Torchinov U.A. highlighted the issue of Buddhist Transcendentalism (BT) in frames of the speculative polemic between Western and Eastern Philosophies [1]. His version of the epistemological and ontological components interpretation of the perfect wisdom in Buddhism has the special value: the path to cognition is connected with the theory of three body, particularly with the idea of Dharmakāya, and the structure of the truth is connected with the theory of Tathāgatagarbha (TGG). Moreover, Torchinov expressed his own account about the top of the ontological trend that aroused and developed in the philosophy school of Yogāchāra – it’s exactly about the theory of TGG. Not to mention, the Jo-Nang School had unfolded TGG in a special way, recognizing the eternity and inviolability of the nature of Buddha [2], that was formulated in the gZhan-sTong doctrine as “other-emptiness” (ZT). If we admit that the main practice of this school is the doctrine of Time Kālacakra (KC), and we extrapolate the ideas of TGG on the doctrine of ZT, we will realize the comprehensive understanding of the onto-epistemological basis of BT. I mean that we will see how the epistemological and ontological trends can be connected and inseparable to solve the problem of finding true knowledge or the final clarification of the meaning of the absolute uninterrupted reality, which is free of the horizon of the Buddhist lingo-philosophical topos.

To verify this thesis of the complex onto-epistemological value of the final doctrine of Time in Buddhism, I divided the research into two parts: studying the evolution of the theory of instants Ksanikavāda (KV) into the theory of the space-time continuum KC; and reconstructing of the metaphysic system of KC, regarding with Buddhist Philosophy, described not only in Sutra, but in Tantra too.

In the first part of the research, it was found five significant turns in the transformation of ideas of Time from the theory of KV to the theory of KC. In brief, they are: the anthropological turn, which began from Prajñāpāramitā and led to the recognizing of psychological time, based on the theory of five skandhas; the next epistemological turn intensified the searches for reliability knowledge of Time [3] [4]; the ontological turn implemented the new view on the nature of Time, which led to rethinking of emptiness in the bosom of the Tibetan-Buddhist Tradition (TBT) in terms of the ZT doctrine [5]; the ethical turn returned tantra practices to the frame of monastic vinaya traditions by Tsongkhapa's manuals of restrictions and motivational rules (especially for practitioners of the highest tantra of KC); the scientistic turn pushed the development of Buddhist Classic Sciences (in particular, the science of stars and medicine) [6] [7], which led to the starting of the dialog between Buddhism and Western Science at the end of the 20th century.

In the second part of the research, I returned to the historiography of KC and did study the textual analysis of KC itself. As to “subject-object” perspective of the academic Buddhist Studies, KC reveals its phenomenological potential – the doctrine provides the model of the structure and functioning of the space-time continuum, in
which all phenomena (physical, psycho-mental) are manifested, and which has the inbuilt source as other (hidden) dimension of true reality. As to “out-of-subject-object” perspective of the academic Buddhist studies, KC opens the way to the transcendent level of the phenomenal world through the formation of a certain worldview and the experience of the careful job on calming our uncontrolled and split “monkey-mind” (by the special six-stages yoga, etc.). As well as different perspectives, KC emphasizes that the main key to the base of life is Time. This is Time flowing cyclically in the space, formed by the various dichotomies at the relative level, and stopping in our perceptions and conceptualizations, revealing the purest emptiness beyond space at the absolute level. Using Time as the tool of transcending is the feature of the perfect wisdom method of KC: we need to synchronize the outer and inner Times to recognize the other/sacral Time. This way we get the opportunity to acquaint with the ideas of BT, reflecting on the structure of being/existence and the paths of its cognitions.

By the way, the structural-textual analysis of the basic texts of KC [8] [9] exactly describes to us the various levels of Time: The Outer Wheel of Time, The Inner Wheel of Time, and The Other Wheel of Time. Moreover, according to historical and philosophical reconstruction, here we deal with the complex metaphysical system illustrating the order of the phenomenal world, awakening from time to time, in time, from timelessness. The Outer Wheel of Time correlates with axiological problems of the social-cultural life that is commensurate with to cyclic rotation of Heaven. At the concerned parts of texts, we recognize the eschatological myth [10] and cosmological maps, and the utopian model of the social arrangements in the whole [11]. The Inner Wheel of Time draws our attention to the law of the circulation of five primary elements in nature. Hence, at the relevant part of the teaching, we can be acquainted with the movement of our subtle psychical energies through the neuro-channels. The Other Wheel of Time has essential instruction on profound practices of reality for which practitioners need to get special permissions and transmissions [12]. Nevertheless, the Other Wheel of Time raises the issue, not the identity, which reveals on the outer and inner levels of Time, but the authenticity, which arises from the primary timelessness base by the hidden rhythms. Therefore, we use the Buddhist minor science of stars to calculate the space-time state on the relative level, but we need to apply the special six-stage yoga for finding the true emptiness on the absolute level.

So, there were identified the ontological (The Outer and Inner Wheel of Time) and epistemological (The Other Wheel of Time) components of the highest Tantra of KC, which open the possibility of combining skillful methods with the perfect wisdom in single teaching, and allow to apply the orthogonal scale of the space-time continuum of the "outer-inner-other" wheels of Time in relation to the linear cyclic scale of three tenses "past-present-future". By transforming Time into the tool and the object of meditation contemporaneously, TBT opens the perspective not only of the philosophical experience of transcending Time as temporality but also the experience of really reaching the level of absolute emptiness as freedom human mind from suffering and simulacra. Because the five turns of the view on Time in TBT and reconstruction of the space-time continuum of the metaphysic system of KC demonstrate to us its onto-epistemological profile, evidencing the opportunity to gain experience of true reality (whatever it is) by transcending Time.

To sum up, we see that doctrine of KC can be considered as the exclusive representative of BT, because it has close ties with Buddhist Sciences, which explore cognition opportunities and methods of harmonization of mind to prepare it to meet with the truth. That is to say, KC is able to open a new “transcendental” page in Buddhism Studies.
References: