



DOI 10.31696/2618-7043-2019-2-1-40-50
УДК 294.3

Original Paper
Оригинальная статья

Imagination, Desire, and Aesthetics in Engendering a Vision of Śambhala

V. A. Wallace

University of California, Santa Barbara, United States of America,
e-mail: vwallace@religion.ucsb.edu

Abstract: the legend of Śambhala and a related eschatological battle between the twenty-fifth *kalkī* king of Śambhala and the enemy of Dharma, which initially appeared in the eleventh-century Indian, Buddhist tantric tradition of the *Kālacakrantra*, proliferated in the later Tibetan and Mongolian sources. In the nineteenth, and particularly in the early twentieth-century Mongolia, when the demolishing of Buddhist monasteries and persecution of Buddhist monks were carried out by the Mongolian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, a wealth of literature on meditational and ritual practices related to the transference of consciousness (*pho ba*) to the Buddhist kingdom of Śambhala emerged. Witnessing the executions of monks and a destruction of Buddhism in Mongolia, Mongolian lamas in the country's capital felt the urgency to compose practical guides to a swift transference of consciousness to Śambhala for the lamas who were facing an immanent death. The instructions on the transference of consciousness to Śambhala abound in meditations with visualization and imagination practices and accompanying rituals.

Keywords: Kālacakra, Kalāpa; *pho ba*, *kalkī*, Sukhavatī, *sadhana*; Śambhala; transference of consciousness

For citation: Wallace V. A. Imagination, Desire, and Aesthetics in Engendering a Vision of Śambhala. *Orientalistica*. 2019;2(1):40–50. DOI: 10.31696/2618-7043-2019-2-1-40-50.

Воображение, желание и эстетика в воплощении видения Шамбалы

В. А. Уоллес

Калифорнийский университет, Санта-Барбара, США,
e-mail: vwallace@religion.ucsb.edu

Резюме: легенда о Шамбале и связанной с ней эсхатологической битве между двадцать пятым кальки-царем Шамбалы и врагом Дхармы, первоначально в XI в. по Р. Х. появившись в индийской буддийской тантрической традиции калачакратантры, впоследствии получила распространение и в более поздних тибетских и монгольских источниках. В Монголии в XIX, и особенно в начале XX в., в период разрушения буддийских монастырей и преследования буддийских монахов Революционной партией монгольских народов появилось много литературы по медитативным и ритуальным практикам, связанным с перене-



сением сознания (фо ба) в буддийское царство Щамбалы. Будучи свидетелями казней монахов и разрушения буддизма в Монголии, монгольские ламы в столице страны чувствовали необходимость составить практические руководства по быстрому переносу сознания в Щамбалу для лам, которым грозила неминуемая смерть. Инструкции по переносу сознания в Щамбалу изобилуют медитациями, сопряженными с практиками визуализации и воображения, а также сопутствующими ритуалами.

Ключевые слова: калапа; Калачакра; сознание, перенесение его; Щамбала; 'pho ba, kalkī, Sukhavatī, sādhan

Для цитирования: Wallace V. A. Imagination, Desire, and Aesthetics in Engendering a Vision of Śambhala. *Ориенталистика*. 2019;2(1):40–50. DOI: 10.31696/2618-7043-2019-2-1-40-50.

Among the abundant Tibetan-language sources in Mongolia that date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one finds a number of ritual texts and prayers dealing with imagination and visualization practices pertaining to rebirth in Śambhala. Sources that form a basis for this presentation are Agvan Damdinsüren's (Ngag dbang rta mgrin bsrud) *The Swift Path to Kalāpa: A Compilation of the Layout of Śambhala and Ritual Offering to The Dharma Kings and Kalkīs* (*Shambha la'i zhing gi bkod pa'i 'don sgrigs chos rgyal rigs ldan rnam la mchod pa'i cho ga ka la par bgrod pa'i myur lam zhes bya ba bzhug so*), Minjüür Dechin Shiirev's *The Jewel Steps of a Fortunate Disciple, A Prayer for a Sure Rebirth in the Land of Śambhala of the Great Siddhi, in the Land that Captivates a Person's Mind for a Definite Meeting with the Dharma of Raudra Kalkī* (*Khünii Oyunyg Barigch Oron, Deed Büteliin Shambalyn Orond Magadtai Törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvyn Shashintai Magad Uirakhyn Erööl, Khuvytai Taviin Erdeniin Gishgüür Khemeekh Orshvoi*), and Zava Damdin's (*Blo bzang rta dbyangs*) *Elucidation of the Swift Path – A Guidance Manual to Transference of Consciousness to the Pure Land of Śambhala* (*Zhing mchog shambha la'i 'pho 'khrid myur lam gsal byed ces bya ba bzhugs so*). All three of these transference of consciousness ('pho ba) texts were composed in the early twentieth century, on the eve of the Communist revolution and shortly after, during the period of the immanent peril of Buddhism in Mongolia. The anxiety caused by social and personal crises and the sense of helplessness intensified desire for escape into an alternate world of experiences and enhanced the proliferation of literature related to 'pho ba practices for rebirth in Śambhala. As one would expect, the imagination and visualization practices described in these 'pho ba texts are about transformation from death in this troubled and perilous world to a new life in the idyllic Śambhala, in the enduring realm of Buddha Dharma. The imagination and visualization practices in the mentioned texts are ritual, trans-historical processes that look beyond the present world and its troubling circumstances. They function as a means for achieving the specific, intentional result and the practitioner's transformation in a new world.



As we will see later one, imagination integrates multifarious, concurrent, and complementary cognitive activities. A mental imagery that is created, evoked, manipulated, and examined in these processes necessitates the activation of the memory derived from previous perceptions of visual presentations such as painting. For example, in his *Elucidation of the Swift Path – A Guidance Manual to Transference of Consciousness to the Pure Land of Śambhala*, Zava Damdin instructs the practitioner that prior to engaging in the transference of consciousness practice, one should properly display an image of the Buddha Kālacakra and of the landscape of Śambhala as a general and a particular support of the body, speech, and mind with these words:

Here, having relied on the *yoga* of the indivisibility of one's own root *guru* and glorious Kālacakra, one who desires to practice the instruction on a travel to glorious Śambhala, a celestial realm of humans, should in an isolated place agreeable to the mind appropriately display an image of Kālacakra or of the layout of Śambhala as a general support of the body, speech, and mind, perform a *pūja* in front of it, and sincerely arrange a beautiful display of whatever one has¹.

Likewise, the act of imagination in this practice also activates the verbal and physical participation. In the context of these '*pho ba* practices, prescribed visualizations mutually differ in their contents, structures, functions, and applications. For this reason, it is difficult to apply a single, theoretical model to all of them. Nevertheless, there are several discernable, common features among the practices of imagination and visualization in the examined '*pho ba* texts. In all of them, imagination is an intentional mental activity and not an entirely spontaneous. Memory plays an important role in the production of mental imagery that appears as perceptions. Therefore, we see in these practices the interweaving of imagination and perception, in which a duality between imagination and perception is diminished. The perception of a mental imagery is thus codetermined not only by external visual and linguistic factors but also by imaginary refinements of the reproduced, external world of Śambhala. An imaginative visualization of Śambhala, its kings, and others is a discursive, inter-subjective, and symbolic structuring of that world, which begins in each case with the same view of emptiness. Moreover, although the procedures and contents of visualizations in the examined '*pho ba* practices are shaped by theoretical assumptions shared by the Gelug community of Mongolian *Kālacakratantra* practitioners, the observable, procedural and visual differences may be an outcome of the authors' affiliations with different Gelug monastic lineages in Mongolia and Tibet.

¹ Zhing mchog shambha la'i 'pho 'khrid myur lam gsal byed ces bya ba bzhugs so, folio 1a: *dir rang gi rtsa ba'i bal ma dang dpal dus kyi 'khor lo dbyer med kyi rnal 'byor ba brten nas, mi'i mkha' spyod dpal ldan shambha lar bgröd pa'i man ngag nyams su len par 'dod pas/ dben zhing yid dang mthun pa'i gnas su sku gsung thugs kyi rten spyi dang khyad par dus 'khor gyi sku brnyan nam shambha la'i zhing bkod ci rigs bkram zhing/*



Mental images and their cognitive effects, hidden away from the external observer, remain within the inner, subjective space and discrete experience, shaped by one's perspective and other factors. While recognizing this, merely for pragmatic reasons, I provisionally classify visualization practices prescribed in the three mentioned texts into two general types: the inwardly and outwardly oriented visualizations. I refer to those visualization practices that involve some kind of imaginative self-transformation as inwardly oriented. An example of the inwardly oriented visualization is the following practice described in Zava Damdin's work as preliminary to the core *'pho ba* visualization:

On the top of crown of your head, on the upper end of the *jāti*,
Is the supreme, root lama, Ādibuddha.

Your body is reddish-white in color, and your facial expression is pleased and smiling,

Clothed with the three Dharma robes and golden *paṇḍita* hat.

Your two hands hold a *vajra* and bell while sounding a *damaru*.

Your two feet are crossed in the *vajra* posture,

And inside the great central channel in your upright, seated body,

At the level of your heart, in the jeweled palace in Kalāpa,

Is the essential nature in the aspect of Kālacakra,

Present in the form of the ten powerful syllables [of the Kālacakra *mantra*].

The three places [on your body] are marked with the three seed syllables (*om āḥ hūṃ*),

And from the syllable *hūṃ* light spreads forth to the Pure Realms of the ten directions,

Inviting all the *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*,

Which dissolve into yourself, transforming you into an embodiment of all objects of refuge².

In contrast, I refer to those practices that involve visualizations of Śambhala as a geographical space as outwardly oriented. In these practices, the visualization and imagination are inextricably interconnected. In some instances, imagination involves a mental construction of visual images. In other instances, when the imagined evades visual representation, a mental image is not visual but rather a thought. An example of this is a practice in which one imagines that the essential nature of the external offerings and symbolic representations of Śambhala and its deity laid out on the altar is that of

² Zhing mchog shambha la'i 'pho 'khrid myur lam gsal byed ces bya ba bzhugs so, folios 2b–3a:
*rang gi jāti'i yar sna spyi bo'i steng/
dang po'i sangs rgyas rtsa ba'i bla ma mchog/
sku mdog dkar dmar dgyes pa'i 'dzum zhal can/
chos gos gsum dang gser mdog pan zhwas mdzes/
phyag gnyis rdo dril cang te'u 'khol tshul mdzad/
zhabs gnyis rdo rje skyil krung gis bzhugs pa'i sku yi drang por rtsa chen dbu ma'i nang/
snying thad nor bu'i pho brang k' la bar//
ngo bo dus kyi 'khor lo rnam pa ni/
rnam bcu dbang ldan yi ge'i gzugs su gnas/*



primordial consciousness, or gnosis (*ye shes*). While Agvaan Damdinsüren and Minjüür Dechin prescribe various outwardly and inwardly oriented visualization practices, a considerably shorter text of Zava Damdin, like many other Mongolian, short ritual prayers and *'pho ba* practices for rebirth in Śambhala, is exclusively concerned with the inwardly oriented visualizations.

The practices of visualizing the land of Śambhala, as given in the first two mentioned texts, entail bringing to mind an alternate reality and implicitly one's participation in it. A visualization of Śambhala is a symbolic enactment of one's visit to Śambhala. Although a visual experience of an imagined Śambhala is a temporal departure from the present time and space, it is deemed conducive to the future transcendence of time and space. A visualization of Śambhala is a mental process in which one produces new mental imprints by means of the patterns contained in a mental image. This, in turn, one familiarizes the mind with a vision of Śambhala and its culture and creates new memories conducive to the *bar do* (intermediate state between death and rebirth) experience that leads one to Śambhala. Moreover, based on the premise that a mentally constructed image is not something other than the mind, that it is a reflection of the mind itself, the degree of subtlety of a visualized image is understood to correlate to the degree of the subtlety of the mind that creates it. It is on this premise that the first two of the mentioned texts structure a sequence of visualization practices that could bring about increasingly subtler visions of Śambhala and corresponding mental states.

Various preliminary practices to the core *'pho ba* practice, which include visualizations, offerings, recitations of the versified homage, invocations, and eulogies to Kālacakra and the kings of Śambhala, have a theurgical significance. Imbued by intentionality, they catalyze visionary experiences of Śambhala, its inhabitants, deities, and the like. Whether in the context of preliminary practices or in the context of the innermost *'pho ba* practices, one finds both the synchronicity of recitation and visualization practices and the turning away from the words of prayer and eulogy to silent images. While certain visualization practices are characterized by the merging of visual and auditory elements, in other visualization practices one finds the coalescence of light with a wide range of forms, including anthropomorphic, environmental, and syllabic forms. With the words of prayer and eulogy the practitioner establishes an intimate connection with the lineage of the kings of Śambhala and paves the way to the actual encounter with them. In fact, in Agvaan Damdinsüren's work, soon after the initial expressions of refuge and brief preliminary practices, one is introduced to each of the Dharma-kings and *kalkī* of Śambhala. Only after that introduction is one informed about the location of Śambhala within the world of the Small Jambudvīpa:

As for the northern Śambhala, in the center of the Small Jambudvīpa is Vajrāsana (Bodhgaya), the place where the Buddhas of the fortunate (*bhadra*) era arrive. In the east is the five-peaked mountain (Wu-tai), which is an abode of



Mañjuśrī. In the south is the Potala Mountain, which is an abode of Avalokiteśvara. In the west is Oḍḍiyāna (Urgyan), which is an abode of *dākiṇīs*. In the north is Śambhala, which is an abode of human *vidyādharas*. [3A] The fifth of those five abodes is a residence of the Dharma kings and the *kalkīs*. Moreover, corresponding to three types of oceans, Small Jambudvīpa [measures] 25,000 leagues from the south to the north and is divided into three regions. The northern section among those three regions is divided into six great territories, and it is in the fifth [of those six territories. [Yet, it is said] in the great *Stainless Light Commentary* ('*Grel chen dri med 'od*) that the fifth [territory] is Greater China³, and the sixth [territory] is Himālaya. Thus, it belongs to the Himālayan [region]⁴.

Imagining Śambhala's geographical location within the Small Jambudvīpa, one at the same time imagines the larger world itself. This marks the initial phase in a sequence of the visualizations of Śambhala in Agvaan Damdinsüren's work, in which the practice progresses from constructing a larger visual image of Śambhala as a physical and geographic place to gradually smaller and subtler visual images of Śambhala as an inner, spatial world of the mind. Like in many tantric visualization practices of *maṇḍalas* and their deities or in tantric *sādhana*s on Pure Lands of various *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, here too, each of these visualizations of Śambhala is situated within specific phase of a larger context of the practice in accordance with their individual goals and functions. Analysis of the subsequent meditations on a mentally constructed image Śambhala gives us some insight into the power and value of visual imagination, combined with power of desire. It also reveals the dialectic between the aesthetic features of a visualized image of Śambhala and desire for rebirth there. On the one hand, it is an aspiration for rebirth in Śambhala that drives the visual desire for Śambhala; and on other hand, contemplation on the attractive features of a visualized Śambhala intensifies that desire. An image of the imaginatively recreated Śambhala corresponds to that desire. Moreover, an aspiration to be born in Śambhala is tied to imagination in which one affectively projects oneself into that aesthetically and spiritually alluring place. For instance, in Agvaan Damdinsüren's work, one is told that in order to generate a strong aspiration for rebirth in Śambhala, one must dwell on the majestic beauty of Śambhala's landscape, the excellent ethical qualities of its inhabitants, the attractive features of their bodies and clothing, the magnificence and splendor of the *kalkī*'s body, the unparalleled glamour of his palace in Kalāpa, the grandeur of his vast retinue of wives, ministers, army, and handsome ruling princes with their splendid appearances, 900 million towns with two-storied houses, the unimaginable abundance of wealth and provisions for everyone, including for shaven monks and ascetics who uphold the Vinaya with great devotion, the widespread Dharma teachings,

³ In the *Stainless Light Commentary* (*Vimalaprabhā*), the Greater China is mentioned as Mahācina in addition to China (Cīna).

⁴ *Shambha la'i zhing gi bkod pa'i 'don sgrigs chos rgyal rigs ldan rnam la mchod pa'i cho ga ka la par bgrod pa'i myur lam zhes bya ba bzhus so*, folios 2b–3a.



especially those of Tsong kha pa, which, he says, are more widespread in Śambhala than in Tibet, the extraordinary abilities of Śambhala's *vidyādhara*s, and so on. As for described facets of Śambhala that one cannot visually recreate, like the ethical qualities of its inhabitants and the like, one can imagine them not only conceptually but also visually in the attractiveness of the inhabitants' bodies, which implies their ethical qualities. What we also find at work here, like in other sets of visualization practices within the works of Agvaan Damdinsüren and Minjuur Dechin, is a method of projecting images from a detailed textual description, rich in suggestive imagery, to the derived images, or visualized forms. Although the causal connection between the text and image generated in meditation with visualization is undeniable, the processes of reading and imagining are also concomitant, since textual descriptions themselves set images in motion that are reproduced in a silent meditation.

By the fact of being prescribed, visualization practices in these texts, as in virtually all tantric texts, do not allow one to freely choose what to imagine and how to imagine. Disallowing free-floating images, a guided visualization delineates the boundaries of a phenomenological horizon, requiring on the part of the practitioner a commitment to suspend his unrestricted and playful creativity. This restriction of autonomy in the performance of a prescribed visualization and one's mental perception of Śambhala is grounded in the assumption that Śambhala is not exclusively a mental space enacted in the practitioner's mind, but also an empirical, spatial world with its specific landmarks, measurements, landscapes, and customs, existing in a geographical locale, and verifiable through the physical senses. However, since Śambhala is also understood here to be an interior world, a representation of a mental space, activated through a process of imagination, one can say that the visualization of Śambhala encompasses both realms, mental and physical. For this reason, the mental image must approximate the described image of Śambhala. In other words, before Śambhala can be objectified and verified through the physical senses, it must be internalized and subjectivized as a mentally constructed image. Thus, a mental image of Śambhala, which is precursory to the perception of Śambhala in the future life, also exists simultaneously with the image of the terrestrial Śambhala that it imitates, at the time of its arising and for the period of its duration. According to Minjüür Dechin, among the five types of wishful prayers for rebirth in Śambhala, the first one is a prayer for establishing a connection with structure of Śambhala land through a *sādhana* on its layout and geographical features⁵.

⁵ Khünii Oyunyг Barigчh Oron, *Deed Büteliin Shambalyn Orond Magadtai Törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvyn Shashintai Magad Uirakhyn Erööl, Khuvytai Taviin Erdeniin Gishgüür Khemeekh Orshvoi* (2003): 10, the five types of prayer for rebirth in Śambhala are:

1. prayer for having a connection with the organization of the land of Śambhala
2. prayer to be conceived in someone's womb there
3. prayer to meet the kalkā
4. prayer to meet his Dharma
5. prayer to attain awakening there.



After bringing to mind the previously described appearance of Śambhala and generating the aspiration for rebirth there, one is to visualize it again. But this time, the visualized Śambhala resembles a celestial Pure Land, a purely mental space, rather than a geographical region. While the previous vision of Śambhala was to approximate the realm within a spatial and temporal world as seen by the ordinary mind, this vision of Śambhala seems to reference the invisible realm devoid of any objective correlate in the physical world. However, this may not be entirely true for some authors. In Minjüür Dechin's work, Śambhala is a special type of Sukhāvātī, an esoteric Sukhāvātī of the human realm, or, as Minjüür Dechin calls it, "the place of the highest *siddhi*," "where one can attain Buddhahood within a single lifetime"⁶. Referencing the Tibetan sources such as Vagindra's *Wish-Prayer for Śambhala*, the Second 'Jam dbyangs Bzhad pa's⁷ *Response to Questions regarding Śambhala*, and Dkon mchog Darmabazar's *Composition on the Land of Śambhala*, Minjüür Dechin assures us that this is the reason why even Bodhisattvas in celestial Sukhāvātī pray for their rebirth in Śambhala. Similarly, in another, not previously mentioned, Mongolian source, titled *The Precious Crystal Stairway: Illuminating the Way to Śambhala, The Supreme and Glorious Abode for Accomplishing Siddhis*, composed by Shes rab rgya mtsho (Prajñāsāgara, Mong. Brazna Sagara) in 1921, Śambhala is spoken of as "a sublime *maṇḍala* of the earth, rotated by the Wheel of Dharma of the guaranteed Awakening, and celebrated by the illusory dance of the Sons of Jinas – the seven Dharma kings and twenty-five *kalkīs*"⁸.

A transition from visualizing Śambhala as a physical, geographical local to a somewhat intangible place in this phase of practice marks a move to a subtler visual realm of a mental state that bridges the initial and the final stages of the 'pho ba practice. It is a phase of a further refinement and approximation of the vision of Śambhala to a spatial world created by the mind of the king Sucandra, an emanation of Vajrapāṇi, which Minjür Dechin calls "a land of Vajrapāṇi" and "the marvelous Pure Land"⁹. In this visualization practice, one is to imagine in front of oneself the earth as being of the nature of various jewels, vast, very lovely, and smooth like the palm of the hand, beautified with trees made of various jewels and various rivers perfumed with *uragasāra* sandalwood and the like, covered by a golden lattice filled with various jeweled lotuses. The ground, intervening space, and the whole sky are completely and evenly engulfed by a bounty of pleasures to delight the senses, including divine para-

⁶ Khünii Oyunyng Barigch Oron, *Deed Büteliin Shambalyn Orond Magadtai Törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvyn Shashintai Magad Uirakhyn Erööl, Khuvytai Taviin Erdeniin Gishgüür Khemeekh Orshvoi* (2003): 19–22, 25–27.

⁷ 'Jigs med Dbang po (1728–1791).

⁸ *Grub pa'i gnas dpal ldan sham bha lar bsgrod ba'i lam gsal bar byed ba'i rin chen shel gyi them skas shes bya ba bzhugs so*, folio 2a, a xylographic copy from the private collection.

⁹ Khünii Oyunyng Barigch Oron, *Deed Büteliin Shambalyn Orond Magadtai Törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvyn Shashintai Magad Uirakhyn Erööl, Khuvytai Taviin Erdeniin Gishgüür Khemeekh Orshvoi* (2003): 17, 27.



sols, victory banners, pennants, and canopies. In the center lies a palace, ablaze with seven kinds of jewels. Great light rays spread forth, expansively filling incalculable world systems. In its center, a great throne made of various kinds of jewels and supported by eight large lions, rests on various kinds of jeweled lotuses, and is beautifully embellished with vast, divine fabric, and is imbued with limitless excellent qualities, and so on. Here, as in all the examined Śambhala related *'pho ba* practices, Śambhala as a subtle world is not approached *via-negativa*, but by means of percepts and concepts, through relatable images. The fact that an invisible reality can be envisioned in sensory images and symbols refutes the notion of it being an ineffable experience. Perhaps this is a reason why in these practices images are not rejected in favor of an unmediated perception of Śambhala. A visual image of the otherworldly Śambhala is an intermediary between the tangible and the intangible realms. Since one is told to mentally place this image in front of oneself, the image can be also described as being both an inner and outer mental perception.

After visually constructing the otherworldly Śambhala, one is to imaginatively act in that sacred space by generating a bathhouse to which one invites the deities (Kālacakra and the kings of Śambhala), bathes them, anoints their bodies, dresses them in the fine, soft, and light clothing, offers them ornaments, and imagines them returning to their seats after they have been attended to in this way. Once they are seated, one eulogizes them, addressing each one by his name, and offers them the objects of the sense faculties, *maṅḍala* offering, and ritual cakes (*gtor ma*). While making the offerings, one is to imagine them to be of the nature of the gnosis of bliss and emptiness, filling the earth, intermediate space, and sky. In this visualization practice, in which one does not dwell on a mentally created image as a mere observer but engages in the imagined ritual performance in the visualized space, one becomes both a visualizing subject and an objective agent in the imaginary event. One is told that by this type of visualization, in which an image becomes a dramatization of the act of worship, one generates a field of merit and induces blessings in one's mind-stream, conducive to the core practice of *'pho ba* and its beneficial results. So far, we have seen that the two varying procedures of visualizing Śambhala and the corresponding contents and levels of subtlety of generated mental images are closely connected to their individual purposes: the generation of aspiration and generation of merit and blessings.

This intermediate stage of practice, in which one visualizes the subtler, otherworldly Śambhala is followed by earnest prayers for one's own and all sentient beings' rebirth in Śambhala and by the core *'pho ba* practice. One is here reminded that the best transference of consciousness is to recall the *guru* Kālacakra for a moment at the time of death. But while one is not yet near the death, one should engage in a visualization practice in which the mental state and images are even subtler than in the immediately preceding visualization. According to Agvan Damdinsüren, in this visualization practice one imagines



the *guru* Kālacakra on the top of one's head and imagines one's own mind manifesting as a white *vajra* at the level of the heart, as sparkling and hovering, light and mobile, as being on the verge of soaring upward through the central *nāḍī* imagined as being of the width of a reed arrow that extends from beneath the navel to the Brahmā aperture. Having visualized this, praying for guidance to Śambhala, one imagines the hook-like rays of light emerging from the *guru*'s heart, and striking the sparkling white *vajra* at one's own heart, and so on. At this point one is instructed to practice a long-life *sādhana* by engaging in another set of visualization practices for the sake of achieving the *siddhi* of immortality. According to Zava Damdin's exposition on the core '*pho ba* practice for rebirth in Śambhala, one visualizes one's own body similar to the nature of a crystal, outwardly and inwardly translucent, empty, and luminous on the right and left sides, in the center, and on the back and front. A little toward the backside, one visualizes the *avadhūti* as having the width of a bamboo shoot, with its upper end open at the Brahmā aperture, while its lower end is a tube four finger-widths beneath the navel, white and blocked with swirling light, and imbued with four qualities, like an inverted trumpet (*rag dung zhabs ldog*). The Brahmā aperture is white, and in the center of the *avadhūti* is one's *prāṇa*-mind in the form of the syllable *hūṃ*, about the size of a bean, pulsing with radiant blue light that is quickly transferred to heart of the *guru*¹⁰. In both instances of the core '*pho ba* practice, the visualization culminates in the subtlest image, in light at the heart, in a symbolic representation of one's *prāṇa*-mind that will arise in the *bar do* period and lead to the direction of Śambhala.

As pointed out by Minjüür Dechin in his text, for the aspirant who has successfully accumulated the necessary conditions for rebirth in Śambhala, at death, when the clear light of death appears along with the dissolution of the four great elements, a stirring of the subtle mind with *prāṇa* for rebirth in Śambhala occurs, immediately followed by the dissolution of the clear light of death. As soon as the *bar do* being for Śambhala is formed, a white light appears in the direction of Śambhala in the northern direction. Following the direction of that white light without fear, exhaustion, or shock, the *bar do* being reaches the land of the majestic Śambhala in a single moment¹¹. It appears that by imaginatively perceiving itself as a spatial realm of light, that subtle mind familiarizes itself with its eventual appearance in the *bar do* state, in which it can realize that Śambhala is nothing other than its own, inner light. Thus, the understanding is that every appearance and experience of Śambhala, whether as a geographical place or as purely mental, is contingent on the perceiving mind.

In conclusion, one may say that in the context of the *bar do* practice, the discussed modes of visual perception, imaginative recreation, and familiariza-

¹⁰ *Zhing mchog shambha la'i 'pho 'khrid myur lam gsal byed ces bya ba bzhugs so*, 2b.

¹¹ *Khünii Oyunyng Barigch Oron, Deed Büteliin Shambalyn Orond Magadtai Törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvyn Shashintai Magad Uirakhyn Erööl, Khuvytai Taviin Erdeniin Gishgüür Khemeekh Orshvoi* (2003): 50.



tion through recollection are the means of generating incrementally new types of awareness. The expressive capacities of mental images in Śambhala-oriented practices provide us with a venue for understanding the power of imagination in recreating the world and one's own experiences in it. Similarly to physical pictorial representations, mental images are constituents of the tradition, and as evident in the first of the aforementioned visualizations, a mental imagery is grounded in its sectarian affiliation.

References

1. Blo bzang rta dbyangs. *Zhing mchog shambha la'i 'pho 'khrid myur lam gsal byed ces bya ba bzhugs so*. Collected Works, *tha* volume. Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian State Library.
2. Jambadorj. *Bolor Toly*. Vol. 1. Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian National University, Center for Mongolian Studies; 2006.
3. Minjüür Dechin Shiirev. *Khünii Oyunyг Barigч Oron, Deed Büteliin Shambalyн Orond*. 2003.
4. *Magadtai Törökh khiigeed Rigden Dagvyn Shashintai Magad Uirakhyn Erööl, Khuyvtai Taviin Erdeniin Gishgüür Khemeekh Orshvoi*. Ulaanbaatar: Admon.
5. *Shambha la'i smon tshig bzhugs so*. Xylographic copy held in Mongolian National Library.
6. Ngag dbang rta mgrin bsrud. *Shambha la'i zhing gi bkod pa'i 'don sgrigs chos rgyal rigs ldan rnams la mchod pa'i cho ga ka la par bgrod pa'i myur lam zhes bya ba bzhug so*. Xylographic edition in a private collection.
7. *Shambal-yin orun-u baidal qayun-ud-un üy-e kiged zorčiqui-yin yosu ary-a jam noyud-i üjügülegsen sudur ene bolai*. Anonymous, manuscript copy in private collection.
8. *Shambald Zorchson Nuuts Temdeglel*. Translated from Tibetan by O. Sükhbaatar, D. Buyambasüren and B. Batsanaa. Ulaanbaatar: Shambhal Niigemleg; 2005.
9. Shes rab rgya mtsho. *Grub pa'i gnas dpal ldan sham bha lar bsgrod ba'i lam gsal bar byed ba'i rin chen shel gyi them skas shes bya ba bzhugs so*. Xylographic edition in a private collection in Ulaanbaatar.

Information about the author

Vesna A. Wallace, Ph. D (habil.) (Hist.), Professor, University of California, Santa Barbara, United States of America.

Информация об авторе

Весна Уоллес, доктор исторических наук, профессор, заместитель директора Департамента религиозных исследований, Университет Калифорнии, Санта-Барбара, США.

Conflicts of Interest Disclosure

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Раскрытие информации о конфликте интересов

Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Article info

Received: January 12, 2019
Reviewed: February 10, 2019
Accepted: February 15, 2019

Информация о статье

Поступила в редакцию: 12 января 2019 г.
Одобрена рецензентами: 10 февраля 2019 г.
Принята к публикации: 15 февраля 2019 г.