ears, the nose, eye and tongue, and also the anus [and] the vagina are the six

²⁰⁷ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” np v149.

²⁰⁸ Andresen, v152.

²⁰⁹ Andresen, v159.

[objects] of Śabdavajrā, etc. [...] ²¹⁰

These verses show the close integration of the female aspect with the Kālacakra purification processes of the earth and body. The purification process reaches its pinnacle with the “thirty-seven *dharma*s conducive to enlightenment,”

The goddess, the flame, and the near position of *smṛti* are well-known in Kālacakra. But Wisdom is the mother of the limbs of enlightenment. There is also six other, which are of Śabdavajrā, etc.

There are four proper abandonings, and another four would result in a group of eight supernatural powers. {The supernatural power known as "moon" is *Brahmānī*; the supernatural power of courage is *Indrī*; the supernatural power of mind is *Vārāhī*; [...] ²¹¹

At this stage, thirty-seven *yoginīs* manifest, with the addition of the *yoginī*, called Wisdom, referred to above as “the mother of the limbs of enlightenment.”

Once the practitioner has become very familiar with these complex symbolic qualities of the *yoginīs*, it is at this point that the *yogī* is to become attracted to the *yoginīs*. The practitioner is to become aroused as to be able to see one’s body in union with the *yoginī*’s true nature, the absolute. As such, a token (Skt. *mudrā*) is utilized to represent, to remember, and perhaps to signal the arrival of the *yoginī*.

The term *mudrā* has various meanings in Buddhist *tantra* that warrant clarification. In Sanskrit, the words *mudra* and *mudrā* are different, although we commonly see the term spelled *mudra* (ending in a short “a”) in English. The word *mudra* means “giver of joy”, however when speaking about consorts, the word *mudrā* (ending in long “ā”) is used.²¹² The

²¹⁰ Andresen, v160.

²¹¹ Andresen, v167.

²¹² Vaman Shivaram Apte, *Revised and Enlarged Edition of Prin. V. S. Apte’s The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Dictionary (Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1957-1959), <https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/apte>.

word *mudrā* can mean several things, but has the connotation of a seal, sign, stamp, print, marking, or hand-gesture, or even hand-calculations.²¹³ The latter definition is evidenced in several passages of the KCT, such as stanza 176 describing the *mudrā* of a five-tipped *vajra* instrument that deity Kālacakra holds,

Now the *mudrās* of the symbols are described.

Both thumbs are joined. The two pinkies, which are like lotus petals, {are joined}. The two middle fingers are extended. And the two forefingers are half-bent. The two fourth fingers are located on the palm of one's own hand, contracted downwards.

This is the five-tipped *mudrā*, indeed, which should be seen by the *vajra*-possessor on the *vajra*. The fingers, which are in the form of a spoke, indeed, all of them, the thumb, etc., are on the surface of both hands.²¹⁴

The word *mudrā* in this instance is clearly referencing a hand-gesture. Andresen explains that *mudrā* is “polysemous,” therefore, in symbolic terms, it denotes “both external ritual positions and internal process(es)/state(s).”²¹⁵

The term *mudrā* can also mean “woman”, as it is commonly defined in *tantra*. This meaning is not found in any of the three important Sanskrit-English dictionaries, but early on the word certainly did mean woman, and *tantra* has kept this meaning.²¹⁶ Apparently, only

²¹³ Apte. *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit*.

²¹⁴ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” np v176. Andresen instructs in the *mudrā* as “one joins the palms of the hands, the thumbs, and both pinkies. These are then fashioned into the shape of a lotus petal. Having joined the tips of both middle fingers, they are extended in the center and both forefingers are joined to resemble a half moon that is half bent towards the back of the middle finger. The two fourth fingers are contracted underneath and come onto the palm of one's hand.” Looking at your hands in this position does indeed resemble a 3-D representation of a five-pointed vajra.

²¹⁵ Andresen, 221. For completeness, one more definition of *mudrā* along with *marga* (path) means “the opening believed to exist in the crown of the head through which the soul is said to escape at death.” Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

²¹⁶ Sanskrit-English dictionaries referenced here include Monier-Williams, Apte and Edgerton. The 14th of 17 definitions listed for *mudrā* in Apte is “nymph.” White also include many definitions for *mudrā*. See White, *Kiss of the Yoginī*, 83, for example.

later did the definitions of hand-gestures and even grain, thought to be derived from the action of throwing rice, come into existence. This derived meaning may also come from the act of dancing performed by women.²¹⁷

An example of a woman as *mudrā* appears in verse 138 of the *Chapter on Initiation* describing the action consort,

Now the *yogīs'* precept for the *vajra* offering is described for the purpose of the accomplishment of the action *mudrā*.

Girls, old women, young women with impure bodies, female Brahmins and warrior women, or merchant women, laborer women born of the lowest [caste], [women] whose eyes and hands are gone, whose ears, lips and noses are separated—all should be worshipped for the purpose of enlightenment, according to {yoga, which is the means to} wisdom and means, O King, by means of the teachers, by means of those with compassionate hearts, [by means of] those from whom sins {pride, etc.} have disappeared, [by means of those] advanced in the practice of enlightenment, [by means of] those who have ascended in the practice of enlightenment.²¹⁸

In this quote, every kind of female is to be worshipped by the sincere and passionate seeker.

Some of the mystery regarding the worshipping of the *yoginīs* may be revealed by considering the roots of Tantric Buddhism, which, according to White, is Indian tantric Kula (or Kaula).²¹⁹ Kula is the Śaivic tantric ritual describing the use of wine, meat, and sexual intercourse to the attainment of highest levels of consciousness, are thought to be derived. Dupuche, a Kula expert, citing Abhinavagupta's treatise *Tantrāloka*, distinguishes between, “*nirācāra*, the person who is not attached to any ritual, and *sācāra*, the person who is so attached.” This is important for our discussion because it was believed that the females in

²¹⁷ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 221–22.

²¹⁸ Andresen, np v138.

²¹⁹ White, *Kiss of the Yoginī*, 6.

general can be *nirācāra*. According to Dupuche,

That description of the practitioner who is not attached to any ritual is further illustrated by those women who are called *nirācārāḥ*, who are not restricted by food laws or moral codes and so are to be worshipped as goddesses.²²⁰

The officiant, usually a male, is *sācāra*. Therefore, there were female participants and male participants in this ritual to ideally liberate the practitioner. Dupuche goes even further when he writes that females had more freedom from ritual, and their knowledge outweighed the ritual.²²¹ This shows the altruistic trust participants had in the female practitioners in that particular context.

Following this logic, seeing the *yoginīs* as part of the *maṇḍala*, *mudrās*, and *mantras* immediately escalates their status. This data is important throughout Kālacakra philosophy and practice. Again, females are seen in everything. They represent emptiness, radiance, and care. They are an indispensable component, and worship of every type of female without prejudice is an important Kālacakra instruction.

There is an abundance of passages, some we have seen already, regarding the appropriate manner in which a practitioner prays to the *yoginīs*. In such passages, Newman translates “feet of the *yoginīs*” whereas Wallace translates “families of *yoginīs*.” Both agree, “they are to be worshipped.”²²²

We have seen many instances where the text calls for females to be worshipped in this non-dual *tantra*. This should certainly apply, if not more so, for a “mother” *tantra*, a *yoginītantra*. It is thus surprising to read that this was a major critique of Shaw’s research

²²⁰ John R. Dupuche, Abhinavagupta, and Jayaratha, *Abhinavagupta: The Kula Ritual, as Elaborated in Chapter 29 of the Tantrāloka*, 1st ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2003), 77.

²²¹ Dupuche, Abhinavagupta, 78–79.

²²² See Appendices A, B and D in this present work for quotes and references.

premise, the worship of women. Admittedly, the practice of the worship of women is a razor's edge practice. The act of worshipping and of being worshipped can lead one to fall too far to either side. This is precisely the point in practicing *tantra*, the fast path to enlightenment. It has been shown that the KCT allows and encourages this type of practice within its passages. Such passages in the KCT explicitly encourage the worshipping of female figures either in the form of deities, colleagues on the path, or even through representing all phenomena as female by nature. However uncomfortable that premise sounds for some, it is as enticing for others. The worship of women should be emphasized as done in these passages so as to counterbalance the heavy male-orientation of the text.

United

This section of the chapter examines ways in which females are united, whether acting in coordination with each other, with their fellow *yogīs*, or with a man in sexual union. The opening stanza for the third section in the *Chapter on Sāadhanā* describing the nature of *prāṇa*, the *Vimalaprabhā* cites a song from the *Paramādibuddhatantra* that the goddesses sing,

I am Locanā, the mother of the world, present in the *yogī's* emission. O Kālacakra, arise with the nature of my *maṇḍala* and desire me!

I am Māmakī, the sister, present in the *yogī's* maturation. O Kālacakra, arise with the nature of my *maṇḍala* and desire me!

I am Pāṇḍāra, the daughter, present in the spirit of *yogīs*. O Kālacakra, arise with the nature of my *maṇḍala* and desire me!

I am Tāriṇī, the wife, present in the *yogī's* purity. O Kālacakra, arise with the nature of my *maṇḍala* and desire me!

O protector of the world, whose intention is to deliver the world, seeing an

empty *maṇḍala*, expand the *maṇḍalas* of the body, speech. and mind!²²³

This song demonstrates the goddesses' unity and confidence in their mission to liberate the *yogī*. The *yogī*, at this point, may see the goddess as wife, daughter, sister or mother, but in truth they are the *yogī*'s salvation. This speaks to the Buddhist perspective of the female gaze as embodying the absolute.

It is notable that in Wallace's translation of this verse, her notes from Buton Rinchen Drub (1290-d.1364), hereafter referred to as Bu Ston, adds a resultant to each of the goddess's attributes within the *yogī*.²²⁴ So for instance, the goddess is not seen in the process of the *yogī*'s maturation necessarily, but rather resides in the result, "in the fruit of maturation." This means that the *yogī* must reach the result before the "true" goddess can be seen.

The goddesses who sing this song are seen as the four immeasurables,

Here, the goddesses Locanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍāra. and Tārā, who are of the nature of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity, excite him for the sake of the flow of the five [elemental] *maṇḍalas* of the simpletons and for the sake of the Divine Lord's concern for the world. This is the principle of excitement by means of the goddesses' vajra songs.²²⁵

This stanza describes the female figures' important role in motivating and exciting the *yogī*, here referred to as the Divine Lord, to wake up. The original text notes two types of excitement being generated at this point. One is the subtle body energy *prāṇa* and the other is "to produce the bliss at the age of sixteen." The text repeatedly reminds the reader that the

²²³ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 81.

²²⁴ "Buton Rinchen Drub," The Treasury of Lives, accessed May 28, 2023, <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Buton-Rinchen-Drub/2845>.

²²⁵ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 80–81.

goddesses' united purpose is to benefit beings. The female gaze here is a collective awakened view, a female cooperative of teachers, protectors, and supporters focused solely on the *yogī*'s attainment. She is all to the yearning practitioner. Her importance in the Kālacakra cannot be overstated. This can be considered as an example of the way females are united with each other in the KCT. Next, is an example of the way in which females are viewed at the same level as their male peers.

Two notable female practitioners are represented in the pages of the KCT. They participate actively in requesting the teachings of the *dharma*. In the first chapter of the KCT, the *Chapter on the Cosmos*, Śrī Viśvarūpiṇī is recognized thus,

Likewise, Viśvarūpiṇī said in the *Yogānuviddha*:

Śrī Viśvarūpiṇī bowed to Vajrabhairava and asked, "What is the *Yogānuviddha-tantra*, the supreme bliss of Vajrasattva?"

With this and other statements she requested the *Yogānuviddha*.²²⁶

Newman explains the stanza in a footnote: *Śrī* is the designation for the requestor who experiences non-dual gnosis; Viśvarūpiṇī refers to "she (who) has the form of the universe," or emptiness.²²⁷ This may also be a reference to the womb of which she is in charge.

Viśvarūpiṇī is also the name for various female goddesses, and she is possibly the consort of Yamāntaka in the *Yogānuviddha Tantra*.²²⁸ The teacher here is Bhairava, the one "who has destroyed the vicious conceptual thoughts by making the winds, the indestructible aggregates, and so forth, great bliss within *avadhūtī* (the central channel of the

²²⁶ Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time," 331. These two females turned up in my search for the word "she" in the KCT. Refer to Appendix A in this present work.

²²⁷ Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time," n20.

²²⁸ Wiesiek Mical, "36 Castes" (Unpublished First Draft Edition for 84000.co, April 28, 2023).

psychophysical body), or “the *vajra*” he adds. The *dharma* in this case is referred to as the *Yogānuviddha-tantra*.

Similarly, in the next stanza, Vajravārāhī, known as “Vajra Sow,” requests the teachings of the *dharma* teaching called *Lakṣābhīdhāna*.²²⁹ Vajravārāhī is a form of Vajrayoginī, and one of the goddesses in the speech *maṇḍala* of Kālacakra,

Likewise, Vajravārāhī said in the *Lakṣābhīdhāna*:

Vajravārāhī saluted Heruka, who consists of the three existences, and asked, “What is the *Lakṣābhīdhāna-tantra*, the supreme bliss of Vajrasattva?”

With this and other statements she requested the *Lakṣābhīdhāna*.²³⁰

The three existences can mean different things depending on the context. In this case, the three existences have an external and internal meaning. In the external, they are the desire, form and formless realms of reality. Internally, they are the channels; *lalanā*, *rasanā*, and *madhyamā* “that have become indivisible.”²³¹ These internal three are *nāḍīs* (energy channels) in the psychophysical body, with *rasanā* corresponding to the *piṅgalā* or the right subtle body sun channel believed to carry menstrual blood, and *lalanā* corresponding to the *iḍā* or left subtle body moon channel believed to carry semen or *bodhicitta*.²³² The *madhyamā* corresponds to the central channel.²³³

These two females infer a sense of equality between females and males amongst the practitioners of the KCT. Within the same groups, working side-by-side, united, either

²²⁹ Mical, “36 Castes.”

²³⁰ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 331–32.

²³¹ Newman, 332 n21.

²³² King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratāntra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 53.

²³³ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 75 & 82.

gender wields the capacity to request teachings and are venerated for doing so. These types of passages are worthy of emphasis to counteract other passages where the sense of equality between genders is not implied or even denied.

The thirty-six *yoginīs* are not the only important females in the KCT. *Śaktis*, power beings or the female personification of divine energy, are emblematic of *tantra*.²³⁴ According to Shaw, similar to the Śaivic Kula, Śāktism is goddess-worshipping that influenced Buddhist *tantra* along with other pan-Indian religiosities.²³⁵ Shaw relates the two, “Tantric Buddhist and Śākta texts have parallel passages urging respect of women and extending threats and punishments to those who would transgress this inviolable command.” She further cites *strīprasamśa*, the praise of women, and *strīpūjā*, the secret worship of women, as being part of both disciplines. Whether one agrees with Shaw’s historical reading or not, her point is compelling for reading the KCT from a female perspective.

The KCT recognizes ten and eight *śaktis* specifically. The ten *śaktis* have been mentioned before in the description of the *kālacakra-maṇḍala*. *Śaktis* are an essential part of its mind *maṇḍala*. These females, along with other members of the mind *maṇḍala*, are thought to be the ones who bestow the initiation.²³⁶ Wallace describes the role of the ten *śaktis*, “In the four highest initiations, the initiate is given ten consorts, representing the ten powers (*śakti*), or ten perfections.”²³⁷

²³⁴ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 71. Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. The term *śakti* can also mean a “short stick” and is one of the implements wielded by the deity, referenced in this way in a few stanzas of the KCT. For example, see King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sādhana Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 59.

²³⁵ Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment*, 31–32.

²³⁶ Andresen, “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives,” 214.

²³⁷ Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratāntra*, 40.

Eight *śaktis* are also mentioned as arising from eight syllables that create the *dharma* language. From the KCT's *Chapter on Sāadhanā* describing the origination of the deities of *prāṇa*,

The eight *śaktis* are arisen from *a*, *ā*, *aṃ*, and *aḥ* and *haṃ*, *haḥ*, *ha*, and *hā*.²³⁸

And the *Vimalaprabhā* explanation,

Likewise, *śaktis* have their seed syllables. *Śaktis*, Dhūmā and the others, are the female deities of the [daytime and nighttime] signs (*nimitta*). There, the letters *a* and *ā*, *aṃ*, and *visarga* —or *a*, *ā*, *aṃ*, and *aḥ* — are Kṛṣṇadīptā, Pītadīptā, Śvetadīptā, and Raktadīptā, respectively. Moreover, there are *haṃ*, *haḥ*, *ha*, and *hā*. *Haṃ* is Khadyotā, *haḥ* is Marīcī, *ha* is Dhūmā, and *hā* is Pradīpā. Thus, the eight *śaktis* are arisen from the eight syllables.²³⁹

Śaktis are representative of the birth of language in the form of seed syllables.

In total, females representing the cosmos, individual body parts, and various occupations of the *kālacakra-maṇḍala* along with external and internal pilgrimage sites, vows, instruments, gross bodily substances, purification rites, hand gestures, and language have been identified throughout this chapter. It would seem that females reign the Kālacakra universe. For a practitioner, uniting with the aforementioned females is instrumental in becoming one with the universe.

An interesting aspect regarding united females with their males in Buddhism, is the *yab-yum* imagery. At this point, many casual readers with even a slightest interest in *tantra* have seen images of *yab-yum*, that is the female sitting on the lap of the larger male Buddha. We mostly see her back, the side of her face, and a bit of breast, her head thrown back

²³⁸ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 103.

²³⁹ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 104.

awkwardly with her arms loosely around his neck while in union. The term *yab-yum* is a Tibetan word, with *yab* meaning father and *yum* meaning mother, literally “father-mother” union.

The *yab-yum* depiction is an iconographic depiction found throughout Tibetan Buddhism. Although quite a favorable article, Herrmann-Pfandt questions the results of Shaw’s *Passionate Enlightenment* research by stating in a footnote, “The absence from Tantric Buddhism iconographical sources of any image showing masculinity subordinated or assimilated to femininity seems to contrast dramatically with the results of Miranda Shaw.”²⁴⁰ Her article is from 1997. What is not commonly known, but should be for the sake of equality, are *yum-yab* unions. These reverse images are so secret that it has taken decades for them to be revealed even to the most astute of Buddhist scholars.²⁴¹

In the *kālacakra-maṇḍala*, as in the higher levels of many other *tantras*, reverse images appear. As opposed to *yab-yums* that are commonly seen in *thangkas* and statues, *yum-yab* refers to “mother-father” union. These images are as they sound, inverted or “reversed” (Skt. *viparīta-surata*) with the female in the dominant position facing her audience, and the smaller male kneeling at her lap in a posterior view, her legs up, his legs folded at the sides.

Within the *Chapter on Sādhana* in the KCT, a reverse union is described. Male *yab-yum* depictions are in the cardinal directions, whereas “reversed” female *yum-yab* images are

²⁴⁰ Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt, “Yab Yum Iconography and the Role of Women in Tibetan Tantric Buddhism,” *The Tibet Journal* 22, no. 1 (1997): 34 n53.

²⁴¹ Saying that, English recounts that Herrmann-Pfandt refers to *yum-yab* practices in her book *Ḍākinīs* from 1992. Elizabeth English, *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, Rituals & Forms: A Study of the Cult of Vajrayoginī in India*, 1st Wisdom ed, Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002), 405-406 n104.

in the intermediate directions forming a circle around Kālacakra. From the *Vimalaprabhā*,

Furthermore, the male [deities] facing the Divine Lord are principal deities in the cardinal directions. The goddesses facing the Divine Lord are the principal female deities in the intermediate directions. [A male deity] whose face is turned away from the Divine Lord is a secondary male deity.²⁴²

This statement refers to the goddesses that face the Kālacakra deity, with their male counterparts facing them at their laps. The next stanza incorporates the wisdom and method attributes of female and male deities, respectively,

Therefore, the method [being], a secondary deity, in an embrace with the wisdom [being], is on the lotus of the moon in the corner section within the intermediate directions. Likewise, the goddesses who are secondary deities, in an embrace with male deities, or method [beings], are on the disc of the sun in the cardinal directions.²⁴³

The first part of this statement refers to the method, male being as the secondary deity, who is embracing the primary wisdom, female deity. There are many of these *yum-yab* unions in the *kālacakra-maṇḍala*, further highlighting the equal, if not dominant, role that females play in the Kālacakra.

Simmer-Brown covers *yum-yab* depictions in the last section, titled “Yab-Yum and Subjectivity,” in her chapter called *The Inner Ḍākinī*. She stresses that these images, whether *yum-yab* or *yab-yum*, are neither to be seen as female nor male, but as something beyond gender. She states, “When the *yab-yum* iconography is analyzed only politically, as an expression of male and female power, most of its significance is lost.”²⁴⁴ Although this may be true, it is also a symbol of the barrier that exists for females in the higher echelons of

²⁴² King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sāadhanā Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 49 v20.

²⁴³ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, v21.

²⁴⁴ Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm Breath*, 160.

Tibetan Buddhism. Simmer-Brown notes that reverse *yum-yab* practices “were probably well known during earlier periods of tantric Buddhism in Tibet.”²⁴⁵ What caused these images to become hidden over the millennium? These practices were put to the wayside or made extremely secret that they all but disappeared. Hesitancy and secrecy are hurting the growth of these *tantras*. Females interested in *tantra* need to know about the existence of *yum-yab* images to feel included, understood, and motivated.

Although not as yet well-known, we have seen females united in their work to liberate, whether as a group in harmony or as the dominant figure in union. The goddesses, and sexual imagery in general, prompt the practitioners to liberation. The state of euphoria generated through thoughts of sexual experience lead one to higher states of consciousness. This is not a practice for sexual gratification, but for reminding oneself of gaps in consciousness leading to realization.

This section culminates with a discussion on the Great Seal consort. Even though the origin of the Great Seal (Skt. *mahāmudrā*) is thought to be a specific sexual technique, in the KCT, it is the yogic union with light.²⁴⁶ The Great Seal can be said to be a type of mnemonic for enlightened states of mind. Although very difficult to express in words, it points the way. The homage just prior to Viśvamātā’s homage is to Mahāmudrā,

Homage to Mahāmudrā: passed beyond atomic reality, having the nature of a prognostic image, possessing the best of all aspects.²⁴⁷

This homage personifies the *mahāmudrā* or great seal wisdom consort of non-dual nature.

²⁴⁵ Simmer-Brown, *Dakini’s Warm Breath*, 159.

²⁴⁶ Physical “urethral suction,” which can be performed by the female and the male while “sealed” in sexual union. White, *Kiss of the Yoginī*, 82 & 215.

²⁴⁷ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 225.

In the section describing Yumo Mikyo Dorje's experiences of the Kālacakra's six-branch *yogas*, Hatchell recalls in *Naked Seeing*, "This Supreme Seal or Great Seal is not a flesh-and-blood woman or a deliberately imagined consort, but rather is a visionary consort, who appears spontaneously, arising before the eye (to use the traditional metaphor) like an image in a prognostic mirror."²⁴⁸ In the ultimate state of this non-dual *tantra*, gender is ultimately non-existent.

Respected

Viśvamātā, or Mātā as she is lovingly known, is arguably the most prominent Buddha shown in the Kālacakra *thangka*. Her standing yellow back immediately informs the viewer of her presence, and easily identifies the *thangka* as that belonging to the Kālacakra system. Her name may not be the moniker associated with the image, but it is Viśvamātā's silhouette and color that is most recognizable.

As is the custom, the very beginning of the KCT proffers homages. Viśvamātā features in the next stanza,

Homage to Viśvamātā: the progenitor of all the Buddhas, who has abandoned origination and destruction, who possesses the conduct of Samantabhadra.²⁴⁹

The term *viśva* has the connotation of "all" or "whole." It is partly defined in Monier-Williams as "whole, entire, universal, all-pervading or all-containing."²⁵⁰ Apte adds to this definition including "the supreme being, an intellectual faculty, omnipresent, existing

²⁴⁸ Hatchell, *Naked Seeing*, 39. And thank you to Hatchell for condensing the metaphor so as not to distract from its true descriptive purposes.

²⁴⁹ Newman, "The Outer Wheel of Time," 225.

²⁵⁰ Williams, *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

everywhere, a universal soul and protector of all.”²⁵¹ The term *mātā* means “mother.” I include these definitions to confirm the view of Viśvamātā as an important deity, as well as to show her as representing all females. We have seen how females are representative of the objects of the universe. Viśvamātā embodies them as a whole.

Not only is Viśvamātā the universal mother, she is also known to be the mother of King Yaśas, the First Kalkī King and author of the condensed (Skt. *laghu*) *Kālacakratantra*,

Mañjuśrī - King Yaśas - took birth in the womb of Viśvamātā, queen of this Sureśāna — the Emanation Body of Khagarbha. He taught the Dharma on the bodhisattva's lion throne for one hundred years.²⁵²

Sureśāna was the previous king, and he and Viśvamātā were the parents of King Yaśas.

The next passage outlines her power, described as the ultimate state in the principle of *prāṇāyāma*. *Prāṇāyāma* is the third stage in the six-branch *yoga* (Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) of Kālacakra, but when used here in the *Chapter on the Individual*, it is also listed for its therapeutic purposes,

At that time, with great force, it directs the *apāna* into the upward path. When the pair of winds is obstructed, after splitting the *uṣṇīṣa*, it reaches the most excellent abode. Thus, due to the rousing of the *vajra* in the mind, which is accompanied with a sense-object, it obtains the power of flying. This [power] has the nature of the five extrasensory perceptions, and it is Viśvamātā of *yogīs*.²⁵³

Viśvamātā is known here as the nature of the five extrasensory perceptions, received in the

²⁵¹ Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

²⁵² Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 304.

²⁵³ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratantra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 176. *Prāṇāyāma*, or wind control, is described as the process that “combines the *prāṇa* and *apāna* in the central channel, through suppressing the movements in the *rasanā* and *lalanā* channels. This is mainly done by means of *vajra*-repetition meditations, observing the coming and going of the breath, and other breath-manipulation exercises,” “Kālacakra,” “Introduction to the Six Yogas,” accessed May 22, 2023, <http://www.kalacakra.org>.

process of yogic breathing exercises. Viśvamātā imbues our being as we breathe.

A *siddhi* that garners the utmost respect and awe in Buddhist tantra narratives is that of flying without the aid of any modern machinery. Flying is associated with female embodiment in Buddhist *tantra*. The term *ḍākinī* translates in Tibetan as *khandroma* meaning “she who flies through the sky.” *Khandroma* is short in Tibetan for *khe kham su khyap par droma*, which means “she who flies everywhere in [the limitless limits of] the realm of space.”²⁵⁴ In the shortened form, “sky-dweller” or “sky-dancer” are common. The origins of the Sanskrit term are not clear, but Simmer-Brown states that in the development of the figure of *ḍākinī* in Tibet, “the *ḍākinī* evolved from a minor goddess figure to a central symbol of meditative experience in iconography, ritual, and meditation.”²⁵⁵

The previously cited stanza talks about the “power of flying.” Because flying accords so closely with female embodiment, I include here the eight qualities of mind that inform it,

1) being of the nature of the smallest atoms, 2) the lightness of the body, 3) pervading the entire three worlds, 4) achieving the qualities of the Buddha, 5) the light of gnosis, 6) being stabilized in that, 7) having the nature of the mastery of all living beings, and 8) ultimately transforming into the fulfillment of all desires... The form is very subtle, light, very large, able to go anywhere, capable of illuminating, powerful, controlling, and it is present wherever one wishes.²⁵⁶

The ubiquitous nature of the female, as we have seen, are epitomized in these qualities.

I found two instances of sky-beings mentioned in the KCT. It exists in a stanza describing the origin of living beings, and how it corresponds to different parts of the body. i.e., “The salty ocean is urine, the ocean of liquor is sweat [...],”

²⁵⁴ Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm Breath*, 51. Or in Wylie, *mkha' kham su khyab par 'gro ma*.

²⁵⁵ Simmer-Brown, 48.

²⁵⁶ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratāntra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*. They were added to the Bu ston version of the text.

All the Siddhas are the hairs. Within the abode of the three worlds, Siddhas are of many kinds. Here in the external world, in the universe, there are three kinds of Siddhas—the sky-walkers, the earth-walkers, and those inhabiting the underworld. Among them, the sky-walkers have the hair on their heads, the earth-walkers are born in hiding places, and those inhabiting the lower worlds are born from the vulva and the male sexual organ.²⁵⁷

This particular phrase is describing the hairs as *siddhas*, and the sky-walkers as having hair on their heads. Usually sky-walkers refer to female *ḍākinīs*. It is difficult to tell if the sky-walkers referred to here are the same. In another stanza from the *Chapter on the Individual*, are mentioned sky-*vajrīs*,

Neither the Self nor the creator bestows suffering and happiness, O king. Apart from the power of the mind, nothing, O king, neither bondage nor liberation, is [the bestower of suffering and happiness]. Just as space does not disappear [from a jar] when water is brought into the jar, so that sky-*vajrī*, who is the pervader of the universe and devoid of the sense-objects, is within the body.²⁵⁸

This stanza is explained further in the *Vimalaprabhā* as,

Just as space does not disappear [from a jar] when water is brought into the jar, so the sky-*vajrī* is in the body, the sky-*vajrī* who pervades the universe, who is the mind that is purified in liberation through emptiness and the like, and who is devoid of the sense-objects, meaning, devoid of the *guṇas*—devoid of the *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, of the subtle elements (*tanmātra*), and the like, devoid of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth state, and lacking an inherent nature. This means that *vajrī*, the purified mind, does not have these two: external existence and nonexistence, or annihilation.²⁵⁹

In the dictionary, a *vajrī* is a kind of Euphorbia plant, a flowering perennial that is easy to grow.²⁶⁰ This term could also be interpreted as the Sanskrit female form of *vajra*. In describing the characteristics of the moment, this stanza exemplifies the principle of the

²⁵⁷ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratānta: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 45.

²⁵⁸ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 139.

²⁵⁹ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 140.

²⁶⁰ Williams, *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

transmigratory and *nirvāṇic* minds.

In continuing our look at *siddhis* referencing Viśvamātā, she is also attributed with the alleviation of malignant diseases,

One visualizes Viśvamātā, who is similar to the stainless moon, [as standing] on top of the moon in the lotus of the heart.²⁶¹

And the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary on this stanza,

Along with *prāṇāyāma*, one visualizes that in the lotus of the heart there is Viśvamātā, similar to the stainless moon, having the hands in a wish-fulfilling *mudrā* with a lotus, abiding on the lotus-seat in the *vajra* [-posture], and having one face and two arms.²⁶²

Mudrā in this case means “hand-gesture.” As is common in *tantra*, Viśvamātā is taught to be visualized in one’s heart. This already shows how this female figure is respected, and the following description goes further. The text continues with a *mantra* praying to Viśvamātā,

Now a mantra: “*Oṃ phreṃ Viśvamātā, eliminate, eliminate the vajra-like sharp pains, bring on my forbearance, bring on, svāhā.*
(*oṃ phreṃ viśvamāte vajrakaṇṭakān nāśaya nāśaya mama śantiṃ kuru kuru svāhā*)²⁶³

Practitioners have a visualization and *mantra* dedicated to Viśvamātā to cure them of malignant diseases.

In descriptions of the *maṇḍala* and practices related to the generation-stage, there are many stanzas with descriptions of Viśvamātā and goddesses, too numerous to list here.

Respect is expressed in the following example,

Embraced Viśvamātā has a golden luster, four faces, and eight lotus hands. In her right [hands] there are a cleaver, a goad, a sounding *damaru*, and a rosary, respectively. In her left [hands] there are a skull, a noose, a hundred-petal

²⁶¹ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakratāntra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 183.

²⁶² King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 183.

²⁶³ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, 185.

lotus, and a sublime jewel. She is in the *pratyālīḍha* [pose]. She has twelve eyes and the tiara of the Lord of Jinas, and she is marked with *mudrās*.²⁶⁴

Mudrās in this case means “seals.” The usual depiction of Viśvamātā’s posture reflects that of Kālacakra whereby her right-leg is drawn-in and her left-leg is extended. Wallace comments that this *pratyālīḍha* pose is one “in which the left foot is advanced and the right foot is drawn back”²⁶⁵. *Pratyālīḍha* is contrasted with *ālīḍha* where the right-leg is advanced and the left is drawn back, which is the usual term for the female standing deities. *Ālīḍha* might be affiliated more with females because *ālīḍhā*, (ending with a long “ā”) is, according to Apte, a woman in menstruation.²⁶⁶ As with many things associated with the female aspect, sources vary in their descriptions of which word refers to a particular stance. Stances aside, the ultimate state of Viśvamātā is described as that of the nature of emptiness and gnosis. Therefore, worthy of respect and recognized as powerful,

Thus, in the *maṇḍala*, the principal male deity is the inconceivable mind vajra, and the principal female deity is Viśvamātā, who is of the nature of emptiness and gnosis. This is a rule.²⁶⁷

By name, Viśvamātā is entitled the principal female deity, who does not just represent, but is the nature of wisdom-emptiness. This is the point at which words break down in trying to describe the ineffable.

It is my estimation that at this point, the best way forward is for scholars to honor females in Buddhist history by actively pursuing research about them. Just like

²⁶⁴ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sādhana Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 41.

²⁶⁵ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, n95.

²⁶⁶ Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

²⁶⁷ King Yaśas and Puṇḍarīka, *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sādhana Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, 125.

Samantabhadra offering clouds that fill and pervade all realms, a small discovery has the possibility of leading to more enticing discoveries, and in turn, encouraging more scholars to delve into the mysteries of the female in Buddhist *tantra*.

There are more mysteries to be solved. For instance, Newman mentions an illustrated manuscript of the *Vimalaprabhā* still to be examined. Hara Prasad Shastri discovered, transcribed, and discussed the colophon of such a Kālacakra manuscript. In the last line of his notes he states, “There are numerous illustrations in this work representing Buddha as Upāya, as male, and Dharma, otherwise *prajñā*, as female.”²⁶⁸ It would be especially intriguing to find out what information on female embodiment those images proffer.

Even though the Kālacakra is not considered a *yoginītantra* but a non-dual *tantra*, had Shaw written her book today, perhaps it might cite information from this tradition, which includes *śaktis* (all female deities) within the *maṇḍala* and the presence of *yum-yab* (reverse *yab-yum*) depictions. More research on females in Buddhism is essential. To emphasize the importance of female representation after having been neglected for so long and to reveal where females have been formerly concealed are driving factors of success for all practitioners of the KCT.

²⁶⁸ Newman, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 138. At the time of his dissertation, this manuscript was missing. It would be interesting to find out if it has since become available.

Conclusion

This research on the *Kālacakratāntra* has looked at representations of women as objects, women as practitioners, and women as *buddhas*. Within the section on women as objects, we saw females being given as gifts, being catalogued, and being blamed. Examining women as practitioners, we looked at females designated according to their age, bodily processes, and status, as well as passages where they were ignored. Women represented as *buddhas*, such as female goddesses, female deities in concert with other *saṃgha* members, with each other, and with men in sexual union, as well as females being honored such as that of Viśvamātā were also explored.

The aim of my research was to provide a reference for the various types of passages mentioning females in the KCT, and to provide an interpretive foundation for the reading of those passages via a female gaze. This aim allows a foundation to be laid, and contributes tools that readers can use to make better sense of female-specific passages. To that end, a thorough look at all female-related passages (except for the *Chapter on Gnosis* of the KCT) has been analyzed.²⁶⁹ From this analysis, there are six main results that were found to be present throughout the text: (1) it was without a doubt written from a male point of view, (2) there are no passages containing outright condemnation of females, (3) females are required to be worshipped, (4) passages regarding females are often shrouded in complication, secrecy, and mystery, (5) there is a quasi-obsession with females, and (6) the Kālacakra lives up to its designation as a non-dual *tantra*. Each of these results are briefly summarized.

²⁶⁹ See Appendices A-D in this present work for a list of identified passages for each KCT chapter researched.

Although the text was written from a male point of view, this does not necessarily mean that females did not successfully, willingly, and equally participate in its rituals. Since the viewpoint of females was either not as clearly written down or lost, the proof is not readily evident. Martin, a scholar looking at accomplished women in the history of Tibet, states, “If women did have identical opportunities for education and employment to men in those days, we ought to find just as much written about women as we do about men.”²⁷⁰ However, females most likely did not have these opportunities and so their stories have been, for the most part, lost.

Even though blame is put on women in beginning stanzas of the KCT and women are utilized as mere objects within its pages, I agree with Shaw in her assessment that there is no outright castigating, putting down, or other such attitudes or language towards females directly in the KCT. The blame towards females is related to the man’s perspective and is not directly correlated with the woman, as we have seen. Additionally, the text is without violence towards females in the act of union. *Tantra* in the KCT is not violent, meaning the men are not taking advantage of anyone against their will. Disrespect defeats the intention of merging with the empty form (Skt. *śūnyatābimba*).

In fact, the opposite of condemnation occurs in each chapter of the text. This is seen in the persistent instructions for the practitioner to worship women, goddesses, *yoginīs*, etc., no matter their caste, beauty, attitude, or occupation. That she is to be worshipped, is a constant refrain throughout the text.

The secret nature of females in Buddhist literature has become a hinderance to them.

²⁷⁰ Martin, “The Woman Illusion?”

Female spiritual experiences have been shrouded in complications, misgivings, and mystery. This makes sense in that the texts were written from a male stance. *Tantra* has gradually become well-known to modern society in the last half-century. Some secrets are out in the open. Perhaps the term “secret” should be interpreted for what it is, inexpressible. Females and males need to be educated on egalitarian attitudes toward all beings. Buddhist tantric texts need to be continually researched for proper interpretation, translation, and accreditation. These integrative actions are essential for Buddhist *tantra* to survive as a viable enlightening option, and for the Kālacakra goal of peace to reign in this world. This cannot be done without half the sky.

Requiring women’s involvement is not the same as being obsessive about them. From women being blamed and objectified to being put on a pedestal and worshipped, the text contains a seemingly excessive focus on women. Perhaps if passages included a female viewpoint, this might not be the case. Lama Tsultrim Allione suggests that texts should be developed to emphasize “the development of *upāya* and finding and working with male consorts.”²⁷¹ Her idea is that females would then learn the skillful means or methods (Skt. *upāya*) necessary to develop themselves fully. This would also take some of the pressure off females being portrayed as a separate status of humankind.

In every aspect of the Kālacakra, equal and opposite polarities are shown to be ultimately together as one. “The *Kālacakratāntra* speaks of this non-dual perception of the world in terms of seeing all things as being of the ‘same taste’ (Skt. *samarasa*), the taste of

²⁷¹ Allione, *Women of Wisdom*, 95–96.

gnosis.”²⁷² Whether female and male, wisdom and method, sun and moon, object and faculty...are two sides of the same coin in every action in the KCT showing itself to be a true non-dual *tantra*.

Throughout the research, I have suggested ways of reading, writing, and supporting a women’s viewpoint. Ideas have been presented such as reading passages that are offensive by ignoring, modifying or changing them. Scholar-practitioners have the ability to rewrite passages by taking into account the other half of the sky by replacing offending messages, clarifying historical accounts, and including females where they are left out. I know these discussions are underway amongst translators, Ani Lekshe Tsomo being a strong and leading voice in the domain of non-tantric Buddhism. That women are to be worshipped in many cases in *tantra* should be emphasized, not repudiated. Females’ true purpose in *tantra* should be revealed. Women need to know, be able to have a say in, and prepare for their role. Finally, realized women are to be honored. These changes will bring about balance and opportunity for all proponents of Kālacakra.

Tantra is sometimes considered the yoga of sexuality, as is the Kālacakra. Even if one does not partake in sexual intercourse, the text is imbued with the language of it. The text tells us that those who practice the Kālacakra and practice properly, meaning there is no coercion or manipulation of another, have beautiful enlightening experiences.²⁷³ Females may be interested in *tantra*, but are shy of its sexual element for a number of historical reasons. I hope this research provides information regarding techniques and methods as they

²⁷² Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratāntra*, 147.

²⁷³ Sarah Jacoby, *Love and Liberation: Autobiographical Writings of the Tibetan Buddhist Visionary Sera Khandro* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 207. Sera Khandro reports being traded between male lamas for sexual services without her consent.

apply to the KCT in general and as they apply to a female gaze. May those interested in this perspective move forward comfortably. It is my view, that *tantra* is for females. Females should not let the scriptures create doubts in their own abilities to lead to enlightenment nor in the power of their spiritual authority.

Even though, this research has only looked at the text, and not an expansion of texts such as inscriptions, and so forth, the results are clear. The treatise is most definitely written from a male viewpoint. There are plenty of instances in each chapter, although many times shrouded in secrecy, where females are instructed to be worshipped. The text does not intrinsically condemn females. The Kālacakra is considered a non-dual *tantra* and it exceedingly exemplifies this through its repeated pairing of opposites. It would be a valuable next step to investigate the female gaze using other resources, such as images, inscriptions, oral traditions, correspondences, and crafts surrounding the KCT to see what more these sources reveal or confirm. Continued work researching female adepts of the *Kālacakratāntra*, combined with Shaw's methodology, revelations, and disclosures in *Passionate Enlightenment*, will advance the goal of increased education in this area.

Appendices

Appendices A-D list, by chapter, a majority of the stanzas in the KCT specifically mentioning females. Explanations of search term criteria, specific term clarifications, and the reason for creating such lists follows in question-and-answer format.

Appendix E lists some academic sources that have referenced *Passionate Enlightenment* within its pages, whether positive, negative or both. The table demonstrates the notion that *Passionate Enlightenment* is not a viable academic resource is a misnomer.

What are the criteria for the search terms?

Search terms were chosen that specifically steer towards stanzas having anything to do with females. Terms such as “female”, “women”, “girl”, “mother”, “sky walkers”, “goddesses”, etc. Terms that might imply either gender, such as “consort”, were not included.

How are uterine blood versus semen the major indicators from women and men in the creation of a human being?

In general, uterine blood is part of the body whereas semen is considered an element in the astro-medical sense. The KCT covers a lot more parts of the body concerning women than men because of its focus on the development of a fetus.

Uterine blood, what does this refer to? Menstruation, the blood from the hymen being broken or something else?

According to Western medical terminology, it references menstrual blood, that which comes from the uterine arteries. It can seem odd to the modern woman that the KCT seems to talk about uterine blood creating a fetus, because we know that women are more apt to get pregnant in between periods not during her period. This issue is discussed further in the thesis.

What are these lists helpful for?

These types of lists may seem to trivialize females, but they are also helpful for a number of reasons, including

- to possibly show female terms used in both derogatory and non-derogatory ways
- to be able to see the overall role that females play in the *tantra*
- to emphasize female deities and stanzas that might be as well known
- to show there are more or less females in the *tantra* than you might expect to find
- to formulate the major role played by females in the *tantra*, even though they may be viewed from a male gaze

Appendix A: Female Specific Passages from *Chapter on the Cosmos*²⁷⁴

Search Term	Chapter	Pages	Stanza	K or V	Quote	Explanation
Mahāmudrā	The First Great Brief Account, Which Destroys All Devils and Obstructors: The Precept on the Supreme Chosen Deity and the Noble Path	225	15	K	Homage to Mahāmudrā: passed beyond atomic reality, having the nature of a prognostic image, possessing the best of all aspects.	Homage to Mahāmudrā, capitalized, not to be confused with the word “mahāmudrā,” lower case, which is the great seal wisdom consort of non-dual nature.
Viśvamātā	The First Brief Account	225	16	K	Homage to Viśvamātā: the progenitor of all the Buddhas, who has abandoned origination and destruction, who possesses the conduct of Samantabhadra.	After these two homages, comes homage to Kālacakra (not Śrī Kālacakra which is the first homage).
Women	The First Brief Account	228	30	V	One arrogant in his scholarliness who does not know the speech of the Masters of Jinas, who is always blind to the way, devises a commentary on the best vehicle. He causes other blind men to fall, and enters hell himself. The bliss of women draws his mind to the nonvirtuous paths of despair, killing, and so forth. His bliss of Śrī Prajñā is destroyed. His thunderbolt word is destroyed. He is overcome by external pleasures.	Women are used as the object of male downfall. This has nothing to do with the women themselves, just as the object of desire does not necessarily have anything to do with that desire. It’s in the eyes of the beholder.
woman	The First Brief Account	229-230	35	V	The great <i>mudrā</i> of Vajradhara is the only one that gives the bliss of omniscience. It is the object that properly destroys the obscurations of the aggregates and so forth. It is like the eight prognostics. One may abandon that and serve a deceitful woman attached to wealth, or an imaginary woman, for Buddhahood. But because of that woman whose mind is full of ideas, one will just be reduced to ejaculation.	Blame is on the woman for the man’s misperception, or incorrect intention, as if saying the woman should always be the more pious and enlightened of the two.

²⁷⁴ Newman, John Ronald. “The Outer Wheel of Time: Vajrayāna Buddhist Cosmology in the Kālacakratantra.” Doctor of Philosophy (Buddhist Studies), University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1987.

Vulva	The First Brief Account	232	47	V	Even a sleeper who is bitten by a snake does not live. An ascetic ruined by a powerless woman's vulva is similar, because he does not retain his semen.	This verse is worded to sound as if the blame of the man's demise is on a powerless woman. In the preceding stanzas, an ascetic is likened to one who ejaculates only in wet dreams, therefore the "powerless woman" referred to is the ascetic's own dream.
Vulva	The First Brief Account	232	49 & 50	V	Quicksilver touched by fire does not remain motionless, it escapes. Semen without method is always like that from touching a vulva.	Quicksilver is mercury. A clever way to describe what happens to men without skillful means during intercourse (or close to it) with a woman.
Mothers	The First Brief Account	235	66	V	Mira creates obstacles with the forms of perfect Buddhas, <i>bodhisattvas</i> , fathers, mothers, daughters, sisters, sons, brothers, and desired wives.	Females and males
yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	236	76	V	Obstacles <i>are</i> permanently destroyed for a <i>yogi</i> who always meditates on the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> in order to quickly obtain the splendor of Kālacakra.	This begins a series of stanzas, stanzas 76-95, referring to "the feet of the <i>yoginīs</i> " as that which is to be worshiped.
Woman	The First Brief Account	236-237	77	V	Enemy, lion, lord of elephants, fire, master of snakes, bandits, being bound by a noose, raging ocean, ghouls causing the fear of death, disease, Indra's deputies, poverty, being without a woman, fear of an agitated king, lightning strike, and destruction of wealth these are destroyed for one who clearly remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> .	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	237	78	V	One who is being destroyed in battle by enemies elephants, chariots, horses, and numerous excellent infantry, all armored and bearing spears, discuses, swords, and bows and arrows — should remember the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> . He will conquer all those enemies – death-givers having fierce visages, dwelling in the cardinal and intermediate directions — with his own weapons, and will gain the fame of victory.	

Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	237	79	V	The lion roars and his face is distorted; he bares his sharp teeth and twitches his tail. He wards off the forehead of the crazed elephant with his curved, strong claws. He is enraged and his eyes are red like the early dawn. His sword-tongue lolls about. He has a mane and desires to kill. The lion goes far away when one remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that dispel fear.	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	238	80	V	The great master of elephants is blue-colored. His eyes are tawny and his temples are full of masses of rutting musk. He uproots numerous great trees and smashes them. He thunders like a dragon. He binds one with his trunk, and chops one up with the tips of his tusks. The body of one who remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that dispel fear is freed from such an elephant.	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	238	81	V	The fire that extends in all directions has flames that blaze everywhere in the cardinal and intermediate directions. Its dense smoke envelops one in great darkness. It simultaneously burns the village and the forest. It emits sparks like a falling star, and always makes sentient beings afraid of death. Such a fire becomes cool for one who remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that dispel fear.	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	238	82	V	The lord of hooded snakes is enraged; he is the color of blue eye ointment. As he moves he writhes and utters a fierce hiss. His fangs <i>are</i> curved and he has two tongues. He makes one afraid of death. As swift as the wind, he is <i>very</i> wrathful, and his eyes <i>are</i> cruel. He displays his hood, and strikes and bites. Such a snake is destroyed for one who remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that dispel fear.	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	238	83	V	The bandits in the forest are malevolent; in the palms of their hands are bows and barbed arrows. Dwelling in the cardinal and intermediate directions, they hold spears, discuses, and swords. The cruel-eyed ones block the ground of the noble path, and strike and rob the moving traveller. Such bandits become distant for one who remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that dispel fear.	

Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	239	84	V	One's arms are tied with nooses, and the pair of lotus feet of one's legs are covered with iron fetters. Deprived of good water, one's tongue, throat, and lips are parched. One's body is emaciated and racked with hunger. Day and night the guards guard one on the orders of an angry ruler. Even so, one who remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that dispel fear is freed from that bondage.	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	239	85	V	Conveyed in an ocean-going vessel, the ocean is tossed and turned about by boundless fierce winds. One is stopped by pirates — gangs of crocodiles and sharks. They fling the vicious fire-oil, and a great incessant rain of fire falls all about. Even so, one who remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that dispel fear passes beyond that.	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	239	86	V	Holding cleavers and skull cups in their hands, cruel-minded zombies dwell in the circle of the ten directions and horrify.' Howling, sending forth terrifying sounds, blazing fire comes out of their mouths. Racked with hunger, they eat flesh and delight in human blood. Their bodies are emaciated and naked. One who remembers the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that dispel fear is protected from such zombies.	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	239-240	87	V	Each day one wails, and the stubs of one's fingertips rot. One's nose, lips, and ears deteriorate. Due to the strength of the putrid stench one's relatives abandon one like a corpse. One who remembers the good feet of the <i>yoginis</i> becomes free from diseases and satisfied.	
Mistress	The First Brief Account	240	88	V	Indra's messengers have flaming sharp tusks and the faces of snakes, lions, <i>sarabhas</i> , tigers, and elephants. In all directions they hold discuses, swords, arrows, tridents, hooks, and thunderbolts. They threaten the practitioner dwelling in supreme bliss, solely absorbed in concentration on enlightenment. These messengers are destroyed for one who places the feet of the mistresses of yoga in his own mind.	

Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	240	89	V	In the rains one carries a load from the forest to the city on a path full of muck. In winter one travels naked on a snowy trail, and must even go to foreign lands. In the summer one is burnt by the rays of the sun on a waterless, terrible, desert path. Such a poor man is freed from those sufferings, and is satisfied, if he meditates on the good feet of the <i>yoginis</i> .	
Ladies, women, feet of the yoginis	The First Brief Account	240	90	V	The excretions of one's armpits, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and body give off an unbearable stench. Unlucky all the time, one is deprived of sexual pleasure due to separation from all ladies. Women may always hate one as a result of non-virtue. All such as this become handsome and lucky should they meditate on the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> that give the best bliss.	
Yoginis, feet of (diacritics not used)	The First Brief Account	241	91	V	Due to treachery the lord of men is furious at the servants. Like the Yama of Death, he is continually intent on murder. He quickly dispatches troops make one afraid of death. Even such an angry king becomes pacified towards those servants if they meditate in their own minds on the feet of the <i>yoginis</i> – the protectors of all the three worlds, And indeed, with his gifts of complete honor, the king becomes a benefactor.	
Yogini	The First Brief Account	241	92	V	For some, at times, lightning falls from the sky. And due to intercourse with women, the fall of the <i>vajra</i> perpetually causes them to die, to become unconscious, and to be devoid of desire, again and again, for life after life. Even that fall of the <i>vajra</i> becomes pacified for them, they die, and are not born again, by meditating on the splendid feet of the thunderbolt of the <i>yoginis</i> , that abides in the lotuses of the <i>karma</i> -, <i>jñāna</i> -, and divine <i>mudrās</i> .	

Yogini	The First Brief Account	241	93	V	Some lose all their wealth from indifference, because of intercourse with women day and night. That occurs many times again from the mind being anointed with propensities in other lives. All that wealth is saved by meditating on the unequal and equal feet — having the form of the universe — of the <i>prajñās</i> , the <i>yoginis</i> . They are worshipped and praised by the best of Jinas.	
Yogini	The First Brief Account	242	94	V	The <i>yoginis</i> are the threefold path-passages of the sun, the moon, and Rāhu: <i>piṅgalā</i> , <i>idā</i> , and <i>avadhūtī</i> . Those two feet that go together, the destruction of existent and nonexistent, are their Gnosis Body. This one is their unchanging status of connate bliss. The result spoken of here, the dispelling of all fears, will quickly occur in this life for one who would remember just that.	
Yogini	The First Brief Account	242	95	V	The place of the splendid <i>yoginis</i> is the house of the thunderbolt gem. The path the Jina taught for entering that place is without passions, it destroys devils; here I express a preliminary praise. May those men who lose the path and always go in the darkness of falsehood from associating with devils obtain this path and come to the house of the thunderbolt gem without delay!	
Mother, in relation to her son	The First Brief Account	244	102	V	I write as a mother benefiting her sons, for the sake of bliss for all embodied beings.	The import of the son
female	The Second Brief Account: The Bhagavān's Teaching of the Tantra, Having Observed the Subject, the Discourse, their Relation, the Purpose, and the Ultimate Purpose	245		V	He was encircled by a host of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, fury kings, gods, nagas, and male and female deities.	Describing the scene around the Buddha emanating as Śrī Kālacakra while he taught the 12,000 verse <i>Paramādibuddha</i> .

Women	The Second Brief Account	266		V	The conscious [careful] Dharma always speaks of liquor and women without unspeakable sin for the sake of meditation [on the non-conceptual completion process].	This verse is within a talk around ethical questions regarding the eating of meat since it could involve killing. Five meats are said to need to be eaten every day in order to keep vows (in pills the size of mustard seeds). The five are beef, dog, elephant, horse, and human. Newman notes that in the <i>yoginī-tantras</i> , these substances are part of an “inner offering” practice.
mother	The Second Brief Account	267-268 & 306		V	Outcaste sexual intercourse is with one’s mother... ...and incest with one’s mother...	The extreme used to describe the practices of other countries (cultures).
female	The Second Brief Account	269		V	The female deities are: Vajradhātīśvarī, etc.; Dharmadhatū, etc.; Atinīlā, etc.; Carikā, etc.; Gaurī, etc.; and Śvānāsyā, etc.	In describing the Kālacakra <i>maṇḍala</i> .

yogini, (without diacritics)	The Second Brief Account	276		V	<p>And it is not the case that the word yoga speaks the meaning of method or speaks the meaning of wisdom — the word yoga speaks the meaning of wisdom and method. Furthermore, it is said [in the <i>Ādibuddha</i>]:</p> <p>"Yoga cannot occur due to the body of method, or by wisdom alone. The Tathāgatas call the absorption of wisdom and method yoga."</p> <p>Thus, a <i>tantra</i> whose subject consists of wisdom and method is ultimately neither a wisdom <i>tantra</i> nor a method <i>tantra</i>. From the point of view of worldly, phenomenal (truth), the Tathāgata spoke [with intention] of the side of wisdom and method, in accordance with the dispositions of dull sentient beings. He did this from the point of view of the purity of the aggregates and elements, by means of the divisions mirror-like gnosis and so forth. The same is also true for the one named <i>yogini</i>.</p> <p>Here, because it has a <i>yoge</i> disposition, it is <i>yogi</i>, and likewise for <i>yogini</i>. Thus, from consideration of others, there is <i>yogatantra</i> and <i>yoginitantra</i>.</p> <p>Therefore, from the point of view of ultimate truth, Kālacakra is the <i>yogatantra</i> that consists of wisdom and method — without partiality.</p>	<p>KCT is referred to as a non-dual tantra. This stanza explains the meaning. (In the last sentence, “<i>yogatantra</i>” refers to either “<i>yogatantra</i>” or “<i>yoginitantra</i>.” It is an interesting linguistic conclusion after an enlightening paragraph.)</p> <p>Newman notes that “[The pure aggregates, method, is “<i>yogatantra</i>,” and from consideration the pure elements there is wisdom- “<i>yoginitantra</i>.”]</p> <p>Both wisdom and method are required</p>
Viśvamātā	The Third Brief Account: The Relationship Between the Teacher and the Requestor, and the Basic Tantra and the Abridged Tantra	304		V	<p>Mañjuśrī —King Yaśas - took birth in the womb of Viśvamātā, queen of this Sureśāna — the Emanation Body of Khagarbha. He taught the Dharma on the <i>bodhisattva</i>'s lion throne for one hundred years.</p>	<p>In describing the parents of King Yaśas. Sureśāna (Khagarbha) was the previous king.</p>
female deity	The Third Brief Account	305		V	<p>It consists of male and female deities fashioned from the five precious things.</p>	<p>Description of the <i>maṇḍala</i>.</p>
vulva, ladies	The Third Brief Account	325-326		V	<p>“Thus have I heard, at one time the Bhagavān dwelt in the vulvas of the vajra ladies, the Body, Speech, and Mind of all Tathāgatas.”</p>	<p>Newman cites from <i>Vajragarbha</i> symbolic meaning associated with each word in this sentence. For “vulvas,” it means the material elements of space and so forth. For “vajra ladies,” it means objective phenomena.</p>

she	The Fourth Brief Account: Establishing the Teacher and the Requestor of the King of Tantra by means of “The Omniscient One,” and so forth	331		V	Likewise, Viśvarūpiṇī said in the <i>Yogānuviddha</i> : Śrī Viśvarūpiṇī bowed to Vajrabhairava and asked, "What is the <i>Yogānuviddha-tantra</i> , the supreme bliss of Vajrasattva?" With this and other statements she requested the <i>Yogānuviddha</i> .	I want to highlight here the female Viśvarūpiṇī as requesting the teachings of the <i>dharma</i> . Newman notes that her name, “Viśvarūpiṇī” means “she has the form of the universe - emptiness.
she	The Fourth Brief Account	331- 332		V	Likewise, Vajravārāhī said in the <i>Lakṣābhidhāna</i> : Vajravārāhī saluted Heruka, who consists of the three existences, and asked, “What is the <i>Lakṣābhidhāna-tantra</i> , the supreme bliss of Vajrasattva?” With this and other statements she requested the <i>Lakṣābhidhāna</i> .	Here, again, a female, Vajravārāhī is requesting the teachings of the <i>dharma</i> .
woman, female, young lady	The Fourth Brief Account	333		V	In this mantra system EVAM is not a term; there are many terms for even a single existent. And since there are many terms, no single term is chief because all terms demonstrate a single existent. For example, among woman, female, young lady, and so forth, woman is not the chief term because all of these demonstrate an existent that possesses breasts and hair.	Used as the object, “an existent,” in an example.
mother	The Fourth Brief Account	364	3	V	In the world of the cannibal demonesses a mother even thinks to eat her own son. How will one who is merciless towards her own offspring act towards another man?	As an example of false teachings that injure and harm other beings. “Son” is used as, perhaps, the extreme form, and “offspring” to include all her children.

maiden	The Fifth Brief Account: A Summary of the Teacher and so forth	367	35b	V	That which is taught in accordance with ultimate truth is devoid of phenomena imagined by one's own mind in order to achieve the transcendental <i>māhamudrā siddhi</i> that possesses the best of all aspects. Like a maiden's prognostic image in a mirror and so forth, the clear light of the yogis' own minds appears manifest in the sky.	The first, and unarguably most well-known, of eight types of prognostication. I have researched somewhat and do not know if there's a necessity for the one seeing the mirror to be a maiden (intermittently described as a young virgin) as is always the case when this metaphor is used in Buddhist literature.
maiden	The Fifth Brief Account	369		V	It has thoroughly forsaken intellection of existence and nonexistence. Like a prognostic in a maiden's mirror, it is not imagined by one's own mind. It is directly seen; an object of confidence.	Describing <i>vajrayoga</i> as being without partiality.
goddess	The Fifth Brief Account	369			The definitive meaning is: "It has abandoned object and subject, it is beyond the consciousness reality, it is not localized in existence or nirvana, it is the assembly of the Buddhas as well as the congregation of the goddesses, it is the nature of being the same taste together with this Gnosis Body."	females and males
maiden	The Fifth Brief Account	371		V	...the divine image that consists of emptiness and compassion — the pure mind that is like a maiden's prognostic image — is not characterized by form...	And again, in describing nonexistence and existence.
blood	The Sixth Brief Account: A Summary of the Mandalas, Initiations, and so forth	389			the six form aggregates [earth, water, fire, wind, semen, blood]	Is semen referring to only the male and blood the female, or is semen and blood a part of all humans as are the other four elements?
vulva	The Sixth Brief Account	393		V	...(9) the vulva: HA; (10) urination: HAH; (11) the divine organ HAM; (12) ejaculation: HĀ...	symbolism regarding the vowels

girl	The Sixth Brief Account	401		V	Up until the time she menstruates at the age of twelve, a girl is to be known as three families and five families. Up until the time he ejaculates at the age of sixteen, a male is to be known as three families and five families.	A linguistic slip, perhaps, with Newman translating “male” here instead of “boy” to be parallel with “girl”? It is interesting to note that girl’s mature at an earlier age than boys. “Mature” here refers to the origination of the gnosis stage in life.
goddesses	The Sixth Brief Account	402		V	Now I shall discuss the family members of the families. (Śrī Kālacakra I.2a says: "Buddhas" and so forth. Here, the Buddhas are the six aggregates — gnosis, consciousness, and so forth. The word 'also' in "gods and demons also" indicates the six <i>bodhisattvas</i> — the mind faculty and so forth; and likewise, the six elements and the six objects; and likewise, the six furies — the six action faculties, and the six fury goddesses — the six functions of the action faculties. The 'gods' are the twelve joints of the arms and legs — they will be explained later, and so will the eight <i>yoginis</i> , Carcikā and so forth. The 'demons' are the <i>naga</i> kings and the goddesses — Śvānāsyā and so forth.	females and males; females as the functions and objects, and males as the faculties
she, Mother Earth	The Seventh Brief Account: A Summary of the Cosmos: A Brief Account that Summarizes the Mantras of the Universe - the Digits of the Moon and so forth	414	I.3	V	At the end is she who holds - earth. [Since she acts as a base for sentient and non-sentient beings, “she who hold” (<i>dharā</i>) “Mother Earth” is “earth” (<i>pṛthvī</i>)]	Do not use violence or force with Mother Earth.
girl, maiden, young woman, old woman	The Seventh Brief Account	445 & 449-450	I.8	K	Because of the divisions of the <i>sattva guṇa</i> , the excessive measure of the digit of the first lunar day of the first (section) is a girl on the eleventh. [Likewise, that digit of the first lunar day] is a maiden on the twelfth [due to its excessive measure]. On the thirteenth it is a young woman. On the fourteenth it is an old woman. On the fifteenth it is fully matured.	Used as an object, a unit of measure, in a metaphor. I enunciate the use of “it” in the last sentence!
	The Seventh Brief Account	446	I.8	K	[The third (digit) becomes an old woman.]	In reference to astrological measurements.

	The Eighth Brief Account: A Summary of the Measurements of the Cosmos					N/A
	The Ninth Great Brief Account: The Formula For Knowing Astronomy					N/A
	The Tenth Great Brief Account: The Precept on the Procedure for the Svarodaya and the Machines					N/A
wisdom / mother	Śrī Kālacakra I.150-170	617	I.156	K	Method / Father / “drop”; Wisdom / Mother / “shakti”	The way the Bhagavān’s emanations manifest.
menses						used 14 times and always paired with semen as its equal and opposite

Appendix B: Female Specific Passages from *Chapter on the Individual*²⁷⁵

Search Term	Chapter	Pages	Stanza	K or V	Quote	Explanation
body, uterus	I - The Great Exposition on the Origination of the Body, Speech, and Mind and on the Investigation of the Four Noble Truths	7-8	4	both	Earth holds the seed present in the lotus, and water makes it sprout from there. Afterwards, heat makes it blossom and consumes the six flavors. Wind causes its growth, and space provides the room for growth. Thus, O king, in the course of time, there is completion. In due time, the divine conditions assist at the time of birth, in childhood, and so on. K This is the principle of conception. V	women as land (uterus and womb mean the same thing in English dictionary) In the K and V, these terms are used in describing the process of conception.
body, vulva	I - Body, Speech, and Mind; The Four Noble Truths	11	7	V	...due to the opening of the vulva up to two hands' breadth, birth takes place at the man-lion-stage, which may be from the seventh month up until the day of birth.	The K describes the complete process of life from conception to death according to ten stages. The man-lion is the fourth stage happening at birth.
body, uterine blood	I - Body, Speech, and Mind; The Four Noble Truths	12	8	V	The marrow, bones, <i>nāḍīs</i> , and sinew originate from semen. The skin, blood, and flesh originate from uterine blood, from a single drop of blood.	The K describing the process of developing life form.
faculties, female reproductive faculty	II - The Great Exposition on the Truth of Origination, and so on...	36	29	V	Those experienced in yoga should know that the entering of a mental states (<i>bhāva</i>) into the body and the entering of the body into a mental state are of the same taste, like space, due to the efficacy of the <i>guṇas</i> of <i>prakṛti</i> and due to the classification of the colors of the elements. K ...Similarly, in accordance with the classification of the body, the auditory faculty, the mental object, the female reproductive faculty, and the emission of semen are of the nature of space and are green in color. In accordance with the classification of mental states and due to the nature of gnosis, they are blue. V	This begins a series of stanzas describing the Kālacakra <i>maṇḍala</i> in terms of the body. One could try and make a chart with these components and their colors, mantra syllables, etc.

²⁷⁵ Wallace, Vesna. *The Kālacakratāntra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*. Bilingual edition. New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2004.

goddesses	II - The Truth of Origination	37-38	30	both	<p>...Thus, one should know the goddesses in the <i>maṇḍala</i>, together with the Buddhas, as the sense-objects and sense-faculties. K</p> <p>...one should know, in the mentioned sequence, the goddesses—who are the earth and other elements—and one should know the Buddhas—Vairocana and others, in the later taught <i>maṇḍala</i>—as the sense-objects and sense-faculties. This is a principle of the manner of the mutual embracing of wisdom and method. V</p>	It is painting the correspondences of the actions of the body to the Kālacakra <i>maṇḍala</i> and their meanings, which are learned in initiation.
body, uterine blood	II - The Truth of Origination	37	30	V	In the precious body, splendid uterine blood is the spirit of awakening (<i>bodhicitta</i>) itself, whose object is the sphere of phenomena (<i>dharmadhātu</i>).	This is quite a compliment and comparison.
body, sex organs	II - The Truth of Origination	38	30	V	Urination is wisdom, and the female sex organ is method. The male sex organ, or the emission of semen, is wisdom, and the faculty of the <i>śaṅkhinī</i> is method.	<i>śaṅkhinī</i> means vein, but is also known in ancient India to be a particularly horrible <i>ḍākinī</i> .
body, uterine blood	II - The Truth of Origination	39	31	V	In the case of women, the growth of the sun takes place until the occurrence of uterine blood, and in the case of men, until the production of semen at the end of the age of sixteen.	This is the principle of the development of the <i>nāḍīs</i> .
sky-walkers	II - The Truth of Origination	45	35	V	All the Siddhas are the hairs. Within the abode of the three worlds, Siddhas are of many kinds. Here in the external world, in the universe, there are three kinds of Siddhas—the sky-walkers, the earth-walkers, and those inhabiting the underworld. Among them, the sky-walkers have the hair on their heads, the earth-walkers are born in hiding places, and those inhabiting the lower worlds are born from the vulva and the male sexual organ.	In a phrase describing the origin of living beings, and how it corresponds to different parts of the body. i.e., “The salty ocean is urine, the ocean of liquor is sweat...” in this particular phrase, “the Siddhas are the hairs.” Usually sky-walkers refer to female <i>ḍākinīs</i> .

yoginī	III - The Great Exposition on the Battle Between Cakravartī and Barbarians, on the Tantric Families of Kālacakra, and on the Origination of the Families of the Nāḍīs	62	51	both	<p>When three years of time are multiplied by the number of the days of the year and are divided by the halves of the year, there are six families [of <i>yoginīs</i>]. Due to the classification of thirty-six months, there are thirty-six families of <i>yoginīs</i>. Dividing them by the days of the week, one obtains the obvious and definite deities in the Kālacakra. O king, upon dividing them by a fortnight, a list of names with male and female deities comes about. K</p> <p>...Due to the multiplication of six by six, there are thirty-six families of <i>yoginīs</i>, the <i>yoginīs</i> who belong to the method [beings] (<i>upāya</i>). V</p>	The text is explaining the derivation of the thirty-six <i>yoginīs</i> .
male and female deities	III - Cakravartī Battle; Tantric Families; Nāḍīs	62	51	K	O king, upon dividing them by a fortnight, a list of names with male and female deities comes about.	The beginning of this section is describing an internal battle “within one’s own body” between the <i>cakravartī</i> and Barbarians. This stanza describes the principle of the <i>yoginī-tantras</i> , which are specific divisions of three years. Various numbers of male and female deities in union are described in the <i>kālacakra-maṇḍala</i> .
yoginī	III - Cakravartī Battle; Tantric Families; Nāḍīs	65	53	K	...Three signs of the zodiac in the body of a wisdom [being], or in the <i>yoginī</i> and <i>yoga tantras</i> , are apparent and definite. There are ten Śaktīs and Krodhas respectively, and there are five Buddhas and goddesses.	The first part is “a clear and exact description of the <i>mudrās</i> in the <i>yoginī</i> and <i>yoga tantras</i> .” The second is a teaching of the numbers of male and female deities of the <i>kālacakra-maṇḍala</i> .
śaktīs	III - Cakravartī Battle; Tantric Families; Nāḍīs	67	53	V	The ten Śaktīs are the ten Perfections, and the ten Krodhas are Uṣṇīṣa and the others. They are each ten. There are five Buddhas and goddesses.	Buddhas: Akṣobhya, Amitābha, Ratnasambhava Amoghasiddhi, and Vairocana. The five goddesses are Vajradhātviśvarī, Pāṇḍarā, Māmakī, Locanā, and Tārā in the same order with their consorts.

goddesses	III - Cakravartī Battle; Tantric Families; Nāḍīs	66	53	V	They are each ten. There are five Buddhas and goddesses. The five Buddhas are Akṣobhya and others; and the five goddesses are Vajradhātviśvarī and the others. ³⁹ Footnote 39 states who the other eight Buddhas and goddesses are.	In her translation of The Chapter on Sādhana, Wallace uses the terms “male deities and goddesses” instead of “Buddhas and goddesses”. Compare to IV.67.
	IV - The Great Exposition on the Characteristics of Unfavorable Death and on the Severance of the Nāḍīs					What is missing - no particular gender indifferences in this section that I could find.
blood and semen	V - The Great Exposition on the Principles of Kālacakra and on the Characteristics of the Moment	129	82	V	Here in the cycle of existence, the moment of emission (<i>cyuti-kṣaṇa</i>)—which induces the origination of sentient beings, is accompanied by blood and semen in the womb, and has the characteristic of consciousness—causes the occasion of birth from the womb, the condition of an infant, child and so on.... The sun and moon have the characteristics of blood and semen.	This is a principle of the creator of a conventional reality.
sky-vajrī	V - Principles of Kālacakra; Characteristics of the Moment	139-140	91	both	<p>Neither the Self nor the creator bestows suffering and happiness, O king. Apart from the power of the mind, nothing, O king, neither bondage nor liberation, is [the bestower of suffering and happiness]. Just as space does not disappear [from a jar] when water is brought into the jar, so that sky-<i>vajrī</i>, who is the pervader of the universe and devoid of the sense-objects, is within the body. K</p> <p>Just as space does not disappear [from a jar] when water is brought into the jar, so the sky-<i>vajrī</i> is in the body, the sky-<i>vajrī</i> who pervades the universe, who is the mind that is purified in liberation through emptiness and the like, and who is devoid of the sense-objects, meaning, devoid of the <i>guṇas</i>—devoid of the <i>sattva</i>, <i>rajas</i>, and <i>tamas</i>, of the subtle elements (<i>tanmātra</i>), and the like, devoid of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth state, and lacking an inherent nature. This means that <i>vajrī</i>, the purified mind, does not have these two: external existence</p>	I chose this sentence because females are often referred to as sky-dwellers or those who are flying through the sky, as the term <i>khandro</i> , meaning <i>dākinī</i> in Tibetan, is derived from. It is interesting to see qualities of one outlined here in the “principle of the transmigratory and <i>nirvāṇic</i> minds.”

					and nonexistence, or annihilation. V	
16-year-old female consort	VI - The Great Exposition on Elixirs, Midwifery, and the like	173	115	both	<p>What else than one's own [<i>bodhi</i>]<i>citta</i>, always dropped down in union with a wisdom [consort], eliminates white leprosy in the body of <i>mantrīs</i> in half a year due to the obstruction of the wind of <i>prāṇa</i>? ... K</p> <p>...If it does not eliminate leprosy, then a <i>yogī</i> enjoys a sixteen-year-old female consort, the eating of meat, and drinking of liquor every day. His <i>bodhicitta</i>, dropped down but retained, during friction in the uterus for six months, eliminates leprosy due to the <i>kumbhaka-yoga</i>. There is no doubt in the Tathāgata's words here. V</p>	<p>This is the principle of the alleviation of leprosy.</p> <p><i>kumbhaka</i> means the base of a column.</p>
Viśvamātā	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	176	121	K	<p>At that time, with great force, it directs the <i>apāna</i> into the upward path. When the pair of winds is obstructed, after splitting the <i>uṣṇīṣa</i>, it reaches the most excellent abode. Thus, due to the rousing of the <i>vajra</i> in the mind, which is accompanied with a sense-object, it obtains the power of flying. This [power] has the nature of the five extrasensory perceptions, and it is Viśvamātā of <i>yogīs</i>.</p>	<p>Described as the ultimate state in the principle of <i>prāṇāyāma</i>. Bu Ston, "because it is the method of generating the immutable bliss."</p>

medicinal substances, uterine blood	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	179	125	K	...Uterine blood, combined with semen and ingested, eliminates the disease in a year.	each of these, uterine blood and semen, has an outer and an inner component
medicinal substances, uterine blood	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	180	125	V	In the outer environment, <i>rakta</i> is talc and it is uterine blood within the individual, as well as an equal portion [of those two].	<i>rakta</i> could mean any one of various plants such as vermilion, cinnabar, or saffron, or it could mean menstrual fluid or blood of any type. It means the color red and associated red things.
medicinal substances, uterine blood	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	180	125	V	... "A flower" is uterine blood; in the outer environment, it is the black bee <i>keśarājikā</i> and its honey. The nasal [inhalation of] a flower, similar to [the inhalation of] uterine blood, along with meditation [practiced] for up to six months, eliminates old age in the body accompanied by gray hair, for those who are engaged in meditation. This is the principle of nasal inhalation.	relieving of old age
Viśvamātā	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	183	128	both	One visualizes Viśvamātā, who is similar to the stainless moon, [as standing] on top of the moon in the lotus of the heart. K Along with <i>prāṇāyāma</i> , one visualizes that in the lotus of the heart there is Viśvamātā, similar to the stainless moon, having the hands in a wish-fulfilling <i>mudrā</i> with a lotus, abiding on the lotus-seat in the <i>vajra</i> [-posture], and having one face and two arms. V	Part of the principle of the alleviation of a malignant disease.
Viśvamātā	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	185	129	V	Now a mantra: "Om phreṃ Viśvamātā, eliminate, eliminate the <i>vajra</i> -like sharp pains, bring on my forbearance, bring on, <i>svāhā</i> ... (om phreṃ Viśvamāte vajrakaṇṭakān nāśaya nāśaya mama śantiṃ kuru kuru svāhā)	Part of the principle of the alleviation of a malignant disease.
disease / illness, of pregnant women	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	205-206	146	K	One should place [the numbers] seven, twelve, one, fourteen, two, thirteen, eight, eleven, sixteen, three, then, five, nine, six, fifteen, and four in [their respective] sections. The sum [of the numbers, or 136,] when [divided into] four [equal] sections, is thirty-four [in each section]. At the time of childbirth, having drawn [the <i>yantra</i>], one should show to pregnant women the entire	This is the principle of child delivery.

					glorious <i>cakra</i> on the back of a measuring vessel.	
yoginī	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	206-212	146-153	both		This section describes principles of child delivery, diseases, and unfortunate conditions of children.
yoginī	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	206	147	K	There are sixty-four <i>yoginīs</i> who are clearly on the earth and who are well-known as Mothers. [Among them] twenty-seven are called “a womb,” ten are called “a day,” eleven are called “a month,” and the other fifteen are called “a year.” On the entire earth, they seize a child. Moreover, at the time of childbirth, they cause sharp pains in the womb and contractions in the uterus.	This is the principle of the [<i>yoginīs</i>] called “a womb.”
yoginī	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	210	151	K	...Worshipping of the <i>yoginīs</i> is definitely useful from the [time in the] womb until the age of fifteen.	This is the principle of the worship of the <i>yoginīs</i> .
disease / illness, Mother-diseases	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	211-212	152	K	Recognizing these sign of “Mother-diseases” of those children—due to the word “very,” [it refers to the diseases] of children who are seized with cruel grips—one should perform oblations, and the like, in the <i>maṇḍala</i> . Otherwise, if we do not give the offerings, the previously mentioned Mothers, born as demons, will not release [the children] due to the efficacy of the <i>guṇas</i> of <i>prakṛti</i> .	What is missing - these stanzas are not to be mistaken for cures of ailments of a woman who has just given birth, but are cures for children who are taken ill— “pained by or seized by Mothers.” Not sure why they are labeled Mother-diseases. Perhaps these are severe diseases possibly thought to be caused by either unfortunate genetics, illnesses or karma of one’s Mother.
private organ	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	212	153	K	The entire body becomes white, O king, and very subtle bold appear. The neck is bent together with the body, blood drips at the mouth, at the private organ, or at the rectum. In that case, one should not perform worship, because the wantonness of confused <i>mantrins</i> will arise. The death of that [child] is inevitable, and neither gods, nor men, nor <i>nāgas</i> can ward it off.	This is the principle of the signs of death [of a child].

ḍākinī (is strangely not in the Sanskrit index as no words beginning with retroflex letters are included)	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	213	154	K	The <i>nāgas</i> , <i>yakṣas</i> , <i>grahas</i> , <i>rākṣasas</i> who are born in the family of Danu [<i>asuras</i>], <i>piśācas</i> , <i>śākinīs</i> , evil <i>nāgas</i> who delight in human blood, <i>ḍākinīs</i> , <i>rūpikās</i> , <i>kumbhāṇḍas</i> , <i>kṣetrapālas</i> , <i>gaṇapatis</i> , <i>pretas</i> , goblins, <i>siddhas</i> , and the lords of <i>ḍākinīs</i> who are associated with epilepsy cause supreme well-being and should be worshiped in the <i>maṇḍala</i> .	Depending upon the malady, worship as appropriate with the position of their <i>mūdras</i> .
sons of barren women	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	216	158	K	This is for [bringing forth] the sons of barren women and for the relief and strength of people who are struck by <i>grahas</i> .	The last three stanzas of this section are for particularly evil inhabitants to rid of them by building a <i>maṇḍala</i> in the woods. To note: Nowadays “barren” denotes land. “Barren” means infertile, unproductive, unfruitful, desert, waste, impoverished, uncultivable. This term is demeaning in its use regarding women. Better to use “childless”. Also using “childless” make the metaphor easier to understand for those who are not familiar with the archaic use of the term “barren.”
yoginī	VI - Elixirs, Midwifery, and the Like	217	160		One should offer these—milk, grains, sesame, and the life, grass and a hundred pieces of fire-wood from five sappy trees, an honorific gift, invocation, praise, and worship—for the sake of the relief of those pained by the Mothers on the precious earth. A worship of thirty-six <i>yoginīs</i> , O king, takes place all the time.	Gifts for the mom and worship of <i>yoginīs</i> “all the time.”
	VII - The Great Exposition of Our Own and Others’ Philosophical Views, Logic, and Analysis					What is missing - no particular gender indifference in this section that I could find.

Appendix C: Chart of 36 *Yoginīs* from *Chapter on Initiation*²⁷⁶

36 Types (stanza 135)	Name	Occupation	Characteristic	Bodily Characteristics (stanza 141-142)	Location (stanza 135)	Realm (stanza 137)	Stanza	Corresponding Male (stanza 136)
4 castes								
laborers (<i>śūdrī</i>)	Tārā	field plower	auspicious; lotus	thin-limbed with fine hair, delicate hands and feet, and affectionate; somewhat thin, pendulous, but [her] eyes are unwavering, with curly hair	auspicious forest seat (<i>pīṭhas</i>)	egg of Brahmā	130, 140	Buddhas
		cow herder						
		mud worker						
		wood worker at home sites						
warriors (<i>kṣatriṇī</i>)	Pāṇḍarā	armies of foot soldiers	conch-possessor; water-one	immodest, with intense desire, fond of many quarrels, with little hair;				
		riding horses						
		riding elephants						
		riding chariots						

²⁷⁶ Mical, Wiesiek. “36 Castes.” Unpublished First Draft Edition for 84000.co, April 28, 2023 and Andresen, Jensine. “Kālacakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives.” Harvard University, 1997

merchants (<i>vaiśyā</i>)	Locanā or Kṣmā	traders and business people	elephant	thick, short, solid-limbed, [one] to whom sense objects are very hard, with thick hair				
		scribes						
		physicians						
priests (<i>brāhmaṇī</i>)	Māmakī	recitations of R̥g Veda (veda of Verses)	variagated	tall, full in all limbs, indeed, one by whom sense objects are taken lightly, [with] long hair				
		Yajur Veda (Veda of Ritual Formula)						
		Sāma Veda (Veda of Melodies)						
		Atharva Veda (Veda of Sorcery)						
		wife of a Brāhman who resides in the forest (hermit)						
		female Brāhmaṇī, who exhibits superior behavior, is sweet, pure and monogamous (ascetic)						
		wife of the ascetic Brāhman who is neither bound to material things nor to household activities (liberated person)						
6 vajras, six senses					best village of the sense objects / field (<i>kṣetras</i>)	on the abode of the best gods		<i>bodhisattvas</i>

	Śabdavajrā	copper worker	speech				130	
	Rasavajrā	wine seller	taste				130	
	Rūpavajrā	goldsmith	form				130	
	Gandhavajrā	māla maker	smell				130-131	
	Sparśavajrā	weaver (spinner)	touch				131	
	Dharmadhātuvajrā	jeweler	<i>dharma</i> realm				131	
8 Carcikās, who gave birth to spirits, womb of harmful spirits / hungry ghosts					near dwelling / subordinate field (<i>upakṣetra</i>)	in the realm of hungry ghosts		hungry ghosts
	Cāmuṇḍā	butcher					131	
	Vaiṣṇavī / Viṣṇvī	potter					131	
	Vārāhī	betel-seller					131	
	Kaumarī / Ṣaṇmukhī (six-faced)	prostitute					131	
	Aindrī / Indrī	seamstress					131	
	Brahmāṇī	fisherwoman					132	
	Īśvarī	dancer / performer					132	
	Lakṣmī	washerwoman					132	
10 wrathful, divisions of wrathfulness, born from wrath / <i>krodha</i>					meeting place / finest cities	born of wrath in the realm of mortals		wrathful protectors

	Jambhī / Jambhanī	dyer of cloth					132	
	Stambhakī	basket maker					132	
	Māla	oil presser					132	
	Atibalā / Subṛhadatibalā	iron smith / copper worker					132	
	Mārīcī	leather worker / tanner					133	
	Bhṛkuṭī	wood worker					133	
	Buddhā / Śrībuddhā	barber / wife of a barber					133	
	Śṛṅkhalā	flute maker / maker of reeds					133	
	Vajrākṣī	well-digger					133	
	Atinīlā / Veṇunṛtyā	dancer with flute / very blue (piper and dancer)					133	
8 extremely wrathful animal- faced ones			auspicious		sacred groves	in the underworld		demons in Nāga realm
	Mlecchā	resides in the 8 cemeteries		dog-faced			134	
	Haḍḍinī	sweeper of excrement		boar-faced			134	
	Mātaṅgī	generates heat		jackal-faced			134	
	Tāpinī	assist a Tajik		tiger-faced			134	
	Varvarī	lives on the edge		crow-faced			134	
	Pukkasī	cremator		vulture-faced			134	
	Śrībhillī	wild woman		Garuḍa-faced			134	

	Śabarī	jungle or mountain dweller		owl-faced			134	
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Appendix D: Female Specific Passages from *Chapter on Sādhana*²⁷⁷

Search Term	Chapter	Pages	Stanza	K or V	Statement	Summary
uterine blood	I - The Great Exposition on the Location, Protection, and Disclosure of Sins	14	2	V	The day is the sun, uterine blood, and lotus; and in accordance with the classification of mental states, the night is the moon, semen, and vajra. The unity of these two is Kālacakra, supreme bliss (<i>mahāsukha</i>).	This is a perfect explanation summing up the numerous stanzas on semen and uterine blood. They are usually mentioned as a pair in symbolic ways; therefore, I do not include them in my analysis.
uterine blood	II - The Great Exposition on the Generation of the Body by Means of the Stage of Generation	36	10	V	Thus, there are eighty consonants on the sun and in uterine blood during conception. This is the principle. Similarly, semen is in uterine blood. In the middle of semen is a repository consciousness, a <i>gandharva</i> being. It has the five [gnoses]...	An image is being built in terms of a body, how a body is created and mantra syllables as well as masculine and feminine symbolism.
Viśvamātā	II - The Stage of Generation	41	15	both	Embraced Viśvamātā has a golden luster, four faces, and eight lotus hands. In her right [hands] there are a cleaver, a goad, a sounding <i>damaru</i> , and a rosary, respectively. In her left [hands] there are a skull, a noose, a hundred-petal lotus, and a sublime jewel. She is in the <i>pratyālīḍha</i> [pose]. She has twelve eyes and the tiara of the Lord of Jinas, and she is marked with <i>mudrās</i> .	There are many stanzas with descriptions of Viśvamātā and goddesses in the Kālacakra <i>maṇḍala</i> , too numerous to list here. <i>Mudrās</i> in this case means “seals”

²⁷⁷ Wallace, Vesna. *The Kālacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Sādhana Together with the Vimalaprabhā*. American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2011.

lady, goddesses	II - The Stage of Generation	43	16	V	<p>Just as a classification of the Divine Lord's different faces accords with the different [colors] of the four cardinal directions, so it is in the case of the goddesses. Viśvamātā's eastern face has a golden luster. Her right [face] is white, her left [face] is red, and her back [face] is blue. It is the same in the case of the Pītā [goddesses]. In the case of the Śuklā [goddesses], the front [face] is white, the right [western face] is black, the back one is red, and the left one is yellow. In the case of the Raktā [goddesses], the front [face] is red, the right one is yellow, the left one is blue, and the back one is white. In the case of the Kṛṣṇā [goddesses], the front [face] is black, the right one is red, the left one is white, and the back one is yellow.</p> <p>The ornaments and the five <i>mudrās</i> of the goddesses of the womb lotus should be known to be the same as those of the Divine Lady. This is the principle.</p>	Shows the different points of view of the different goddesses.
goddesses	II - The Stage of Generation	55	27	V	<p>Moreover, the goddesses who stand on the petals are of the same colors and forms as the principal female deities who stand on the pericarps. Likewise, the eight sets of eight <i>yoginīs</i> who are on the petals of the lotuses have complexions of the colors of the principal female deities.</p>	This is to demonstrate that there are more females in the Kālacakra <i>maṇḍala</i> than there are males. Here principle female deities are aligned with eight sets of eight <i>yoginīs</i> .
goddesses	II - The Stage of Generation	72	49	V	<p>Therefore, the method [being], a secondary deity, in an embrace with the wisdom [being], is on the lotus of the moon in the corner section within the intermediate directions. Likewise, the goddesses who are secondary deities, in an embrace with male deities, or method [beings], are on the disc of the sun in the cardinal directions.</p>	In Kālacakra, as in many other tantras, there are <i>yum-yabs</i> , as opposed to <i>yab-yums</i> that are commonly seen in public thangkas. This first part of this statement is referring to the male deity as the secondary deity, and the latter part is describing the opposite.
goddesses	III - The Great Exposition on the Origination of the Deities of Prāṇa	80-81	50	V	<p>The goddesses sing: "Divine Lord, you are the benefactor of all sentient beings. O <i>vajrī</i>, spiritual mentor of the gods, protect us, who are desirous of pleasure!" Here, the goddesses Locanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍārā. and Tārā, who are of the nature of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity, excite him for the sake of the flow of the five [elemental] <i>maṇḍalas</i> of the simpletons and for the sake of the Divine Lord's concern for the world. This is the principle of excitement by means of the goddesses' vajra songs.</p>	This is a stanza describing their important role in motivating or exciting "the consciousness of one in the state of sleep in order to wake him up," the Divine Lord. The text repeatedly reminds the reader that the goddesses purpose is to benefit beings in this way.

goddesses	III - The Origination of the Deities of Prāṇa	94	67	K	The remaining deities in the <i>maṇḍala</i> clearly and definitely abide in the vajra pose. Goddesses, present in the directions of their own families, abide in the lotus pose on the top of the moon of their respective lotuses. The gods who are associated with the family of <i>nāgas</i> and who stand in the chariots of their respective directions abide in the vajra pose. The goddesses who are on the petals of their gods and [the goddesses standing on the petals] of those born from the elements are in the <i>lalita</i> pose.	
Viśvamātā	III - The Origination of the Deities of Prāṇa	125	102	both	The action <i>cakras</i> in the joints of the arms and legs have 360 deities. [The <i>cakras</i>) called "performance" in the joints of the knuckles of the fingers have sixteen <i>caṇḍās</i> and <i>nāgas</i> . O king, the glorious <i>vajrī</i> is due to the purification of time in accordance with the divisions of years, months, and the like. The mental appearance [here] is not the sun. Viśvamātā is purified by the efficacy of every single day. K Thus, in the <i>maṇḍala</i> , the principal male deity is the inconceivable mind vajra, and the principal female deity is Viśvamātā, who is of the nature of emptiness and gnosis. This is a rule. V	This is the principle of the purification of the <i>cakras</i> .
Viśvamātā	IV - The Great Exposition on the Sādhana of the Stage of Completion	164-165	122	K	<i>Prāṇa's</i> entering into the central [channel] is an embracing of Viśvamātā devoid of sense objects. A throbbing of one's own vajra that has entered the lotus is also the entering of the moon and the sun into the central [channel]. This yoga of the <i>yogī</i> is the bliss present in the intense delight of sexual pleasure during the nonemission of the seed, and it is an even greater mystery than the great mystery of the lord, because of the benefit of the <i>mudra-siddhi</i> .	Bu ston gives a more detailed translation of this passage (put together).

wife	IV - The Stage of Completion	168 & 169	124	both	<p>...The bliss that arises due to the nonemission of drops is the worship of someone else's wife out of passion. K</p> <p>...The bliss that arises due to the nonemission of a drop of semen is the worship of someone else's wife. "Someone else's wife" is the transcendence of wisdom, which transcends the cycle of transmigration; and "someone else" is Vajrasattva, who also transcends the cycle of transmigration. "Someone else's wife" is his wife. The worship of her is due to the <i>yogīs'</i> passion, as a result of imperishable bliss, Furthermore, in terms of the external [practice], worship of someone else's wife out of passion is the worship of the wife or of someone else who is offered at the time of initiation by a donor. This means, since those who have pledges are themselves free from attachment, for them, there is no breaking of pledges. V</p>	
women, practice with	IV - The Stage of Completion	172	125	V	<p>Likewise, the path of <i>bodhicitta</i> is a circulation of the channels. The movement of semen should be directed upward. This is the principle in the <i>Root Tantra</i>. This is the principle of the practice with women.</p>	It is unclear, and unmentioned, if women should also train in this way or should they direct their energy upwards instead of downwards, or some other such instruction.
vulva	IV - The Stage of Completion	173-174	127	K	<p>...Due to the mind's penetration into the empty, this sexual union, which brings about the same taste, is not in the vulva.</p>	Penetration is with the mind and not sexual. "According to Bu ston, this is the definitive meaning of sexual union."
uterine blood	V - The Great Exposition on Diverse Sādhana	191	142	V	<p>"Passed into the sun" means here, just as <i>bodhicitta</i> that has passed into uterine blood within the woman's uterus becomes of the same essence as that uterine blood, so the moon that has entered the sun becomes of the same essence in Mātā's lotus.</p>	There is great fascination in tantra with women's menstruation.

Mātā, goddess, twelve-year-old	V - Diverse Sādhana	191	142	both	<p>One should emit [the gnosis <i>cakra</i>] that is similar to the secretion of the moon and is complete, from the aperture of one's own vajra into Mātā's lotus. Passed into the sun [therein], it becomes of the same taste [as the sun] and is endowed with vowels and consonants. In them, it becomes the gnosis seed syllable of the rites of pacification and the like, in accordance with their families. That [gnosis seed syllable] gives rise to the goddess or to the male deity, who gives the result to the <i>yogi</i>. <i>K</i></p> <p>Just as that seed gives rise to a girl or a boy, who matures at the age of twelve or at the age of sixteen respectively, so it gives rise to the goddess or to the male deity, the method [being], who is meditated upon by the <i>yogi</i>. This is the principle.</p> <p>Therefore, the goddess who is meditated upon as if she were a twelve-year-old becomes a boon giver. Likewise, a god who is meditated upon as if he were a sixteen-year-old becomes a boon giver. Thus, all of the <i>yogi</i>'s rites, <i>siddhis</i>, and joys become accomplished. Otherwise there is only a mental affliction. In all the <i>tantras</i> there is a restriction of time for those who are diligent and who meditate day and night, but there is no [such restriction] for others who are of the age of one hundred. This is the principle of <i>siddhis</i>. <i>V</i></p>	This is an interesting stanza and tells us two important things; (1) this practice appears to support either a female or male consort, and (2) the twelve and sixteen-year-olds are in the mind of the beholder, not actual twelve and sixteen-year-olds.
śaktis	V - Diverse Sādhana	194	145	K	<p>After taking the person for whom the <i>sādhana</i> is practiced away from that [home], let these two enter the lord's <i>maṇḍala</i>. Having received the lord's permission, delighted Locanā and the other [four <i>mātṛkās</i>] bathe the person for whom the <i>sādhana</i> is practiced with the vases of ambrosia. The ten principal <i>śaktis</i> worship him. Rūpa[vajrā] and the others make him thrive. Lāsyā and the others, along with the ten [<i>śaktis</i>], clearly gratify him.</p>	
goddesses	V - Diverse Sādhana	195	146	K	<p>Those known as the female <i>bhūtas</i> do not frighten him. Ten excellent [goddesses] related to the <i>krodhas</i> guard him. The female <i>nāgas</i> kiss him, the twelve young goddesses embrace him, and the <i>caṇḍās</i> protect him. Thus, for the sake of pacification and prosperity on the entire earth, the <i>yogī</i> should meditate on all those who bring about the supreme bliss to the person for whom the <i>sādhana</i> is practiced.</p>	

wife	V - Diverse Sādhana	246	205	K	If, due to [someone else's] pedigreed horse, in [another man's] purebred mare, another pure bred, male horse is conceived, the splendor [of the male colt] is due to the majesty of that [horse]. Moreover, is there not a gain for the owner [of the mare]? Since those attached [to their wives] guard their wives day and night by themselves, alas, there is the unwholesome bond of action. Who are you, and who is your wife when you die?	<i>kāmadāna</i> , and the fact that women are used for their pedigree. This section (stanzas 204 - 224) is an exposition on <i>kāmadāna</i> and similar techniques.
wife	V - Diverse Sādhana	246	206	K	If in the world of men, donations of cows, land, and other possessions and donations of medicine and food eliminate entire diseases, hunger, and thirst, then, what can one say of the gift of sensual love to everyone, which brings the result of immutable bliss at the time of the [communal] feast? In the secret offering, one should offer one's chosen wife, sister, and beautiful daughter.	<i>kāmadāna</i>
wife	V - Diverse Sādhana	247	207	K	A respectable courtesan is an actual consort. A mistress and someone else's wife are pledge [consorts]. An independent woman is a Dharma consort. One's own wife who delights in many sexual pleasures is a gnosis consort. A respectable courtesan is twelve years old and delights in supreme bliss. A woman from a good family is sixteen years old. An independent woman is twenty years old. One's own wife who has her own daughter is thirty years old.	In Wallace's notes is included Bu ston interpretation that the twelve year old "courtesan" is the actual consort because she does the work of assisting all people.
gift of sensual love	V - Diverse Sādhana	247	208	K	Long ago, for the sake of buddhahood, buddhas gave their lands, elephants, horses, chariots, and numerous golden items. They even gave their heads, blood, and flesh. Since the desired buddhahood still did not come about, they offered a gift of sensual love. This kind of men's secret offering generates buddhahood in the family of the Progenitor of the Jinas.	Bu ston shows "Progenitor" as "Prajñāpātmitā," and "Jinas" as "the psycho physical aggregates that are devoid of obscurations." "Men" reads "holy ones" in the Mongolian translation.
wife	V - Diverse Sādhana	247- 248	209	K	Gold is equal to copper, and god's crest gem is equal to a fragment of crystal. If a young woman from a pure family is acquired [in exchange] for the gifts of the sensual love of a respectable courtesan, musk for a piece of leather, a purebred horse for an ass, the lord of the most excellent elephants for a goat, and a goddess in the family of the Progenitor of the Jinas for a gift of one's wife, is this not a gain for that [man]?	<i>kāmadāna</i>

wife	V - Diverse Sādhanaś	253	221	K	In the family of the progenitor of the Jinas, generosity and ethical discipline are accomplished, and patience and zeal are accomplished. Meditative stabilization, wisdom, method, aspiration, power, and gnosis are swiftly accomplished in this life for the <i>yogī</i> whose mind is joyful due to offering his wife. Deluded are the men who, having produced a bond of attachment to her, go to hell.	<i>kāmadāna</i>
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Appendix E: Academic Sources Referencing *Passionate Enlightenment* (PE)

Critique	Author	Title	Year	General Context	Page	Specific Context	My Comments
+	Allione	Women of Wisdom	2000	Allione appreciates the familiarity with which Shaw recounts as history	67-68	"Through PE, I discovered that there were many similarities between how my practice and teaching were evolving and how the early tantric women practiced together."	This is how I also felt, a pass-life remembrance, upon reading the book
+ / -	Andresen	Kalachakra: Textual and Ritual Perspectives	1997	gaps in previous scholarship on the methods in the study of tantra; Andersen cites Shaw in regard to the 3 types of tantric initiation process; Andresen's view is that no part of Kalachakra can be described as "gynocentric", even the dominatrix roles women seemingly play in its Chapter IV	43; 201; 235-236	"a so-called "feminist" phase, in which women's perceived agency in tantric life is highlighted"; ritual empowerment, reading transmissions, and secret oral instructions; "attempt to extrapolate from scanty biographical evidence to argue that women displayed significant agency in Buddhist tantric communities"	Legitimization; A citation; Shaw didn't talk about Kalachakra in her book, her focus was on the <i>yoginītantras</i>
+	Arnold	As Long As Space Endures	2009	author of one of the chapters	153-168	writing on "Palden Llamo: Supreme Guardian Goddess of the Dalai Lamas"	She would not be included in this book alongside other esteemed authors if they didn't think she was a good researcher
-	Davidson	Indian Esoteric Buddhism	2002	feminist viewpoint that tries to perpetuate its own goals	97	First chapter of Vyaktabhāvānugata-tattva-siddhi, a "gemlike treatise" is geared towards men.	It depends on how that one chapter, even though geared towards men, treats women. Even then, the rest of the book may be a "gem".
+	Diemberger	When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty	2007	informed by feminism; works in reaction to male-biased views of established scholarship	15; 99	Cites PE in retelling Lakṣmīṅkarā's (Chokyi Dronma) story	

+	Gier	The yogī and the Goddess	1997	clarifies basic issues such as tantra's subversion of conventional gender roles, and that the 'self' is a dynamic, organic, interrelated and alive.	282-283	Buddhist tantra is Śāktism; women were highly valued in tantra	His findings are on par with Shaw's in that tantra is female and a female voice needs to be (re)given to it.
-	Gray	Disclosing the Empty Secret	2005	the agrees there is erosion of feminine in tantra, but gynocentric origins are under question	442-443, note 57	Shaw's strong argument concerning the agency of female practitioners in the early Indian tradition is not well-supported by extant evidence	Shaw may be correct, but the evidence is not there.
+	Herrmann-Pfandt	Yay Yum Iconography	1997	for the first time women are actively investigating their own history of tantra	13, 34 n53	Cites Shaw's PE as one of the most comprehensive studies along with Allione WoW, however she does question Shaw's results in a footnote citing the lack of male subordinate images in tantric Buddhism	She quotes Shaw many times throughout her article. Herrmann-Pfandt had presumably not yet come across any <i>yum-yab</i> images in her research.
+	Jacoby	Love and Liberation	2014	as an example of one of the few positive portrayals of females in tantra	189	goddesses deserving valorization	Her comment is neither directly positive nor negative, but legitimatizes Shaw's work.
+	Martin	The Woman Illusion	2005	cites Shaw as a source for the biography of Machik Jobum, renowned as being the emanation body of Indrabudhi's Lady Lakṣmīkāra	43	He quotes from Shaw describing Lakṣmīkāra as "one of the founding mothers of tantric Buddhism"	
+	Poss	Claiming Notability for Women Activists in Religion	2020	Shaw is one of these 10 women chosen for their noteworthy work, although not yet identified as notable	41-60	Chapter 3	A long overdue recognition.
+ / -	Simmer-Brown	Dakini's Warm Breath	2001	although she proffers problems in Shaw's methodology and replacement of a patriarchal with a gynocentric one, Simmer-Brown cites Shaw numerous times along with other well-known authors throughout her book regarding the Tibetan version of the ḍākinī culture	18,19-20,113-115,148, 300 n. 31	"she draws historical conclusions based on symbolic expressions of the dakinī in the tantric literature she studied"	The sheer number of times that Simmer-Brown utilized and discussed Shaw's book in her pages is enough to warrant a further look.

/	Singh	Female Donors at Sarnath	2019	uses Shaw in opposition with Davidson on their opposing interpretations of female donors in Medieval Buddhism	6-7	Vajrayāna allowed for females to attain to perfection through the merits of meditation	Perhaps it was timing of her book, but Shaw is opposed with Davidson.
+ / -	Wedemeyer	Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism	2013	cites Shaw in promoting the idea that tantra was tribal in origin; as a researcher who reaches a narrative of triumph from the “decline of Buddhism”, an opposing but similar trope than that of Davidson’s	22; 50	He posits the theory of synthesis— “a bricolage of the prehistoric, tribal, and Śaiva models.”; the Shaw cites as a narrative of progress is the same data that Davidson cites for his narrative of decline	He also cites Davidson (and Samuel) in the same manner as and next to Shaw — legitimization; “the two only differ in their choice of interpretive model”
+	White	Kiss of the Yoginī	2003	cites Shaw several times; for hypothesizing, along with many others, female leaders in Indian tantric origin, for her knowledge of Buddhist yoginī tantras and female maṇḍala symbology	120, 279 n1, 298 n150, 299 n10, 305 n134; 304 n111	He admits that Shaw “imputes greater agency and intentionality to (these) female figures than I find in the Hindu material.”	Since hardly anything was written down regarding the female viewpoint, this is not surprising.
+	Young	Courtesans and Tantric Consorts	2004	cites a translated passage of <i>Caṇḍramahāroṣaṇa</i> , research regarding <i>hijrās</i> , an informative explanation of the drops, along with many other scholars on topics regarding prostitutes, and separately, Machig Labdron.	102 n37, 145 n27 & n34, 147 n51, 163 n54, 176 n1	“Shaw argues that women contributed to the development of tantra and were respected, active participants in it. Her frequent reading of legendary and mythical sources in creating a history of women in tantra is problematic, as is her reliance primarily on one tantra, the <i>Caṇḍramahāroṣaṇa</i> . Despite this, read carefully there is much of value in her work.”	When there are not enough sources, and one wants to create a history of women, legend, myth, and intuition needs to be relied upon. That creates the value.

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