

# Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines



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## Prayer to Ta pi hri tsa

### A short exposition of the Base, the Path and the Fruit in Bon Dzogchen teachings\*

By Ratka Jurkovic

#### Introduction

zogchen (*rDzogs pa chen po* or in short *rDzogs chen*), the Great Perfection represents the highest system of spiritual practice for both the Nyingma and Bon schools, which maintain that it leads to recognition of the state of absolute knowledge, the so called Natural State (*gnas lugs*), that exists in all sentient beings.<sup>1</sup> It is also considered to be the essential nature of all phenomena. The Natural State represents the primordial, intrinsic purity of Buddha-nature (*bodhicitta*)<sup>2</sup> in every individual, the condition to which the practitioner becomes directly introduced by an accomplished Dzogchen master.<sup>3</sup> The accomplished master is the one who has experienced and stabilized in himself (or herself) the Natural State i.e., who has not only mastered the doctrine, but has become Dzogchen itself.<sup>4</sup>

Each individual possesses the intrinsic purity or *bodhicitta*; instead of turning outside for answers, one should turn inside to find them, and

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<sup>1</sup> Rossi (1999: 20).

<sup>2</sup> Although I shall use Sanskrit equivalents for certain Tibetan terms, it should be noted that certain authors (such as Donatella Rossi) object to this convention on the grounds that, according to the Bonpos, the terms are translations not from Sanskrit but from the Zhangzhung language.

<sup>3</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 30-31); Reynolds (2005: 21-23); Rossi (1999: 56).

<sup>4</sup> Tulku Thondup (1989: 144).

eventually transcend dualistic concepts of both outside and inside. The adherents of the system maintain that Dzogchen methods of training are of utmost simplicity in order to reach and stabilize the state of awareness (*rig pa*) within oneself. However such a simple state is also the hardest thing for a practitioner to achieve.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to discuss and analyze particular facets of Dzogchen as seen in the six verses extracted from the “Prayer to Ta pi hri tsa” (*Ta pi hri tsa'i gsol 'debs*), written in the eighth century by Ta pi hri tsa's disciple Gyer spungs chen po sNang bzher lod po. The paper will also present a translated commentary on the prayer written by Venerable Lopon Tenzin Namdak (1926-), a highly accomplished Dzogchen master and one of the most learned contemporary Bon scholars outside of Tibet. Ven. Tenzin Namdak is highly respected for his encyclopaedic knowledge of Bonpo culture and a lifetime's experience of teaching monks both in Tibet and India.<sup>6</sup> The commentary is a part of the 13-volume set of collected works by Ven. Tenzin Namdak and is found in volume 13, the *rDzogs chen gyi skor*. This volume includes six texts with pith instructions on Dzogchen and long life prayers.

The translation of the commentary was carried out in the course of fieldwork that included a Dzogchen retreat in Shenten Dargye Ling, a Bon monastery in France. The translation was done with the help of Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, the abbot of the Bonpo monastery of Triten Norbutse (*Khri brtan nor bu rtse*) in Kathmandu. Khenpo was leading the retreat on the famous Dzogchen text “*Heartdrops of Dharmakāya*” (*Kun tu bzan po'i snying tig*), written by Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan (1859-1935). This famous Bonpo master gave the teaching to his various students from the Bon and Tibetan Buddhist traditions, in an unbroken lineage that thrives to the present day. I participated in the six-day retreat from 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of April, 2008. This comprised morning and afternoon sessions that included both teachings and meditation. During the breaks, Khenpo worked with me on the translation of Ven. Tenzin Namdak's commentary and provided me with exegetical material which informed the core of the paper.

Although the prayer is comprised of twenty-two verses, a set of six crucial verses offer the outline of the Dzogchen teachings represented through the discussion of Base, Fruit and Path. The six verse form is typical of the kind usually found in the earliest Dzogchen Nyingma text, “*The Cuckoo of the Intellect*” (*Rig pa'i khu byug*), a copy of which was among the works found in Dunhuang. The text is dated to eighth century, and catalogued as No. 746 in the Sir Aurel Stein's collection of manuscripts.<sup>7</sup>

The first part of this paper presents a general introduction to both the history of the Bon religion and to the tradition of the Great Perfection. The second part will elucidate some essential aspects of Dzogchen doctrine in a tripartite scheme comprised of the Base (*gzhi*), the Path (*lam*) and the Fruit (*'bras bu*). The third part offers the translation of both the prayer, as the root text, and the commentarial work by Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. In this part I

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, (1989: xiv).

<sup>6</sup> Dixey in Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen (2002: 11).

<sup>7</sup> See below: n. 80-81.

will also provide my own commentary on the six verses of the prayer. In Appendix I, a short biography of Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is included. Appendix II includes Tibetan transliteration of both the prayer and its commentary by Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

## I. The Great Perfection teachings according to Bon

### History of Bon

Followers of Bon maintain that their teachings were first taught as the everlasting Bon (*g.yung drung bon*) by the great teacher gShen rab Mi bo che in the legendary land called Olmo Lungring ('Ol mo lung ring) in Tazik and were later brought to the country of Zhang-zhung in Western and Northern Tibet.<sup>8</sup> gShen rab Mi bo che, the ruler of Tazik, is considered by Bonpos to have been a fully enlightened Buddha; his name means "the great human being who is the supreme Shen practitioner."

gShen rab Mi bo che travelled around propagating Bon. He came to Tibet in search of his stolen horses and their thief, the demon prince bDud rje khyab pa lag ring. According to the oral tradition of Bon, at that time humans in Tibet were subsisting in a primitive state, living in caves and oppressed by the activities of evil spirits. In order to release them from evil influences, gShen rab Mi bo che taught the practice of shamanism.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, he prophesied that higher spiritual teachings of Bon, in the form of Sūtra, Tantra and Dzogchen would be brought to Tibet from Tazik and Zhang-zhung when the time was right. The kingdom of Zhang-zhung played an influential role in the history and culture of Tibet. Priests and masters were invited to Tibet as advisors and magicians while marriage alliances were established between Tibetan and Zhang-zhung royalty. However, Tibetans conquered Zhang-zhung in seventh/eighth century, and although Bon at first enjoyed royal patronage, it was severely persecuted during the adoption of Buddhism.<sup>10</sup>

The systematization and canonization of Bon scriptures began during the second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet, that is after the 10<sup>th</sup> century, while there is evidence that the Bon Canon was clearly formed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Kvaerne (1995: 17), suggests that although the name Tazik implies the land of Tajiks in Central Asia, it is not possible to get exact identification of its location. However, Tazik is not just a geographical area, it is also a hidden land (*sbas yul*) in which one enters after being completely purified, similar to Shambala. For the latest discussion see Kvaerne in Karmay (2007: 83-97). See also Reynolds in Tenzin Namdak (2006: 4-5) and Karmay (1998: 105-106 and 1972: xxvii-xxxii).

<sup>9</sup> Taught in the casual vehicles of Bon, see passages below for explanation. The term Bon is used to explain both the indigenous pre-Buddhist shamanistic/animistic culture of Tibet and religious culture which is believed to have flourished in Tibet prior to Buddhism and originated from Tazik. The latter is known as Yungdrung Bon. See Reynolds (2005: 4-10); Kvaerne (1995: 9-10).

<sup>10</sup> Karmay (1972: xxxii) states that persecution occurred around 780-790 A.D., during the reign of Khri Srong lde btsan (742-797). The first persecution of Bon is said to have occurred during the reign of king Gri gum; however there are doubts whether this happened at all. See Karmay (1972: xxxiii).

<sup>11</sup> Martin (2003: 3); Rossi (1999: 19).

The Bon teachings are classified in the so called Nine Vehicles and are divided into the so called Four-Vehicles of Cause and Five Vehicles of Fruit.

The Four Vehicles of Cause are: the Vehicle of the gShen of Prediction; gShen of Appearance; the gShen of Magic; and the gShen of Existence. The first vehicle is concerned with astrology, rituals, divinations and medical diagnosis. The second includes instructions on fate, protection against demons, ransom and exorcism; the third is concerned with rituals aimed at disposing of enemies, and the fourth with funerary rituals and the Intermediate State (*bar do*).

The Five Vehicles of the Fruit are: the Vehicle of Virtuous Devotees; of the Great Ascetics; of the Pure Sound; of the Primordial gShen and of the Unsurpassable Supreme One. They are concerned with rules of conducts and religious practices for lay practitioners (5<sup>th</sup> vehicle); rules for fully ordained practitioners (6<sup>th</sup> vehicle); higher tantric practices of meditative transformation (7<sup>th</sup> vehicle); tantric practices based on the Generation (*bskyed rim*) and Perfection (*rdzogs rim*) stages of meditation (8<sup>th</sup> vehicle); and the teachings of the Great Perfection (9<sup>th</sup> vehicle).<sup>12</sup>

For Bon, Dzogchen represents the highest teaching in the so called Nine-Vehicle classification.<sup>13</sup> Alternatively, the Bonpos divide their scriptures according to the Four Portals and One Treasury (*sgo bzhi mdzod lnga*). Dzogchen is presented in the last of the portals, known as the Guide (*dpon gsas*), which consists of both oral instructions (*man ngag*) and written transmissions (*lung*) by various Dzogchen masters.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Nyingmapas have a nine-fold division of their teachings, known as the Nine *yānas*, with Dzogchen or Atiyoga as the highest teaching.

The Nine *yānas* of Nyingma tradition are subdivided into a three-fold classification:

1. Sūtric *yānas*: Śravakayāna (*Nyan thos*), Pratyekabuddhayāna (*Rang sangs rgyas*) and Bodhisattvayāna (*Byang chub sems dpa'*). The first two are Śravakayāna Sūtras aimed at achieving Arhatship. The third contains Mahāyāna Sūtras focused on the practice of the six perfections in order to become an enlightened Bodhisattva.
2. Three Outer Tantric *yānas*: Kriyāyoga (*Bya rgyud*), Caryāyoga (*sPyod rgyud*) and Yogatantra (*rNal 'byor rgyud*).
3. Three Inner Tantric *yānas*, representing the highest tantric teachings of Mahāyoga (*rNal 'byor chen po*), Anuyoga (*rJes su rnal 'byor*) and Atiyoga (*Shin tu rnal 'byor*). Teachings in tantric *yānas* are received usually through one's own lama who gives empowerments and initiations to assist practitioners according to their understanding and capacity. In the highest tantric teachings the emphasis is on complex and elaborate meditation practices which include methods of visualization and states of samādhi, and less so on the external forms of spiritual practices, such as acts of austerity or ritual purification.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Snellgrove (1967: 9-11); Rossi (1999: 20-21).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Reynolds in Tenzin Namdak (2006: 9-20); Reynolds (2005: 5-10); Karmay (1998: 111).

<sup>15</sup> Tulku Thondup (1989: 3-4).



In the highest Atiyoga, also known as Dzogchen, the direct instructions for achieving the Natural State are given privately by the master to the practitioner. However, the majority of people need to go through the common training found in “lower” *yānas* before they are ready for Dzogchen. Although Dzogchen is usually understood as the path of non-action and non-meditation, it is common to find among Dzogchen expositions a variety of meditative practice that adopt a gradual approach to enlightenment.<sup>16</sup>

The instructions of the Great Perfection are the highest spiritual teachings most commonly associated with the Bon religion and the Nyingmapa school. However, Dzogchen practitioners were also found among other Tibetan Buddhist schools. For example, it is known that the current and the Fifth Dalai Lama of the Gelugpa school were Dzogchen practitioners, while Dzogchen is also used as a supplementary practice for the Kagyupa Schools.<sup>17</sup>

### History of Dzogchen

The origins of Dzogchen or the Great Perfection cannot be traced with absolute certainty. It has been suggested that they are to be found in Mahāyoga tantras, notably the *Guhyagarbha* tantra, that were translated into Tibetan shortly after their composition in the eighth century CE.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, parallels can also be found in the doctrines developed in the Yogācāra school called the storehouse-consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) and the “Buddha embryo” (*tathāgatagarbha*), which will be discussed below. The teachings of the Great Perfection “can be considered as forerunning the whole evolution and configuration of Tibetan Buddhism”.<sup>19</sup> Its significance is not only one of spiritual doctrine, but also of the historical representation of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism and the Bon religion.<sup>20</sup>

In the system of Mahāyoga Tantra, Dzogchen represents the highest phase of the Tantric process of transformation comprised of the Generation Process (*bskyed rim*) and the Perfection Process (*rdzogs rim*). With this respect, Dzogchen is said to correspond to the usage of the term Mahāmudrā in the New Tantra system of the other Tibetan schools.<sup>21</sup>

An early text, the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*, the copy of which is found in the *bsTan 'gyur*, is considered to be the only work on Dzogchen securely attributed to Padmasambhava. It is usually dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and in it Dzogchen is not treated as an independent vehicle but only as the final stage of the tantric perfection process (*rdzogs rim*). When taught as an independent vehicle, Dzogchen practice does not require any tantric practice before entering into the state of even contemplation (*mnyam bzhag*).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For more on the practices found in Dzogchen see the section of Path in this paper.

<sup>17</sup> Berzin (2006). Introduction to Dzogchen. at [http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/advanced/dzogchen/basic\\_points/introduction\\_dzogchen.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/advanced/dzogchen/basic_points/introduction_dzogchen.html) accessed 04.01.2008.

<sup>18</sup> Karmay (1988: 11, 64-66).

<sup>19</sup> Rossi (1999: 21).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> For further exposition on union of Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen see: Chagmé, 2000.

<sup>22</sup> Karmay (1988: 137, 152).

Both the Buddhist Nyingmapas and the Bonpos claim that their respective Dzogchen traditions were brought to Central Tibet in the eight or ninth century.<sup>23</sup> According to Nyingmapas, their Dzogchen teaching came to Tibet from the mahāsiddha Śrī sīha and his disciple Vimalamitra, who were both living in Northern India. Mahāsiddha Śrī sīha was the disciple of Indian mahāsiddha Mañjuśrīmitra, who received the teachings from Nirmānakāya Garab Dorje (dGa' rab rdo rje), the miraculously born son to the virgin Princess Sudharma. Garab Dorje was the first to transmit the Dzogchen teachings in our human world in the country of Oḅḅiyāna.<sup>24</sup>

From Vimalamitra and Śrī sīha, the teachings were transmitted to Padmasambhava, the spiritual founder of the Nyingma school and to his disciple Vairocana. The latter is said to come from Bonpo family and was reportedly instrumental in both translating Bonpo works into Tibetan and hiding some Bonpo texts before he was forced to leave Tibet.<sup>25</sup>

#### Four traditions of Bonpo Dzogchen

The Bonpo transmission of Dzogchen comes from a line of mahāsiddhas who came from the ancient kingdom of Zhang-zhung and were residing around its spiritual centre, Mount Kailash (*Ti se*).<sup>26</sup>

Within the Bon tradition there are generally considered to be three different transmission lines of Dzogchen teachings, which are collectively known as *A rdzogs snyan gsum*. However, there is a fourth, separate transmission known as the *Ye khri mtha' sel*, also considered to be an important Dzogchen cycle of teachings.<sup>27</sup> Within *A rdzogs snyan gsum*, the first two transmission lines are known as *A khrid* and *rDzogs chen yang rtse'i klong chen* and are based on rediscovered treasure texts known as *gter ma*. The third line of teachings, the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* is based on a continuous oral transmission through a line of realized masters. Treasure texts or *gter ma* are important both for Bonpos and Nyingmapas. Both schools had to hide their teachings due to persecutions by the Tibetan kings Gri gum and Khri Srong lde bstan<sup>28</sup>, as in the case of Bon, or, as in the case of Nyingma, due to their profound spiritual nature. Treasure texts were hidden either in nature (fire, water, earth and space) or were sealed in the minds of realized masters and chosen individuals.<sup>29</sup>

The three main Dzogchen transmissions within Bon are as follows:

<sup>23</sup> Reynolds (2005: 12-14); Rossi (1999: 21-22).

<sup>24</sup> The legend of dGa' rab rdo rje can be found as one of the chapters in the hagiography of Vairocana titled *Vairo 'dra 'bag*, from either 11<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century. According to the 13<sup>th</sup> century editor Dharma seng ge, the hagiography is found in two versions, one being *gter ma* and the other *bka'ma*. For detailed description see Karmay (1988: 18-37).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*: 17-37; 216-223.

<sup>26</sup> Reynolds (2005: 13); Karmay (1998: 98).

<sup>27</sup> Rossi (1999: 30), also mentions the independent cycle of teachings called *Byang chub sems gab pa dgu skor*, *gter ma* found in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by gShen chen Klu dga' (996-1035).

<sup>28</sup> Karmay (1972: xxxi-xxxiii).

<sup>29</sup> Rossi (1999: 31). It is said that Padmasambhava sealed the profound spiritual teachings in the minds of his disciples, to be discovered when the right circumstances have arisen. See Tulku Thondup (1997). *Hidden Teachings of Tibet: An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.

### 1. *A khrid*

*A khrid* means the instructional teachings (*khrid*) concerning the Unconditioned (*A*). The white Tibetan letter A is the symbol of emptiness and of the Natural state. The great master Ri khrod chen po extracted these Dzogchen precepts in the 11<sup>th</sup> century from the *Khro rgyud* cycle of texts, which are part of the so called Father Tantras (*pha rgyud*), originally attributed to gShen rab Mi bo che. They form a set of meditative instructions dealing with the view (*lta ba*), the meditation (*sgom pa*) and the conduct (*spyod pa*) in the form of 80 practice sessions. Successful completion of the 80 sessions would give the practitioner the title of *rtogs ldan*, i.e the one who possesses understanding. These practice sessions were, over the course of 200 years, reduced first to 30 and then to 15 when they came to be known as the *A khrid thun mtshams bco lnga*.<sup>30</sup>

According to the latest discovery by Jean-Luc Achard, the *A khrid* is based on the set of texts known as *Gab pa dgu skor* and *Sems smad sde dgu* which were rediscovered by gShen chen Klu dga'. The author and the great master Ri khrod chen po compiled the practical teachings from these texts and elaborated the cycle of *A khrid*. Thus, *A khrid* is not directly a *gter ma* but a composition based on *gter ma*.<sup>31</sup>

### 2. *rDzogs chen*

Although the term resembles the doctrines of the Great Perfection in general, it is actually a reference to a specific transmission of Dzogchen based on the root text called *rDzogs chen yang rtse'i klong chen* ("The Great Vast Expanse of the Highest Peak which is the Great Perfection"). The *gter ma* is from a cycle of treasure texts found behind a statue of Vairocana in mKho mthing temple and was rediscovered by the great Tertön gZhod ston dNgos grub grags pa in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The cycle was originally composed in the eight century by the Bonpo master known as Li shu sTag ring and hidden due the persecution of Bonpos by the king Khri Srong lde btsan.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Reynolds (2005: 15-16); Rossi (1999: 26); Karmay (1988: 201); Kvaerne (1973: 19-20). According to private correspondence with Jean-Luc Achard, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2008, he states: "A short manuscript has surfaced recently which most apparently represents the tradition of *A khrid* as compiled by the 5<sup>th</sup> lineage holder g.Yor po Me dpal, showing an original set of practice in 8 or 10 (*brgyad dam bcu*) sessions. The interrogative *dam* appears in cursive as a tiny wave line above the *d* suffix of *brgyad* (8) and may have been lost during successive copying. For this reason, Lopon Tenzin Namdak thinks that there were never any 80 sessions but rather an original set of 8 or 10 sessions."

<sup>31</sup> Achard (2008: 64-65, 284).

<sup>32</sup> Reynolds (2005: 16); Rossi (1999: 26-28); Karmay (1988: 201-202).



Figure 1 : *Ta pi hri tsa*.

### 3. *sNyan rgyud*

This cycle represents an uninterrupted oral transmission of the Dzogchen teachings originating from the country of Zhang-zhung and known as the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* (*The Oral Transmission from Zhang-zhung*). According to this transmission, the first teaching of Dzogchen was mentally transmitted by the Primordial Teacher Kun tu bzang po to “the Nine Sugatas” (*bder gshegs dgu*) and then to “the Twenty-four Individuals” (*gang zag nyi shu rtsa bzhi*) from the kingdom of Zhang-zhung. The disciples following the line of were mahāsiddha Ta pi hri tsa and his disciple Gyer spung sNang bzher lod po in the eight

century BCE. It is believed that the teachings were first written down by Gyer spung sNang bzher lod po in the Zhang-zhung language, and translated into Tibetan in the ninth or tenth century by one of his successors, dPon chen bTsan po. The history of the lineage holders was compiled in 15<sup>th</sup> century by sPas ton bsTan rgyal bzang po, and it is based on the previous biographical material compiled two centuries earlier by Yang ston Shes rab rgyal mtshan. They are known as “*The Biographies of the Lineage Teachers of the Zhang Zhung Aural Transmission of the Great Perfection*” (*rDzog pa chen po zhang zhung snyan rgyud kyi brgyud pa'i bla ma'i rnam thar*).<sup>33</sup>

A fourth lineage that scholarly sources usually mention as an important yet separate cycle originating in India (*rgya gar gyi skor*),<sup>34</sup> is the *Ye khri mtha' sel*.<sup>35</sup> This Dzogchen cycle is attributed to the eighth-century Zhang-zhung master Dran pa Nam mkha', who converted to Buddhism during the persecution of Bon by emperor Khri Srong lde btsan (742-797). This

<sup>33</sup> Reynolds (2005: 80); Rossi (1999: 28-29); Karmay (1988: 203).

<sup>34</sup> Rossi (1999: 29).

<sup>35</sup> A study by Rossi can be found in the '*Lo rgyus chen mo* in the *Ye khri mtha' sel* collection – see Karmay and Nagano (2000: 181-191).

collection of teachings is said to have been transmitted by both male and female accomplished masters.<sup>36</sup> They were transmitted in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by a miraculous emanation of Tshe dbang Rig 'dzin, the son of Dran pa Nam mkha', to Lung bon lHa gnyan.<sup>37</sup>

### Comparison between Bon and Nyingma Dzogchen

In general, the difference between Bon and other schools of Tibetan Buddhism is not so much in doctrine and monastic practice, which are both very similar and to some extent equal, as it is in the lineages.<sup>38</sup> Bonpos believe that their founder is gShen rab Mi bo che, who, like the Buddha Śākyamuni of all Buddhist schools, is considered an enlightened teacher.

With respect to Dzogchen, similarities between Nyingma and Bon doctrine are to be found in the ninefold division or vehicles of religious practice. The two schools differ in this respect from the others, which have only six vehicles, due to the reliance these place on the later translations of Buddhist scriptures in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Differences between Nyingma and Bon in the content of their respective nine vehicles between lie in the fact that Bon scriptures contain religious, secular and ritual beliefs, including astrology, cosmology, medical science, divination etc., which are not found in the Nyingma scriptures. Within the doctrine of Dzogchen, both Nyingmapas and Bonpos refer to Kun tu bzang po as the primordial Buddha and both have a strong *gter ma* tradition.<sup>39</sup>

## II. The main facets of Dzogchen doctrine and their historical development

### Three aspects of Dzogchen

Although Dzogchen is often referred to as the single great sphere (*thig le nyag gcig*),<sup>40</sup> it is described as having three aspects: Base, Path and Fruit. The Base (*gzhi*), represents the primordial state of the individual, or the invisible Primordial Buddhahood. The reason for invisibility is our stream of consciousness by which we see things as inherently existent and dual in nature, thus making the Primordial Buddhahood invisible to the deluded mind. The Path (*lam*) on which the Dzogchen practitioner enters, begins with the direct introduction to the Natural State, also known as the insight into the view (*lta ba*) of one's Nature of Mind. After that one cultivates the actualization of awareness (*rig pa*), and simultaneously purifies oneself of

<sup>36</sup> Martin (2001: 409).

<sup>37</sup> Rossi (1999: 30).

<sup>38</sup> Kvaerne (1995: 12-13).

<sup>39</sup> For comparative studies on Bon and Nyingma Dzogchen see : Achard (2005: 59-106), Achard (1999: 215-239), Karmay (1988: 220-223).

<sup>40</sup> For an explanation see Reynolds (2005: 22); Rossi (1999: 60, n.180).

cognitive and emotional defilements. These defilements have been accumulated through past and present karmic activities, which also influence possible future lives.

During the Path, the practices of *khregs chod*, meaning “cutting through” and *thod rgal*, or “leaping over” are used to stabilize one in the natural state. This can only occur with an understanding of the reality of emptiness as a non-dual (*gnyis med*) wisdom that goes even beyond samsāra and nirvāna. The Fruit (*bras bu*) represents the definite return to the state of Reality or Dzogchen and the attainment of the so-called Rainbow body (*ja' lus*), where a person's body starts to shrink and/or dissolves into light, leaving just nails and hair behind.<sup>41</sup>

The main facets of Dzogchen doctrine, will be explained in this paper from the aspect of Base, Path and Fruit, since this is the traditional Buddhist way of exposition of the teachings, and is also widely used in both Nyingma and Bon Dzogchen doxography. The exposition of teachings in the tripartite form of Base, Path and Fruit bares historical importance for both Nyingma and Bon Dzogchen. The reason for that is the need to justify or at least give the impression of the Indic origins of the teachings. The other Buddhist schools, especially in the period of second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet (*phyi dar*), representing the time in which the Indic origin became *condition sine qua non*, were suspicious and critical of the origins of Dzogchen.<sup>42</sup>

As Karmay states:

rDzogs chen has...been the focus of doctrinal and philosophical dispute right from the beginning of the eleventh century A.D. The criticism of it seems to be centred around two points: authenticity of its source and validity of its doctrine as a genuine Buddhist teaching.<sup>43</sup>

### The Base

The natural state is usually referred to as having three aspects: the base (*gzhi*), expressive energy (*rtsal*) and display of manifestation (*rol pa*). It is usually compared to an ocean on which the reflection of the sun can be seen. Whatever terms we use to explain the single great sphere, it is only from the point of view of the display (*rol pa*), since from the point of view of the base (*gzhi*) everything is inseparable, empty and primordially pure. From the point of view of the ocean there is no difference whether the sun reflects on

<sup>41</sup> For discussion on Base, Path and Fruit see Reynolds (2005: 21-24); Wangyal (2004: 51); Rossi (1999: 43-44). This division, prevalent in Buddhist philosophy, was introduced to Dzogchen literature in ca. 10<sup>th</sup> century, see *Lung bon Lha gnyen, La zla ba'i bam po*, in *sPyi rgyud chen mo nam mkha' dkar po ye khri mtha' sel gyi gsung pod*, Triten Norbutse Library, vol. 20, pp. 159-252.

<sup>42</sup> For example, in the 11th century, the famous lHa Bla ma Ye shes 'od issued an edict expressing his concerns over the practices of sexual rite (*sbyor*) and the rite of deliverance (*sgrol*). Although he did not mention any specific tantras, this gave rise in later centuries to various accusations on the part of Dzogchen since *sbyor sgrol* tantric practice was found in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, and it is in this tantra collection that doctrine of Dzogchen has been expounded. See Karmay (1988: 121-123).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*: 124.

the water or not: the ocean will remain unaffected, pure and clear.<sup>44</sup> Dzogchen masters have used different categorizations and descriptions, both for pedagogical reasons and for revealing the doctrine to their disciples. When one is fully integrated in the natural state of mind, then no concepts are needed to explain the state of inseparability also known as the one taste (*ro gcig*) of everything.

The doctrine of one taste (*ro gcig*) represents an important part of the Ta pi hri tsa's final instructions to his disciple Gyer spung sNang bzher lod po which are found as "*The Prophetic Sayings of the Lord Tapihritsa from the Oral Transmission of Zhang-zhung for the Great Perfection Teachings*" (*rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan rgyud las rje ta pi hri tsa'i lung bstan bzhugs so*).<sup>45</sup> One taste represents one of the three certainties (*gdeng rnam pa gsum*) of a yogi, and is comprised of understanding the inseparability of appearances and emptiness (*snang stong dbyer med*) as the Ultimate Reality (*bon nyid*).

The Ultimate Reality in Dzogchen is not considered to be the Absolute Truth, found in the other Buddhist schools, and represented as emptiness of both self and the phenomena. Dzogchen teachings acknowledge the existence of the two truths (absolute and relative) but state that the Natural State is represented by the single truth, known as one taste (*ro gcig*) or the unique essence (*thig le nyag gcig*). Natural state is beyond karmic causality and its effects. Appearances comprised of self and phenomena are the product of accumulated karma and they do exist on the level of relative truth. On the level of absolute truth, Dzogchen teachings acknowledge their emptiness, however, this is not the end state, since even acknowledging emptiness means grasping in order to understand it. In Dzogchen one does not grasp for either emptiness or for awareness. Similarly one does not grasp for appearances. Both emptiness and appearances dissolve in the Natural State, and, like the drops in ocean, have the single salty taste of the whole ocean itself.<sup>46</sup>

Our Natural state is also known as the Primordial Base (*kun gzhi*), the primordial state of liberated awareness in each individual. The literature expresses it by various terms such as universal ground (*spyi gzhi*), universal grandfather (*spyi mes chen po*) or primeval grandmother (*ye phyi mo*). The Primordial Base has three main qualities. "Its state (*ngang*) is pure from the beginning (*ka dag*) and has physical form (*sku*). Its nature is spontaneous (*lhun gyis grub pa*) and is luminous (*'od gsal ba*). Its self-being (*bdag nyid*) is the primeval intellect (*ye nas shes pa = ye shes*) which pervades all (*kun khyab*)."<sup>47</sup>

When speaking of Base (*gzhi*), the Dzogchen texts explain it in the terms of its Essence, Nature and Compassion<sup>48</sup> (also known as the Trikāya of the

<sup>44</sup> According to oral comments from Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, given during a retreat on *Heartdrops of Dharmakaya*, 13-18th April, 2008. See also Tenzin Namdak (2006: 140).

<sup>45</sup> Reynolds (2005: 108). The doctrine of one taste (*ro gcig*) is found both in Bon and Nyingma Dzogchen. For Nyingma sources see Chagmé (2000: 57; 186-187; 244-254) and Pettit (1999: 90, 133, 237).

<sup>46</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 49-56, 144).

<sup>47</sup> Karmay (1988: 177).

<sup>48</sup> According to private correspondence with Jean-Luc Achard, compassion is represented as the altruistic, spontaneous and dynamic nature of the primordial state (23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2008).

potential or Base).<sup>49</sup> The Essence of everything is emptiness, the state of primordial purity, while the Nature of everything is awareness (*rig pa*). Everything arising from the Base is seen as pure and complete. Compassion (*thugs rje*) represents the inseparability (*dbyer med*) of emptiness and awareness.<sup>50</sup>

### *Kun tu bzang po as the Primordial Base*

In certain texts, the Primordial Base is referred to as Kun tu bzang po (Samantabhadra), the Primordial Buddha, the one that has never entered the dualistic process of samsāra and nirvāna. According to both Bon and Nyingma, he is the source of all the Dzogchen teachings. In Bon they were later exposed by gShen rab Mi bo che. Kun tu bzang po is present in the core of all sentient beings as their own Primordial Base or the Buddha nature. If we draw an analogy with the Yogācāra school, he represents the Buddha embryo (*tathāgatagarbha*), the potential within sentient beings which enables them to become Buddhas.<sup>51</sup>

When speaking about Kun tu bzang po as the Primordial Base, the literature usually portrays him as having a body, face and hands (*zhal phyag rdzogs pa*), where he acts as the Buddha preaching his doctrines.<sup>52</sup> To quote Karmay: "In certain texts, the Primordial Basis is presented as the Kun tu bzang po of the sphere (*dbyings*), its effulgence as the Kun tu bzang po of the rays (*zer*) and its activities (*rtsal*) as the creative being (*sku gsum*) within the Primordial Basis is discernible."<sup>53</sup> Since he is the aspect of total enlightenment known as Dharmakāya, he is also represented as the nude male Buddha figure sitting in the centre of space without any ornaments.<sup>54</sup>

### *The distinction between kun gzhi and kun gzhi rnam shes*

Another analogy between Yogācāra school and Dzogchen is usually drawn when talking about *kun gzhi* (base of all) and *kun gzhi rnam shes* (storehouse-consciousness).<sup>55</sup> The storehouse consciousness as understood in the Yogācāra school represents the place where all the karmic traces are stored and preserved for future lives. It is the last of the eight consciousnesses, and serves as the medium for the transmission of karmic traces (*bag chags*) from one life to another. Every action that we perform leaves the karmic imprint

<sup>49</sup> The trikāya is comprised of Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya, which are known as the three aspects or levels of manifestation of the enlightened Buddha. See Reynolds (2005: 395-396, n.2 and 403-408, n.12). For distinction of Trikāya of the Base, the Path and the Fruit see Reynolds (2005: 23-24) and Tenzin Namdak (2006: 87).

<sup>50</sup> For further discussion on Essence, Nature and Compassion see Reynolds (2005: 23).

<sup>51</sup> Reynolds (2005: 19); Hookham (1992: 94).

<sup>52</sup> Karmay (1988: 177).

<sup>53</sup> 1988: 178.

<sup>54</sup> For further discussion see: Reynolds (2005: 17-19); Karmay (1988: 178).

<sup>55</sup> Karmay mentions the work *Kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud* by 'Jigs med gling pa (1729-1798) as the example of a most visible fusion of the doctrine of Yogācāra and Dzogchen (1988: 179). For English translations of this work see Van Schaik (2004: 137-147) and Guenther (1963: 83-105).



in our stream of consciousness, which is like a seed waiting for the appropriate causes and conditions to appear in order for it to blossom and give fruit to our latent karma.<sup>56</sup>

The 16<sup>th</sup> century debate between the Kagyupas and Nyingmapas tried to establish whether *kun gzhi* is pure (*ka dag*) from the beginning. If we consider it to be the storehouse consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*), then primordial purity is not possible since the base is polluted by karmic traces. Nyingmapas strongly opposed the notion of storehouse consciousness, saying that *kun gzhi* and *ka dag* do not precede one another, but are born together. In a form of a riddle they reply to their Kagyupa opponents by saying that *kun gzhi* is pure from beginning (*ka dag*), and that *kun gzhi* and *ka dag* are neither the same nor different.<sup>57</sup>

For Bonpos, *kun gzhi* is *ab aeterno* pure; it has never been defiled by the karmic traces. The *kun gzhi* is like a treasury, in which through the coordination of the eight consciousnesses the karmic traces will be stored, transforming it into *kun gzhi rnam shes*. However, *kun gzhi* itself remains pure and unaffected by karmic traces; just like the treasury is clean, once the treasure is removed. Ven. Tenzin Namdak states: “According to Dzogchen, there are no karmic traces to be found in the Natural State. It is like trying to write something in space, or like clouds passing across the sky; there are no traces left behind.”<sup>58</sup> This position is similar to the *gzhan stong* position of the Yogācāra school, which states that tathāgatagarba is never really transformed, but rather revealed, once karmic traces are purified.<sup>59</sup> However, Ven. Tenzin Namdak states that Yogācārins don’t consider anything beyond storehouse-consciousness which, like the other seven consciousnesses, exists inherently (although the objects that these consciousnesses perceive do not have inherent existence) and dissolves once nirvāna is attained.

This also resembles closely the position of early Dzogchen writers of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries who also made clear the distinction between *kun gzhi* and *kun gzhi rnam shes*.<sup>60</sup>

Although *kun gzhi* in Dzogchen is understood to be the Dharmakāya of the Base (*gzhi'i bon sku*), this is still not the manifestation of Dharmakāya, found in the Fruit, or result of Dzogchen practice. Practitioners, although introduced to the Nature of the Mind (which is also the Primordial Base), still have to purify themselves from the two-fold obscurations (emotional and intellectual).<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 81); Hookham (1992: 333, n.2). For detailed explanation of *alaya-vijñāna* see (Schmithausen, 1987).

<sup>57</sup> See Karmay (1988: 180-182).

<sup>58</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 87).

<sup>59</sup> Hookham (1992: 333-334, n.2).

<sup>60</sup> Karmay with this respect mentions the 11th century work *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la jug pa* by Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (1988: 179).

<sup>61</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 87).

*The distinction between Nature of Mind (sems nyid) and Mind (sems)*

The base represents the Natural state of the Nature of mind (*sem nyid gnas lugs*), where everything that appears exists as the inseparable union of clarity and emptiness. In Dzogchen a clear distinction is made between the Nature of the Mind (*sems nyid*) and the mind (*sems*) or limited awareness.

The Mind (*sems*) is an illusory creation and Dzogchen masters use the mirror metaphor to explain the difference between the mind (*sems*) trapped in conventional reality and awareness (*rig pa*) which is realized in the Natural State.

To quote Reynolds:

Time and causality are like the reflections in the mirror, whereas the Natural State is like the mirror itself; it is immaculate and perpetually untainted by Samsara or conditioned thought process. This Natural State of the Nature of Mind has been present there all the time, although it has gone unrecognized since time without beginning because it has been covered over by obscurations, just as the face of the sun high in the sky may go unrecognized because it is obscured by clouds. By removing or purifying these layers of accidental obscuration, the inner sun, concealed at the core of our being, unfolds into view.<sup>62</sup>

The understanding of *sems nyid* endowed with *rig pa* and inseparable from *gzhi*, is what distinguishes Dzogchen from Yogācāra, since in the latter the mind is the part of the system of eight consciousnesses (*tshogs brgyad*) including *kun gzhi rnam shes*. The Base as understood in Dzogchen is not known to Yogācāra.<sup>63</sup>

The real nature of mind (*sems kyi rang bzhin*) is from the beginning completely pure (*ye nas dag pa*), luminous (*'od gsal ba*) and immaculate (*dri bral*). The Nature of Mind is never changed or modified by karmic causes. It totally transcends the concepts of causality, so the practitioner, once stabilized in the Natural State, does not expect neither good nor bad qualities to arise as a result of one's practice.<sup>64</sup> If they arise, they are just the display of the mind (*sems*) and one should not cling to them. The re-unification of *sems* and *sems nyid* (or realization of their inseparability within the Nature of Mind) is symbolically explained as the unification of a lost child and its mother, and it is in this moment that an adept gains realization.<sup>65</sup>

### The Path

Looking from the point of view of the Base, our Buddha nature is primordially present from the very beginning. The question that arises is one of the necessity of practicing the Path. However, although our Buddhahood is present from the very beginning, we do not recognize it. It is obscured

<sup>62</sup> 2005: 398.

<sup>63</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 114).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*: 52.

<sup>65</sup> Karmay (1988: 175-176).

from us due to ignorance, delusion and karmic traces. The practice of the path is necessary in order to purify and remove thick layers of emotional (*nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa*) and intellectual (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*) obscurations. The practices aimed at purification of obscurations are also known as the Trikāya becoming manifest on the Path.<sup>66</sup>

In the Bonpo tradition, there are two different approaches to practicing Dzogchen.<sup>67</sup> In the first, one must find a suitable lama, who is a Dzogchen master and request the teachings. In the second, comprising a more intellectual approach to Dzogchen teachings, the practitioners may follow a monastic scholarly path and train in Sūtra and Tantra. Having completed this training, they are educated in the Dzogchen teachings, which leads them to the Geshe (*dge bshes*) degree.<sup>68</sup>

Here, only the first tradition will be presented briefly. After requesting the teachings, one starts with preliminary practices known as *sngon 'gro*, which are described in detail in the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud rgyal ba'i phyag khrid*.<sup>69</sup> These practices are divided into the following nine: Guru Yoga (receiving empowerments and blessings); meditation on impermanence; confession of sins; practice of producing bodhicitta; taking refuge; offering the mandala; mantra recitation; offering one's own body and praying for blessings. They are practiced one hundred thousand times each. After that, one returns to the lama and requests the Dzogchen teachings. In order for one to recognize and stay in the Primordial Base or in the Nature of Mind, one has to be directly introduced to the Natural State.<sup>70</sup>

Having received the introduction, one goes into the retreat in the isolated place and one trains in two important practices, that of *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*. *Khregs chod* or "cutting through" is practiced in order to dissolve the rigidity of dualistic perception and to stabilize the awareness (*rig pa*) in all aspects of life. A practitioner usually starts the practice with *khregs chod*. *Thod rgal* or "leaping over" entails physical postures and ways of gazing which produces visions that are to be understood as the display of the Mind-itself (*sems nyid*), and not as something independent of the practitioner.<sup>71</sup>

### *The practice of khregs chod*

It is said that all the individual's rigidities, tensions and obscurations resemble a bundle of sticks (*khregs pa*) tied together with a cord. When the cord is cut (*chod*), all the sticks fall on the ground, which means that the practitioner has released all the tensions and obscurations in a totally relaxed state (*lhod pa chen po*).<sup>72</sup>

The introduction to the Natural state begins with fixation on the white Tibetan letter A. The principle is to first develop calm state of mind by one-

<sup>66</sup> Reynolds (2005: 20).

<sup>67</sup> As explained by Tenzin Namdak (2006: 125).

<sup>68</sup> For the curriculum of studies as found in Bön Triten Norbutse Monastery, see: Tenzin Namdak (2006: 224-230).

<sup>69</sup> For the detailed explanation of preliminary practices see: Reynolds (2005: 253-343).

<sup>70</sup> For some methods of introduction see: Tenzin Namdak (2006: 126-130).

<sup>71</sup> Rossi (1999: 68).

<sup>72</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 251, ch. 8, n. 1).

pointed concentration also known as *śamathā* (Tib. *zhi gnas*). However, this is still not the Natural State. It is only the experience of a calm state, undistracted by whatever thoughts arise. The practice of *khregs chod* begins with looking back into ourselves and observing the mind and the watcher, what it is, where it comes from and so forth. We look and search and ultimately come to the point where we cannot really separate the watcher and the watched, since they have the same nature of emptiness and clarity.<sup>73</sup>

Once we have entered into the Natural State, the practice is to continue dwelling in it, and to stabilize it by observing the mind, the thoughts that arise and dissolve again without leaving traces. Eventually, all thoughts become automatically self-liberated as soon as they arise and the practitioner dwells in the unspeakable state (*ha phyod*).<sup>74</sup> The practitioner, who is stabilized in the Natural State, enters into the path of non-action and non-meditation. "Whether it is to look or not to look, to act or not to act, everything is self-liberated; therefore there is no missed view or right view – I do not care."<sup>75</sup>

#### *The practice of thod rgal*

The practice of *thod rgal* is done in order to realize that visions of ordinary normal life are illusory and insubstantial. Although it is considered as superior to *khregs chod*, it should not be practiced alone. If one does not practice both *khregs chod* and *thod rgal* together, then the methods of generating visions mean nothing, since the person will not be able to either stabilize the visions or understand them as illusions.<sup>76</sup>

*Thod rgal* practices are done either in dark retreat or by gazing at the sun, the moon and sky.<sup>77</sup> The purpose is to enable the spontaneous arising of the visions in space which are the product of the dynamism of one's awareness. Although there are various classifications of the *thod rgal* practice, in this paper I will present only one. In the terms of gradual realization there are four stages of the development of vision (*snang ba bzhi*). At the initial stage, the practitioner experiences small spheres of light (*thig le*). In the two next stages, the visions become bigger. The practitioner will at first experience appearances of torsos and deities inside *thig le*, which will develop into pure visions of Peaceful and Wrathful deities and mandalas. The size of the *thig le* varies from that of a mustard seed to the ones as big as the shield. At first visions are unstable and various; they come and go, signifying practitioner's state of unstable mind. Gradually they become clearer and more stabilized.<sup>78</sup>

At the fourth stage of practicing vision, the practitioner realizes the Rainbow Body of Light as visions dissolve back into the Natural State.<sup>79</sup> The dissolving of the actual body usually happens at the time of death, when the

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*: 126-130.

<sup>74</sup> For *khregs chod* practices see Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen (2002: 51-74).

<sup>75</sup> Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen (2002: 73).

<sup>76</sup> Tenzin Namdak in Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen (2002: 93, n. 22-23).

<sup>77</sup> For more see Wangyal (2004: 166-174).

<sup>78</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 199-200). For the full exposition of *thod rgal* practice see Tenzin Namdak (2006: 189-204); Chagmé (2000: 153-179).

<sup>79</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 199).

impure elements of our material body revert back (*ru log*) into the clear, coloured light.

If one practices only *khregs chod*, then the body cannot become the light body, it can only disappear to the level of atoms.<sup>80</sup>

### The Fruit

The fruit of the Dzogchen path is in Bon usually called the fully-realized Trikāya. The Enlightenment in Dzogchen is not understood as annihilation or oblivion, but realization of Trikāya which has always been present in the Nature of Mind.<sup>81</sup> Through the practice of *thod rgal*, one realizes the Rūpakāya, represented as the manifestation of the enlightenment of the Buddha in visible form as Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya. Through the practice of *khregs chod* one realizes the Dharmakāya.<sup>82</sup> At the time of death,<sup>83</sup> awareness manifests once again as the Clear Light. However, since all the karmic traces have been purified one will not follow the path of samsāra, as there is no grasping and clinging involved. Since all the karmic residues have been purified, the Clear Light is the embodiment of the Trikāya. The Nature of Mind (*sems nyid*) is the Dharmakāya, the energy (*rtsal*) is the Sambhogakāya and the body (*sku*) is Nirmāṇakāya.

However, unlike in the Sūtra system, Trikāya does not arise as a result of accumulation of wisdom and meritorious karma. It also does not arise as the product of the transformational practices of *bskyed rim* and *rdzogs rim* (the generation and perfection stages where the practitioner realizes the illusory body composed of *prana* and subtle mind), found in the system of Tantra.<sup>84</sup> The practice of *thod rgal* has opened up the space for the manifestation of Trikāya. This is possible because the ultimate liberation has been present in us from the beginning of time, like the clear sky.<sup>85</sup>

As Ven. Tenzin Namdak explains:

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*: 192.

<sup>81</sup> Reynolds (2005: 245).

<sup>82</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 154); Reynolds (2005: 244).

<sup>83</sup> For the explanation of the arising of samsāra and nirvāna at the time of death, see the translation of the text below.

<sup>84</sup> Generation process means that practitioners generate and conceive themselves in the image of deity at the centre of mandala. The practitioners practices three concentrations (Skt. *samādhi*, Tib. *ting nge'dzin*): thusness concentration (Skt. *tathatā samādhi*, Tib. *de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge'dzin*) comprised of meditation on emptiness; all-illuminating concentration (Skt. *samantāloka samādhi*, Tib. *kun tu snang ba'i gi ting nge'dzin*), where a clear moon disc is generated within emptiness and causal concentration (Skt. *hetu samādhi*, Tib. *rygu'i ring nge'dzin*), where the deity was imagined to appear out of a seed syllable placed at the top of the moon disc. Perfection stage represents the stage where practitioners are in union with deity. They are the deity. Dunhuang manual *De kho na nyid kyi snang ba dam pa rgyan gi sgom thabs* states that in the generation state one should have generated oneself as the son of the Victor, while in generation stage one should generate the Victor as one's own son. For more see Dalton (2004: 8-9). Tenzin Namdak states that in perfection stage practitioners should create in their heart center a very refined Illusion Body or *sgyu lus* through union of prana and mind. This Illusion body is something we create during the life time and it represents the base for the manifestation of the Sambhogakāya (i.e. the deity). At the time of death, we transfer our consciousness into it, and this becomes the way for the manifestation of our Sambhogakāya. (2006: 40).

<sup>85</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 250, n.12); Reynolds (2005: 245).

[all] other sentient beings, who are still caught up in their ignorance, remain behind in samsara. However, we have not abandoned them. Because we are now fully and permanently in the Natural State, the virtuous quality of the great compassion for all sentient beings, which is inherent in it, manifests spontaneously and without limitations. This compassion is total, the great compassion, because it is extended to all sentient beings impartially. And by virtue of the power of this spontaneous compassion, we reappear to Samsaric beings as a Body of Light in order to teach them and help guide them along the path to liberation and enlightenment.<sup>86</sup>



*Figure 2 : Gyer spungs chen po sNang bzher lod po in the moment of achieving the supreme realization after which he spontaneously composed the prayer to Ta pi hri tsa.*

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<sup>86</sup> 2006: 155.

### III. Translation of Tibetan texts

The following excerpts from the collected works of Ven. Tenzin Namdak are his commentaries on the «*Prayer to Ta pi hri tsa*» (*Ta pi hri tsa'i gsol 'debs*), written in the eight century by Ta pi hri tsa's disciple Gyer spungs chen po sNang bzher lod po also known as Gyer spungs pa. Ta pi hri tsa is known as the 25<sup>th</sup> master in the unbroken transmission lineage within the Oral Tradition from Zhang-zhung (*Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*).

Little is known of his life<sup>87</sup> but it is presumed that he was born sometime in the seventh century in Zhang-zhung. He received the transmission of all four cycles of precepts within the Oral Tradition<sup>88</sup> from the 24<sup>th</sup> master Tshe sprungs Zla ba rgyal mtshan. He attained the Great Transfer of the Rainbow Body (*'ja' lus 'pho ba chen po*), leaving no part of his body behind,<sup>89</sup> but manifested miraculously to his later disciples in the form most suitable for the occasion.

Gyer spungs pa is an important figure in the history of Oral Tradition, since he was the one who got the permission directly from Ta pi hri tsa, to write down the Dzogchen precepts in the Zhang-zhung language. This then resulted in the wider spread of the teachings, which until then were only spread in an aural manner from the master to a single disciple (*gcig brgyud*).

The prayer is used as a part of Guru Yoga practice, the single most important preliminary practice in both Dzogchen and all other Buddhist systems. The idea of Guru Yoga is to unite one's mind with the mind of the teacher. Through achieving such unity it is said that disciples receive blessings and/or assistance for their practice. It is believed that one should visualize in front of oneself Ta pi hri tsa in the sky, in a form of a young child or eternal youth, since this was the form he used to reveal himself to Gyer spungs pa. During visualization, one should recite the prayer.<sup>90</sup>

The prayer itself can be found in the manuscript version of the *rGyal ba phyag khrid* collection (practice manual and commentary to *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*) and was recently reprinted as an appendix to the *sNgon 'gro'i gsol 'debs* in *rGyun khyer bon spyod phyogs bdus dand dang thar lam rdzogs pa'i them skyes*.<sup>91</sup>

Within the prayer, particular importance is given to the six verses (highlighted below in bold).<sup>92</sup> The symbolism of the six verses as a prototype and basic building structure of the main text is a form taken from "The

<sup>87</sup> See Reynolds (2005: 81-82).

<sup>88</sup> According to oral commentary from Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* has four categories of precepts, or the ways of teaching: external, representing the general exposition of the Dzogchen view and its difference from the other vehicles; internal, representing the important explanation of the Dzogchen view; secret, which is seeing the intrinsic awareness nakedly; and exceedingly secret teaching representing the definite decision to accept Natural State as the source. See also: Reynolds (2005: 49-50, 82).

<sup>89</sup> He realized Buddhahood in one life time and there was no necessity to undergo the process of death. Instead, his physical body simply faded away and dissolved into space. However, he is said to manifest himself in a Body of Light (*'od lus*) in order to teach disciples with whom he had karmic connections. See: Reynolds (2005: 441-442, n. 14).

<sup>90</sup> For detailed description of the practice see: Reynolds (2005: 216-219).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*: 213-25; 231-232; 518, n. 15.

<sup>92</sup> Reynolds argues that this core six verses were written by Gyer spungs pa and the frame consisting of preface and conclusion was added by later editors, see (2005: 518, n. 15).

*Cuckoo of the Intellect*" (*Rig pa'i khu byug*).<sup>93</sup> This is one of the earliest known Nyingma Dzogchen texts found in Dunhuang, belonging to the series of five texts that are said to have been translated by Vairocana from his own master Śrī siṃha.<sup>94</sup> It is preserved as No. 746 of the Sir Aurel Stein's collection of manuscripts and can be found in India Office Library in London. It is dated to ca. eighth century. The text is comprised of six verses plus the salutations and the subsequent commentary on the work.<sup>95</sup>

The role of the cuckoo is important both for Bon in general and the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* in particular, since it is said that gShen rab Mi bo che came down to earth from heaven in its form. Also, in the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*, one of the nine Blisful ones (*bde gshegs*), belonging to the first group of those who received the teachings by means of contemplation (*dgongs pa*) rather than through the oral transmission, is known after his name as Bar snang khu byug (the Cuckoo of the space), who transformed himself in the cuckoo on the juniper tree and sang clearly the "*Cuckoo of the Intellect*".<sup>96</sup>

The six highlighted verses of the prayer refer to the Base, the Path and the Fruit of practicing *rthod rgal* (and *mkhregs chod*), as Ta pi hri tsa did, and in that way he obtained the Great Transfer of the Rainbow Body.<sup>97</sup>

#### *Prayer to Ta pi hri tsa*<sup>98</sup>

E ma ho!  
 How wonderful!  
 Mind emanation of Kuntu Zangpo, (Your) body color shines like the white crystal,  
 Pure and clear rays of light emanate (from You) in the ten directions.  
 (You) are unadorned and naked, (representing) the essential meaning of the Primordial State.  
 (Through Your) compassion and two-fold knowledge, (You) care for the benefit of all sentient beings.  
 The heart essence of the enlightened ones is Dzogchen, the highest of all (teachings),  
 The summit of all vehicles and the essence of all the Tantras, transmissions and pith instructions.  
**The Natural State of the Base, (is the source) of both the liberation of nirvāna and delusion of samsāra.**  
**Through sounds, lights and rays, all the faults (of samsāra) and all the qualities (of nirvāna) completely banish.**  
**Having totally cleared away the darkness of the minds (trapped in the cycle of) rebirths,**

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*: 519, n. 17; Karmay (1988: 41,48).

<sup>94</sup> Karmay (1998: 101) doubts whether this is so, and claims that these texts are original Tibetan compositions and not translations from Sanskrit.

<sup>95</sup> For the detailed explanation see: Karmay (1998: 94-101) and (1988: 41-85).

<sup>96</sup> Reynolds (2005: 39-48); Karmay (1988: 43-44). Apparently, one of the nine Bonpo Dzogchen texts known as *Sems sde dgu* is also entitled *Rig pa'i khyu byug* (see Karmay *ibid.*).

<sup>97</sup> Reynolds (2005: 519, n. 17).

<sup>98</sup> Translation done with the assistance of Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung.



**The Base, empty and without any origin, is instantly realized, (together with five) paths (and ten bhūmis).**

**Experiences and realization manifest (on the Path), and samsāra and nirvāna are liberated into the (Nature of) Mind,**

**Trikāya of the Fruit manifests in the space.**

To You, Ta pi hri tsa, the protector of all beings,  
I pray with wholehearted devotion.

(That you) bestow the blessing and empowerments to me and others,  
All obstacles, inner, outer and secret, may they be pacified.

Having been liberated of the illusory and ignorant apprehension of self,  
and having perfected view and action, the intrinsic awareness manifests.

I pray, at this moment, that the meaning of the Great Perfection, that is  
primordially empty and baseless, beyond conception, be bestowed upon me.

To you, Ta pi hri tsa, the lord protector of all beings

I pray that you hold with compassion the beings of six realms and release  
their minds.

[This prayer was dedicated single-pointedly by Gyer spung snang bzher  
lod pos to the mind-emanation, Ta pi hri tsa. May this prayer be auspicious  
and virtuous!]



### **Translation of the commentary by Venerable Tenzin Namdak**

The translation of the commentarial text (Namdak 2005: 37-42) has been done with the help of Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, the abbot of the Bonpo monastery of Triten Norbutse (*Khri brtan nor bu rtse*) in Kathmandu, who also kindly provided substantial oral commentaries to the text, which are included here in the footnotes. This text is the explanation of only the first four highlighted verses, due to the limitation of space. However, the translated material provides us with the solid explanation of the main facets within the Dzogchen doctrine.

### **The Natural State of the Base, (is the source) of both the liberation of nirvāna and delusion of samsāra**

[p.37] As for the first, to explain the natural state of the fundamental (primordial) base. According to lower vehicles<sup>99</sup>, [p.38] after the ultimate reality has been analyzed by logical cognition [to establish whether] the essence of the object of refutation (*dgag bya'i ngo bo*) exists or doesn't exist within a logical subject (*bon can*)<sup>100</sup>, (when one checks and finds) that essence of the object of refutation<sup>101</sup> is not found in this base (of the logical subject),

<sup>99</sup> Ven. Tenzin Namdak starts His explanation of the prayer by establishing the general philosophical view (*lta ba spyi gcod*) of other vehicles and how they differ from the Dzogchen view. This is also known as the external category of teaching.

<sup>100</sup> According to Khenpo Yungdrung, logical subject (*bon can*) is the subject serving as the point of analysis of whether there is or isn't inherent existence (*dgag bya'i ng bo*) within the object, e.g. a table. A practitioner will use the so called analytical meditation to observe the object and try to understand it's empty essence. The refutation of the inherent existence varies according to different traditions (e.g. *gzhan stong* and *rang stong*). For a detailed explanation see: Hookham, 1992.

<sup>101</sup> According to Alexandar Berzin, object of refutation (*dgag bya'i ngo bo*) is: “.. an item, or a truth about an item, defined in terms of the exclusion of something else (*gzhan sel*,

therefore (that logical subject's) nature is empty. From the point of view of that knowledge which realizes that specific subject (as empty, the subject should then also be considered from the) aspect of non-affirming negation.<sup>102</sup>

According to the Dzogchen (system), emptiness is beyond the ordinary conception (*blo rig*).<sup>103</sup> The nature of the base (is considered to be) the union of clarity (and) emptiness. That clarity is also empty. (That) emptiness is also empty. Their union (is also) not beyond (the state of) emptiness. Since this (state) is empty, it is given the name of (that which is) endowed with the nature of fathoming what is empty.<sup>104</sup> According to the "Extensive Oral Transmission, the Grey One"<sup>105</sup>, it is said: "Clarity is clear within the nature of mind. Emptiness is also empty within the nature of the mind."<sup>106</sup>

(In the text) "The Six Key Points of Pure and Perfect Mind"<sup>107</sup>, it is said: "Awareness (is) empty. Emptiness (is) awareness." According to "The Medium Length Oral Transmission"<sup>108</sup>, it is said: "As for the nature of essence, (it is) empty, luminous, unchanging, unceasing (and) intangible. As for emptiness, it abides as empty essence. As for luminosity, (it's) nature abides as clarity. Essence of emptiness abides (as) clarity. Essence of clarity abides as emptiness. The quality (of) inseparable union (of) emptiness and clarity (is) unchanging."<sup>109</sup>

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elimination of other), in which an object to be negated is explicitly precluded by the conceptual cognition that cognizes the phenomenon. An example of a negation phenomenon is "not an apple." In order to conceptualize "not an apple," one needs previously to have known "apple" (the object to be negated here). [http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/sutra/level5\\_analysis\\_mind\\_reality/cognition\\_theory/level\\_b\\_fine\\_analysis/affirmations.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/sutra/level5_analysis_mind_reality/cognition_theory/level_b_fine_analysis/affirmations.html)

<sup>102</sup> *Reductio ad absurdum* analysis within Madhyamaka school which consists of negation of positive and negation of negative.

<sup>103</sup> According to Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, in Dzogchen we cannot say that we can conceptually grasp emptiness. As Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche points out, unlike the Sūtra teachings (common name for all lower vehicles), which analyses the object by means of conceptual thought, Dzogchen uses direct and immediate introduction to emptiness and together with various forms of *zhi gnas* meditation helps the person to understand the empty nature of reality and of the primordial state. (2004: 179).

<sup>104</sup> According to Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, once we experience the state of emptiness that goes beyond the ordinary conception, then the observer also becomes the emptiness within the emptiness itself. «Who is aware? Who knows? The awareness is known by itself.» Like a candle light full of light, which itself produces the clear light. It is clear by itself.

<sup>105</sup> *Nyams rgyud rgyas pa skya ru ma*, teachings belonging to the cycle of the Experiential Transmission (*Nyams rgyud*). It is the collective commentarial work based on the practical experiences of the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* masters. Within the extensive collection there is the Grey and the Brown one, because of the colour of the covers used to distinguish two versions.

<sup>106</sup> This signifies the fact, that although the nature of the mind possesses two qualities of clarity and emptiness, they are in fact in unity within the nature of mind.

<sup>107</sup> *Byang tsub sems khyi gnad drug*, a complementary text to the root text "Instructions on the Six Lamps" (*sgron ma drug pa*), written by *Ya ngal Gong khra pa chen po*, belonging to *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* cycle. The root text is also known as "The Six Lamps", which is the title used in this paper.

<sup>108</sup> *'Bring po sor bzhaq*, part of Medium length experiential teachings by Zhang-zhung masters, belonging to the *Nyams rgyud* cycle.

<sup>109</sup> According to Khenpo Yungdrung, these statements are made to fortify the inseparability of emptiness and clarity.

(In the text) “*The Commentary of the Six Precepts*”<sup>110</sup>, it is said: “(That which) possesses awareness abides as empty, and is clear as the state of great primordial wisdom. Awareness abides as pervasive Dharmakāya.” Such a natural state cannot be found by conceptual mind in the duality of object and subject. (Now), if you think how can (one) find (it)? (In the text) “*The Commentary of the Six Precepts*”, it is said: “(There are two ways), the gradual taming of the mind and the instantaneous taming of the mind.”<sup>111</sup> As for gradual taming, (it is said that) by meditation (one should) focus one's mind on the sacred syllable (or on any) divine body. (If) the mind does not want to focus and escapes (to the extremes) of drowsiness (and) agitation. (In the case of) drowsiness, (one should) uplift (the mind by) thinking (on) [p.39] Buddha's body (and) primordial wisdom (and) generate enthusiasm. (In the case of) agitation (one should) bring the (mind) down (by) thinking (that) substance of appearances (produced in meditation) is delusion. Having generated the feeling of dissatisfaction that there is no benefit if one does not meditate on these principles, one meditates and in consequence of which, gradually, the discursive thoughts (become) more and more pacified. At the same time, the primordial wisdom arises (and) becomes clearer. As it is said, focus on the (sacred syllable) A etc., and let the mind gradually settle down. In that state of mind, (one should) again look back at it.”

As for instantaneous taming of mind, as mentioned above, (it is said): “When the mind does not want to be stable and (gets) agitated, it is similar to for example, a wild horse. If you try to tame it, it cannot be tamed and so you should (first) let it run as much as (it) wants and (gradually it will get tired) so (you can) tame (it). (Like this), the wild mind (which is) like the wild horse, if (you) intentionally try to tame it, more and more discursive thoughts will arise. (Therefore), let it just arise as much as it wants without trying to stop (your) senses. (Also), without trying to tame the inside of the mind (that runs) after the object, let it go, without holding and analyzing (your thoughts), without (any) attachment to any particular thing.”

According to the same text (it is said): “When (one) looks at (one's) mind, (there is) no colour and form. Therefore (one) does not see (the mind as) substantial (and with) form. From primordial time, the mind is not substantial. Mind is endowed with essence of awareness. Through the (nature of) Mind which is endowed with the quintessence of awareness, one become familiarized with the state of Reality (*bon nyid*) which is endowed with the quintessence of mind.”<sup>112</sup>

(In the text entitled) “*Determining the General Philosophical View*” (it is said)<sup>113</sup>: “If discursive thought arises (and if one) looks (at it) directly, (it will be) liberated. (After liberation there will be) clear wisdom, without fixed point of reference. (This) is called the wisdom of *thod rgal*.” When discursive

<sup>110</sup> *Lung drug 'grel*, the text belonging to the *rDzogs chen bsgrags pa skor gsum cycle*, the commentary of the *Lung drug*, written by Li shu sTag ring.

<sup>111</sup> This is the practice of direct introduction to mind (*sems kyi ngo sprod*) which is compulsory before training in *khregs chod*, see Tenzin Namdak (2006: 139-145).

<sup>112</sup> This means by knowing awareness experientially, one comes to know the ultimate Reality (*bon nyid*) of the mind itself (private correspondence with Jean-Luc Achard on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2008).

<sup>113</sup> *ITa ba spyi gcod*, independent root text, 12 chapters of pith instructions (*Man ngag le'u bcu gnyis pa*), part of *Bon bKa' brten*.

thought arises, (if one) looks (at the discursive thought itself that has become) the object of watching, (it will be) dissolved. (Having dissolved that, one) remains in the unspeakable state without particular identification of the (mind as) the observer. (That is) the experience (of) the nature of mind. Such a natural state is endowed with all the qualities of original purity, spontaneous perfection, essence, nature, compassionate energy etc.<sup>114</sup>

[p.40] As for the second, to explain the liberation (and) delusion (of) samsāra and nirvāna: (there are two and the first is) the way of being deluded (in) samsāra. (The second is) the way of being liberated (in) nirvāna. As for the first, generally, (even) samsāra (itself) is delusion (and also there is) no beginning of (that) delusion. In particular, each person at the time of death (can experience) the intermediate state of primordially pure Dharmakāya.<sup>115</sup> Most people experience (that state), regardless whether (they have or haven't been) directly introduced (with natural state). (Sentient beings) remain (in the intermediate state of primordially pure Dharmakāya) for longer or shorter extent of time (and after that, through the condition of rising movement) of innate wind energy<sup>116</sup>, the three visions (of) sound, light and rays (will) freely manifest.<sup>117</sup> Together with that vision, the cognizant

<sup>114</sup> Dzogchen practice of *zhi gnas* or *śamata* represents a part of so called *semdzin* practices (*sems 'dzin*) which are aimed at fixating the mind on e.g. white Tibetan letter A. By such practice the state of calm is achieved and mind is concentrated. However this is not the Natural state, or awareness (*rig pa*), it is just something created by the mind. In that state, when a thought arises, one should observe it (it becomes the object of watching) and without trying to change it, inspect its colour, shape, point or origin, establish whether it is coming from the inside or the outside of the body etc. After that we look at the mind, and inspect who and where is the watcher that really looks at the thought. There comes the point when neither watcher nor the object of watching can be separated since they are of the same nature, and this is the point of recognition of Nature of Mind (i.e. the unspeakable state). See Tenzin Namdak (2006: 126-131).

<sup>115</sup> According to private correspondence with Jean-Luc Achard on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008, the Bardo of Dharmakāya (*ka dag bon sku'i bar do*) is: "The Bardo of the Primordially Pure Absolute Body is...the state which occurs just after the disconnection of the mind from the body. At that time, there are no arising of anything (thoughts, visions, etc.), just the pure and limpid Essence of our natural state. In general, this Bardo is said to last as long as one is able to remain clearly in the state of Trekchö. For ordinary beings, it last a tenth of a finger snap and therefore cannot be recognized. For many schools and masters (outside Dzogchen), this is a blank state without consciousness. In a sense this is true: there are no consciousnesses such as sense or mental consciousness. However, this is not a blank state of being dull, etc. It is rather the pure state of Emptiness and Clarity together. The clarity aspect is at its sapiential level (not at its visionary level which occurs in the Bardo of Clear-Light of Reality) and is simply Awareness (*rig pa*). Therefore it is a state beyond consciousnesses but endowed with Awareness. It is self-aware without mental limitations. If one recognizes this state just after death, then there is nothing else to do, this is total Buddhahood. The existence of this state just after death is the very reason of the practice of Trekchö (if one is unable to reach liberation in this life)."

<sup>116</sup> The natural base in itself hold all the potentiality and perfected qualities of all phenomena. The first element that arises out of it (leaving it nevertheless unaffected, like the sun reflecting on the water) is the very subtle wind, because it is in its nature to arise (e.g. nature of the fire is to warm up, of the water to moisten etc.). Due to the this spontaneous perfection and quality of the base, the elements can arise but they can never affect the base. See Rossi (1999: 65-67). According to Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, the subtle wind causes the subtle sounds and the luminosity and clarity of the base cause the arising of lights and rays.

<sup>117</sup> For explanation of the Bardo of the Clear-Light of Reality (*bon nyid 'od gsal gyi bar do*), see Blezer in Karmay and Watt (2007: 188,192); Tenzin Namdak in Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (2002: 122-123); Blezer (1997: 69-70); Orofino (1990: 45-59); Karmay (1988: 203-205).

consciousness (as) the perceiver (*yul can gyi shes rig cig*) arises (as soon as) the object's observable qualities appear (to that cognizant consciousness). Grasping of the objects (that appear to the cognizant consciousness) emerges from its own side<sup>118</sup> (and) naturally arises. That is called simultaneously-born ignorance (*lhan gcig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*).<sup>119</sup>

Furthermore, (if you ask) together with what (is this ignorance) simultaneously born, (it is) born simultaneously (with) three (objects which are) sounds, lights (and) rays. (If you ask) what is also born, the cognizant consciousness (as) the perceiver (is born). (If you ask) what condition caused (it), it is caused by the condition of sounds, lights (and) rays. The cause of the birth of that ignorance (is) the previous karma and negative emotions of the person (whose) mind stream (is endowed with that ignorance).

(In the text) "*The Six Lamps*" (it is said): "When the three objects of vision (sounds, lights and rays) directly manifest, recollecting consciousness (of the) cognition (*dren rig blo ye shes pa*) (is) obscured (by the) objects. (In that way this consciousness) does not recognize (them as) self-manifesting (and as) magical apparition (and it) perceives (them as) dual and real. That perception of duality obscures the actual state of awareness. Since (it) does not realize self-awareness (*rang rig*) (it) cannot realize the nature of primordial base (*kun gzhi'i don*). That is (called) simultaneously born ignorance".

Because of that cognizant consciousness the grasping of the objects becomes grosser and having discriminated more particularities of the object, that consciousness (itself) becomes grosser. By the force (of that), the objects of the vision are stirred up. Having stirred those objects of vision, the five causal elements arise (*rgyu lnga'i 'byung ba*).<sup>120</sup> Due to that, vision of five objects (*yul lnga'i snang ba*) arise.<sup>121</sup> Because of that, five sensory perceptions (*sgo lnga'i shes pa*)<sup>122</sup> [p.41] and five aggregates (*phung po lnga*) arise.<sup>123</sup> (That perception that grasps) those objects as inherent and from their own side<sup>124</sup> and discriminates different forms is called imputed ignorance. (In the text entitled) "*The Six Lamps*" (it is said): "Six senses (having imputed or made up their) objects, (make them) vary in forms.<sup>125</sup> That is imputed ignorance (*kun btags kyi ma rig pa*).<sup>126</sup>

By the power of imputed ignorance, (one) grasps self and others. Having grasped self and others, five poisons of negative emotions arise".<sup>127</sup>

<sup>118</sup> It appears that the objects are separate from us and not just the projection of our mind, oral commentary Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung.

<sup>119</sup> The "genetic" cause which prevents recognition of the ultimate nature of mind, simultaneously born with all sentient beings, see Klein and Wangyal (2006: 90-91); Reynolds (2005: 241-242); Rossi (1999: 64); Karmay (1988: 189-190).

<sup>120</sup> Wind, earth, fire, water, space.

<sup>121</sup> Form, sound, taste, smell, touch.

<sup>122</sup> Eye, ear, tongue, nose, body.

<sup>123</sup> Five *skandhas* – form, feeling, idea, formation, consciousness.

<sup>124</sup> The objects have independent inherent existence, and the perception grasps them as dual and separate from itself.

<sup>125</sup> One starts recognizing e.g. this is my hand and I can touch with it, this is my nose so I can smell with it, oral commentary by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung.

<sup>126</sup> Non-spontaneous ignorance made up later in the process due to causal rising of different elements, perceptions, aggregates and so forth. See Reynolds (2005: 242).

<sup>127</sup> Desire, anger, delusion, pride, envy.

As for the second, (to explain) the way of being liberated (in) nirvāna: at the end (of the) manifestation (of) the fundamental nature (in the intermediate state of Dharmakāya), during the state of death (which is the time) when the three (visions) of sounds, lights and rays arise (due to the movement of) the innate wind energy, at the same time, the expressive manifestation (of) awareness wisdom (*rig pa'i ye shes*) (appears) without wavering (from the state of ) self-originated wisdom (*gzhi rang 'byung ye shes*) (and) the objects of perception manifest (to) the awareness wisdom, (but it) does not perceive them. All the appearance of the objects of perception (resembles) magical apparition (and are) like an image in a mirror, (which) appears, but with no reality.

As for the awareness, (it) is nothing other than the base, (which) is empty and clear. Therefore, all appearances gradually arise as those of wisdom and body of divinities (just like) the rainbow manifests (itself) in the space.<sup>128</sup> The empty form of inconceivable wisdom appearance (*ye shes kyi snang ba bsam gyis mi grub pa*) arises. That awareness wisdom does not waver from the empty and clear base, and (it also) does not follow the expressive energy of three (objects which are) sounds, lights and rays. This is called simultaneously-born wisdom awareness (*lhan cig skyes pa'i rig pa'i ye shes*). (If you ask) together with what (is this wisdom) simultaneously born, (it is born with) three capacities of sound, light and rays. (If you ask) what is born, (it is) that wisdom awareness that (is born). Even the term born (refers to) the beginning of realization of emptiness by emptiness itself.<sup>129</sup> Causal conditions of the birth of this wisdom result from the accumulation of merits in previous lifetimes by the person endowed with (it) and (he/she) is able to maintain awareness at its natural place (*rig pa rang gnas su zin*) (without wavering towards objects).

In "*The Six Lamps*" (it is said): "Due to the manifestation of the expressive energy of three objects (of vision which are sounds, lights and rays) mindful awareness (*dran rig blo yi shes pa*) sees directly (those objects as) self-manifestations (and) magical apparitions. [p.42] Because (of the) self-manifestation (of) the objects, awareness "awares" nakedly and freshly.<sup>130</sup> The primordial base is realized clearly without obscuration. (Due to that) realization, the awareness stays (in its) own natural place. (It) doesn't follow after the objects manifested by the vision. At that time (one) manifests (one's own) independence."

<sup>128</sup> The practitioner can be liberated either in the Bardo of Dharmakāya, or can move on to Bardo of the Clear-Light of Reality, where the first chance of liberation occurs if one recognizes the three visions (sounds, lights and rays) as the manifestation of one's own expressive energy (tsel) of the Nature of Mind. If one does not recognize them as illusions, more vision appear of the so called Zhitro (*zhi khro*), the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities, their mandalas and retinues etc. This is also the point in which one can get liberated by realizing that these visions are mere projection of one's mind. See Tenzin Namdak (2006: 138).

<sup>129</sup> Tenzin Namdak states that: "In Dzogchen, we do not even grasp at the presence of awareness. We find no grasping there and no watcher. Both the watcher and the watched dissolve into the Natural State....But other schools are not satisfied to let thoughts dissolve and then find nothing there, no trace at all. They maintain that there must be a thought or a perception present that knows this state. Such a thought or perception, however, no matter how subtle, still represents grasping." (2006: 144).

<sup>130</sup> It represents the moment of understanding of the emptiness and non-duality and inseparability of awareness from the Nature of Mind and Primordial Base. (*ibid.*: 140).

In this text, it is said (that) the term “*dran rig blo yi shes pa*” should not be taken literally (as the recollecting consciousness of cognition in samsāra but as the mindful awareness of nirvāna). This is because beneath the objects of self-manifestation awareness manifests (itself) nakedly and freshly. That awareness is nothing other than the awareness staying in its own natural place. (Its) expressive energy is manifested self-awareness wisdom (*shar gyi rang rig ye shes*). That (manifested self-awareness wisdom) is none other than the union of emptiness and clarity. If (you) are not convinced of this, (you) will be in contradiction with all the texts and teachings that explain the simple sphere of basic nature as beyond conception.<sup>131</sup>

**Through sounds, lights and rays, all the faults (of samsāra) and all the qualities (of nirvāna) completely banish**

As for the third, (to) explain the faults and qualities (of) three (visions of) sound, light and rays: as mentioned above, awareness that stays in its own natural place, the manifested self-awareness wisdom, is not wavered from the base, (which is) the union of clarity and emptiness (and) becomes the essence of emptiness and clarity. From that state, whatever (visions of) sound, light and rays may arise, (one) does not perceive them and is not transformed and modified by either qualities or faults of grasping thought. Therefore, all the visions are manifested as empty form. So, (one) does not accumulate any defilements of either qualities or faults on the primordial ground (which is called) completely luminous.<sup>132</sup>

**Having totally cleared away the darkness of the minds (trapped in the cycle of) rebirths**

As for the fourth, (to explain) the clearing away (of) the darkness<sup>133</sup> of sentient beings: having dispelled the darkness of the mind of the sentient beings (means that) all the obscurations comprising both afflictive obscurations and obscurations to the knowledge and all those similar to

<sup>131</sup> Independence mentioned here means being aware that thoughts can arise, but we are neither distracted by them nor clinging towards them. We understand them as manifestation of expressive energy (*rtsal*) of the awareness wisdom which remains in its own natural state or place. (*ibid.*: 146).

<sup>132</sup> The quotation from Klein and Wangyal further fortifies the statement  
 “Nothing, not even one thing  
 Does not arise from me.  
 Nothing, not even one thing  
 Dwells not within me.  
 Everything, just everything  
 Emanates from me  
 Thus I am only one.  
 Knowing me is knowing all –  
 Great bliss.” (2006: 229).

<sup>133</sup> The darkness of those deluded by duality and seeing things as having inherent nature, is sometimes explained with the parable of “mistaking rope for a snake”, see Klein and Wangyal (2006: 227); Rossi (1999: 55). “Thoughts and emotions fill the mind with darkness, like the clouds filling the space with thick clouds.” Reynolds (2005: 242).

them are purified without leaving any trace by this Lord (Ta pi hri tsa) when (he) directly manifested the awareness wisdom (and) became perfect (in it).

**The Base, empty and without any origin, is instantly realized, together with the paths and *bhūmis*.**

[p.43] As for second, (to explain) the activity. Three sentences starting with word *gzhi stong* (the base, empty and without any origin) etc. (To explain its meaning there are three subdivisions which are): The instant realization of path and *bhūmis*, the way of liberation from *samsāra* and *nirvāna* in the (nature of) mind, (and) the means of obtaining the three *kāyas* as a result. As for the first, although (the system of) Dzogchen accepts (the philosophy of) achieving two *kāyas* (through) two types of accumulations of merit (and wisdom), as for the way to achieve the result, it is unnecessary to add any other method except keeping oneself in a single state of meditation on awareness wisdom, which is the union of the primordially pure and spontaneously perfect base and is called the uniquely perfect awareness. Therefore (the result) does not depend on progressive stages of the path and *bhūmis*.

(In the text entitled) “*The Commentary to the Six Precepts*” (it is said): “The ultimate nature of phenomenal existence, the pure and perfect mind, has no paths and *bhūmis* and (one) does not progress higher or lower. (There is) also nothing to be observed.” Even though, from the base itself, there is nothing to be examined, if (one) practices with understanding of spontaneous perfection, as mentioned earlier, (one will) realize the natural state of the Great Perfection and the way (in which it) is perfected. Knowing that, the mind-stream of the practitioner will attain the qualities of that knowledge. For example, a person drinking a cup of milk (will indiscriminately and instantaneously) know the benefits and harms of nourishing quality of butter in milk on (his/her) body, even if the particularities of (those) nutritional qualities of the milk are not known (to that person).<sup>134</sup>



### Commentary to the translation

The six verses encapsulate the exposition of the Base, the Path and the Fruit. The Primordial Base, representing our Natural State or our Nature of Mind, is spontaneously perfected. However, in it there is also potentiality for the rise of both *samsāra* and *nirvāna*. The practitioners of *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*, at the time of death, enter into the intermediate state, but they are not deluded by the appearances that manifest themselves. The manifestation of

<sup>134</sup> Through the direct introduction into the Nature of Mind by the qualified teacher, the practitioner starts practicing *khregs chod* to stabilize the mind and *thod rgal* to overcome dualistic perceptions and to understand the nature of the arising visions as a mere display of his/her own Nature of Mind. Consequently, one comes to definite understanding (*chod rtogs*) of Dzogchen as the Sole Path (*lam gcig*) to liberation. There is no need to practice any separate method, since all the methods are already there, spontaneously perfected within the practice of remaining in the Primordial Base. See: Reynolds (2005: 242-243); Rossi (1999: 68); Karmay (1988: 193).



appearances occurs because the Natural Base in itself holds all potentiality and perfected qualities of all phenomena.

As Reynolds states:

During the process of dying, one's elements, vital winds, and thought processes all dissolve back into the space from which they originated. Deprived of the definition and constraint of a material body, consciousness finds itself in a vast dark empty space without any borders or walls....But this space is not just non-existence or a blank nothingness, a mere absence; it is the vast, open infinite space of one's own Nature of Mind. This vast space of dimension is the Kunzhi, the basis of everything, the state of Shunyata.<sup>135</sup>

The Nature of Mind is expressed as the inseparability of emptiness and inherent luminosity of intrinsic awareness (*rig pa'i rang gsal*) which spontaneously manifests in the dimension of space as the Clear Light.

If, at the moment of death, one does not recognize that the emanating sounds, lights and rays are just the display of the Nature of Mind or inherent energy of awareness (*rig pa'i rang rtsal*), and starts clinging to them, then one falls into unconsciousness. In the case of nirvāna, or enlightened awareness (*rig pa'i ye shes*), the visions of buddhas and mandalas appear from the Clear Light. However, the practitioner, although at first perhaps deluded by the subtle visions of sounds, lights and rays, will recognize them as nothing but illusions, and in that way gain Enlightenment. This happens due to the simultaneously born wisdom awareness (*lhan cig skyes pa'i rig pa'i ye shes*), which enables the practitioner to remain stable in understanding the processess happening due to potentiality of the Primordial Base.

In the case of samsāra, the cognizant consciousness (*shes rig*) starts clinging to the subtle visions of sounds, lights and rays which causes them to become grosser and grosser. Due to the simultaneously born ignorance (*lhan gcig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*), this genetic cause simultaneously born with all sentient beings that bares with itself the duality of the watcher and watched, one perceives visions as something separate from oneself and as born from one's own side. One also feels either attraction or aversion to them, which leads to unfolding of the other impure karmic visions and eventual rebirth.<sup>136</sup>

Under samsāric conditions, cognizant consciousness is dual in nature, separating object from subject and is distracted by thoughts and emotions. This is known as the two-fold ignorance, one called simultaneously born ignorance (*lhan gcig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*) and the other imputed ignorance (*kun btags kyi ma rig pa*). This two-fold ignorance is usually compared to the clouds in the sky which obscure the view.

At the time of death, one clearly has the chance to either enter the path of samsāra or nirvāna. Therefore, it becomes necessary to understand and familiarize oneself with the Natural State during one's life time. This is done through the direct introduction to the Nature of Mind, by the qualified lama and consequent practices of *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*. Through these practices one should stabilize oneself in the Nature of Mind, which is the state beyond thoughts, beyond good and bad qualities and beyond the accumulation of karma. Practitioners do not hope to achieve nirvāna nor are

<sup>135</sup> 2006: 238-239.

<sup>136</sup> Reynolds (2005: 241); Rossi (1999: 65-67).

they frightened by the possibility of falling into the cycle of samsāra. They do not desire to do good deeds and refrain from the bad ones. When either good or bad events happen, the practitioner does not cling to them, but lets them spontaneously manifest and dissolve into the Nature of Mind. The practitioner is no longer bounded by thought process which leads to the birth of ignorance. As such one is prepared for the state of *bar do*, and sees all the defects of samsāra and virtues of nirvāna as mere visions.

One also realizes that the Base is the only path, meaning that by stabilizing oneself in the awareness of the Natural State, one does not need to practice any higher or lower method than this. By practicing *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*, one realizes that enlightenment is nothing more than liberating within oneself the Trikāya or the Primordial Buddhahood that has been obscured. As a consequence, one obtains the Rainbow Body and dissolves into light.

### Appendix I: Short biography of Venerable Tenzin Namdak<sup>137</sup>

The Venerable Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is considered to be one of the most learned experts on Bon outside Tibet. He is both an accomplished scholar and a practitioner of Dzogchen and *Ma rgyud* or Mother Tantras within Bon.<sup>138</sup>

He was born in 1926, in Kham province in Eastern Tibet. He started the monastic life at the age of seven and he received his early education in two well known Bon monasteries – Tengchen and Yungdrung Ling. In 1945, he started his studies in philosophy at Yungdrung Ling. From 1945 to 1950 he lived the life of a hermit existence with his master and tutor sGang ru tshul khrim rgyal mtshan. This master was a highly learned lama within the Bon tradition and a long-time Lopon at Yungdrung Ling. In his cave, Lopon Tenzin Namdak studied grammar, poetics, monastic discipline, cosmology and the stages of the path to enlightenment.<sup>139</sup>

In 1950, following the advice of his master, he went to Menri monastery in Tsang province. There he completed his studies and obtained Geshe (*dge bshes*) degree (Tibetan equivalent to a Doctor of Philosophy). His principal teacher was Slob dpon lJong ldong sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, and in Menri he undertook the study of Tibetan and Sanskrit grammar, poetics, astrology and medicine, also deepening his knowledge of Sūtric and Tantric teachings. In 1953, due to his outstanding knowledge, he became Lopon (*slob dpon*) or head teacher of the academic program at the monastery's college. He retired from the position in 1957 due to the increased conflicts between Tibetans and Chinese.

In 1960 he tried to escape to India, but on the way was shot by Chinese soldiers and incarcerated in Chinese prison for nearly 10 months. He escaped with a group of monks, and after 22 days arrived in the safety of Nepal. In 1961, while residing in Kathmandu, he met David Snellgrove, the famous Tibetologist, who invited him to come to London. He came as a

<sup>137</sup> For detailed biography of Venerable Tenzin Namdak see: Reynolds in Tenzin Namdak (2006: 209-230); Reynolds (2005: 368-380).

<sup>138</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 209); Reynolds (2005: 367).

<sup>139</sup> Tenzin Namdak (2006: 210-211); Reynolds (2005: 368).

visiting scholar at the University of London, and obtaining a Rockefeller Foundation Grant, resided some time at Cambridge. His three-year collaboration with Snellgrove resulted in the publication of *"The Nine Ways of Bon"*, and the translation of the extracts from the *gZi brjid*, the most extensive hagiography of gShen rab Mi bo che.

He returned to India in 1964, and continued working on the publishing and printing of Tibetan texts. He also raised the funds for establishment of Bonpo settlement in Northern India. In 1967, with the financial help of the Catholic Relief Service, he purchased a piece of forest land at Dolanji and began to establish a settlement, which was officially registered as the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation (TBF). About 70 families were transferred from Manali district where they lived under harsh and impoverished conditions. They all received a piece of land and a house. TBF has its own constitution and administration, with the Abbot of Menri acting as the president. In 1978, the Bonpo Monastic Centre was completed, consisting of a temple, library, Abbot's residence, residential area and Lama's college (*bshad grwa*). It took almost nine years to build the whole complex and during that time, Lopon Namdak had a crucial role of being the teacher to young monks, a publisher of crucial Bonpo texts, and the organizer of the curriculum in the college. As a well renowned scholar, he himself wrote numerous publications, of which many are used as a part of the curriculum.

The purpose of the Lama's College at Dolanji was to preserve the tradition of education in philosophy, as it was taught in Tibetan Bon monasteries, and to inaugurate a nine-year program which would prepare students for Geshe (*dge bshes*) degree examination. Students would learn Sūtra, Tantra and Dzogchen, by application of philosophical analysis and logic to their understanding. Recently, Lopon Namdak established another Bonpo monastery and college in Nepal, known as Tritten Norbutse (*Khri brten nor bu'i rtse*).

Lopon continued his visits to the West, where he gave Dzogchen teachings according to Bonpo tradition of the *A khrid* and *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*. In 1991, he was invited by HH the Dalai Lama to represent the Bon tradition at the Kalachakra Initiation in New York. In 2001, Shenten Dargye Ling, a permanent Bon centre for teaching, retreat and research was established in France.

## Appendix II Transliteration of Tibetan texts

### The transliteration of the "Prayer to Ta pi hri tsa"<sup>140</sup>

EMAHO!

*kun bzang thugs sprul sku mdog shel dkar 'od/  
dri med mdang gsal 'od zer phyogs bcur 'phro/  
rgyan med gcer bu ye nyid snying po'i don/  
mkhyen gnyis thugs rje 'gro ba'i don la dgongs/  
bde gshegs thugs bcud rdzogs chen kun gyi mchog/*

<sup>140</sup> Reynolds (2005: 518, n.16).

theg pa'i yang rtse rgyud lung man ngag snying/  
 gzhi yi gnas lugs 'khor 'das grol 'khrul dang/  
 sgra 'od zer gsum skyon yon rab gsal zhing/  
 'gro ba blo yi mun pa kun gsal nas/  
 gzhi stong rtsa bral ba lam gcig chod rtogs/  
 nyams rtogs mngon-gyur 'khor 'das sems su grol/  
 'bras bu sku gsum dbyings su 'god mdzad pa/  
 'gro ba'i mgon po ta pi hri tsa la/  
 bdag blo rtse gcig mos pas gsol ba 'debs/  
 bdag sogs 'gro la dbang bskur bying gyis rlobs/  
 phyi nang gsang ba'i bar chad zhi ba dang/  
 ma rig 'khrul ba'i bdag 'dzin grol bas kyang/  
 rang rig mngon gyur lta spyod mthar phyin nas/  
 ye stong rtsa bral blo 'das chen po'i don/  
 da lta nyid du bdag la rtsal du gsol/  
 rje 'gro ba'i mgon po ta pi hri tsa la/  
 gsol ba 'debs so 'gro drug thugs rjes zungs la bdag rgyud khrol/  
 [ces sprul sku ta pi hri tsa la/ gyer spungs snang bzher lod pos gsol ba phur  
 tshugs sub btap pa'o/bkra shis/dge'o/]



**Transliteration of Venerable Tenzin Namdak's  
commentary on the "Prayer to Ta pi hri tsa"**

[p.37] dang po gzhi yi gnas lugs 'chad pa la/ theg pa 'og ma ltar bon can zhig gi  
 [p.38] steng du dgag bya'i ngo bo yod med don dam dpyod pa'i rig shes kyis brtag  
 nas dgag bya'i ngo bo de gzhi de yi steng du ma rnyed pas gzhi de yi rang bzhin  
 stong pa yin par nges dgos shing nges byed de yi ngor dgag bya bcaad pa'i med dgag  
 gi rnam pa shar ba zhig go rdzogs chen gyi stong pa de blo rig gi yul las 'das pa zhig  
 yin tel/ gzhi yi rang bzhin gsal stong zung 'jug cig 'dod la/ gsal ba de yang stong pa/  
 stong pa yang stong pa/ zung 'jug kyang stong pa las ma 'das pas/ 'di la stong pas  
 stong pa 'jal ba'i ngang tshul can zhes mtshan gsol/ snyan rgyud rgyas pa skya ru  
 ma las/ gsal ba yang sems nyid du gsal/ stong pa yang sems nyid du stong / zhes  
 dang / byang chub sems kyi gnad drug las/ rig pa stong pa/ stong pa rig pa/ zhes  
 gsungs pa'i phyir/ 'bring po sor bzhag las ngo bo'i gnas lugs ni/ stong pa/ gsal  
 ba/ 'gyur med/ 'gag med/ thogs med du gnas pa yin tel/ stong ni ngo bo stong par  
 gnas/ gsal ba ni rang bzhin gsal bar gnas/ stong pa'i ngo bo gsal bar gnas/ gsal ba'i  
 ngo bo stong par gnas/ stong gsal dbyer med kyi yon tan 'gyur med du gnas/ zhes  
 gsungs pa'i phyir/ lung drug 'grel las/ rig bcas stong par gnas pas/ ye shes chen po'i  
 ngang du gsal te/ rig pa khyab bdal bon sku ru gnas zhes bya'o/ /zhes gsungs/ de lta  
 bu'i gnas lugs de yul dang yul can gang gi steng nas shes rig gis mi rnyed pas/ da ji  
 ltar byed nas rnyed snyam na/ lung drug 'grel las/ khad kyis 'dul ba dang / cig char  
 'dul ba gnyis so/ /khad kyis 'dul ba ni/ yid 'bru'am lha sku la sems gtad de bsgom  
 pas/ sems gnas su ma 'dod de/ bying rgod kyi mthar shor na/ bying na gzengs bstod  
 la [p.39] sangs rgyas kyi sku dang ye shes la spro ba bskyed/ rgod na shes pa shed  
 smad la snang ba'i dngos po 'di 'khrul pa yin/ don la ma bsgom na phan med snyam  
 pa'i skyo ba bskyed de bgom pas/ je zhi je zhi la rnam rtog zhi la/ je gsal je gsal la ye  
 shes bskyed pa'o/ /zhes gsungs pa ltar a la sogs la sems gtad de rim bzhin gnas su  
 bcug gnas pa'i sems la slar kha log ste blta ru gazhugapa'i lugs de'o/ /cig char 'dul

ba ni/ gong ma ltar sems sdod du ma 'dod de rgod na/ dper na rta dmu rgod du shor  
 ba de yang btul bas mi thul de/ kho rang dkyus pas chad nas drung du 'ong ba bzhin  
 du/ sems rta rgod dang 'dra ba 'di yang / btul na rnam rtog phyir la mang  
 bas/ dbang po yul la mi dgag rang yan du btang bas/ shes pa yul la yan pa slar mi  
 btul/ ma bzung ma brtag pas gang du yang chags pa de nyid ces bya'o/ /zhes dang  
 / yang de nyid las/ sems la bltas pas/ kha dog dang dbyibs su ma grub pas/ dngos  
 po'am dbyibs su ma mthong pa'o/ /zhes dang / sems la dngos po gdod ma rang nas  
 med pa ste/ rig pa'i snying po can du yod pa'o/ /sems nyid rig pa'i snying po can  
 des/ bon nyid sems kyi snying po can gyi ngang la 'dris par byed pa'o/ /zhes gsungs  
 pa dang / lta ba spyi gcod las/ rnam rtog thol gyis skyes sam na/ gcer gyis bltas pas  
 khrol gyis grol/ gtad med kyi ye shes sa le ba/ thod brgal ye shes bya ba yin/ zhes  
 gsungs pa ltar rnam rtog cig skyes pa de la bltas pas blta yul stor/ de stor nas lta  
 mkhan de yang 'di ltar zhes ngos bzung med pa'i ngang du ha phyod de lus pa de la  
 sems kyi gnas lugs mthong ba'o/ /de lta bu'i gnas lugs de la ka dag dang lhun  
 grub/ ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje sogs [p.40] kyi yon tan kun tshang pa'o/ /

gnyis pa 'khor 'das kyi grol 'khrul bshad pa la/ 'khor ba'i 'khrul tshul dang / 'das  
 pa'i grol tshul lo/ /dang po ni/ spyir 'khor ba 'khrul pa yin yang 'khrul pa'i thog ma  
 med/ khyad par du gang zag re re'i 'chi dus kyi skabs der/ ka dag bon sku'i bar do  
 ngo 'phrod pa dang ma 'phrod pa'i 'gro ba phal cher la shar ba yin/ gzhi der yun  
 ring thung nges med du gnas rjes lhan skyes rlung gi g.yo ldang la brten nas sgra  
 'od zer gsum gyi snang ba 'gag med du shar/ de shar ba dang dus mnyam du yul  
 can gyi shes rig cig shar ba de la yul de'i rnam pa shar ba dang / yul dernamasa  
 rang gi ngos nas byung bar 'dzin pa zhig ngang gis skyes/ de la lhan cig skyes pa'i  
 ma rig pa zer/ de yang gang dang lhan cig tu skyes na yul sgra 'od zer gsum dang  
 lhan cig tu skyes/ gang skyes na de dus kyi yul can shes rig de skyes/ rkyen gang gis  
 byas na sgra 'od zer gsum des byas/ de 'dra'i ma rig pa de skye ba'i rgyu rang  
 rgyud ldan gyi gang zag de'i las nyon snga ma rnams so/ sgron ma drug pa  
 las/ snang ba'i yul gsum mngon du shar ba'i tshel/ dran rig blo yi shes pa yul la  
 rmongs/ rang snang sgyu mar ma shes gzhan snang bden par mthong / gzhan  
 mthong blo yis rig pa'i don la bsgrigs/ rang rig ma shes pas kun gzhi'i don ma  
 rtogs/ de ni lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa'o/ /zhes gsungs/ shes pa de'i rkyen gyis yul  
 la 'dzin pa rags su song ba dang / yul gyi bye brag mang du phyees nas shes pa de  
 rags su song ba'i stobs kyis snang ba'i yul rnams dkrugs/ snang yul rnams 'khrugs  
 nas rgyu lnga'i 'byung ba shar/ de'i rkyen gyis yul lnga'i snang ba shar/ de'i rkyen  
 gyis sgo lnga'i shes pa dang [p.41] phung po lnga sogs byung zhing / yul de rnams  
 la rang ngos nas grub par 'dzin bzhin rnam pa du mar phye ba'i shes rig de la kun  
 btags kyi ma rig pa zhes bya ste/ sgron ma drug pa las/ tshogs drug yul la brtag ste  
 sna tshogs phye/ de ni kun tu brtag pa'i ma rig pa/ kun brtag ma rig dbang gis bdag  
 dang gzhan du bzung / bdag dang gzhan du bzung bas nyon mongs dug lnga byung  
 / zhes gsungs pa'i phyir/ gnyis pa 'das pa'i grol tshul ni/ 'chi srid skabs kyi gzhi  
 snang gi mthar lhan skyes kyi rlung gi g.yo ldang las sgra 'od zer gsum gyi snang  
 ba shar ba dang / dus mnyam du rtsal shar gyi rig pa'i ye shes des gzhi rang 'byung  
 ye shes las ma g.yos par yul snang rnams rig pa'i ye shes la shar yang ngos ma  
 bzung / rjes su ma 'brangs pas yul snang rnams sgyu ma lta bu dang / gzugs  
 brnyan ltar snang ba'o/ /rig pa'i ye shes ni gzhi stong gsal las gzhan du ma gyur  
 pas/ snang ba rnams rim bzhin sku dang ye shes kyi snang ba nam mkha'i gzha'  
 tshon shar ba'am/ stong gzugs ye shes kyi snang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa shar  
 ba'o/ /rig pa'i ye shes de gzhi stong gsal las ma g.yos rtsal sgra 'od zer gsum gyi rjes  
 su ma 'breng pas rig pa rang sa zin zhes pa'o/ /'di la lhan cig skyes pa'i rig pa'i ye  
 shes zer/ gang dang lhan cig tu skyes na sgra 'od zer gsum dang lhan cig tu

skyes/ gang skyes na rig pa'i ye shes de/ skye zhes pa'i tha snyad btags kyang stong pas stong pa 'jal ba'i 'go tshugs pa'o/ /'di ltar skye ba'i rgyu rkyen ni/ rang rgyud ldan gyi gang zag de yis sngon nas bsod nams kyi tshogs bsags pa'i lag rjes las rig pa rang sa zin pa'o/ /sgron ma drug pa las/ snang ba'i yul gsum rtsal shar bas/ dran rig blo yi shes pa yis/ rang snang sgyu mar lhag [p.42] gis mthong / rang snang yul gyi rkyen byas nas/ rig pa gcer bur rjen gyis shar/ kun gzhi sgrub med sal gyi rtogs/ rtogs pas rig pa rang sa zin/ snang ba yul gyi rjes ma 'bren / de tshe rang dbang mngon du gyur/ zhes gsungs pa'i phyir/ gzhung 'di las dran rig blo yi shes pa yis/ zhes gsungs pa dgongs pa can las rang gzhung gi don ma yin te/ 'og tu rang snang yul gyi rkyen byas nas/ rig pa gcer bu rjen gyis shar/ zhes pa'i rig pa de rang sa zin zhes pa'i rig pa de las gzhan pa'i rig pa med/ rtsal shar gyi rang rig ye shes yin dgos/ de ni stong gsal zung 'jug de las gzhan med pa'i phyir/ gal te 'di ltar bshad pa la yid ma ches na/ gzhi gnas thig le nyag gcig de blo 'das yin par ston pa'i gzhung kun gyis gnod pa 'bebs pa'i phyir/ gsum pa sgra 'od zer gsum gyi skyon yon bshad tshul la/ gong bshad ltar rig pa rang sa zin zhes rtsal shar gyi rig pa'i ye shes de gzhi gsal stong zung 'jug de las g.yo ba med pa stong gsal gyi bdag gcig tu gyur pa de'i ngang las sgra 'od zer gsum gyi snang ba gang shar ba'i rnam pa rnam la skyon zhes pa dang / yon tan zhes pa'i 'dzon rtog gang gis kyang ma bcos ma bsgyur bas snang ba thams cad stong gzugs su shar bas skyon dang yon tan gyi dri ma gang yang gzhi thog tu ma bsags pas na rab tu gsal ba'o/ /

bzhi pa 'gro ba blo yi mun pa bsal ba ni/ 'gro ba blo yi mun pa kun sangs nas/ zhes pa 'gro ba'i rgyud la yod pa'i nyon mongs kyi sgrub pa dang shes bya'i sgrub pa gnyis gang rung gis bsod pa dang cha 'dra ba thams cad rje 'dis rig pa'i ye shes mngon gyur mthar phyin pa'i du su rjes shul med pa rje yi thugs rgyud la sangs zin pas na kun bzang gi sku [p.43] mngon du sgyur pa'o/ / gnyis pa 'phrin las ni/ gzhi stong sogs tshig gsum stel/ sa lam gcig chod du rtogs pa dang / 'khor 'das sems su grol tshul/ 'bras bu sku gsum thob tshul lo/ / dang po ni/ rdzogs chen gyis rgyu tshogs gnyis bsags pa la brten nas 'bras bu sku gnyis 'grub pa zhal gyis bzhes pa yin yang / 'bras bu sgrub pa'i tshul ni 'di yi gzhi ka dag dang lhun grub zung 'jug de nyid rig pa'i ye shes kyis nyams su blangs pa la rig pa chig rdzogs zhes bya ba rkyang 'ded du bsgrubs pa las thabs gzhan snon pa 'debs mi dgos pas na/ sa dang lam gyi rim pa bgrod tshul la brten mi dgos pa'o/ / lung drug 'grel las/ bon nyid byang chub sems la sa lam dang / gong 'og tu bgrod rgyu med cing / blta rgyu yang med do/ / zhes gsungs/ gzhi ngos la de ltar blta dpyad byed pa'i gnas rang mtshan pa zhis ma mthong yang gong du bshad pa'i lhun grub kyi don go nas bsgrub na rdzogs chen gyi gnas lugs dang rdzogs tshul shes/ de shes na de sgrub pa po'i rgyud la yon tan rnam 'byung stel/ dper na 'o ma phor gang 'thung ba pos 'o ma phor gang la mar bcud ci tsam yod pa'i tshad ma rtogs kyang 'o ma phor gang gi bcud des 'byung 'dus kyi phung po la phan gnod kyu bya ba byed pa bzhiin te/

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## The First Four Themes of Klong chen pa's *Tshig don bcu gcig pa*

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**A**ith regard to the text *The Eleven Themes (Tshig don bcu gcig pa)* composed by Klong chen rab 'byams (1308-1364) it has to be mentioned that one is dealing with a short — it consists of only 65 pages — but nevertheless comprehensive text. This text out of which the first four themes will be translated and commented upon in this article is contained in the fourth volume of the *Bi ma snying thig* which again forms part of the *Four Branches of the Heart Essence (Snying thig ya bzhi)*. As its name suggests, it deals with eleven main topics arranged into Eleven Themes:

1. "The essential condition of the ground in the time preceding the presence of Buddhas realizing it and of sentient beings failing to do so" presents a list of the Eleven Themes treated in this text as well as a concise explanation of the three aspects of the ground, i.e., of its essence (*ngo bo*), its nature (*rang bzhin*), and its compassion (*thugs rje*). Moreover, it is stated that this text is not meant for individuals preferring a rather gradual approach towards Buddhahood by means of studying philosophical tenets, but for those who are ready to realize it directly through practice.

2. "The assessment of the origin of delusion in the ground (*gzhi*) as defined in the First Theme" deals with its arising as samsara on account of ignoring its appearance as self-appearance (*rang snang*). Ignorance itself consists of three aspects being closely related to the three aspects of the ground and it is accompanied by four conditions which support this process of going astray into samsaric delusion.

3. "The presence of the core or seed of perfect Buddhahood in sentient beings (*sems can*) despite the already arisen delusion" treats the different modalities of such a presence. Thus, it is explained that this seed dwells as Five Buddha Families (*rigs lnga*), as Five Buddha-Bodies (*sku lnga*), etc.

4. "The precise location of the seed or essence of perfect Buddhahood" elucidates the Precious Palace of the Heart (*tsitta rin po che'i gzhal yas khang*) which is said to be located in the middle of the heart. There, the essence of this seed dwells as Buddha-Body, its nature as light, and its compassion as Awareness.

5. "The way taken by Pristine Cognition" gives an outline of the formation of the body. It is argued that one has to learn first about the definite characteristics of the body in order to understand the light-channels (*'od rtsa*) which are based on the body and which constitute the way taken by Pristine Cognition (*ye shes*).

6. "The doors by means of which Pristine Cognition arises" explains the place where Pristine Cognition parts from the body in order to manifest itself outwardly. It is said to be the eyes, or more precisely, the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything At a Distance (*rgyang zhag chu'i sgron ma*), a subtle light-channel dwelling in the eye.

7. "The place where Pristine Cognition appears" treats the Inner Space (*nang dbyings*) of the Precious Palace of the Heart as it is projected in and as Outer Space (*phyi'i dbyings*). Moreover, "Space" (*dbyings*) is considered in this context as being inseparably united with Pristine Cognition (*ye shes*).

8. "The practice" sketches out two ways of how to meditate, one emphasizing a rather conceptual and the other a non-conceptual, i.e., a direct approach. The first one consists of Four Yogas (*rnal 'byor bzhi*) and the second one has as its two parts the Cutting Through (*khregs chod*) and the Leaping Over (*thod rgal*). It is in the context of the latter one that the Four Visions (*snang ba bzhi*) are dealt with.

9. "The marks of progress in practice" gives indications about how body, speech, and mind are felt in the wake of meditative progress. Moreover, as for Awareness (*rig pa*), the two marks of Awareness itself and of its self-appearance are distinguished.

10. "The arising of the intermediate State of Reality Itself in the time following death after having failed to practise during life" presents first an outline of the Four Intermediate States

(*bar do bzhi*) and then focuses on the Intermediate State of Reality Itself (*chos nyid kyi bar do*) which is described as the experience of a multitude of luminous forms.

11. "The great liberation" ascertains the result, i.e., Buddhahood which is understood as an inseparable union of the Inner Space of the Precious Palace of the Heart and its projection into the Outer Space with the Intermediate Space of the Four Lamps (*sgron ma bzhi*).

Being rather short, the text *The Eleven Themes* (*Tshig don bcu gcig pa*) helps us not to lose the overall view. On the other hand, many questions concerning its eleven topics remain unanswered on account of its brevity. Therefore, other texts stemming from *The Four Branches of the Heart Essence* (*Snying thig ya bzhi*), *The Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Old School* (*Rnying ma rgyud 'bum*), and *The Seven Treasures* (*Mdzod bdun*) have been consulted in order to gain a precise understanding of its content. Last but not least, it has to be mentioned that it was absolutely necessary to consult Tibetan *Rdzogs chen* adepts, because the salient aspects of *Rdzogs chen* thinking have been exclusively transmitted "from mouth to ear" from ancient times until now.

#### — The First Theme —

#### **The essential condition of the ground in the time preceding the presence of Buddhas realizing it and of sentient beings failing to do so**

"With body, speech, and mind I pay homage to the Great Glorious *Vajradhara*, to the *Guru*, the *Deva*, and the *Dākinī* who are the cause of bliss coming forth.

Thus, the teacher Samantabhadra (*Kun tu bzang po*), the Perfect Buddha whose compassion is great and whose means are skilful, appeared out of the Clear Light of the *dharmakāya* (*chos sku*) in the form of the *sambhogakāya* (*longs sku*) with its major and minor marks (*mtshan dang dpe byad*). There are different kinds of beings to be tamed, but here Eleven Themes (*tshig don bcu gcig*) (are explained) in

order to let a fortunate individual realize Buddhahood.

The First Theme (explains) the essential condition of the ground in the time preceding the presence of Buddhas realizing it and of sentient beings failing to do so.

The Second Theme assesses the origin of delusion in the ground as defined in the First Theme.

The Third Theme (elucidates) the presence of the core or seed of perfect Buddhahood in sentient beings despite the already arisen delusion.

The Fourth Theme (deals with) the precise location of the seed or essence of perfect Buddhahood.

The Fifth Theme (treats) the way taken by Pristine Cognition.

The Sixth Theme (specifies) the doors by means of which Pristine Cognition arises.

The Seventh Theme (describes) the place where Pristine Cognition appears.

The Eighth Theme (gives an outline of) the practice.

The Ninth Theme (clarifies) the marks of progress in practice.

The Tenth Theme (delineates) the arising of the Intermediate State of the Nature of Reality in the time following death after having failed to practise during life.

The Eleventh Theme (defines) the great liberation.

Now, as for the First Theme: In the general *Rdzogs chen* system, (one distinguishes) adepts of philosophical tenets (*rdzogs pa chen po'i lugs kyi grub mtha'i rjes su 'brangs pa*) and adepts of its practice (*lam rjes su'dzin pa'i gang zag*). From among these two, (this text is meant) for the latter one.

Thus, the original ground (*thog ma'i gzhi*) is present as essence (*ngo bo*), nature (*rang bzhin*) and compassion (*thugs rje*).

Its essence is empty, its nature clear and its compassion unobstructed.

Its essence is present as Buddha-Body (*sku*), its nature as Buddha-Speech (*gsung*), and its compassion as Buddha-Mind (*thugs*).

Its essence is present as Buddha-Body without throne and ornaments, its nature lights up in manifold colours, and its compassion is all-pervading (*kun khyab*) as it is present as unobstructed ground for the arising of anything.

As its essence is empty, it falls not in the extreme of eternalism.

Being clear in its nature, it falls not in the extreme of nihilism, and as it pervades all, it falls not in the extreme of being material.

Its essence is not present as error.

So, there is no possibility of its compassion abiding as error.

As its essence is the Buddha-Body, it does not change.

As its nature is light, it is self-clear.

As its compassion is Pristine Cognition, the aspects of knowing are unceasingly clear in their distinctiveness.

Its aspects of knowing are present as the three aspects of the Pristine Cognition abiding in the ground (*gzhi gnas pa'i ye shes gsum*).

Such is the mode of being of the initial ground."

In the beginning of the text, the author takes refuge (*phyag 'tshal*) in the Great Glorious Vajradhara (*Dpal ldan rdo rje 'chang chen*) and the Three Roots (*rtsa ba gsum*)<sup>1</sup>.

After that one is told that the *dharmakāya* Samantabhadra (*chos sku kun tu bzang po*) has arisen as *sambhogakāya* (*longs sku*) with its Major and Minor marks (*mtshan byed*)<sup>2</sup> in order to transmit this text to sentient beings (*sems can*) with good karma. Furthermore, it is stated that one can attain Perfect Buddhahood (*yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas*) in this life or in the Intermediate States of Death, of Reality, and of Becoming, by following the instructions given in it. Two kinds of *Rdzogs chen* adepts are mentioned, namely the adepts of philosophical tenets and the adepts of its practice. *Klong chen rab 'byams* makes it unmistakably clear that this text is meant for the latter ones.

Altogether seven views or assumptions concerning the ground (*gzhi*) of *Rdzogs chen* are mentioned. Six of them are ascribed to the adepts of philosophical tenets and are considered as only partially correct<sup>3</sup>:

1. The assumption that the ground is spontaneously perfect (*gzhi lhun grub tu 'dod pa*),
2. the assumption that it (the ground) is indeterminate (*ma nges par 'dod pa*),
3. the assumption that it is ultimately determinate (*nges pa don du 'dod pa*),
4. the assumption that it is completely changeable (*cir yang bsgyur btub tu 'dod pa*),
5. the assumption that it is acceptable as anything (*gang du'ang khas blangs du rung bar 'dod pa*), and
6. the assumption that it is variegated on account of its many aspects (*rnam pa sna tshogs pas khra bor 'dod pa*).

1. Why are these six assumptions only partially correct? Let's begin with the assumption that the ground is spontaneously perfect: To consider the ground as something exhibiting deficiency and freedom of deficiency in spontaneous perfection is inconsistent with the primordial purity of it.

Besides, it would not make any sense to walk on the way of meditation. Such a way could not lead towards Buddhahood, because nothing would be attained if deficiency and freedom of deficiency were spontaneously perfect forever.

2. The assumption that it is indeterminate exposes one to the danger of imagining it to be something. Being completely indeterminate, samsara with all its suffering could arise again even after having reached Buddhahood.

<sup>1</sup> On the Three Roots (*rtsa ba gsum*), i.e., Guru (*bla ma*), Deva (*yi dam*), and Dākinī (*mkha' 'gro*), see *Sky Dancer: The Secret Life and Songs of the Lady Yeshe Tsogyel*, pp. 217-225. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

<sup>2</sup> On the 32 major (*mtshan bzang po sum cu rtsa gnyis*) and 80 minor marks (*dpe byed bzang po bryad bcu*), see Tsepak Rigzin *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, pp. 250-252, 341-343. Dharamsala, HP, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA).

<sup>3</sup> These seven views are only mentioned in a note (*mchan*) to the text, but, except for the seventh one, not explained. Thus, the following summary is based on the TDZ. See TDZ, p. 163f.

Such a ground would lead one to everywhere and nowhere.

3. Assuming it to be determinate would exclude any change. How could ignorance, the cause of suffering, be eliminated under such circumstances?

4. The assumption that it is completely changeable would imply that the result of Buddhahood could again turn into its cause.

5. A ground acceptable as anything could not be ultimate, because one would be confronted with innumerable versions of the ground.

6. Also the assumption that it is variegated on account of its many aspects is denied. How could the many aspects of discursive thinking be acknowledged as the primordial ground?

In summary, these six assumptions concerning the ground are similar in one respect: Holding on to them one falls prey to a one-sided perspective of seeing it as something existent or non-existent.

Now, how does the text define the correct view concerning the essential condition of the ground preceding the emergence of the duality of Buddhas and sentient beings? Essence, the first aspect of the original ground (*thog ma'i gzhi*), marks it as initially pure (*ngo bo ka dag*), i.e., as empty of being something determinate with clearly delineated characteristics. Nevertheless, its clear nature (*rang bzhin gsal ba*), the second aspect, is spontaneously perfect (*lhun grub*) in its potentiality of self-appearing as what later on is interpreted as samsara or nirvana. Compassion, the third aspect, emphasizes the unity of the two former aspects and specifies the ground as all-pervading (*thugs rje kun khyab*).

The *Rdzogs chen* presentation of the ground easily raises critical questions: Is it not illogical to assume an initially pure ground being present as innermost being of sentient beings in the face of the fact that they have fallen into samsara? How does it come that they have to purify defilements if their essence has been pure forever? Moreover, why should the result, i.e., final liberation of samsara be obtained after long exertions, if it is already spontaneously perfect at the level of the ground? *Rdzogs chen* does not deny the fall of sentient beings into samsara, but whatever appears is intuited as mere play of Awareness (*rig pa'i rtsal*). This play resembles a dream and being ultimately non-existent forever, it is initially pure. The *Rdzogs chen* point of view that Buddhahood is spontaneously perfect does not make it unnecessary to realize it. However, in this process nothing new is created.

Furthermore, realization comes without efforts and often is likened to the awakening out of deep sleep. The following quotation should shed some further light on the mode of being of the ground<sup>4</sup>:

“The ground with its three aspects is present as inner (*nang gsal*), but not as outer, clarity (*phyir gsal*).

It resembles a crystal or a butterlamp in a vessel.

It is inseparably clear and empty.

Embellished with the innermost Awareness, it is like an egg of a

<sup>4</sup> See KDYT II, p. 71.

peacock.”

This quotation supplies us with important technical terms and suggestive images. First, it is stated that the ground before its arising as samsara or nirvana is present as inner clarity. The term “inner clarity” hints at its potentiality and at its atemporally unrestricted availability. Outer clarity is not in opposition to inner clarity, but is the inner clarity of the ground which appears now in and as Space and consequently materializes itself increasingly. The different levels of materialization and the reversal of it shall be elucidated later on in different contexts.

Now, as far as the all-pervading Pristine Cognition of the ground with its three aspects is concerned, it is conceived of as inner clarity and illustrated with a crystal. The stainless purity and transparency of a crystal suggests its concept-free essence. Furthermore, in the absence of refraction of light, the five lights representing its clear nature do not arise in and as outer clarity, but remain in their potentiality of inner clarity. Finally, its compassion — abiding as subtle unrestricted Awareness ready to arise unceasingly — is equated with the inherent lustre of a crystal.

A butterlamp in a vessel pictures the luminosity of the ground as still enclosed in inner clarity, and in order to illustrate the presence of nature and compassion in the initially pure essence of the ground, the picture of an egg of a peacock is given.

The ground before its arising as samsara or nirvana is also defined as “Spontaneously Perfect Precious Sphere” (*lhun grub rin po che'i sbubs*) not yet broken through, hence likened to the Youthful-Vase-Body (*gzhon nu bum pa'i sku*).

“Youthfulness” stands here for the emptiness of the ground, being beyond arising and ceasing, and “Vase-Body” indicates that it is a Space ready to manifest as Buddha-Bodies. In other words, the Youthful-Vase-Body is another picture of the emptiness of the ground which has the potential to manifest, and it has to be noted, that it should not be equated with a vessel containing the Buddha-Bodies. Rather, the Buddha-Bodies are present in the ground in the way butter is present in milk potentially. Nevertheless, the ground is ground of everything and arises in dependance on circumstances as samsara or nirvana. The propriety of the camphor to be beneficial in case of sickness caused by cold and to be harmful in case of sickness caused by heat accurately describes the ambiguity of the ground<sup>5</sup>:

“In the time before the arising of a Buddha on account of his perfect realization and the arising of sentient beings on account of their lack of realization, there is the presence of the Space of Reality (*chos dbyings*), an empty Space exposing realm resembling the centre of the bright sky.

Furthermore, being bright and unmoving it is also similar to the depth of the ocean, and being clear and unobstructed it bears likeness to the surface of a mirror.

There, in the Sphere of Reality (*chos nyid kyi klong na*) abides the core, i.e. the fundamental Awareness (*gzhi 'dzin pa'i rig pa*), as essence, nature, and compassion.

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<sup>5</sup> See ZMYT II, p. 103.



Like camphor, being neither marked off as samsara or nirvana, it is unobstructed in arising as both.

Even though its essence cannot be delineated, it differentiates itself on account of circumstances (*rkyen*).

In the ground are neither negative nor positive qualities. However, its mere being the ground of arising of whatever one wishes is the great originary place of all which itself is like the Wish-Fulfilling Gem (*yiḍ bzhin nor bu*)."

The phrase "there, in the Space of Reality abides the core, i.e., the fundamental Awareness, as essence, nature, and compassion" raises the question about the relationship between Awareness (*rig pa*) and Pristine Cognition (*ye shes*)<sup>6</sup>:

"The essence of Pristine Cognition is a non-conceptual consciousness endowed with the self-radiation of the Five Inherent Lights (*rang 'od lnga*) which holds onto the nirvanic aspect (of the ground).

Furthermore, the essence of Pristine Cognition is an Awareness free of remembering and conceptuality (*dran rtog dang bral ba*).

It is defined as Pristine Cognition, because it knows the meaning (of nirvana). It is classified into a fundamental Pristine Cognition, namely essence, nature, and compassion, into a Pristine Cognition with five attributes, and into a twofold Pristine Cognition of (all) knowables (*shes bya'i ye shes gnyis*).

It is a consciousness which knows the primordial meaning (*ye yi don*), the ground as it is.

Therefore it is called "Pristine Cognition."

The relationship between Awareness and Pristine Cognition could be described as follows: Awareness is a non-conceptual consciousness which expresses itself as different aspects of Pristine Cognition on account of its realization of the nirvanic aspect of the ground. Consequently, Pristine Cognition is not merely non-conceptual, but a kind of radiation possessing the potential to arise as the Five Lights of outer clarity.

In this context, the white light stands for the Mirror-Like Pristine Cognition (*me long lta bu'i ye shes*), the yellow one for the Pristine Cognition of Equality (*mnyam nyid kyi ye shes*), the red one for the Discriminating Pristine Cognition (*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*), the green one for the Accomplishing Pristine Cognition (*bya ba grub pa'i ye shes*) and the blue one for the Pristine Cognition of the Space of Reality (*chos dbyings kyi ye shes*). By realizing the five lights of outer clarity as self-appearance of the ground, the nirvanic aspect of it is understood. On the other hand, not being aware of them as self-appearance is the cause of their condensation into the Five Elementary Forces (*'byung ba lnga*) of samsara. But how are the Five Lights present at the time of the ground preceding their arising in outer clarity<sup>7</sup>?

"As far as the initial pure essence (of the ground) is concerned, nothing can be established.

<sup>6</sup> See ZMYT I, p. 453.

<sup>7</sup> See TCZ I, p. 287.

Therefore it is not determined as having a definite pattern (*ris can*) such as the lights and colours of Buddha-Bodies found in outer clarity.

Nonetheless, its primordial radiation (*ye gdangs*) appears in the Space of spontaneously perfect nature as identity of exceedingly subtle appearances of Five Lights, Buddha-Bodies, rays (*zer*) and drops of light (*thig le*).

Swirling in (and as) this Space, it abides as Pristine Cognition of inner clarity."

Having clarified the relation between Awareness and Pristine Cognition, the question arises what is meant by conceptuality or conceptual thought (*rtog pa*). According to *Rdzogs chen* it is mind (*sems*) which functions as conceptual thought and which has to be distinguished from the nature of mind (*sems nyid*). As should be clear now, Awareness is not something added to the ground, but the ground itself which in its availability of being something conscious is called "nature of mind". As such it is present before the arising of Pristine Cognition or conceptual thought. Its non-conceptual radiation is Pristine Cognition, spontaneously perfect as Buddha-Realms. Mind, however, initiates deceiving conceptuality and is experienced as painful samsaric existence<sup>8</sup>:

"The essence of mind is samsara as such,(the duality of) the apprehender and the apprehended.

Its potential (*rtsal*) is the apprehender of objects and (the succeeding) attachment to them as belonging to oneself.

Its action consists of the production of various samsaric pleasures and pains and its result manifests as endlessness of samsara and evil forms of existence (*ngan song*)."

The ground as such is intelligent and its split into apprehender and apprehended (*gzung 'dzin*) only ensues from the ignorance (*ma rig pa*) of its initial arising. Having nothing in common with a static entity, it is a self-manifesting process called "singularity" (*thig le nyag gcig*), defined as the emptiness of the ground in its radiation as self-projecting lighting-up of its unchanging mode of being<sup>9</sup>:

"The essence of Self-Awareness (*rang rig*) is emptiness and the radiation of emptiness is clarity in its unobstructedness.

In spite of its clarity, there is no way of establishing it as a duality (of emptiness and clarity), because its essence is the singularity.

On account of the constancy of the ground, one calls the essence of the singularity "circle" (*thig*).

Being unconfined and unrestricted (*rgya chad phyogs lhung med pa*), one calls it "moment" (*le*).

As its nature can not be established, one calls it "tiny" (*nyag*) in view of its subtlety.

As there is nothing which is not contained within it, one calls it

<sup>8</sup> See TCZ II, p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> See KDNVT I, p. 33.

singular (*gcig*).

It is similar to a root or a seed out of which all of samsara and nirvana spreads."

In the time before the arising of Buddhas and sentient beings, the ground abides as completely indeterminate inner clarity, symbolized by the Primordial Lord Unchanging Light (*gdod ma'i mgon po 'od mi 'gyur ba*). The anthropomorphic representation of the ground as Primordial Lord Unchanging Light indicates that it abides in the heart of sentient beings. "Primordial" as it is, it stays there forever. Moreover, one specifies it as "Unchanging Light", because of its presence as Three Buddha-Bodies (*sku gsum*)<sup>10</sup>:

"Initial purity and spontaneous perfection abide in the ground as inseparableness of appearance and emptiness (*snang stong*).

It is the inner clarity free of dullness and confusion (*ma bying ma rmongs*) (present) in the middle of the Sphere of the Five Lights of Awareness.

Not yet having radiated out, it abides as Vase-Body.

At this time nothing is determined (and as such) it is called by terms like "original general ground" (*thog ma'i spyi gzhi*), "Primordial Lord Unchanging Light", or "great ancestor" (*mes chen*)."

The technical terms "Primordial Lord Unchanging Light" (*gdod ma'i mgon po 'od mi 'gyur ba*) or "Original Buddha Unchanging Light" (*thog ma'i sangs rgyas 'od mi 'gyur ba*), "The All-Good-One" (Samantabhadra / *Kun tu bzang po*) and "Youthful-Vase-Body" (*gzhon nu bum pa'i sku*) are identical insofar as they are metaphorical expressions describing the ground<sup>11</sup>:

"The essence (of the ground) is stainless, and the great self-radiation (*rang gdangs*) of (its) Pristine Cognition is unceasingly clear.

It precedes all (other Buddhas) and is endowed with self-appearance of Awareness (*rig pa rang snang*). Therefore, (it is called) "Original Buddha Unchanging Light".

The diversity of its qualities is appearing as anything, but in the essence (of the ground) they cannot be distinguished and so all (of its qualities) (are present as) the One Taste (*ro gcig pa*) in its great non-duality.

Therefore, (it is called) "The All-Good-One" (Samantabhadra / *Kun tu bzang po*).

Out of the self-radiation of clear reality itself arises the radiation of pure Pristine Cognition in form of rays (*zer gdangs*).

In this palace of unceasing light, the core, i.e., the Five Buddha-Bodies, (is present in) inner clarity.

Therefore, (it is called) "Vase-Body".

And because it is free of old age, (it is called) "Youthful".

To sum up, while dealing with many rather difficult terms used to describe

<sup>10</sup> See KDYT I, p. 442.

<sup>11</sup> See ZMYT II, p. 218.

the primordial ground or the (fundamental) Awareness one should never forget that according to *Rdzogs chen* the main point is direct experience of what is meant by it. How would a *Rdzogs chen* master point out its three main aspects, namely essence, nature, and compassion, to a disciple? Obviously, exemplifying it with a crystal comes in handy<sup>12</sup>:

“The primordial nature of mind, the self-arisen Pristine Cognition itself, abides as essence, nature and compassion.

(This) Awareness is shown to be concept-free and empty in its essence.

Therefore, it is similar to a crystal having the qualities of brightness, stainlessness and transparency (*zang thal ba*).

(Without concomitant circumstances), the Five Lights (of a crystal) are not present in outer clarity, but they abide inside in spontaneous perfection.

Likewise, the nature is present in the range of Awareness as unceasing light in spontaneous perfection.

Therefore, the nature is shown to be clear.

Similar to a crystal being inseparably (*dbyer med*) bright and pure (*dkar po*), compassion is shown to arise unceasingly (as inseparable unity of essence and nature).

Although these three qualities (of a crystal) can be distinguished, ultimately, in their essence, they are not different.

Likewise, the Awareness being empty, clear and unceasing, is shown to be an inseparable unity of essence, nature, and compassion.”

#### — The Second Theme —

#### The assessment of the origin of delusion in the ground as defined in the First Theme

Up to this point, the text has treated the mode of being of the ground before its arising as samsara and nirvana. The Second Theme now elucidates how it actually comes forth as samsara on account of the three aspects of ignorance (*ma rig gsum*). But its initial stirring, the first moments of the inner light transforming itself into the outer one, are not treated in the text. Neither is the mode of (nirvanic) liberation of Samantabhadra (*Kun tu bzang po'i grol tshul*) dealt with, because the text explicitly is intended as a manual for adepts of *Rdzogs chen* practice (*lam rjes su 'dzin pa'i gang zag*). Consequently, information concerning aspects of rather theoretical concern such as the ones mentioned above have to be drawn from other sources.

The whole process of the self-appearance (*rang snang*) begins with a first phase within inner clarity, called “Spontaneously Perfect Precious Sphere” (*lhun grub rin po che'i sbubs*) followed by a second phase, circumscribed by terms such as “the Spontaneously Perfect Appearance” (*lhun grub kyi snang ba*) or “the abiding in the outwardly clear appearance of the light-sphere of Pristine Cognition” (*ye shes 'od kyi sbubs phyir gsal gyi snang ba la gnas pa*)<sup>13</sup>:

<sup>12</sup> See KDYT III, p. 171.

<sup>13</sup> See KDYT II, p. 98.

“Out of the Precious Spontaneous Perfection (of) the inner clarity (of) the primordial ground, compassion moves (as) Pristine Cognition of Awareness (*rig pa'i ye shes*) in its rudimentary knowing (*rig tsam*) (driven by) the wind of life-force and its four branches which becomes the power of (its) discriminative awareness<sup>14</sup>.

Thereby (compassion) arises outwardly together with the lustre of the spontaneously perfect inner nature.

At this time (there is) the so called “abiding in the outwardly clear appearance of the light-sphere of Pristine Cognition” (which arises) after the manifestation of the inner clarity of the Spontaneously Perfect Precious Sphere (with its) presencing of (compassion and nature) as Buddha-Body and Pristine Cognition in the sphere of the empty essence. Even though the outwardly arising aspect of active compassion does not (yet) proliferate as discursive thought, it moves away from the ground on account of which it is called “lame Awareness”.

Moreover, this appearance is called “borderline of light and darkness”, because it manifests out of the primordial mode of being in outer clarity, but is presencing (itself) in a intermediate phase lacking the error of a sentient being (caused by) ignorance.”

The term “borderline of light and darkness” (*mun snang gnyis kyi mtshams*) illustrates clearly the still undetermined being of the now outwardly appearing ground being available as such on account of its immediately preceding transformation into the Spontaneously Perfect Precious Sphere, a sphere still resting in inner clarity. Neither realized as self-appearance by the Buddha Samantabhadra nor ignored as such by sentient beings, the subsequent transformation is called “abiding in the outwardly clear appearance of the light-sphere of Pristine Cognition”. The outwardly arising aspect of compassion is termed “lame Awareness”, because it initiates the movement away from the ground which implies the danger of going astray into samsara. Another passage in the text quoted above brings into prominence the cognitive aspect of the first stirring of the ground<sup>15</sup>:

“From (the point of view of) the indestructible *vajra* (*rdo rje*) which I am, there is no outer frame of reference (*dmigs pa*).

(However,) the inwardly present intention (*vid*) (now) moves and begins to think (*rig rig*) on account of which (the outer arising of the ground) is set in motion by means of the wind (*rlung*) (which originates) from the causal inseparability (of the aspects of the ground).

Out of the seed of one-pointed non-conceptuality the propelling Pristine Cognition (*'phen pa'i ye shes*) itself is generated.

(Thus, the ground) enters the womb which is a borderline of light and darkness.”

<sup>14</sup> A slightly different set of five winds (*rlung lnga*) is presented in the Third Theme.

<sup>15</sup> See BMNYT II, p. 591.

The role played by the propelling Pristine Cognition and the wind is elucidated in the following quotation<sup>16</sup>:

“Out of the range which is an abiding with one-pointed non-conceptuality in the intrinsic reality (*rang bzhin*) of the essence, nature, and compassion of the primordial mode (representing) the primordial mode of being in its great initial purity and its inner clarity, all aspects of the Spontaneously Perfect Appearance of the Ground (*gzhi snang lhun grub*) arise.

Moreover, this propelling Pristine Cognition, being compassion itself, abides in the range of the Clear Light (*'od gsal*) (of) the Spontaneously Perfect Ground as extremely subtle and impartial discriminative awareness (of) the inner clarity of Pristine Cognition of Awareness (*rig pa'i ye shes*) or as embodiment of the core (*snying po'i bdag nyid can*).

(Abiding as such) the upward-moving (wind) (*gyen du rgyu*) (functions as) horse of discriminative awareness, the downward-clearing (wind) (*thur*

*du sel*) as (inner) glow of the rays of discriminative awareness, the fire accompanying (wind) (*me mnyam*) (as) carrier of the strength of ripening, and the pervading (wind) (*khyab byed*) (as) carrier of the strength of completion.

The nature of the five winds, four of them being branches (of the main one), is such that they dwell in their function of being the core or the ground of arising of the totality of The Spontaneously Perfect Appearance (*lhun grub kyi snang ba*) as unceasing radiation.”

To sum up, the inwardly present intention is a kind of rudimentary knowing, is compassion itself which begins to move into outer clarity. The technical term for this feature of compassion is “propelling Pristine Cognition”. In its function as subtle discriminative awareness it is forever present in the Clear Light of the ground and with the help of its accompanying wind the outer wall of the Youtful-Vase-Body is finally broken through whereupon a second phase, the so called “Spontaneously Perfect Appearance” (*lhun grub kyi snang ba*) sets in.

This phase marks the actual beginning of the outer arising of the ground and it consists of Four Meditation-Days (*bsam gtan zhag bzhi*), four sub-phases of increasing concreteness in outer clarity<sup>17</sup>:

1. The Spontaneously Perfect Precious Mode of Being (*lhun grub rin po che'i gnas lugs*),
2. the Great Appearance of the Ground (*gzhi snang chen po*),
3. the Appearance of the *sambhogakāya* (*longs sku'i snang ba*), and
4. the Appearance of the *nirmanakāya* (*sprul sku'i snang ba*).

1. The Spontaneously Perfect Precious Mode is also termed “uncertain ground” (*gzhi ma nges pa*), “spontaneous perfection” (*lhun grub*) or “ground

<sup>16</sup> See BMYT II, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup> An exposition of the Four Meditation-Days (*bsam gtan zhag bzhi*) can be found in the KDYT II, p. 100.

arising as variety" (*gzhi sna tshogs su 'char ba*), and it exhibits eight aspects, namely Six Modes of Arising (*'char tshul drug*) and Two Doors (*sgo gnyis*):

1. Arising as compassion (*thugs rje ltar*),
2. as light (*'od ltar*),
3. as Buddha-Bodies (*sku ltar*),
4. as Pristine Cognition (*ye shes ltar*),
5. as non-duality (*gnyis med ltar*), and
6. as liberation from extremes (*mtha' grol ltar*).

1. The door of the complete Buddhahood of Samantabhadra (*Kun tu bzang po mngon par byang chub pa'i sgo*), and

2. the door of the going astray of sentient beings into samsara (*sems can 'khor bar 'khrul pa'i sgo*).

In the following quotation one finds a short but clear explanation of these eight aspects of the Spontaneously Perfect Precious Mode of Being<sup>18</sup>:

"With regard to the Six Modes of Arising: As (the ground) arises as compassion, compassion for sentient beings arises.

As it arises as light, the worlds are pervaded by rays of light.

As it arises as Buddha-Body, all appearances arise as heaps of the Five Buddha-Families (*rigs lnga*).

As it arises as Pristine Cognition, the pure Buddha realms are clearly visible in immediate perception.

As it arises as non-duality, there is an abiding in a non-discursive absorption.

As it arises as freedom from extremes, there is a momentary abiding in the nature of reality (*chos nyid*).

With regard to The Two Doors: When this appearance of Pristine Cognition is understood as self-appearance, the door of the complete Buddhahood of Samantabhadra in the primordial ground (opens up), and when it is not understood as such, the door of the going astray of sentient beings into samsara (opens up)."

Before investigating The Two Doors in detail the three other sub-phases of the Spontaneously Perfect Appearance shall be discussed briefly in order to have an overview of the whole process of the actual outer arising of the ground.

2. The second sub-phase, termed "the Great Appearance of the Ground" (*gzhi snang chen po*) arises immediately after the conclusion of the first one. It exhibits a variety of rainbow-like appearances such as the Banners of Pristine Cognition (*ye shes kyi snam bu*)<sup>19</sup>:

"Not having recognized the (first) appearance as self-appearance, it comes to an end.

On the second day there is the so called "Great Appearance of the

<sup>18</sup> See KDYT II, p. 102.

<sup>19</sup> See KDYT II, p. 103.

Ground”.

(This) appearance of the Five-Coloured Banners of Pristine Cognition resembles a stratification of the rainbow-spectrum in the ten directions.

In(side) it, appearances of Pristine Cognition, which are embellished with five-coloured heaps, arise everywhere.

It is also said that some (sentient beings) have attained liberation in the primordial ground on account of having recognized this appearance (for what it is).”

3. In the same text we read about the appearance of the *sambhogakāya* (*longs sku'i snang ba*)<sup>20</sup>:

“Concerning the third one: After the conclusion of the former one, there is in the third day, the so called “Appearance Of the *sambhogakāya*”.

In the all-encompassing appearance of the Clear Light, heaps of the (Five) male-female Buddha-Families (*rigs lnga*) shining in their Major and Minor Marks (*mtshan dang dpe byed*) light up...”

As it were, an explanation of the Five Buddha-Families (*rigs lnga*), is based here on the view of *Rdzogs chen* with its emphasis on a fundamental Awareness (*rig pa*)<sup>21</sup>:

“The appearance of compassion, i.e., the Pristine Cognition of Awareness, as totality of (perceptible) forms is the Body of *Vairocana* (*Rnam par snang mdzad kyi sku*).

This Pristine Cognition of Awareness - when not moved by the wind of conceptuality - is the Body of *Akṣobhya* (*Mi bskyod pa rdo rje'i sku*).

The coming of everything needed out of the realization of Awareness which is like a wishfulfilling gem, is the Body of *Ratnasambhāva* (*Rin chen 'byung ldan gyi sku*).

The unlimited dwelling of this Awareness in the appearance of boundless light is the Body of *Amitābha* (*Snang ba mtha' yas kyi sku*).

The great self-arising of the play of Awareness (*rig rtsal*) of unceasing compassion is the Body of *Amoghasiddhi* (*don yod grub pa'i sku*).”

4. The fourth sub-phase, the Appearance of the *nirmanakāya* (*sprul sku'i snang ba*), exhibits three levels:

1. The actual *nirmanakāya* (*rang bzhin sprul sku*),
2. the Six Sages (*thub pa drug*), and
3. the *nirmanakāya* with Various Forms (*sna tshogs sprul pa*).

1. The Actual *nirmanakāya* consists of the Five Buddha-Families which appear now in their semi-concrete form as teacher of *Bodhisattvas* of the Tenth

<sup>20</sup> See KDYT II, p. 104.

<sup>21</sup> See KDYT II, p. 220.



Level (*sa bcu pa*)<sup>22</sup>.

This appearance is termed “semi-concrete”, because it presents itself half-way between the more subtle appearance of the *sambhogakāya* and the two other levels of the *nirmanakāya* which are more concrete than it.

2. The Six Sages represent six aspects of Buddha arising in the six samsaric realms of gods, anti-gods, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts and hell-beings as *Brgya byin*, *Thags bzang*, *Shā kya thub pa*, *Seng ge rab brtan*, *Kha 'bar bde ba*, and *A lba glang mgo*, respectively.

3. As the name implies, the *nirmanakāya* with various forms stands for an indeterminate variety of possible manifestations of the *nirmanakāya*. The following quotation affords a glimpse of this fourth sub-phase of the “Spontaneously Perfect Appearance”<sup>23</sup>:

“Out of the (appearance of the *sambhogakāya*) (arise) the pure realms (*zhing*) of the Five Buddha-Families (of) the actual *nirmanakāya*, namely, ‘*Og min*, *Mngon dga'*, *Rin chen yongs gangs*, *Padma brtsegs*, and *Las rab grub pa*.”

There, the teacher, being the Five Buddha-Families, presents himself to his retinues of the Tenth Level in his perfect mirror(like) form during the three times. The obscurations of the Tenth Level are cleared by means of (his) swirling light-rays.

Thus, he accomplishes the charismatic activity of placing (his retinues on the level) “Light Everywhere”.

This pure realm appears (only) to the assemblage of (his) pure victorious sons.

(Originating) from light-rays emitted from (his) mouth, *Brgya byin*, *Thags bzang*, *Shā kya thub pa*, *Seng ge rab brtan*, *Kha 'bar bde ba*, and *A lba glang mgo* benefit the impure (sentient beings dwelling) in the worlds of gods, anti-gods, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts and hell-beings in forms adopted to them, thereby (still) relying on the peaceful space (*zhi ba'i dbyings*).

Thus, the *nirmanakāya* with various forms accomplishes the charismatic activity of ultimately certain excellence after having effected an abiding in happiness, ease and joy (by means of things) such as skilled craft, birth as living being, ponds, bridges, lotus flowers, wishfulfilling trees, drugs, precious stones and lights.

After the extinction of beings to be tamed the taming (Buddha) dissolves in (peaceful) space.”

After having shortly elucidated the four increasingly concrete sub-phases of the “Spontaneously Perfect Appearance”, it is necessary to return to the point where Samantabhadra (*Kun tu bzang po*) gained liberation and where sentient beings went astray in order to discuss the Second Theme of the *Tshig don bcu gcig pa*, namely ignorance. As we know, the Two Doors related

<sup>22</sup> On the Ten Bodhisattva Levels (*sa bcu*), see Guenther, Herbert V. 1975. *Kindly Bent to Ease Us: The Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease*, Part One, pp. 241-244. Emeryville, California, Dharma.

<sup>23</sup> See the text *Sems nyid rang grol*, p. 32. In *Rang grol skor gsum*. Gangtok/ Sikkim. Dordrub chen Rinpoche Edition.

to liberation and ignorance arise in the first sub-phase. Two subsequent moments of realization are required to open the Door of the Complete Buddhahood of Samantabhadra<sup>24</sup>:

“Out of the presence of the essence, nature, and compassion (of) the primordial ground in inner clarity, the Pristine Cognition of Awareness has moved with (the help of) the four(fold) life-wind which has provided (its) horse.

Together with the Awareness (of) compassion, which slightly has arisen outside, the pure realms of the Buddha-Bodies and Pristine Cognition (originating) from the nature have lit up like the rising sun.

In a first moment an understanding has arisen, because compassion has clearly (*lbal gyis*) recognized (this lighting up) as inner radiation (*mdangs*) arising outwardly in its self-appearance.

Afterwards, the overestimated nirvanic vision (of) outwardly clear Buddha-Bodies and (of) appearances of the Clear Light, and the undervalued vision, i.e., the door of samsara, possessing the seeds of the impurely arising ground of the six kinds of sentient beings, namely “A”, “NRI”, “PRE” “DU”, “SU”, “HRI”, are naturally purified and neutralized (*rang log*). Being free of them, the whole of outer clarity has been inwardly absorbed in a second moment.

Present as great inner clarity which has remained without change as it has been before, the ground has ripened into the result.

The result (is) the capture of the stronghold (of the ground), and like the fruit of the pomegranate tree (which does not bear seeds), it abides without falling back into the cause (of error).”

The understanding of Samantabhadra is qualified by three self-arisen aspects of teaching (*rang byung gi chos gsum*)<sup>25</sup>:

“In short, after having effected a difference of his understanding in one single moment, the primordial Samantabhadra attained Buddhahood.

As it is written in the Tantra of the Magical Net (*Sgyu 'phrul drwa ba*):

The difference effected in one single moment.  
Buddhahood perfected in one single moment.

Samantabhadra who has been liberated in this way possesses three self-arisen aspects of teaching:

The quintessential teaching which has not originated from an oral transmission of teaching (*lung*), the Buddhahood which has not originated from mind (*sems*), and the result which has not originated from a cause.

Concerning the first (aspect): Buddhahood has been attained on account of the self-arisal of self-existing (*rang byung*) realization without a teacher giving an oral transmission.

<sup>24</sup> See KDYT II, p. 109.

<sup>25</sup> See KDYT II, p. 118.

Concerning the second one: Because of not having gone astray into samsara, enlightenment has been attained by knowing the Self-Liberation of Awareness which is not (affected by) the Eight Collections (*tshogs brgyad*) together with their all-ground (*kun gzhi*)<sup>26</sup>.

Concerning the third one: Having seen the mode of being of the ground, the three (aspects of) Awareness have been attained without even a slight accumulation of virtue such as (exemplified by) the Two Collections (*tshogs gnyis*)<sup>27</sup>.

Thus, in the reach of the ground which is as it is, (these three aspects) are in themselves spontaneously perfect forever."

In this quotation we met with the controversial statement that Samantabhadra (*Kun tu bzang po*) has attained Buddhahood without having accumulated the Two Collections. However, this statement has to be understood in a qualified sense<sup>28</sup>:

"Although (the statement) "Samantabhadra has attained Buddhahood on the ground without even a slight accumulation of virtue" is well known, nevertheless, (it is not exactly correct).

If it is scrutinized, (it becomes evident) that the recognition of one's essence (*rang ngo*) is a ocean of self-arisen stainless virtue.

(This recognition) is the forever present perfection of the great accumulation and the forever present conquest of obscurations (*sgrib*) by virtue of the purification of neutral ignorance (*lung ma bstan gyi ma rig pa*)."

The term "ignorance" (*ma rig pa*) leads us to the second door of the Spontaneously Perfect Precious Mode Of Being (*lhun grub rin po che'i gnas lugs*), namely the door of the going astray of sentient beings into samsara (*sems can 'khor bar 'khrul pa'i sgo*). Actually, the Second Theme of the *Tshig don bcu gcig pa*, focuses entirely on a set of threefold ignorance as cause, and a concomitant set of fourfold conditions:

1. The ignorance of undivided identity (*bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa*),
2. the simultaneously produced ignorance (*lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*), and
3. the conceptual ignorance (*kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa*).

1. The first one is called "ignorance of undivided identity", because basically, ignorance does not differ from Awareness (*rig pa*). Thus, it simply represents the lack of such an understanding.

<sup>26</sup> On the all-ground (*kun gzhi*) and the Eight Collections (*tshogs brgyad*), i.e., eye consciousness (*mig gi rnam shes*), ear consciousness (*rna ba'i rnam shes*), nose consciousness (*sna'i gi rnam shes*), tongue consciousness (*lce'i rnam shes*), body consciousness (*lus kyi rnam shes*), mental consciousness (*yiid kyi rnam shes*), emotive consciousness (*nyon yiid kyi rnam shes*), and consciousness of the all-ground (*kun gzhi rnam shes*), see Thondup Tulku 1989. *Buddha Mind*, p. 216. Ithaca, New York, Snow Lion.

<sup>27</sup> On the Two Collections (*tshogs gnyis*), see H.V. Guenther 1984. *Matrix of Mystery*, p. 214, no. 16. Shambala, Boulder & London.

<sup>28</sup> See TCZ I, p. 311.

2. The second one points to the assumption that Awareness and ignorance arise simultaneously (*lhan cig skyes pa*) in this first outer stirring of the ground. Another interpretation of the term “simultaneous” suggests the synchronism of the first ignorance which stands for the subject-side, i.e., consciousness, and the second one which arises in this phase of self-appearance as its object in the form of the Five lights (*'od lnga*).

3. The third one comes after the two kinds of ignorance mentioned above and represents the conceptual misapprehension of the self-appearance of the ground. Ignorance is accompanied by four conditions (*rkyen bzhi*) which arise together with it:

1. The causal condition (*rgyu'i rkyen*), i.e., the threefold ignorance itself.
2. The object-condition (*dmigs pa'i rkyen*), i.e., the outer arising of the Five Lights (*'od lnga*).
3. The dominant condition (*bdag po'i rkyen*), i.e., the apprehension of these lights by the “Self” (*bdag*).
4. The simultaneous condition (*mtshungs pa'i rkyen*) finally, expresses the synchronism of the three conditions mentioned above.

Thus, the text of the Second Theme runs as follows:

“The essence, the Pristine Cognition (of) Awareness initiates the cause of the ground of error (*'khrul gzhi*) and changes into the ignorance of undivided identity (*bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa*).

The nature brings forth the condition of error whereby the propelling wind (*'phen pa'i rlung*) arises.

Lighting up as colours it turns into the simultaneously produced ignorance (*lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*). The compassion produces the result of error in that the Pristine Cognition dwelling in the ground (*gzhi gnas kyi ye shes*) comes to be the conceptual ignorance (*kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa*).

Now, not knowing that Awareness and ignorance are like front and back of one hand, the ignorance dependent on Awareness, (being) the error relying on the lack of error (*ma 'khrul pa*), (arises) .

As one is labelling (the initial appearance of the ground), it arises as (object of) names.

Thus, by designating it by various names such as “this is the Pristine Cognition of Awareness and this is ignorance and error”, it turns into the conceptual ignorance (*kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa*).

Conceiving of it as object and subject - being similar to the (reflected) figure of a man (apprehended by him) - produces the cause of error, namely the three kinds of ignorance called “causal condition” (*rgyu'i rkyen*).

The so called object-condition (*dmigs pa'i rkyen*) is arising as various mental images of objects, thus, it is similar to (reflections of) a mirror, and the “I” and “Self”, the variety of apprehending and apprehended (*gzung 'dzin*), (represents) the dominant condition (*bdag po'i rkyen*).

Since these three conditions (arise) at the same time, (the fourth)

one is called simultaneous condition (*mtshungs pa'i rkyen*), and the turning into the impure (caused by these four conditions) can be exemplified by the nameless turning into names. Thus, going astray by not knowing the essence, the places of sentient beings, the sense organs, and the passions manifest beyond measure."

A presentation of the formation of the life-horizons of sentient beings is out of the scope of this work. The salient feature of it, however, is, as it were, the increasing materialization of light, light understood as inherently intelligent. Remarkable in this context is the fact that the ensuing concretization of the appearance of the ground into the different life-horizons of sentient beings is viewed only as an incidental process triggered by ignorance. How this process leads to a hardening of the Five Lights into the Five Elementary Forces (*'byung ba lnga*) — the whole process being a misapprehension of the potentiality of Pristine Cognition (*ye shes kyi rtsal*) — is explained in the following quotation<sup>29</sup>:

"Concerning the reason of the presence of the Five Outer Elementary Forces: First, on account of the arising of the potentiality of Pristine Cognition in (its) ever non-existent emptiness, the Five Lights have arisen.

On account of unceasing Awareness (present) in this (potentiality), a (subjective) apprehending of the Five Lights has arisen.

Holding them as real (*dnegos 'dzin*) is called "wind". Ultimately, it is the potentiality of Awareness.

In this (context) the red inner radiation (*mdangs*) is the Discriminating Pristine Cognition (*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*).

Going astray on account of holding this (red light) as real, the red fire has arisen.

In this (red fire) has arisen the warmth of the wind (which is) the potentiality of Awareness.

Moreover, the Pristine Cognition of Equality (*mnyam nyid kyi ye shes*) has lit up as yellow light.

On account of apprehending it, the earth has arisen.

On account of apprehending the arising of the white light (of) the Mirror-Like Pristine Cognition (*me long lta bu'i ye shes*), the white water has arisen.

On account of apprehending the arising of the green light of the Accomplishing Pristine Cognition (*bya grub kyi ye shes*), the air has arisen.

Concerning the Elementary Force space: It abides since the primordial beginning together with Pristine Cognition, and even in the end, it is free of shifting and changing (*'pho 'gyur med*)."

<sup>29</sup> See KDNYS II, p. 71.

— The Third Theme —  
**The presence of the core or seed of perfect Buddhahood in sentient  
 beings despite of the already arisen delusion**

The mode of abiding of the Buddha-Essence (*snying po*) in sentient beings is frequently treated in *Rdzogs chen* texts by means of general and specific explanations. As there is only a specific explanation to be found in our text, we have to take recourse to the TDZ<sup>30</sup> in order to make available a general explanation of the third theme. There one finds quotations from tantric as well as from *sūtric* sources. According to the *Rdzogs chen Tantra Rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long*, the Buddha-Essence exists in sentient beings of the Three Realms (*'jig rten gyi khams gsum*) in the same way as oil is present in a sesame seed. Similar descriptions can also be found in *Rdzogs chen* Tantras like *Nor bu 'phra bkod* and *Sgra thal 'gyur*. Quotations from other Tantras such as the famous *Kye rdo rje (Hevajratantra)* are brought up in order to prove the correctness of the assumption of a Buddha-Essence:

“In the body (of all sentient beings) the great Pristine Cognition is present.

(It is) the perfect abandonment of all discursive thoughts.

It pervades all things.

It is present in the body, but has not taken birth from it.”

As a *sūtric* source, the text *'Mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo (Māhapari-nirvānasūtra)* is quoted. Here, the Buddha-Essence is compared with a golden treasure hidden in a poor house whereof the owner is ignorant. The usual doubts concerning the ultimately valid (*nges don*) presence of the Buddha-Essence are based on the supposition that the nature of mind (*sems nyid*), that is to say emptiness itself (*stong pa nyid*), does not exhibit Buddha-Qualities (*yon tan*) such as the Major and Minor Marks (*mtshan dpe*) or the Ten Powers of a Buddha (*stobs bcu*). In this context, the opponents of an ultimately valid Buddha-Essence argue that all texts of the *Shes rab pha rol tu phyin pa (Prajñāpāramitā)* liken the selfless nature of phenomena (*gnas lugs bdag med*) to the empty sky. Accordingly, the Buddha-Essence conceived of as possessing manifold positive qualities is merely accepted as a provisionally valid (*drang don*) concept. Without defining it as such, it would be identical with the self of the Non-Buddhists (*mu stegs pa*). However, *Klong chen rab 'byams* insists on the ultimate validity of the Buddha-Essence. In his view, the fact that Buddha *Sakyamuni* has finally turned a third wheel (*'khor lo gsum pa*)<sup>31</sup> focusing on the Buddha-Essence, is in evidence of the correctness of not classifying the second one with its emphasis on exclusive emptiness (*stong nyid rkyang pa*) as ultimately valid. Exclusive emptiness is viewed upon as intended for beginners not yet being able to free themselves from an attachment to a self (*bdag tu 'dzin pa*). *Klong chen rab 'byams* does not admit the objection that the Buddha-Essence exhibiting Buddha-Qualities is identical with the self of the heretics, because he does not deny its emptiness, that is to say, in his line of thought it does not represent a specifically

<sup>30</sup> The following summary is based on the TDZ, p. 216-221.

<sup>31</sup> On the Three Turnings of the Wheel (*'khor lo gsum*) see Snellgrove, David L. 1987. *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 79f. Boston, Shambala Publications.

characterised thing (*dnegos po rang mtshan*). Moreover, as the Buddha-Essence can neither be defined as eternal nor as non-eternal, he thinks that it would be incorrect to conceive of it as something exclusively eternal. Last but not least, it can be revealed by means of quintessential instructions of a teacher, hence, it is freely accessible.

According to the specific explanation to be found in the Third Theme of the text, the core or seed of perfect Buddhahood presents itself in the body of sentient beings in the form of six different sets, each exhibiting five aspects:

“It is said that the core of perfect Buddhahood pervades all sentient beings, because the Pristine Cognition of Awareness resides in the body of a sentient being in fivefold form, namely as Five Buddha-Bodies (*sku lnga*), Five Buddha-Families (*rigs lnga*), Five Aspects of Pristine Cognition (*ye shes lnga*), Five Winds (*rlung lnga*), Five Aspects of Discriminative Awareness (*shes rab lnga*), and as Five Lights (*'od lnga*).

It is also said that one's own body is *Vajra*-Buddha(hood), that Buddhahood resides in one's own body and that it cannot be revealed somewhere else.

Therefore, concerning the Pristine Cognition of Awareness itself, as it appears (in and as cognition of) forms of objects (*rnam pa'i yul*), it is the Self-Arisen Body of Making Appear Objects in Their Distinctiveness (*rnam par snang mdzad sku / Vairocana*), not to be searched for elsewhere.

“*Vajra*” means that insofar as the unchanging essence of Awareness is not shaken by conceptual thoughts, Awareness itself has arisen as the Unchanging *Vajra*-Body (*Rdo rje mi 'gyur ba'i sku / Akṣobhya*). Furthermore, since unfathomable doors of expanding qualities such as the the Vision of Increasing Experiences (*nyams snang gong 'phel*) have arisen from Pristine Cognition of Awareness, it has arisen itself as (the Buddha) Source of Preciousness (*Rin chen'byung ldan / Ratnasambhāva*).

Since the aspect of clarity (*gsal cha*) of Awareness has appeared as limitless light-rays, it has arisen itself as (the Buddha) Limitless Illumination (*Snang ba mtha' yas / Amitābha*) (and) Unfathomable Light (*'Od dpag med*).

Furthermore, since the Pristine Cognition of Awareness itself is present in the essence of Pristine Cognition, and since accomplishment is certain by having made an experience of it, it has arisen itself as (the Buddha) Accomplishment of Meaning (*Don yod grub pa / Amoghasiddhi*).

Thus, the *Rdzogs chen* adept does not have to search for the tutelary deity (*yi dam gyi lha*) elsewhere and he does not have to contemplate it.

Therefore, he is free from debilitating disease.

Furthermore, one's own nature of mind has arisen as Five Buddha-Families (*rigs lnga*): Since the Awareness has gone into the unborn Space (*skye med kyi dbyings*) and has been absorbed there without its potential being obstructed (*rtsal 'gag med*) thereby, it is the Buddha-Family of the One Who has Gone to Suchness (*de bzhin gshes pa'i rigs*).

Since its essence (can) not be changed by conditions, it is the Vajra-Buddha-Family (*rdo rje rigs*).

Since all Buddha-Qualities are present in it in self-perfection, it is the Buddha-Family of Preciousness (*rin po che'i rigs*) and since its essence (can)not be defiled by faults, it is the Buddha-Family of Lotus (*padma'i rigs*).

Since everything is present as action of miraculous display (*cho 'phrul*) of Awareness, it is the Buddha-Family of Accomplished Action (*las kyi rigs*).

Furthermore, Awareness itself is also present as Five Aspects of Pristine Cognition: Since everything, religious activities (*chos spyod*) and (objects) being existent by way of their own characteristics (*rang gi mtshan nyid*) or being qualified by form (*gzugs can*), manifest clearly (*gsal ba*) out of the range of Awareness, it is the mirror-like Pristine Cognition. Since the variety of things (*chos can*) are equal in the expanse of the unborn nature of appearances, it is the Pristine Cognition of equality.

Since out of its range all Buddha-Qualities manifest clearly without their aspects becoming mixed up, it is the fully discriminating Pristine Cognition.

Furthermore, it is not necessary to realize it by means of exertion.

Since it is present forever (*ye nas*) in spontaneously accomplished self-clarity, it is the accomplishing Pristine Cognition.

However, all these (aspects of Pristine Cognition) (can)not be separated.

Since they (exhibit) One Taste (*ro gcig*) in the reality of appearances (which is) emptiness itself, (Awareness) is the Pristine Cognition of reality.

One's own Awareness itself has also arisen as Five Lights:

Since Awareness itself is not defiled by karma (*las*) and afflictions (*nyon mongs*), it also appears as white (light).

Because (its) Buddha-Qualities are perfect, it also appears as yellow (light).

Since everything is under control of Awareness, it appears as red (light).

Since it is beyond exertion, it is green (light).

Since its essence is not changing despite its arising in diversity, it appears as blue (light).

Awareness itself has also arisen as Five Winds:

Because it brings down the warmth of the Pristine Cognition of Awareness, it is called "the wind that is accompanied by fire" (*me dang mnyam pa'i rlung*). Because it upholds the life-force of the whole of samsara and nirvana, it is the wind that upholds the life-force (*srog 'dzin gyi rlung*).

Since it distinguishes (things) such as sense-organs, objects and colours it is the wind that separates the pure from the refuse (*dwangs snyigs 'byed pa'i rlung*).

Since it pervades the whole of samsara and nirvana, it is the pervading wind (*khyab byed kyi rlung*).

Since it drives one to the level of nirvana (*mya ngang las 'das pa*), it



is called "the wind of action that has no compassion" (*snying rje med pa las kyi rlung*). Awareness itself is also present as Five Aspects of Discriminative Awareness: Since it has become the ground of arising of the whole of samsara and nirvana, it is the discriminative awareness that does not distinguish (*'phyad pa med pa'i shes rab*).

Since it is not beyond the range of one's own Awareness, it is the discriminative awareness that holds together (*sdud par byed pa'i shes rab*).

Since it has arisen as the essence of everything, it is the discriminative awareness that pervades (*khyab par byed pa'i shes rab*).

Since it acts in (its own) Space through recourse to the wind of Pristine Cognition (*ye shes kyi rlung*), it is the discriminative awareness that moves (*skyod pa'i shes rab*).

Since it clears misconceptions concerning both, samsara and nirvana, it is present as the discriminative awareness that clears misconceptions (*sgro 'dogs gcod pa'i shes rab*).

Thus, since there is nothing else than Awareness itself, it is called "self-arisen Pristine Cognition" (*rang byung gi ye shes*).

Furthermore, since it is present (*gnas pa*) in its essence as Buddha-Body, it is the *dharmakāya* itself during the time of meditation (*mnyam gzhas*).

During the time of the non-duality of meditation and post-meditation it is the *sambhogakāya*, and during the time of post-meditation (*rjes thob*) it is the *nirmanakāya*.

Since its nature is clearly manifest as light, it abides in the ground as self-clarity and its sign clearly manifests as lamps.

The aspect of its compassion is present as Pristine Cognition.

Thus, since it is present as ground of everything, it is not necessary to search for Buddha (elsewhere), being the proof that one's own mind is Buddha forever."

In what way the five aspects of essence, nature, and compassion are present in sentient beings is elucidated in the following quotation<sup>32</sup>:

"Sixth, as to the five aspects of essence, nature, and compassion: The meaning of these (five aspects) (can) be subsumed under the Three Buddha-Bodies of the Pristine Cognition which is present in the ground (*gzhi gnas kyi ye shes*).

The five (aspects of) the essence are correlated to the Five Buddha-Bodies of the ground of arising, and the five (aspects of) the nature are correlated to the appearance of Five Lights.

The five (aspects of) compassion are correlated to the Five Aspects of Pristine Cognition.

They are the compassion of the natural force at the level of Buddhahood (*sangs rgyas kyi sar rang bzhin shugs kyi thugs rje*), the compassion that contacts conditions and objects (*rkyen yul dang 'phrad pa'i thugs rje*), the compassion (caused by) exhortation and supplication (*bskul zhing gsol ba btab pa'i thugs rje*), the compassion of various activities (*mdzad pa sna tshogs kyi thugs rje*), and the compassion that

<sup>32</sup> See TDZ, p. 226.

does not change (its attitude concerning) those to be tamed (*gdul bya mi 'gyur ba'i thugs rje*).

These five (aspects of compassion) have arisen out of the spontaneously accomplished aspect, being the aspect of the ground of arising (of everything) present now in the Pristine Cognition of Awareness."

It has to be noted that all these sets exhibiting five aspects are merely potentially at disposal in the ground. As mentioned above, butter potentially present in milk serves as an example for their mode of being during the time before the arising of the ground as anything. Thus, according to *Klong chen rab 'byams* one has to distinguish clearly between the mode of being of the core or seed of perfect Buddhahood during the time of the ground and the time of the result.

#### — The Fourth Theme —

#### The precise location of the seed or essence of perfect Buddhahood

"Moreover, the Pristine Cognition of Awareness abides in The Precious Palace of the Heart (*tsitta rin po che'i gzhal yas khang*) being situated in the middle of the body.

It abides there as the Peaceful Buddha-Body (*zhi ba'i sku*) which has approximately the size of a mustard-seed with eyes in proportion to it.

It is described as "mustard-seed" on account of being subtle and difficult to realize.

"Eyes in proportion to it" means that vast visions of Pristine Cognition (arise) in dependence upon a subtle practice (*nyams len*).

Furthermore, the abiding of the essence (of Pristine Cognition of Awareness) as Buddha-Body is similar to a Vase-Body (*bum sku*).

The abiding of its nature as light resembles a butterlamp inside a vase (*bum nang gi mar me*), and the door of the lamps lights up unceasingly on account of the abiding of (its) compassion as light-rays (*'od zer*).

Incidentally, ignorance, passion, karma, karmic propensities (*bag chags*), discursive thought (*rnam par rtog pa*), etc., abide in the lungs by virtue of the power of karmic wind (*las rlung*)."

According to *Rdzogs chen* thought, the Pristine Cognition of Awareness, defined here as seed or essence of perfect Buddhahood, pervades the whole body of sentient beings, but its focal point, being localized in the heart, is called "the Precious Palace of the Heart". Even though only the heart is mentioned in our text, in general, one can distinguish four such focal points:

1. The Precious Palace of the Heart, (*tsitta rin po che'i gzhal yas khang*),
2. the Palace of the Channels Initiating Movement (*'gyu byed rtsa yi gzhal yas*),
3. the Palace of the Skull Mansion (*dung khang bhandha'i gzhal yas*), and

4. the Palace of the Eyes Initiating Seeing (*lta byed mig gi gzhal yas*)<sup>33</sup>.

The Palace of the Channels Initiating Movement and the Palace of the Eyes Initiating Seeing are dealt with in the context of the Sixth.

As far as the focal points of the heart and the skull are concerned, one can find numerous descriptions of them.

For instance, the Precious Palace of the Heart is circumscribed as the Intention of the Closed Sphere of Samantabhadra (*kun tu bzang po ga'u kha sbyor gyi dgongs pa*)<sup>34</sup>. In the middle of this sphere, the Forty-Two Peaceful Buddha-Bodies (*zhi ba'i sku*), headed by the Five Buddha-Families, are present in the size of a mustard-seed, covered by five-coloured light.

In the skull reside the Fifty-Eight Wrathful Buddha-Bodies (*khro bo'i sku*) as radiation of the Pristine Cognition (*ye shes kyi gdangs*) of the focal point of the heart. Here, the Five Buddha-Families manifest themselves as the Five Herukas, namely as *Vajra Heruka* (*Badzra he ru ka*), *Buddha Heruka* (*Buddha he ru ka*), *Ratna Heruka* (*Ratna he ru ka*), *Padma Heruka* (*Padma he ru ka*) and *Karma Heruka* (*Karma he ru ka*)<sup>35</sup>. In other *Rdzogs chen* texts<sup>36</sup>, the *dharmakāya* is associated with the clarity of unimpeded Awareness (*rig pa ma 'gags par gsal ba*), the *sambhogakāya* with the Palace of the Skull Mansion and the *nirmanakāya* with the Palace of the Channels Initiating Movement.

In the text all these Buddha-Bodies represent aspects of the essence of the Pristine Cognition of Awareness. Its nature, the five-coloured light and five-coloured seeds of light, pervades all channels, but resides mainly in five energy-centres (*'khor lo lnga*)<sup>37</sup>. These bright appearances of its nature are considered to be the self-radiation of the Peaceful and Wrathful Buddha-Bodies (*zhi khro'i rang mdangs*), and they are said to vary in their size from the limitless sky down to a tenth part of a single hair of a horse's tail. During life they remain in latency, but after death, during the visions of the Intermediate State of Reality Itself (*chos nyid kyi bar do*), there is the possibility of becoming aware of them.

According to the point of view of *Rdzogs chen*, an adept of the Leaping Over (*thod rgal*) is capable of letting them manifest even during life in the form of visions projected in the clear and empty sky. The actual manifestation of these visions in the sky, called "rays of light" (*zer*), is effected by the third aspect of Pristine Cognition of Awareness, namely compassion, by means of the Lamp of the Water that Lassos Everything at a Distance. Since one is dealing here in the Fourth Theme with the *corporeal* presence of the Pristine Cognition of Awareness, its essence is likened to a Vase-Body, its nature to a butterlamp inside such a vase, and its compassion to rays of light illuminating the outer rim of the vase. But how is to be understood the statement that karma, karmic propensities, and discursive thought abide in

<sup>33</sup> See KDYT II, p. 199.

<sup>34</sup> See *Rdo rje sems dpa snying gi me long gi rgyud chen po*. TTT 56, p.147.

<sup>35</sup> See *Rgyal ba rdo rje sems dpa'i dgongs pa bstan pa thams cad kyi bu gcig pa zhes bya'i rgyud*. TTT 56, p. 332.

<sup>36</sup> See *Rgyal ba rdo rje sems dpa'i dgongs pa bstan pa thams cad kyi bu gcig pa zhes bya'i rgyud*. TTT 56, p. 335.

<sup>37</sup> The energy-centre of great bliss at the crown (*gtsug tor du bde chen 'khor lo*), the energy-centre of perfect enjoyment at the throat (*mgrin par longs spyod rdzogs pa'i 'khor lo*), the energy-centre of phenomena at the heart (*snying gar chos kyi 'khor lo*), the energy-centre of emanation at the navel (*lte bar sprul pa'i 'khor lo*), and the energy-centre of maintaining bliss at the secret place (*gsang gnas la bde skyong gi 'khor lo*).

the lungs by virtue of the power of karmic wind?

To begin with, from the point of view of certain *Rdzogs chen* Tantras such as the *Rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long*<sup>38</sup>, treasure texts like the ZMY<sup>39</sup>, and commentaries to be found in the TCZ, mind (*sems*) and its discursive thought does not abide in the lungs, but in a channel between heart and lungs. In the following lengthy quotation one finds a description of eight aspects relating to mind<sup>40</sup>:

“Fourth, there are eight specific topics of the mind, namely its base, its place, its way, its door, its essence, its potential, its activity, and its result.

From among them, its base is the chest of the aggregate of form (*gzugs kyi phung po*).

Its place is a channel (that has the size) of about a straw (*sog ma*) which connects the heart and the lungs and (in which) the radiation of Awareness (*rig pa'i gdangs*) rides on the horse of the wind (*rlung gi rta*).

The wind is like a blind horse with legs and the radiation of Awareness resembles a cripple with eyes.

Movements of conceptual thoughts will not arise, provided that these two do not mingle together. Consequently, the radiation will abide as a natural attribute (*rang chas su*) of Awareness itself. Without conceptual thought about appearing objects, a distinctively clear (*dangs sangs phyed pa*) consciousness arises.

This is the reason why one has to separate wind and Awareness by means of the pith of wind.

The moving part in the arising of any conceptual thoughts on account of the mingling of these two is the wind and its knowing part is the radiation of Awareness.

Moreover, the Awareness inside the heart is like water itself, and its radiating potential (*rtsal gdangs*) having gone into the cavity of the channel (between heart and lungs) and being the mind mingled together with the wind, is like a bubble.

Furthermore, mind relies on the previous presence of Awareness.

On the previous presence of mind, however,

Awareness is not dependent.

In its essence, Awareness cannot be controlled by mind.

But since (mind) is its potential, it is controlled by Awareness.

When the water is not moving, there are no waves. Likewise, when Awareness is not moving, no conceptual thought of mind occurs.

The (*Rdzogs chen* Tantra) *Rang shar* says:

Mind and Awareness are exemplified by water and its bubbles.

(Awareness) cannot be controlled by mind.

As for its way, it moves along the life-channel (*srog rtsa*), because there moves the horse of mind, the life-wind (*srog rlung*).

<sup>38</sup> See the *Rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long gi rgyud*, TTT 56, p. 147.

<sup>39</sup> See ZMYT II, p. 112.

<sup>40</sup> See TCZ II, p. 52.

Its door is the mouth and the nose, because the wind is coming out there.

Its essence is the subject-object structure (*gzung 'dzin*), being samsara itself.

Its potential is the grasping of objects and the attachment to the self.

Its action is bringing forth the variety of samsaric pleasure and pain.

Its result is samsara and its bad migrations (*ngan song*) without limit."

Examples of texts localizing the mind in the lungs are the *KDNYT*<sup>41</sup>, but also the *ZMYT*<sup>42</sup>. However, in consideration of what has been said, it should be clear that it is not the definition of a precise site of mind that is of major importance here, but the assumption that mind is evolving on account of the mingling of the radiation of Awareness with wind, called in this context "karmic wind" (*las rlung*). It has to be noted that in *Rdzogs chen* one distinguishes between the karmic wind and its counterpart, the wind of Pristine Cognition (*ye shes kyi rlung*). The following quotation sheds some light on what is meant by "karmic wind"<sup>43</sup>:

"But afterwards the karmic wind has arisen (which is) the grasping as real (*dngos 'dzin*) of the appearance of the Five Lights being the inherent potentiality (*rang rtsal*) of emptiness, and on account of the power of entering into grasping the inherent light of the Five Aspects of Pristine Cognitions, the Five Elementary Forces have appeared concretely: From the distillate (*dangs ma*) of the Five Outer Elementary Forces, the Five Inner Properties (*nang gi khams lnga*) (of the body)<sup>44</sup>, the Six Sources of Sense Perception (*skyed mched drug*)<sup>45</sup>, etc., have arisen whereby the whole of worlds and their inhabitants (*snod bcud*) is gradually established."

The main characteristics of the wind of Pristine Cognition, as well as its relationship to the karmic wind are elucidated in the following quotation<sup>46</sup>:

"In short, "wind of Pristine Cognition" is a name given to compassion (which is) the essence of Awareness. Furthermore, on account of existing as inseparable identity of essence, nature, and compassion it is called "Pristine Cognition".

Resembling in its rudimentary movement and its rudimentary knowing (*rig tsam*) to the wind, it is called "wind".

<sup>41</sup> See *KDYT* II, p. 224.

<sup>42</sup> See *ZMYT* I, p. 452.

<sup>43</sup> See *NYSNY*, p. 8b.

<sup>44</sup> These are apertures of the body (Space), corporeal liquids (water), metabolic heat (fire), flesh and bones (earth) and respiration (wind).

<sup>45</sup> The Six Sources of Sense Perception (*skyed mched drug*) are: 1) The sense power of the eye (*mig gi dbang po*), 2) of the ear (*rna ba'i dbang po*), 3) of the nose (*sna'i dbang po*), 4) of the tongue (*lce'i dbang po*), 5) of the body (*lus kyi dbang po*), and 6) of the mind (*yiid kyi dbang po*).

<sup>46</sup> See *KDYT* II, p. 161.

Ultimately, wind is (nothing else than) mind, the root of (the wind).

After having burdened the horse of wind with rudimentary knowing which is the radiation of the Pristine Cognition, the manifold collection of consciousness (*rnam shes kyi tshogs*) has arisen. The essence of the wind of Pristine Cognition is freedom from all extremes of conceptuality (*spros bral*) on account of its being empty.

Its nature is its appearance as Buddha-Bodies and (aspects of) Pristine Cognition on account of its being clear.

Its compassion is the arising of the Pristine Cognition of omniscience (*thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes*) and of the Pristine Cognition of knowing all aspects (*rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes*).

Even though this (wind of Pristine Cognition) is named "wind", it is but the inner clarity of Pristine Cognition and its outer arising as completely pure radiation which appears on the way of a yogin."

The two aspects of wind open up two different worlds of experience: The karmic wind initiates the appearances or visions of karmic propensities (*bag chags kyi snang ba*) as illustrated by the worlds of the Six Sentient Beings (*rigs drug*), and the wind of Pristine Cognition elicits the visions of Pristine Cognition, usually subsumed under the term "Three Buddha-Bodies". They are dealt with extensively in the Eighth Theme of the text.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

**BMNYT** *Bi ma'i snying thig*. In *Snying thig ya bzhi*. 11 vols.  
I / II / III / IV New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970.

**BYT I / II** *Bla ma yang thig*. In *Snying thig ya bzhi*. 11 vols.  
New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970.

**KDNYT I / II** *Mkha' 'gro snying thig*. In *Snying thig ya bzhi*. 11 vols.  
New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970.

**KDYT I / II / III** *Mkha' 'gro yang thig*. In *Snying thig ya bzhi*. 11 vols.  
New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970.

**NYSNY** *Theg pa thams cad kyi mchog rab gsang ba bla na med pa 'od gsal rdo rje snying po'i don rnam par bshad pa nyi ma'i snying po zhes bya ba*.  
By Rtse le rgod tshang pa, b. 1608. In *Collected Works*.  
5 vols. New Delhi 1974.

**TCZ I / II** *Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod*. By Klong chen rab 'byams.  
In *Klong chen mdzod bdun*, Sde-dge edition.  
6 vols. Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltzen and Khyentse Labrang, 1983.

**TDZ** *Tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*. By Klong chen rab 'byam  
In *Klong chen mdzod bdun*, Sde-dge edition. 6 vol.  
Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltzen and Khyentse Labrang, 1983.

TTT 56 *The Tibetan Tripitaka*, vol. 56. Editor-in-Chief:  
A W. Barber. SMC Publishing Inc., Taipei, 1991.

ZMYT I / II *Zab mo yang thig*. In *Snying thig ya bzhi*. 11 vols.  
New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, 1970.

**Appendix: The Tibetan text of the first four themes  
of the *Tshig don bcu gcig pa* :**

The following transliteration (Wylie) of the first four themes of the *Tshig don bcu gcig pa* is based on the edition by Trulku Tsewang , Jamyang and L. Tashi (New Delhi, 1970) which presents the *Snying thig ya bzhi* in eleven volumes.

In order to facilitate the reading of this text, the beginning of each of its Eleven Themes is marked with bold letters.

/ dpal ldan rdo rje 'chang chen dang / / bla ma dang ni yi dam lha / mkha'  
'gro bde ba 'byin pa la / / lus ngag yid kyis phyag 'tshal lo / / de la yang  
dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas thugs rje che la thabs mkhas pa'i / / ston pa  
kun tu bzang pos / / chos kyi sku 'od gsal ba'i ngang las / / longs spyod  
rdzogs pa'i sku mtshan dang dpe byad kyis brgyan pa'i skur byon te / /  
gdul bya 'gro ba'i rgyud tha dad kyang / / 'dir skal ldan gang zag cig sangs  
rgya bar byed pa la tshig don bcu gcig ste / / **dang po rtogs te sangs rgyas  
ma byung / / ma rtogs te sems can ma byung ba'i sngon rol na / / gzhi  
dngos po gshis kyis gnas lugs ji ltar gnas pa dang gcig / /** de ltar gnas pa  
de la 'khrul pa ji ltar byung ba'i tshul gtan la dbab pa dang gnyis / / 'khrul  
kyang sems can la yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyis snying po 'am  
sa bon ji ltar gnas pa dang gsum mo / / de nyid gnas pa'ang gang na gnas  
bstan pa dang bzhi / / de ltar gnas pa'i ye shes lam gang nas byung bstan  
pa dang lnga / / de nyid sgo gang nas 'char bstan pa dang drug / / de yul  
gang na snang ba dang bdun / / de ltar nyams su blang ba dang brgyad / /  
nyams su myong ba'i tshad bzung ba dang dgu / / gal te nyams su ma lon  
par tshe'i dus byas pa na chos nyid bar do ji ltar 'char ba dang bcu / / tha  
ma grol ba chen po dang bcu gcig go / / de la dang po ni spyir rdzogs pa  
chen po'i lugs kyis grub mtha'i rjes su 'brangs pa dang / lam rjes su 'dzin pa'i  
gang zag gnyis las / / 'dir lam rjes su 'dzin pa'i ste / de yang re zhis tshig  
gis gtan la dbab pa ni / 'khor 'das gnyis kyis de dgag pa'i gzhung ngo / / ka  
dag lhun grub 'dod na bdun no / / de dgag pa'i gzhung ngo / thog ma'i gzhi  
de ngo bo rang bzhin thug rje gsum du gnas te / / de yang ngo bo stong la  
rang bzhin gsal ba / / thugs rje 'gag pa med pa'o / / de yang ngo bo sku ru  
gnas / / rang bzhin gsung du gnas / thugs rje thugs su gnas pa'o / / de  
yang ngo bo rgyan dang gdan khri med pa'i sku ru gnas / / rang bzhin kha  
dog sna tshogs su 'bar / / gzhi'i dus na / thugs rje 'char gzhi 'gag med du  
gnas pas kun la khyab bo / / de yang ngo bo stong pas rtag pa'i phyogs / /  
'bras bu'i dus na yod gzhi'i dus na med / / su ma lhung / / rang bzhin gsal  
bar chad pa'i phyogs su ma lhung / / de kun la khyab pa'i ngos nas bem  
po'i phyogs su ma lhung ba'o / yang ngo bo 'khrul par mi gnas / / thugs rje  
'khrul par mi srid pa'o / / de yang ngo bo sku yin pas mi 'gyur / / rang  
bzhin 'od yin pas rang gsal / thugs rje ye shes yin pas mkhyen pa'i cha ma  
ngo bo ka dag lhun grub rang bzhin lhun grub thugs rje kun kyab bo 'gags

par so sor gsal lo // de yang mkhyen pa'i cha gzhi gnas pa'i ye shes gsum  
 du bzhugs so // de ni thog ma ji lta ba'i gnas lugs so // **da ni gnyis pa de**  
**las 'khrul pa ji ltar byung ba'i tshul bstan pa ni** // ngo bo rig pa ye shes  
 kyis 'khrul gzhi'i rgyu byas nas // bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig par gyur //  
 rang bzhin gyis 'khrul pa'i rkyen byas pas 'phen pa'i las kyis rlung langs te de  
 la kha dog tu gsal bas lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig par song // thugs rje 'khrul  
 pa'i 'bras bu byas te gzhi gnas kyis ye shes las kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig par  
 gyur // da lta rig ma rig lag pa'i lto rgyab rtogs pa ltar ma shes pas rig pa la  
 ltos pa'i ma rig pa ma 'khrul pa la ltos pa'i 'khrul pa // de la brtags pas  
 ming gi tshogs su shar te // 'di ni rig pa ye shes so // 'di ni ma rig pa 'am  
 'khrul pa'o // zhes ming du ma btags pas kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig par gyur  
 // de la yul dang yul can du 'dzin pa dper na skyes bu'i byad dang 'dra bas  
 // 'khrul pa'i rgyu byas pas rgyu'i rkyen zhes pa ma rig pa gsum mo // de  
 la dmigs pa'i rkyen zhes pa yul la dmigs pa so sor shar bas me long lta bu'o  
 // nga bdag dang gzung 'dzin sna tshogs pa bdag po'i rkyen gsum dus  
 mtshungs pas mtshungs pa'i rkyen zhes pa ma dag pa dngos su song ba ni  
 dper na ming med pa ming du song ba dang 'dra'o // de ltar ngo ma shes  
 shing 'khrul pas 'gro ba'i yul dang las dang // dbang po dang // nyon  
 mongs pa dpag tu med pa 'byung ngo // **da ni gsum pa de ltar 'khrul**  
**kyang sems can rnams sangs rgyas snying pos ji ltar khyab tshul ni** //  
 'gro ba gcig gi lus la / sku lnga // rigs lnga // ye shes lnga // rlung lnga  
 // shes rab lnga // 'od lnga ste // rig pa'i ye shes lnga tshan du gnas pas  
 // bde gshegs snying pos 'gro kun yongs la khyab // ces pa dang // rang  
 lus rdo rje sangs rgyas nyid // rang gi lus la sangs rgyas bzhugs // gzhan  
 nas sangs rgyas bstan du med // ces pa'o // de yang rig pa'i ye shes nyid /  
 / rnam pa yul de nyid la rig pa'i ye shes snang bas // rnam par snang  
 mdzad sku rang byung bas de nyid gzhan nas btsal ma dgos pa'o // rdo rje  
 ni rig pa'i ngo bo mi 'gyur la de la rnam rtog gis mi bskyod pas // rig pa  
 nyid rdo rje mi 'gyur ba'i skur byung ba'o // yang rig pa'i ye shes de nyid  
 las nyams gong 'phel gyi snang ba la sogs te // yon tan gyi 'phel sgo dpag  
 med byung bas // rin chen 'byung ldan du rang byung ba'o // yang rig  
 pa'i gsal cha 'od zer mtha' yas bar snang bas // snang ba mtha' yas 'od dpag  
 med du rang shar ba'o // yang rig pa ye shes nyid ye shes kyis ngo bor yod  
 la // de nyams su blangs pas 'grub nges na // don yod grub par rang  
 byung ba'o // de ltar rdzogs pa chen po'i rnal 'byor pas yi dam gyi lha  
 gzhan nas btsal zhing bsgom du med de // tshi chad pa'i nad dang bral  
 ba'o // yang rang gi sems nyid rigs lngar 'byung ste // rig pa skye med  
 kyis dbyings su rtsal 'gag med gshegs shing thim pas na // de bzhin gshegs  
 pa'i rigs yin la // de'i ngo bo rkyen gyis mi 'gyur bas rdo rje'i rigs so // de  
 la yon tan thams cad rang rdzogs su gnas pas rin po che'i rigs yin la // de'i  
 ngo bo skyon gyis ma gos pas padma'i rigs so / thams cad rig pa'i cho 'phrul  
 gyi las su 'dug pas las kyis rigs zhes bya'o // de yang rig pa nyid ye shes  
 lngar yang gnas te chos spyod dang rang gi mtshan nyid dam // gzugs can  
 thams cad rig pa'i ngang las gsal bas me long lta bu'i ye shes so // chos can  
 sna tshogs chos nyid skye ba med pa'i klong du mnyam pas mnyam pa nyid  
 kyis ye shes so // de nyid kyis ngang las yon tan gyi cha ma 'dres par so sor  
 gsal bas so sor kun tu rtogs pa'i ye shes so // de yang 'bad rtshol gyis  
 bsgrub mi dgos te // ye nas rang gsal lhun grub tu gnas pas bya ba grub  
 pa'i ye shes so // de thams cad kyang tha dad ma yin te // chos nyid  
 stong nyid du ro gcig pas chos kyis dbyings kyis ye shes so // rang rig pa  
 nyid 'od lngar yang byung te / rig pa nyid la las dang nyon mongs kyis ma



gos pas dkar po ltar yang snang ngo // yon tan rdzogs pa'i phyir ser po ltar yang snang ngo // thams cad rig pa dbang du 'dus pas dmar po ltar yang snang ngo // rtsol ba las 'das pas ljang gu'o // sna tshogs su shar yang ngo bo la 'gyur ba med pas mthing ga ltar shar ba'o // rig pa nyid rlung lngar yang 'byung ste // rig pa ye shes kyi drod 'bebs pa'i phyir me dang mnyam pa'i rlung zhes bya // 'khor 'das kun gyi srog 'dzin pas srog 'dzin gyi rlung ngo // dbang po dang yul dang kha dog la sogs par 'byed pas na dwangs snyigs 'byed pa'i rlung ngo // 'khor 'das kun la khyab pas khyab byed kyi rlung // 'khor ba'i srog bcad nas mya ngan 'das pa'i sar 'phen pas na snying rje med pa las kyi rlung zhes bya'o // rig pa nyid shes rab lngar yang gnas te // 'khor 'das thams cad kyi 'byung gzhir gyur pa 'pyed pa med pa'i shes rab bo // rang rig pa'i ngang las ma 'das pas sdud par byed pa'i shes rab bo // de thams cad kyi ngo bor byung bas khyab par byed pa'i shes rab bo // de nyid ye shes kyi rlung la brten nas rig pa mkha' la spyod pas na skyod pa'i shes rab bo // 'khor 'das gnyis ka'i sgro 'dogs gcod pas na sgro 'dogs gcod pa'i shes rab tu gnas pa'o // de ltar rig pa nyid las gzhan med pas na rang byung gi ye shes zhes bya // de yang ngo bo'i cha la skur gnas pa mnyam gzhas gi dus na chos sku nyid la // mnyam rjes gnyis med dus na longs sku'o // rjes kyi dus na sprul pa'i sku'o // rang bzhin 'od du gsal bas gzhi la rang gsal du gnas te // rtags sgron ma la gsal ba'o // thugs rje'i cha ye shes su gnas pa'o // de ltar thams cad kyi gzhir gnas pas sangs rgyas btsal mi dgos te // rang sems ye nas sangs rgyas yin pa'i gtan tshigs so // **da ni bzhi pa rig pa'i ye shes de gnas pa gang na gnas bstan pa ni** // de yang lus kyi dkyil na tsitta rin po che'i gzhal yas khang na gnas te // zhi ba'i sku yungs 'bru tsam la spyang phul thag tsam du gnas so // de yang sku yungs 'bru tsam zhes pa ni // phra zhing rtogs par dka' ba'i cha nas bzhag la // spyang phul thag tsam la zhes pa nyams len phra mo la brten nas ye shes kyi snang ba rgya chen po la dgongs pa'o // de yang ngo bo sku ru gnas pa bum sku lta bu'o // rang bzhin 'od du gnas pa ni bum nang gi mar me lta bu'o // thugs rje zer du gnas pas sgron ma'i go ma 'gags par gsal ba'o // de'i zhar la ma rig pa dang // nyon mongs pa dang // las dang bag chags dang rnam par rtog pa la sogs kyang las kyi rlung gis stobs byas nas glo ba na gnas pa'o /





DEUX REMARQUES À PROPOS DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DU *RA-BTAGS*  
EN TIBÉTAI PARLÉ

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## 1. Introduction

Dans nombre de dialectes tibétains du Tibet oriental, la lettre *ra-btags* (la médiale *r*) du tibétain écrit fusionne avec la lettre de base (initiale), et le tout se prononce comme une consonne rétroflexe ou alvéopalatale. Mais si l'on consulte les formes rapportées dans le *Xifan Yiyu* de la série Ding, qui fut édité au milieu du 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle, il apparaît que la lettre *ra-btags* se prononçait alors encore comme une liquide /r/<sup>1</sup>. Toutefois, quasiment aucun dialecte moderne ne préserve une liquide /r/ pour la lettre *ra-btags*<sup>2</sup>.

Cet article présente le cas de deux dialectes khams-tibétains peu connus, qui préservent une prononciation archaïque du *ra-btags* du tibétain écrit<sup>3</sup> :

1. Dialecte de sProsnang [Zhonglu]  
Parlé au village de Zhonglu, le district de Danba, la préfecture de Ganzi, Sichuan, Chine.
2. Dialecte de Melung [Weixi]  
Parlé aux villages de Baohe et Yongchun, le district de Weixi, la préfecture de Diqing, Yunnan, Chine.

## 2. Dialecte de sProsnang : conservation de la liquide /r/

Le *ra-btags* du dialecte de sProsnang correspond presque à la liquide /r/ : il conserve une prononciation identique à celle du tibétain ancien<sup>4</sup>.

### 2-1. La prononciation de la liquide /r/

La structure des groupes de consonnes initiaux dans le dialecte de sProsnang se présente comme suit : prénasalisation ou préaspiration (optionnelle), la consonne de base (initiale principale) et la liquide (optionnelle elle aussi).

Quand la consonne qui précède la liquide /r/ est une vélaire, au moment de l'articulation de cette vélaire, la pointe de la langue se soulève jusqu'à la po-

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<sup>1</sup>Voir Nishida & Sun (1990:30-35) et Suzuki (2007a).

<sup>2</sup>Voir Jiang (2002:240-244, 247-259).

<sup>3</sup>Cet article est adapté de deux articles originaux écrits en japonais, Suzuki (2007b) et Suzuki & Tshering mTshomo (2007).

<sup>4</sup>Le /r/ médial qui correspond au *ra-btags* en tibétain ancien est conservé dans certains mots d'emprunt dans les langues rgyalrongiques comme le japhug (Jacques 2004:117-119) et le geshitsa (rDo-rje 1998:192).

sition postalvéolaire pour prononcer une vibrante /r/. Il semble qu'il s'agisse d'une double articulation.

Cette coarticulation vélaire/rétroflexe n'affecte que l'initiale, pas la prénasalisation ou la préaspiration, mais la rétroflexion se maintient encore dans une partie de l'articulation de la voyelle suivante. Par exemple, /krə/ peut se représenter comme [kɽ̣ᵛə] en phonétique détaillée. Le /r/ est pleinement sonore sauf dans le cas où il est précédé d'une consonne aspirée, auquel cas il s'assourdit.

Quand la consonne qui précède la liquide /r/ est une labiale, la situation articuloire est similaire à celle de la vélaire, par exemple, /prə/ peut se représenter comme [pɽ̣ᵛə] en phonétique détaillée.

Quand la consonne qui précède la liquide /r/ est une rétroflexe, l'articulation passe doucement de l'occlusive rétroflexe au son /r/<sup>5</sup>. Par exemple, /ʈrə/ peut se représenter comme [ʈɽ̣ᵛə] en phonétique détaillée.

## 2-2. Exemples

La série vélaire

tibétain écrit	sProsnaṅg	sens
<i>khraḡ</i>	ʰkʰraʔ	'sang'
<i>gru</i>	ʰkru	'bateau'
<i>khra</i>	ʰkʰraʔ	'faucon'
<i>grog ma</i>	ʰkroʔ mə	'araignée'
<i>khri</i>	ʰkʰrə	'lit'
<i>grib ma</i>	ʰkʰrəʔ s <sup>h</sup> e	'ombre'
<i>gri chung</i>	ʰkʰrə zḡ	'couteau'
<i>khri gcig</i>	ʰkʰrə h <sup>h</sup> teɪʔ	'dix mille'
<i>lam khrid</i>	lā ʰkʰrəʔ mə	'guider'
<i>mkhris pa</i>	ʰkʰrə h <sup>h</sup> pə	'vésicule biliaire'
<i>'khrungs</i>	ʰkʰrū	'accoucher'
<i>skra</i>	ʰkʰrə	'cheveu'
<i>dgra bo</i>	ʰgru	'ennemi'
<i>sgro gu</i>	ʰgre:	'bouton'
<i>skrag</i>	ʰkra: mə	's'effrayer'
<i>bkru</i>	ʰkru mə	'laver'
<i>skrang</i>	ʰkrō mə	's'enfler'
<i>bkra shis</i>	ʰkra s <sup>h</sup> i	'Trashī'
<i>sgrol ma</i>	ʰgre: mə	'Drolma'

<sup>5</sup>Si la distance articuloire entre la pointe de la langue et la position postalvéolaire se rétrécit entre l'occlusive et le /r/, ce son devient une affriquée et il est analysé comme un phonème différent.

## La série labiale

tibétain écrit	sProsnang	sens
<i>brag</i>	ʔpraʔ	'précipice'
<i>brag phug</i>	ʔpraʔ hʰuʔ	'grotte'
<i>brag 'go</i>	ʔprã ʳgu	'Danba'
<i>brang</i>	ʔproʔ hʰgɛʔ	'poitrine'
<i>phrug byis</i>	ʔhriʔ ɕhi:	'bébé'
<i>bro</i>	ʔpru	'danse'
<i>phra bo</i>	ʔhro mə	'fin'
<i>'bro</i>	ʔpre: mə	's'enfuir'
<i>bri</i>	ʔprə mə	'écrire'
<i>'brug</i>	ʔmbruʔ	'foudre / dragon'
<i>'bru zas</i>	ʔmbru zeʔ	'nourriture'
<i>'bras</i>	ʔmbre:	'riz'
<i>sprin</i>	ʔhri	'nuage'
<i>spro snang</i>	ʔhpro ɳo	'Zhonglu'
<i>spre'u</i>	ʔa hʰpri:	'singe'
<i>sbrul</i>	ʔhbrɛ:	'serpent'
<i>sbrang nag</i>	ʔhbro na:	'mouche'
<i>sbrang ma</i>	ʔhbrō mə	'abeille'
<i>sprul sku</i>	ʔhprɛ hku	'Buddha vivant'

## La série postalvéolaire

tibétain écrit	sProsnang	sens
<i>dkrog</i>	ʔtra: mə	'étonner'
<i>dri</i>	ʔtrə mə	'interroger'
<i>'di 'dra</i>	ʔa ʳdrə	'comme ça'

## 2-3. Exemples qui incluent la rétroflexe

Dans les dialectes tibétains, excepté celui de sProsnang, les groupes avec *ra-btags* correspondent le plus souvent à des occlusives ou des affriquées rétroflexes. Toutefois, on retrouve ce type de correspondance à sProsnang également.

tibétain écrit	sProsnang	sens
<i>drug</i>	ʔtʂuʔ	'six'
<i>bcu drug</i>	ʔhʂo dʂuʔ	'seize'
<i>phrug</i>	ʔptʂhiʔ	'enfant'
<i>dron po</i>	ʔtʂu: mə	'chaud'
<i>dbral</i>	ʔptʂje mə	'déchirer'

Parmi les exemples ci-dessus, on doit noter que l'étymon du tibétain écrit *phrug* 'enfant' présente une prononciation alternative /ᵑʰriʔ/. C'est une variante libre et on ne constate aucune différence de sens. En revanche, il n'y a pas de formes avec la liquide /r/ dans les mots 'six,' 'seize,' 'chaud' et 'déchirer'<sup>6</sup>.

### 3. Dialecte de Melung : omission du r ou rhotacisation

Les groupes initiaux à *ra-btags* dans le dialecte de Melung présentent des particularités remarquables. Le *ra-btags* peut disparaître ou causer une voyelle rhotacisée. Même Qu (1991), qui traite systématiquement des rimes et des voyelles dans les dialectes tibétains, ne mentionne pas ce phénomène. Les données du dialecte de Melung attestent donc d'un nouveau type de développement phonétique dans les dialectes tibétains inconnu autrefois.

#### 3-1. Voyelle rhotacisée et cette prononciation

La valeur phonétique de la voyelle rhotacisée est le son selon lequel la rétroflexion est maintenue pendant toute l'articulation de la voyelle, sans aucune articulation consonantique avant ou après la voyelle. Concernant les mots polysyllabiques, cependant, le /r/ consonantique est clairement articulé au milieu du mot<sup>7</sup>.

On peut noter que la voyelle rhotacisée apparaît le plus souvent comme une voyelle centrale /ɤ/. Les voyelles du dialecte de Melung sont /i, e, ε, a, ɑ, ɔ, o, u, ʊ, ə, ɛ, ɔ/, mais seules /ε, ɔ, ɤ/ peuvent être rhotacisées.

#### 3-2. Exemples

Beaucoup de mots qui ont une voyelle rhotacisée correspondent au *ra-btags* en tibétain écrit, mais dans certains cas toutefois aucune rhotacisation n'est observée.

##### 1. Avec la voyelle rhotacisée

tibétain écrit	Melung	sens
<i>sprin</i>	ᵑpɤ	'nuage'
'brug ?	ᵑmɔ lowʔ	'foudre'
<i>sbrang nag</i>	ᵑbɔ naʔ	'mouche'
<i>sbrang</i>	ᵑbɔŋ	'sucre'

<sup>6</sup>On peut douter que la prononciation du mot 'six' /ᵑʰsuʔ/ ait vraiment une relation de correspondance directe avec le tibétain ancien, car ce mot se prononce au ton haut. Les mots ayant l'initiale #d- en tibétain développent normalement un ton bas. Donc, /ᵑʰsuʔ/ ne correspond pas exactement à *drug* en tibétain écrit, il correspondrait plutôt à une forme non-attestée telle que \*(s)trug. Le mot 'six' se prononce au ton haut dans tous les dialectes parlés à Danba.

<sup>7</sup>Phonétiquement /r/ possède plusieurs variantes, par exemple, la résonante postalvéolaire ou rétroflexe.

<i>gri</i> ( <i>chung</i> )	ʔkə̃ tʂʰaŋ / ʔkə̃	‘couteau’
<i>brug</i>	ʔmə̃ʔ	‘dragon’

## 2. Sans la voyelle rhotacisée

(a) le *ra-btags* disparaît sans laisser de traces

tibétain écrit	Melung	sens
<i>brag</i>	ʔpaʔ	‘précipice’
<i>skra</i>	ʔ <sup>h</sup> ka	‘cheveu’
<i>srog</i>	ʔ <sup>h</sup> soʔ	‘vie’
<i>khra</i>	ʔ <sup>h</sup> a	‘faucon’
<i>sbrul</i>	ʔ <sup>h</sup> bʱa:	‘serpent’
<i>spre’u</i>	ʔpu:	‘singe’
<i>sran ma</i>	ʔ <sup>h</sup> sā ma	‘soja’
<i>phra bo</i>	ʔ <sup>h</sup> a nā	‘fin’

(b) avec la rétroflexe

tibétain écrit	Melung	sens
<i>sprang po</i>	ʔ <sup>h</sup> tʂwaŋ jɔŋ	‘mendiant’
<i>drel</i>	ʔtu:	‘mulet’
<i>bras</i>	ʔ <sup>h</sup> tə ma	‘riz’
<i>drug</i>	ʔtɕʔ	‘six’

(c) avec l’affriquée alvéopalatale

tibétain écrit	Melung	sens
<i>khrag</i>	ʔtɕ <sup>h</sup> aʔ	‘sang’

(d) avec la liquide /r/

tibétain écrit	Melung	sens
<i>bru rtswa</i>	ʔ <sup>m</sup> bru tswa	‘riz’

Dans les exemples ci-dessus, on observe que /ə̃/ est la voyelle rhotacisée la plus courante, et le timbre de cette voyelle ne correspond pas à celle du tibétain écrit. Par exemple, les deux mots /ʔ<sup>h</sup>bə̃ŋ/ ‘sucre’ *sbrang* et /ʔ<sup>h</sup>tʂwaŋ jɔŋ/ ‘mendiant’ *sprang po* possèdent le même élément orthographique (*s*-labiale-*rang*), mais leur prononciation diffère : la voyelle de l’un est /a/ et celle de l’autre /ə̃/<sup>8</sup>, et seul le premier a une voyelle rhotacisée. Cependant, à pro-

<sup>8</sup>Il y a des formes multiples correspondant à *-ang* en tibétain oral : /aŋ/, /waŋ/, /ə̃ŋ/, etc.

prement parler, la forme orale /<sup>-h</sup>t̚swaŋ joŋ/ 'mendiant' devrait correspondre à une forme non attestée \**sprang slong* en tibétain écrit<sup>9</sup>. Et si l'on considère la correspondance de la deuxième syllabe, ce mot ne peut pas faire partie du vocabulaire hérité dans le dialecte de Melung, mais il doit s'agir d'un mot d'emprunt<sup>10</sup>.

Quand la lettre de base est *d*, on obtient une initiale rétroflexe comme c'est le cas dans plupart des dialectes tibétains. Le mot 'bru, dont le sens moderne est 'riz' et le sens ancien est 'grain,' est un exemple unique où la liquide /r/ se maintient dans la prononciation moderne parmi les mots ci-dessus, et ce mot doit être considéré comme une exception. L'évolution de groupes à *ra-btags* en affriquées alvéopalatales s'observe dans beaucoup de dialectes amdo-tibétains ainsi que dans plusieurs dialectes khams-tibétains comme rGyalthang [Xiang-gelila/Shangri-La] et Thoteng [Tuoding]. Dans le dialecte de Melung, ce type n'existe plus sauf pour l'étymon 'sang,' qui est probablement un emprunt à un autre dialecte.

Il est remarquable qu'il y ait autant d'exemples tels que /<sup>ˆ</sup>paʔ/ 'précipice' *brag* sans voyelle rhotacisée dans le dialecte de Melung. Ce phénomène s'observe également dans plusieurs mots du dialecte de Lhassa<sup>11</sup>. Parmi les exemples du dialecte de Melung mentionnés ci-dessus, il y a plusieurs dialectes dans lesquels la correspondance de *sr-* en tibétain écrit n'est pas une rétroflexe, comme /<sup>-h</sup>soʔ/ 'vie' *srog*<sup>12</sup>. Toutefois, à l'exception de ce groupe initial, la disparition du *ra-btags* dans les groupes initiaux n'est constatée que dans peu de dialectes.

Dans les exemples où le *ra-btags* disparaît sans laisser de traces, il n'y a aucun mot avec une voyelle /ə/. Donc, on peut supposer que le développement de la rhotacisation a une relation étroite au point d'articulation de la voyelle.

### 3-3. Notes concernant de la voyelle rhotacisée

On peut également retrouver des mots avec voyelle rhotacisée dans les mots à initiale *r* en tibétain écrit, mais cette rhotacisation n'est pas systématique.

<sup>9</sup>Il n'existe pas de forme \**sprang slong* en tibétain écrit, et c'est un composé de deux morphèmes *sprang* (*ba*) et *slong* (*ba*), ayant tous les deux le sens de 'mendier.'

<sup>10</sup>La correspondance remarquable entre /j/ et *sl-* est une caractéristique propre aux dialectes tibétains parlés dans les districts de Deqin, Deirong ou Xiangcheng.

<sup>11</sup>Par exemple, /<sup>-</sup>pi fiu/ 'singe' *spre'u*, /<sup>-</sup>p<sup>h</sup>a po/ 'fin' *phra bo*, /<sup>-m</sup>bi/ 'yak femelle' 'bri, /<sup>-</sup>soʔ/ 'vie' *srog*, etc. Ce type de correspondance s'observe dans plusieurs mots dont la lettre de base est *p*, *ph*, *b*, ou *s*.

<sup>12</sup>Concernant le mot 'vie,' par exemple, le dialecte de gDongsum a /<sup>-h</sup>soʔ/, celui de Rangakha /<sup>-</sup>so:/.



## 1. Avec voyelle rhotacisée

tibétain écrit	Melung	sens
<i>ri</i>	ʼə̃	'montagne'
<i>ri ?</i>	ʼə̃r ɣ <sup>h</sup> oŋ	'vallée'
<i>rus ?</i>	ʼə̃r t <sup>h</sup> u:	'os'
<i>ras</i>	ʼfiɛ:	'étoffe'

## 2. Sans voyelle rhotacisée

tibétain écrit	Melung	sens
<i>rogs</i>	ʼroʔ	'ami'
<i>ra</i>	ʼra	'chèvre'
<i>a rag</i>	ʼfiɑ raʔ	'vin'
<i>de ring</i>	ʼtə raŋ	'aujourd'hui'
<i>rang</i>	ʼrwaŋ	'soi-même'

D'après les exemples ci-dessus, on peut conclure que la formation historique de la voyelle rhotacisée dépend le plus souvent du timbre de la voyelle. Les mots à voyelle rhotacisée avaient une voyelle fermée en tibétain ancien, à l'exception des mots 'étoffe' et 'aujourd'hui.'

Le cas du *r* final en tibétain écrit n'a pas été mentionné ci-dessus, car il ne cause jamais de voyelle rhotacisée, comme on peut le constater dans les exemples /<sup>-h</sup>s<sup>h</sup>ɛ:/ 'or' *gser* et /<sup>-h</sup>tə<sup>h</sup>ga/ 'noix' *star ga*. Par conséquent, les voyelles rhotacisées ne correspondent qu'au *r* qui précède la voyelle en tibétain écrit.

En dehors du groupe dialectal de Melung, ces phénomènes sont inconnus. Le seul exemple dans lequel le -r- médial tombe est la forme /<sup>ʷ</sup>go/ 'aller' *'gro* qui est commun parmi les dialectes de la préfecture de Diqing, et qui est analysé comme une forme sans le *ra-btags*.

## 4. Conclusion

Les groupes à *ra-btags* en tibétain écrit correspondent habituellement à des réflexes dans la plupart des dialectes, mais quelques exceptions existent dans les dialectes parlés dans la région périphérale de l'est.

Les deux dialectes traités ici n'ont aucune relation historique, mais nous avons illustré deux cas extrêmes de conservation (pour le dialecte de sPro-snang) et d'innovation (pour celui de Melung), qui sont remarquables l'un et l'autre parmi les dialectes modernes et aussi dans l'histoire de la langue

tibétaine<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup>Récemment, l'auteur a étudié un autre dialecte tibétain nommé Daan, parlé au village de Daan, au district de Yongsheng dans la préfecture municipale de Lijiang au Yunnan, dans lequel le *ra-btags* en tibétain écrit a disparu presque partout. Une discussion détaillée de ce dialecte sera préparée dans un autre article.

Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, 232pp. + appendices, footnotes, index, bibliography

Reviewed by  
Fabienne Jagou

To examine how the actions of Tibetan Buddhists shaped the emergence of modern China, Gray Tuttle presents a broad overview of two and a half centuries of Sino-Tibetan relationships. He intends to show the role played by Buddhists, both Chinese and Tibetans, in the construction of the new China based on the idea of the nation-state; the influence of these Buddhists on Sino-Tibetan relations; and how modern ideas such as nationalism, race, and religion have affected the relations between Chinese and Tibetans.

In the first part of his book, Tuttle offers a useful synthetic analysis of the relationship between Manchus and Tibetans. Tuttle emphasizes cultural issues. He first describes the relationship between Manchus and Tibetans as inherited from traditional patronage and the previous imperial tradition that can be dated back to the eleventh century. For him, the early relationship was characterized by cordial cooperation, as neither tried to implement policies to change the culture of the other state. Tuttle points to three main Tibetan Buddhist sites that served as links between Tibet and the Manchu Qing court: Mount Wutai, from the beginning of the eighteenth century; the Yonghe gong, after the lCang-skya Qutughtu (Rol pa'i rdo rdje 1717-1786) founded it in 1744; and the Forbidden City's Zhongzheng dian. Lhasa appointed Tibetan masters at these sites from the end of the seventeenth century until the 1930s. From the Manchu side, these relationships were handled by the Emperor first, then the Imperial Household (*neiwufu*) and the Court for Managing the Frontiers (*Lifan yuan*). Then, Tuttle suggests, the relations between the elites of the Qing Empire and the Tibetan Buddhist cultural world became political ones after the British invasion of Tibet in 1904 (p. 34) and the growing involvement of Chinese, not Manchus, in Tibetan affairs. As such, Tibet was included "in the Western model of nation-state relations and Chinese officials used the British acknowledgment of Qing suzerainty to claim Qing sovereignty of Tibet." From then on, the Chinese tried to impose cultural and political reforms on the Tibetans in order to secure their western border.

According to Tuttle, the question of the integration of the Tibetan territory inside the Qing Empire derives also from this shift from cultural to political relations. The author clearly states that the Manchus did not intend to incorporate Tibet into their Empire, as the first Chinese representatives of the Manchu Court did.

Tuttle claims that the Manchu interest in Tibetan Buddhism was linked to the concept of a "patronage tradition," but it is also true that on the Qing side the relationship became more and more institutionalized (Emperor, Imperial Household, Court for Managing the Frontiers, and, I would add,

the Grand Council). It would have been useful for the reader to know more about how the Tibetan affairs were shared between the Imperial Household, the Court for Managing the Frontiers, and the Grand Council. Granted, on the Tibetan side, relations with foreign countries were not institutionalized, as the Tibetans did not inaugurate new administrative organs in their government nor, more precisely, did they include Manchu affairs into a single political structure. For the Tibetans, it is obvious that the relationship was instituted from one person to another, as between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperor. However, his emphasis on cultural relations leads Tuttle to neglect the Manchu side, which saw Tibetan affairs incorporated into specific administrative organs.

According to Tuttle, the Tibetan response to this newly aggressive policy of the Qing Court (the signing of treaties between the British and the Chinese regarding Tibet and the progressive incorporation of the Kham territory inside the administrative structure of their Empire) came mainly from the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (1875-1933) who, at that time, became a nationalist. The 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, thanks to the meeting he held with politicians from different countries during his two exiles (in China after the raid of the British in 1904 and in British India after the Chinese invasion of Lhasa in 1909), was trained in modern world politics. And then, in Tuttle's account, with the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, Tibetans succeeded in becoming *de facto* independent and tried, without success, to be a nation. These efforts toward independence led to economic and administrative reforms in Tibet that contributed to the decision of a number of lamas to leave Tibet—men who would become important actors in Sino-Tibetan relations during the first half of the twentieth century.

Referring to the theory of James Millward, Tuttle suggests that during the Qing dynasty multi-ethnic unity was not achieved and the Qing maintained the cultural divisions of China, Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, and the Muslims till the end of the dynasty. For Tuttle, the ethnic debates at court became important in the early twentieth century after the return of Chinese and Manchu intellectuals from Japan who wanted to be part of the emergent new Chinese Empire. The Chinese were in favor of the elimination of the Manchus, while the Manchus and some Chinese supporters proposed the creation of a multi-ethnic state. Finally, the policy of unity of the five peoples and of racial equality was implemented with the creation of the Republic of China in 1912. But from the perspective of the Inner Asian countries and their effort to separate from the new China, Tuttle argues that it was not simply assumed that the Republic of China should reclaim all of the Qing territory though Chinese leaders used the idea of unity of the five peoples precisely to legitimate their claims to Qing imperial territories.

In the context of the multi-ethnic nation, what place was to be given to Tibetan Buddhists? According to Tuttle, Tibetan Buddhists did not intervene one way or another in the emergence of the theory of the unity of the five peoples, but some of them were courted. For Tuttle, Buddhists, whether Chinese or Tibetans, redefined the religious community in order to "exercise power over politicians, nationalists, and colonialists". This new community, born after the Parliament of World Religions held in Chicago in 1893, became real after Chinese Buddhists found support from the Tibetan monks, the lCang skya Qutughtu (1890-1957) at the beginning of the Republic and then the 9<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama (1883-1937), to preserve their holdings. Tibetan

monks and monasteries which were totally dependent from the imperial support during the Qing dynasty had also to find a way to survive in the new Republic of China. And at the same time, the laity found in Tibetan Buddhism a way to help their country.

According to Tuttle, the main actors for the propagation of Tibetan Buddhism in Modern China were Bai Puren (1870-1927), rDo rje gcod pa (1874-?), the 9<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama (1883-1937), Nor lha Qutughtu (1865-1936), and Chinese Buddhist monks—mainly Dayong (1893-1929), Fazun (1902-1980), and Nenghai (1886-1967)—who went to Tibet to be trained into Tibetan Buddhist teachings before returning to China to transmit these teachings. Tuttle organizes their actions into historical periods:

- 1925-1927, Tibetan masters in China dedicated their time to teach Buddhism and were not involved in politics. However, leaders of the Beijing government looked for the spiritual help of Tibetan masters. Duan Qirui (1865-1936) sponsored a ritual led by Bai Puren in 1925, was impressed by those given by Nor lha Qutughtu, recognized officially the Panchen Lama.
- 1929-1931, Tibetan Masters and Chinese Buddhist monks were helped by Sichuan warlords who, in their turn, became involved in the process to link China and Tibet through religion. On the other hand, racial and nationalist ideologies failed, as Tibetan members of the Nationalist government tried to create separate counties in the Tibetan Kham area.
- 1931-1935, Tibetan masters became members of the Nationalist government and Tibetan Buddhism was included in a new definition of the Buddhist religion; the Nationalist ideologue Dai Jitao (1890-1949) advocated the use of religion for political ends.
- 1935-1950, the idea to join the Chinese and Tibetan cultures emerged and became reality through the foundation of institutionalized educational and religious exchanges. New institutions had to find teachers first and then funding. The warlords first participated in the creation of such institutes and then the Nationalist government became their main financial backer. These institutes gained students who, through translations, made the link between the Chinese and Tibetan cultures more vivid.

Tuttle's narrative of the first contacts between the Beijing government president and Buddhists shows that from both side the aim of the Buddhist activities was to renew with the Qing imperial tradition: the only physical link between the imperial tradition and the Nationalist China was Bai Puren, who apparently came from a lineage that was sponsored by the Qing Emperor ; Nor lha Qutughtu followed the Imperial tradition (but nothing is said about his intention to do so); and the Panchen Lama received a title from Duan Qirui (1865-1936), then president of the Beijing government. All three men received financial support from the Beijing government through Duan Qirui. Duan had personal connections with Bai Puren and Nor lha Qutughtu, but not with the Panchen Lama. As such, the Panchen Lama was granted a special status from the beginning. The Chinese monks who went to Tibet had different motivations (mainly Nenghai and Fazun who returned

to China to teach Tibetan Buddhism there and left writings). Nenghai wished to study esoteric Buddhism while Fazun wanted to bring back to China what he considered to be authentic Buddhism.

The second part of this book deals with the relationships between Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist monks and the warlords. However, the transition between the two periods (1925-1927 and 1929-1931) is not obvious for the reader. We have seen that the Tibetan monks received support from the Beijing government and the Panchen Lama received special treatment, but the author considers that the Sichuan warlords were "more concerned" with Tibet and more interested in Buddhism than the leaders of the Beijing government. Tuttle also suggests that because Sichuan is close to Tibet the ex-warlords were "more responsive to the religious developments occurring around them". But mainly, he credits the Sichuan warlords with a national vision for China by "imagining a role of religion in state matters" while the state, incarnated in the Nanjing government, still wanted religion and politics to be separated. In this very interesting section, Tuttle explains how the Sichuan laity supported the Tibetan monks from Kham such as rDo rje gcod pa and Nor lha Qutughtu and how Chinese monks such as Dayong and Nenghai originated from the province. Indeed, once in Sichuan, and in Kangding in particular, the Chinese monks who wanted to go to Tibet had to overcome financial, linguistic, cultural and political (on the part of the Tibetan government) barriers. First, Dayong was their main sponsor. When he died in 1929, the Chinese Buddhist monks became dependent on Tibetan monks from dKar mdzes and Li thang and succeeded in getting access to the prestigious Tibetan monastery of 'Bras spungs. They benefited too from the teaching given by rDo rje gcod pa in Sichuan, who redistributed his benefits to them.

As a matter of fact, Sichuan was the domain of various warlords, a situation that continued through the end of the 1930s, and, facing the rise of the Nationalists, it seems more likely that they were less concerned to "support a cause popular with the local people" and more concerned to support their own people, their own army and their own territory. Sichuan lay Buddhists, after many refusals, succeeded in inviting rDo rje gcod pa, whose teaching would become the most important in Sichuan given by a Tibetan monk in 1930. His message of peace transcended Sichuan's borders and even China's borders as he dedicated it to the saving of the world. And it was only after this event that the Sichuan province warlords began to support Tibetan Buddhism.

It was Liu Xiang, a Sichuan warlord who, thanks to funding from Buddhist associations, sent Chinese monks to Tibet to study Tibetan Buddhism and founded the new Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Institute. As such, according to Tuttle, and contrary to government officials, he heard and realized the message of Taixu who promoted the idea that Japanese, Tibetan, and Chinese Buddhists unity would lead to "a mutually supportive relationship" with the state. Tuttle shows brilliantly how the Sichuan warlords acted despite the inaction of the central Chinese government and were precursors in establishing political support for the religious activities of the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists.

The Nanjing government, on the contrary, continued to base its relationship with Tibetans on political grounds and incorporated the Tibetan masters into the structure of the government through the creation of a

political office for the Panchen Lama and the nomination of Nor lha Qutughtu as a member of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. On his side, the Dalai Lama used his existing representatives to Mount Wutai and the Yonghegong temple, opening official offices at those sites but the reader doesn't know if they were recognized as such by the Nanjing government. At the same time, Dai Jitao and others attempted to open schools dedicated to the education of borderlands people with the official ideology of Sun Yat-sen's *Three People's Principles*.

According to Tuttle, the main obstacle facing the Tibetan Buddhist lamas was linguistic. He considers that the Panchen Lama did not know Chinese (pp. 140, 142, 179) and had to rely on the Tibetan language. Tuttle took the example of the corpus of the Panchen Lama's published Chinese writings, or so-called Panchen Lama Chinese writings,<sup>1</sup> to demonstrate that the Panchen Lama or his representatives used the racial rhetoric (*wuzu*, *wuzu gonghe*) very occasionally and only when that was beneficial for them to do between 1925 and 1933 (141-142). The author considers that from 1933 on, the Panchen Lama (or his translators) began to use the Chinese racial rhetoric (pp. 179-180). He first considered these sources biased because they were published under Communist rule (p. 142) and mainly because he noticed the use of words that seem anachronistic (terms such as "Xizang minzhong" and "Xizang minzu" for example) (pp. 179-180). Tuttle, then, searched for occurrences, that would confirm the opinion expressed in the Chinese published sources he read, in the Panchen Lama's Tibetan language works.<sup>2</sup> Analyzing them, he finds no evidence that the Panchen Lama adhered to the racial rhetoric. As such, for Tuttle, the new racial and ethnic divisions were rarely incorporated into the Panchen Lama's works (p. 144). Tuttle, then, analyzes the terms used in the Panchen Lama biography to designate the so-called ethnic groups and concludes that the Muslims were never included among "other races" because they are not associated with Buddhism, contrary to Chinese practice (pp. 143-144). Instead, the use of "being" (*skye bo*) is adopted to show an ethnic category. He questions the use of "mi rigs" that appears to be used as "an indicator of a type of person" in the Panchen Lama's biography (pp. 144-145) and "would only be define under the Western standard during the Communist period" (p. 146).

In sum, Tuttle insists that we do not know who wrote the discourses (only one was published in Tibetan) and the entire correspondence of the Panchen Lama in Chinese. The reader will agree that the question is very important regarding what we must attribute to the Panchen Lama and what the influence of the prelate's entourage was.

<sup>1</sup> Zhongguo di er lishi dang'anguan, comp. 中國第二歷史檔案館, *Jiu shi Banchan neidi huodong ji fan Zang shouzu dang'an xuanbian* 九世班禪內地活動及返藏受阻檔案選編 (*Selections from the archives concerning the ninth Panchen's activities in China and the restrictions on his return to Tibet*), (Nanking: Zhongguo Zangxue, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Shakya dge slong Blo bzang 'Jam dbyangs Ye shes bsTan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *sKyabs mgon thams cad mkhyen pa Blo bzang thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma dge legs rnam rgyal bzang po'i zhal snga nas kyi thun mong pa'I rnam bar thar pa rin chen dbang gi rgyal po'i phreng ba* (*Biography of the Panchen Blo bzang thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma*), Reproduced from the bKra shis lhun po blocks, 1944; lHa mkhar yongs 'dzin bstan pa rgyal mtshan, *Pan chen thams cad mkhyen pa rje btsun Blo bzang thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma dge legs rnam rgyal bzang po'i gsung 'bum* (*The Collected works of the Panchen Lama Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma*), reproduced from bKra shis lhun po blocks, 1973 [1944].

However, the limitations of Tuttle's arguments need to be noted. Regarding the sources, Tuttle uses the Chinese archives published in 1993 and as such considers them biased with reason. He did not have access to any original Chinese sources related to the Panchen Lama and convincingly suggests that if the discourses of the Panchen Lama have not been published by the actual Chinese government, they must contain words and ideas that not suit the present Chinese authorities (p. 163). From a practical point of view, Tuttle argues that the Panchen Lama was a non-Chinese speaker and could not have written his correspondence or his discourses by himself. However, contemporary testimony (to be taken with caution) says that the Panchen Lama spoke Chinese very badly and understood it.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we still have no evidence that he could write or read Chinese and as such, even if he pronounced his discourses in Tibetan and understood the immediate translation, he was not able to examine later translations and "often was deliberately misinformed."<sup>4</sup> Tuttle questions very carefully the Chinese sources and measures them against the Tibetan biography and collected writings of the Panchen Lama. However, the reader will search in vain for a historical analysis of these Tibetan sources. Tuttle's faith in their veracity may also be challenged and, like the Chinese sources, should in fact be used with caution. The author should have studied the Tibetan biography and collected writings of the Panchen Lama with the same critical eye as he read the Chinese published sources. This study would have benefited from a discussion of the nature of the biography and collected works, their historical context, their authors, and the dates of their publication.

In a nutshell, the biography and collected works were written for disciples who wanted to follow an example of spiritual realization and to learn how to attain Enlightenment. In that kind of writing, little room is left for political correspondence. As a corollary example, any of the correspondence exchanged between the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and the 9<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama has been compiled into the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's biography, which does not prove that any problems occurred and that any letters have been exchanged between them.

The historical context of this biography is also very important. The biography is dated 1944. It ended in the Panchen Lama's bKra shis lhun po Monastery three years after the return of the corpse of the Panchen Lama to Tibet and the year his stupa was completed. As a matter of fact, it was quite rapidly after the death of the Panchen Lama in 1937 while the dispute with the Lhasa's government was not yet settled. Tuttle does not link the circumstances of the Panchen Lama departure from Tibet -- Tuttle considers that the Panchen Lama left Tibet because he "felt himself the victim of the Dalai Lama's efforts to build a centralized Tibetan nation-state" (p. 9) and "the imprisonment of these officials [of the Panchen Lama's monastic government] was the direct cause of the Panchen Lama's flight from Tibet" (p. 55) -- the difficulties he encountered in returning to his monastery and the dispute between Lhasa and gZhis ka rtse was not settled in the 1940s. These circumstances could have prevented the author of the biography to include anything related to the Panchen Lama's political actions in China

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<sup>3</sup> Gordon Enders, *Foreign Devil: An American Kim in Modern Asia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1942), p. 261 (available at: [www.archive.org/details/foreigndevilanam011500mbp](http://www.archive.org/details/foreigndevilanam011500mbp)). I am grateful to Isrun Engelhart for this reference.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.



that would demonstrate his adherence to Chinese government policies and threaten the life of people from bKra shis lhun po Monastery.

From another point of view, we do not know which sources this biography was based on. Did the Panchen Lama's entourage bring documents to Tibet? What kind of documents? We know that the Chinese archives, for which his Nanjing office was responsible, had been distributed between his two hagiographers (Chen Wenjian and Liu Jiaju, *alias* sKal bzang Chos 'byor). We know too that Liu Jiaju published the Nanjing documents in his biography of the Panchen Lama.<sup>5</sup> But, we still do not know the conditions of the compilation of the Panchen Lama's Tibetan biography.

Tuttle affirms the Panchen Lama is the author of his own biography and hesitates between calling it a "biography" (for example, p. 144) or an "autobiography" (for example, p. 186). However, the author of the Panchen Lama's biography was not the Panchen Lama himself. It was Shakya dge slong Blo bzang 'jam dbyangs ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan.<sup>6</sup> For the reader, that modifies the conclusions of Tuttle concerning the use of Nationalist Chinese rhetoric and the acceptance of Chinese policies by the Panchen Lama. Did the Tibetans in Central Tibet hear about Sun Yat-sen's ideology? Tuttle is very clear on that point: the answer is negative (p. 226). Did they hear about the merging of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism? The answer is again negative. This is why the reader cannot find any reference to Chinese political ideology and why the author of the Tibetan biography used transliterations of Chinese terms to designate Chinese Buddhism (for example, pp. 70-71). I would add that most Chinese terms were translated phonetically at that time. But in any case, Tuttle seems mistaken when he writes, "the stark absence of an adoption of Chinese conceptions of racial terminology [into the Tibetan biography of the Panchen Lama] indicates the weak influence that Chinese conceptions of race and ethnicity had on Tibetans at this time" (p. 145) which in fact the biography was written by a disciple of the Panchen Lama living in Tibet who probably knew nothing about nationalist ideology.

The date of the publication of the Panchen Lama's biography is without a doubt the year 1944.<sup>7</sup> However, this biography, after years of disappearance (some people considered it destroyed, others supposed it to be kept somewhere) perhaps reappeared around 1996<sup>8</sup> though most probably not before 2003.<sup>9</sup> Two volumes became available at that time. One was written by a member of the research team of the bKra shis lhun po Monastery and is dated 1996, and the other was written by Shakya dge slong Blo bzang 'Jam

<sup>5</sup> Liu Jiaju, 劉家駒, *Banchan da shi quanji* 班禪大師全集 (The Collected Works of the Great Master Panchen), Chongqing, 1943.

<sup>6</sup> Shakya dge slong Blo bzang 'Jam dbyangs Ye shes bsTan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *op.cit.*, f.834, line 1. I hesitate however to follow this idea, as the title of the biography (which seems to have been added later) bears the inscription *zhal sngas nas* (in front of) after the full transcription of the Panchen Lama's name. But, it seems that this usage is a strictly honorific expression as the disciple can not write the name without this mark of deference.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, f.833.

<sup>8</sup> At that time, a second biography was written under the supervision of the bKra shis lhunpo Monastery historical research group subsidized by the Chinese State Council, vol. *stod cha*, f.601-604.

<sup>9</sup> These volumes were scanned by the TBRC in 2003.

dbyangs Ye shes bsTan pa'i rgyal mtshan in 1944. The first question to ask is why two biographies became available suddenly? Why was a second one compiled? What are the differences between the two of them? What was the context of this sudden reappearance of the 9<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama's biography? In fact, these two biographies appeared during the dispute over the recognition of the 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama. Could these biographies, a contemporary one and one new, be useful for China to claim a right to designate the 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama?

It is also worth noting that the compiler --presumably the 'author' was the Panchen Lama, since they are his collected works, even if he had writers working for him-- of the collected works of the 9<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama was not the Panchen Lama himself, as claimed by Tuttle (p. 311). It was lHa mkhar yongs 'dzin bstan pa rgyal mtshan. Tuttle states clearly that the collected works of the 9<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama were compiled in 1944 but released in 1973 (p. 311). Apparently, the collected works were edited right in the middle of the Cultural Revolution when all Tibetan publications were stopped! That is an interesting point that Tuttle did not comment on. Instead, Tuttle simply considers that as there is almost no presence of the Nationalist ideology in these volumes, then the Panchen Lama was not influenced by it (p. 145). Once again, what would we expect of religious writings published at a time when the Communists were in the midst of a thorough attack on everything traditional, everything religious (!) and everything coming from the Nationalists?

To conclude, Tuttle should have questioned both the Chinese and Tibetan published materials. Both types of sources offer insights but also barriers as to what the Panchen Lama and his representatives thought. The stories of both sides need to be analyzed with caution.

From a philological point of view, as noted above, Tuttle remarks that racial rhetoric was rarely used by the Panchen Lama before 1933 while a 1933 Chinese version of the Panchen Lama's discourse used the terminology of ethnic classification: from "Xizang minzhong" to "Xizang minzu" (pp. 179-180).<sup>10</sup> However, although "Xizang minzu" is a new term introduced at the end of the discourse, Tuttle fails to note that "Xizang minzhong" and "Xizang renmin" are still used together in the same paragraph to mean the same thing. Following Tuttle's idea, I will add that the same transformation occurred between the terms "zhongyuan," used at the beginning of the translation, and "zhongyang," used at the end. These two last words could be translated as "central plain" and "central government" or "center [i.e., China]" (as Tuttle suggests, p. 179), respectively. In the same way, the term "neidi" appears and "zhongyuan" disappears from then on. The point is that, in my opinion, this discourse is divided into two parts. The first recounts the history of Tibet and its relations with China before 1911, while the second is dedicated to the description of the situation in Tibet and in Mongolia in the 1930s and refers to the policies of the Chinese government—and, therefore, uses Chinese republican government's own vocabulary. This

<sup>10</sup> Discourse entitled "Tibetan History and the Five Races United" (*Xizang lishi yu wuzu lianhe*), reproduced in *Zhongguo di er lishi dang'an guan*, comp., *Jiu shi Banchan neidi huodong ji fan Zang shouzu dang'an xuanbian* (Selections from the archives concerning the Ninth Panchen's activities in China and the restrictions on his return to Tibet). Nanking : Zhongguo Zang xue, 1992, p. 56; Liu Jiaju, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-128.

is obvious too if we compare the original translation of the discourse in question with the translation reproduced in the volume quoted and used by Tuttle. The first part of the text encountered changes. Its modern Communist adaptations concern mainly the erasing of any idea related to the political status of Tibet before the founding of the Chinese republic and are very few. Thus “Qi hou Xizang wu tongyi zhi guowang” became “Qi hou Xizang wu tongyi zhi wang” (“guo,” which designates a country, has been erased). Later in the text, “Sajia zhi zhengquan” (*the Sa skya political power*) was erased, and “Xizang zhi fojiao” (*Tibetan Buddhism*) became “fojiao” (*Buddhism*). Into the second part, which begins with the sentence “After the founding of the Republic” (*Minguo chengli yihou*), the numerous changes introduced by the compilers relate mainly to the question of the borders of Chinese territory (and on the contrary the “Kang Zang renmin” used by the Panchen Lama’s translator has been changed to “Kang Zang minzhong”); “dong lai neidi” (*came from the East to Inner China*) has been replaced by “ru zhi neidi” (*enter Inner China*); “ru Nei Meng” (*Enter Inner Mongolia*) by “fu Meng zhi shi” (*reach Mongolia*); “Kang Qing liang qu” (*both the Xikang and Qinghai region*) by “Kang Qing liang sheng” (*both Xikang and Qinghai provinces*), and so forth.

Actually, Tuttle did not get access to the original discourses of the Panchen Lama and depended mainly on the archival documents published by the Nanjing Second Historical Archives in 1993 for the Chinese point of view on that subject. Regarding the Panchen Lama’s correspondence, his translator used the expression “wuzu tongbao” (*the compatriots of the five ethnic groups*) in a letter dated 16 July 1926. With the original versions of the discourses of the Panchen Lama, we learn that the Panchen Lama began to use racial rhetoric from May 1931. In the discourse “Before governing the country, one as to govern itself”, the Panchen Lama’s translators used such terms as “ruoxiao minzu” (*the weak ethnic group*), “Meng Zang liang zu” (*the two ethnic groups Mongol and Tibetans*); in his 5 May 1931 discourse entitled “Xiwang Guoren renshi Xizang” (*Tibetans citizens know Tibet*): “ge minzu” (*every ethnic group*), “ruhe shi Meng Zang yu Zhongguo tuanjie cheng zhengge de minzu” (*how to make the Mongols and Tibetans unite with the Chinese to become a real nation*); in his 5 September 1931 discourse: “ge zu tuanjie” (*the union of every ethnic group*), “bing qing zhongyang genju sanmin zhuyi, fuzu ruoxiao minzu” (*ask the Central Chinese government to help weak ethnic groups on the basis of the Three Principles of the People*); and “Gai Zhonghua Minguo wei wuzu zhi fenzi shaozao er cheng” (*Modify the Republic of China in order to eliminate separatism and stand up*), and in his December 1932 discourse entitled “Zhongguo renmin aihao heping” (*The people of China love peace*). I would conclude that the Panchen Lama consistently used the Chinese government rhetoric but that became obvious as soon as the Nationalist government was settled in Nanjing (1928) and the territory of Inner China was unified (at least in 1930). The most important date is certainly 1931, when the Panchen Lama became a member of the Nationalist government and not, as Tuttle proposes, 1933, when he looked for the support of the Chinese government to go back to Tibet. Anyway, the question remains in its entirety as we don’t know who wrote the Panchen Lama’s discourses and who translated them.

For Tuttle, then, the Panchen Lama did not support the harmonious coexistence of races but to the Sun Yat-sen policy “in the modern context of

both nationalism and the autonomy that Sun had promised to each nation within the former Qing Empire". And, "while the Chinese government was embracing the Buddhist religion within its administration and in the halls of governance, the lamas made greater effort to integrate Chinese rhetoric in their public teachings and lectures." The Panchen Lama accepted the secular and religious role the Nationalist government intended him to hold. He gave a Kalacakra initiation in Hangzhou to save the country in January 1933. For Tuttle, in the context of religion, the Panchen Lama followed both Sun's ideology and the unity of the five races. From 1934 to 1937, the Panchen Lama spread the Chinese nationalist ideology in Amdo. The Nor lha Qutughtu received the same treatment and became a religious and political support for the Nationalist government.

This could not have been achieved without Dai Jitao. Tuttle highlights his role in introducing Buddhism into the Nationalist government policy, his efforts to include the Panchen Lama in this policy, and the actions taken by Taixu. As such, the Nationalist government endorsed its role of protector of the master and renewed the patron-priest relationship, giving the Panchen Lama political positions and granting him title, while the prelate accepted the duty to preach Buddhism to unite the country, promote the well-being of the people, and advance world peace. According to Tuttle, Dai Jitao went further by explicitly supporting a return to the Tibetan Buddhist religio-political system.

The link that Tuttle established between 'Ba bas (sKal bzang tshe ring (1899-1941) and sKal bzang chos 'byor (Ch. Liu Jiaju, 1900-1977)) and the Panchen Lama is very interesting regarding the involvement or at least the awareness of the Panchen Lama of their attempt to bring autonomy to 'Ba' thang for sKal bzang tshe ring and to "Xikang counties" for sKal bzang chos 'byor. But the reader would wonder did the Panchen Lama never go to the Chinese province of Sichuan nor to the Tibetan province of Khams (except to die at its very north border at sKye rgu mdo) while he had two collaborators coming from these areas? These two 'Ba'bas have educated backgrounds. sKal bzang tshe ring was very interested in politics and became the first Tibetan to join the Guomindang. He conducted a political career all his life. sKal bzang chos 'byor was different. He was not so interested in politics and held many posts as a teacher or editor. Both became members of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, and sKal bzang tshe ring became the head of the Tibetan affairs office. Their links to the Panchen Lama were also different. sKal bzang tshe ring served as his interpreter at the arrival of the prelate in Nanjing, then passing the job on to sKal bzang chos 'byor, who kept this responsibility and followed the Panchen Lama almost permanently (he was one of the hagiographists of the Panchen Lama under the name of Liu Jiaju) and became, at the request of the Panchen Lama, his secretary and member of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission.

The question is: did these two Khampas work for the independence (or, most probably the autonomy) of their counties or did they work on behalf of the Nationalist government to abolish Liu Wenhui's control over the region? In Tuttle's view, they applied the Chinese Nationalist government ideology they learned in China to their own locality wishing to attain the autonomy presented by Sun Yat-sen. For Peng Wenbin, not quoted by Tuttle, and who gave a masterful analysis of these attempts, the Chinese Nationalist

government appropriated these Tibetan autonomy movements to “contain Liu Wenhui’s provincial warlordism and the dissemination of Tibetan nationalism in Khams.”<sup>11</sup> In both analysis, Tibetans did not work for the Chinese government.

Another important question is what the Tibetan masters expected from the Chinese government. According to Tuttle, the Panchen Lama and the Nor lha Qutughtu worked for their return to Tibet and the recovery of their former positions of authority. They adapted their behaviour to the Chinese government policy to attain their aims from the beginning to the end of their stays in China. Finally, the reader can infer that they were totally immune to the Chinese government ideology as they were to the social and economic contexts in which they lived for almost fifteen years!<sup>12</sup>

In his last chapter, Tuttle traces how the idea to join the Chinese and Tibetan cultures emerged and was executed through the foundation of institutionalized educational and religious exchanges. These institutes had to first find teachers and then funding. The warlords originally participated in the creation of these institutions and then the Nationalist government became their main financial support. These institutes gained students who, through translations, made the link between the Chinese and Tibetan cultures more vivid. For Tuttle, the influence of this new peaceful policy in Tibet changed the Tibetan attitude toward China through 1950. These cultural and Buddhist exchanges between Tibet and China, with much creation of institutes in Sichuan close to Tibet that develop mainly during the 1930s, were, as Tuttle put it, a way to create a link between China and Tibet.

By founding the Sino-Tibetan relationship on cultural grounds and by using and “accepting” sources mainly related to Buddhism (the review *Haichao yin*, archives from the Sino-Tibetan schools founded in Chongqing, the Dai Jitao archives, the biography and collected works of the Panchen Lama—and despite the Chinese published administrative sources), Tuttle concludes that Buddhists, Chinese and Tibetans played crucial roles in the foundation of the Republic of China, as the Buddhist unity became official government policy from 1930 and the link between Tibetans and Chinese. However, this conclusion makes it difficult to understand why Tuttle denies the link drawn by the Panchen Lama himself between Sun Yat-sen’s ideology and Buddhism,<sup>13</sup> and is certain that the Panchen Lama did not adhere to it before 1933, when he decided to go back to Tibet and needed the help of the Chinese government to prepare his return.

This story of two and half centuries of Sino-Tibetan relationships demonstrates the decision of the Manchu court and of the Republican

<sup>11</sup> See Peng Wenbin, “Frontier Process, Provincial Politics and Movements for Khampa Autonomy During the Republican Period,” in L. Epstein, ed., *Khams pa Histories, Visions of People, Place and Authority, Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the IATS, 2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 57-84.

<sup>12</sup> For the political activities of Nor lha Qutughtu in Khams (Xikang), see Peng Wenbin, “Frontier Process,” pp. 68-71; and for the economic reform for Tibet prepared by the Panchen Lama, see F. Jagou, *Le 9e Panchen Lama (1883-1937), enjeu des relations sino-tibétaines* (Paris: Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, 2004), pp. 156-158; 206-210.

<sup>13</sup> Tuttle derives this idea from the Tibetan discourse published in the *Collected Works of the Panchen Lama*, Tuttle, p. 171.

government to pursue friendly relations with Tibet rather than an offensive strategy. It shows also the great importance taken by Tibet in the Manchu and Chinese policies: the relation evolved from a person to person relationship, then the management of Tibetan affairs by the Manchu Imperial Household and the court for managing the outer provinces (where Mongolia represented the main interest), and finally the creation of the Mongol and Tibetan Affairs Commission that was dedicated to Mongol and Tibetan affairs exclusively.



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**Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2008). A Rosary of Rubies: The Chronicle of the Gur-rigs mDo-chen Tradition from South-Western Tibet. (Collectanea Himalayica ; 2), München: INDUS VERLAG. 167 Pages, cloth-binding, ISBN 978-3-940659-01-9 — EUR 39,95 plus postage.**

The mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa school represents a little known Buddhist tradition from Mang-yul Gung-thang in south-western Tibet. It goes back to a Buddhist yogin known as Ma-bdun-pa or Ma-bdun ras-chen (12th/13th c.) and was later mainly spread by members of the Gur family. Although belonging to the "Upper 'Brug" (stod 'brug) branch of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school, the mDo-chen tradition has always been deeply infused with the "spoken teachings" (*bka' ma*) and "treasure teachings" (*gter ma*) of the rNying-ma-pa school, and the cult of the "Seven Ma-mo Sisters" (ma mo mched bdun) was particularly practised and transmitted by its members.

This book presents a critical edition, an annotated translation and a photographic reproduction of a manuscript copy of a rare chronicle of the

Gur-rigs mDo-chen tradition written by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (1775–1837). The text provides us with an overview of the tradition's development mainly through biographical accounts but also through prophecies, prayers and praises for individual masters. The study concludes with two appendices based on the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*, a lineage history composed in the 15th century, and the "records of teachings received" (*thob yig*) of three important members of the Gur family, thus allowing us to gain an insight into the transmissions of the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa school and the interactions of its representatives with other important Buddhist teachers up to the 18th century. The present work is a further outcome of the author's investigations into the cultural and religious traditions of south-western Tibet and the neighbouring Himalayan valleys.

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