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Dzogchen, Chan and the Question of Influence

Sam van Schaik
The British Library¹

1. Introduction

I said before that, in my opinion, Ch'an did not completely disappear from Tibet and that traces of it can be found in the rDsogs c'en, a branch, as is known, of the rÑiñ ma pas.

– Guiseppe Tucci,
Minor Buddhist Texts II

Guiseppe Tucci, one of the founders of the Tibetology, made the above statement in 1958, and though the specific arguments he offered to support it are no longer taken seriously, the idea that Dzogchen was influenced by Chan continues to exert a fascination for contemporary scholars.² Partly this is because Tucci was not articulating an original theory, but recasting an old polemical argument with roots deep in the Tibetan tradition itself.³ Partly it is simply that texts from these two genres often look similar — both are meditation traditions based on the direct access to one's own enlightened nature. Yet similarity does not equate to influence, and the issue continues to haunt us because various attempts to establish the matter one way or another have failed to do so.⁴

¹ This paper was made possible by a Research Development Award from the British Academy.

² The quote is from Tucci 1958: 60. See also pp. 64, 102, 110. Tucci's main argument for the influence of Chan on Dzogchen was the pro-Chan sections of the fourteenth-century *Minister's Edict*. But since then it has been shown that these sections were lifted from *The Lamp for the Eyes of Contemplation*, a tenth-century work written with the contrary aim of showing the differences between Dzogchen and Chan (see Karmay 1988: 89–99 and Tanaka and Robertson 1992). Thus the *Minister's Edict* tells us only that its redactor had a positive attitude to the Chan teachings that he had encountered in the *Lamp for the Eyes of Contemplation*. Given that the *Minister's Edict* was his main source, it is puzzling that Tucci (1958: 110) also stated that “there was a continuous tendency, even among the rDsogs c'en themselves, to conceal as far as possible their connection with a teaching which was said to have been condemned by a king considered to be the founder of Tibetan Buddhism and the patron of their chief master Padmasambhava.” In fact, the redactor of the *Minister's Edict* was attempting to forge, rather than conceal such a connection. Other influential Nyingma writers, including Longchenpa and Jigmé Lingpa, far from attempting to conceal anything, occasionally made positive statements about Chan (see van Schaik 2003).

³ See the discussion of these polemics in van Schaik 2004a: 14–16. As mentioned there, the most explicit identification of Dzogchen with Chan came from the Gelug school, beginning with Khedrup (1385–1438). On other forms of controversy around Dzogchen in the Tibetan tradition, polemics directed against the Great Perfection are discussed in Karmay 1988, pp. 121–33, 178–84, 186–89, 195–97.

⁴ Since Tucci, there have been several counter-arguments pointing out where Chan and Dzogchen literature diverge. Yet, like the argument from influence which they attempt to refute, they are essentially following a pattern laid out by the Tibetan tradition itself.

When questions prove unanswerable, there are two possibilities. One is that we need more data, and better ways of processing that data; the other is that the question is a bad one, that it is not answerable in the terms in which it has been stated. Now, it is true that we have frustratingly few sources from the time in which Chan is supposed to have been exerting its influence on Dzogchen (the eighth and early ninth centuries), but I think this is not the only problem. I do think the question 'was Dzogchen influenced by Chan?' is a bad one, for this reason: it entails an ahistorical reification of the entities 'Dzogchen' and 'Chan'.

Both 'Dzogchen' and 'Chan' are terms that represent a sprawling, messy complex of textual material, spanning centuries of historical development. A question like 'was Dzogchen influenced by Chan?' elides this, implying that we can point to an essence in both that can serve as the basis for comparison. Any attempt to isolate such an essence is by nature highly selective, and thus the result of the comparison will depend on the sources that we choose for the purpose.⁵ We can make such a comparison more feasible by limiting the historical scope of our enquiry; for Dzogchen and Chan, it makes sense to look at the time when the influence is supposed to have taken place, the eighth and early ninth centuries. Yet we are still looking at a varied complex of textual material in both cases.

And there is another reason why a direct comparison of Dzogchen and Chan as two entities remains dubious. During the eighth and ninth centuries, neither Dzogchen nor Chan had yet developed an identity that would allow them to be considered in separation from the cultures of Buddhist praxis in which they were embedded. Recent studies have shown how the meditation instructions of Chan were closely associated with the practices of what became the Tiantai school, were embedded in the Chinese Yogācāra transmissions, and incorporated esoteric Buddhist practices.⁶ Likewise, recent work on Dzogchen has shown that it cannot be considered in separation from its relationship with Mahāyoga sādhana practice.⁷

The reification of 'Chan' and 'Dzogchen' as independent entities is something that has happened in the tradition itself. Both realms of discourse were gradually separated from their scriptural and doctrinal basis in the

When critics of Tucci's approach write that "for Ch'an the fundamental root is to be sought, while for rDzogs-chen the intrinsic awareness is spontaneous," they are also treating Chan and Dzogchen as ahistorical entities. See Tanaka and Robertson 1992: 78; the argument for the differences between Chan and Dzogchen in this article is drawn from the *Lamp for the Eyes of Contemplation*. See also Norbu 1994, which contains a similar argument.

⁵ An inevitable objection to my argument here is that there is an essence shared by the two traditions, and this essence is the actual experience that Dzogchen and Chan texts both point towards. However, such appeals to experience can be made to serve many different ends. As Robert Sharf (2000: 286) has written, "The category experience is, in essence, a mere place-holder that entails a substantive if indeterminate terminus for the relentless deferral of meaning. And this is precisely what makes the term experience so amenable to ideological appropriation."

⁶ On the relationships between Chan and other meditation systems, see the papers in Gregory 1986. See also the discussion of the early Chan lineage text, the *Lidai fabao ji* in Adamek 2007 (esp. 275–276, 337–338). On the 'syncretic' tendencies evident in the Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts, see Sørensen 1989.

⁷ On the early development of Dzogchen, see especially Karmay 1988 and Germano 1994. In my own work I have tried to show how Dzogchen initially emerged as a way of practising deity yoga – see van Schaik 2004b.

sutras and tantras, respectively. Modern teachers in both traditions – here I am thinking particularly of D.T. Suzuki and Namkhai Norbu – have also done much to engender a popular view that both traditions transcend their cultural contexts.⁸ In the second part of this article, we will look at both Chan and Dzogchen in the context provided by the Dunhuang manuscripts, and looking at them as forms of praxis, we will see that they both came to be applied to the practice of deity yoga. This, I would argue, is where we might be justified in saying that Chan and Dzogchen did come together. Thus what we see, looking at this earliest documentary evidence, is not a case of influence, but one of convergence.

2. The uses and abuses of terminology

The source of Rdzogs chen teachings in Tibet is one of the mysteries of early Tibetan Buddhism – the later Tibetan tradition and Indic-oriented modern scholarship both predictably claim that Rdzogs chen originated in Indian Vajrayāna sources.
– Jeffrey Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*

Arguments for and against the influence of Chan and Dzogchen have often been based on comparing specific technical terms found in their texts. Such a practice encourages us to extract both kinds of text from their contexts, in order to resolve the issue of influence to a straightforward $x = y$ equation. It is easy to highlight similarities or differences between Chan and Dzogchen texts, depending on one's agenda; we need not even be consciously aware of the selective nature of our reading. Take for example the following passage, a teaching attributed to the Indian master Haklenayaśas which is found in several Dunhuang manuscripts:⁹

There are many methods of contemplation in the Mahāyāna. The ultimate among them is the instantaneous approach to the Madhyamaka. The instantaneous approach has no method. One meditates upon nature of reality like this: phenomena are mind, and mind is uncreated. In that it is uncreated, it is emptiness. Since it is like the sky, it is not a field of activity for the six sense-faculties. This emptiness is what we call *vivid awareness*. Yet within that vivid awareness there is no such thing as vivid awareness. Therefore without remaining in the knowledge gained from learning and studying, meditate upon the essential sameness of all phenomena.¹⁰

⁸ See for example Suzuki 1949 and Norbu 1989.

⁹ There are three copies of this text. In IOL Tib J 709, the name of the teacher is given as 'Gal na yas. As far as I am aware this name has not previously been connected to Haklenayaśas, the 23rd patriarch in the list of 28 that appears in the *Platform Sutra* and elsewhere. The Tibetan version of the name, which seems to have undergone some corruption in the form we have it in this manuscript, comes via the Chinese *Helenayeshe* 鶴勒那夜奢. In another copy, Pelliot tibétain 812, the scribe has garbled the name further as 'Gal ya nas; subsequently, this has been 'corrected' to Ma ha yan, which led Luis Gomez (1983: 123–4) to include this text among the works of Moheyan (though he noted that the attribution was doubtful). The third version, in IOL Tib J 706 verso, seems to be embedded in a longer text, and there is no attribution on the fragment of the manuscript that has survived.

¹⁰ IOL Tib J 709, 42v: \$/:/mkhan po 'gal na yas bs[am] g+tan gI snying po bshad pa'// theg pa chen po'i bsam gtan gI sgo yang mang ste// de'I nang na dam pa nI don dbu ma la cig car 'jug pa yIn te// clg car 'jug pa la nI thabs myed de// chos nyId kyI rang bzhIn la bsgom mo// de la chos nI sems sems [sic] nI ma skyes pa 'o// ma skyes pa nI stong pa

One might pick up a number of terminological similarities with early Dzogchen texts here; for example, the emphasis on the mind and its emptiness, the imagery of the sky, and the valorization of the direct connection with the ultimate over the scholastic path. Yet there are also significant differences. Most important perhaps is the term “vivid awareness” (Tib. *tshor*, Ch. *jue* 覺), which plays a key role in many Tibetan Chan texts, including those of Moheyan 摩訶衍, but does not appear in Dzogchen texts. The same term, *tshor ba* frequently appears in Tibetan Buddhist literature as a translation of a completely different term, *vedanā*. Similarly *jue* 覺 is sometimes used in Chinese texts for *vedanā*, in other contexts. It seems that the argument for identifying Dzogchen and Chan texts through terminology is dependent upon how one selects the terms for comparison.

A recent attempt to reinvigorate the argument for the influence of Chan on Dzogchen has come from Jeffrey Broughton, who points to the terminology found in a précis of Shenhui's teachings in two Dunhuang manuscripts.¹¹ It is quite entertaining to see, in the passage quoted above, the old polemical issue of whether Dzogchen ‘originated’ in India or China being recast here as a dispute between Indologists and Sinologists. Perhaps there is something in Broughton's suggestion that the study of Tibetan Buddhism has a bias towards Indian sources, but this objection alone will not suffice if Dzogchen has a much more evident genealogical connection to those Indian sources.¹²

But Broughton argues, in the most recent example of the method of comparing terminologies, that the earliest Dzogchen texts are clearly drawing on terminology from Chan texts – in particular, from a text summarizing the teachings of the founder of the ‘Southern school’, Shenhui 神会 (684–758). In choosing this particular text, by a teacher who strongly rejected all gradualist language and the discussion of meditation techniques, Broughton seems to tacitly acknowledge that the texts that form the bulk of Tibetan Chan are dissimilar to Dzogchen. For the Tibetan Chan texts, both translations and original compositions, contain much discussion of specific meditation practices, especially those that cluster around the idea of “viewing the mind” (Tib. *sems la bltas*, Ch. *kanxin* 看心).¹³

Shenhui's rejection of specific meditation instruction as a hindrance to engaging with the uncaused state of enlightenment does find echoes in many Dzogchen texts. But Broughton makes an ambitious claim for this particular Shenhui text, stating that “all the major points of early Rdzogs chen teaching as found in both the *Rig pa'i khu byug* (*Cuckoo of Awareness*) and the *Bsam gtan mig sgron* (*Lamp of the Eye of Dhyana*) are found in this

ste// dper naM ka dang 'dra bas// dbang po drug gl spyod yul ma yin bas na// stong pa de nl tshor ba zhes bya 'o// tshor nas nl tshor ba nyld kyang myed de// de bas na thos pa dang bsam pa'i shes shes [sic] rab la/ ma gnas par chos mnyam pa nyId la sgoms shig ces bshad do//: //

¹¹ Broughton 2009: 225–226 n.125.

¹² Broughton's treatment of the subject is brief, only appearing in an endnote to his monograph on Zongmi (Broughton 2009: 225–226, n.125). The argument that the Indic influence on Tibetan Buddhism has been overemphasized was also made in an earlier work (Broughton 1983: 2–3).

¹³ On the practice of “viewing the mind” in the work of Shenxiu, see McRae 1986: 196–218, and Faure 1997: 58–67.

Chan Book of Master Shinho.” It therefore seems worth our while to have a look at this short text in full, to see if it does clarify the issue:

Accomplish the sign of truth, which is to be always without recollection. What does this mean? The nature of thought is primordially a non-resting essence. It is not to be obtained, nor can it be fixated by mental clarification or meditative absorption. It cannot be fixed as “it is thought” or “it is not thought” or good or bad, or thought as colour and shape. Nor can it be fixed as having limits or not having limits, as having size or not having size, as having a place or not having a place.

Do not fixate on any of the characteristics of mental activity. If by doing this you do not rest upon thought, then that primordial non-abiding in the essence of thoughts's sameness is reflexive awareness. *Awareness* means coming to rest in non-resting. For example, a bird flying through the open sky goes without resting. If it did rest in the open sky, it would fall. In the same way, it is not possible for there to be no awareness. Without awareness you would fall into the extreme of emptiness.

Therefore non-resting is the primordially peaceful essence. Through the wisdom of the patriarchs you are able to be aware of the essence of this rare peace. If you apprehend this directly, there is no mental activity in that apprehension. If you see it directly, there is no mental activity in that seeing. This is the total perfect dharmakāya, equivalent to the dharmadhātu, the same as the sky. Since it is by nature nonabiding, its qualities are limitless and spontaneously perfected.¹⁴

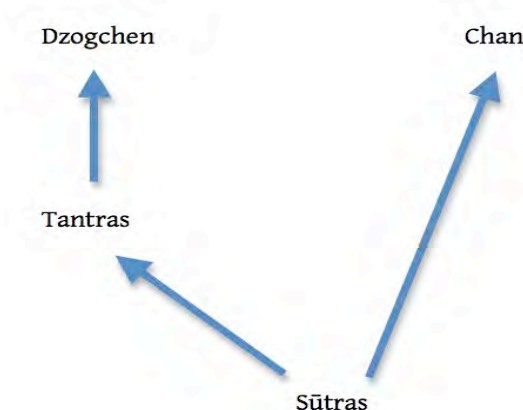
It is clear that Broughton has made a good choice of text here; unlike many of the Dunhuang Chan texts there is no discussion of techniques like viewing the mind, and there is some overlap of terminology with Dzogchen texts. Broughton points out a number of key terms that he believes link Shenhui's teachings to Dzogchen:

- awareness (*rig pa*),
- reflexive awareness (*rang gis rig pa*),
- the peaceful essence (*zhi ba'i ngo bo nyid*),
- no mental activity (*yid la bya ba myed*),
- spontaneous perfection (*lhun kyis rdzogs pa*).

¹⁴ PT 116: [v.60]: //bsam brtan gyi mkhan po shin ho'i bsam brtan gyi mdo las 'byung ba// rtag tu dran ba myed pa'i bden pa'I mtshan ma bsgrub bo// de yang gang [v.61] zhe na// sems kyi rang bzhin ye nas myi gnas pa'I ngo bo nyid nI// thob par bya ba myed de sems dangs ba dang ting nge 'dzin du dmyigs pa myed/sems la yin ba dang/+ ma yin ba dang/ bzang ba dang/ ngan dang/ sems la kha dog dang dbyibs su yang dmyigs pa myed// sems la mtha yod pa dang/ mtha' myed pa dang/ tshad yod pa dang/ tshad myed pa dang/ gnas yod pa dang/ gnas myed pa 'ang dmyigs pa myed de// yld la bya ba'i mtshan ma thams cad myi dmylgs so// de ltar sems la gnas myed par gyur na// sems kyi mnyam ba'I ngo bo nyid ye nas myi gnas de ni// rang gis reg [sic] pa yin [v.62] no// rig pa zhes bya ba ni myI gnas pa'i gnas su phyIn pa'o// dper na bya ni bar snag nam ka la myi gnas par 'gro ste// gal te nam ka bar snang la gnas par gyur na ni ltung bar 'gyur ro// de'i phyir rig pa myed pa yang ma yin no// rig pa myed na stong pa'i mthar ltung ngo// de bas na myi gnas pa nI ye nas zhi ba'I ngo bo nyid de// phyI mo'i ye shes kyis na zhi ba dka' ba'I ngo bo nyid rig par nus so// de bas na mngon sum du shes na yang/ shes par yid la bya ba myed// mngon sum du mthong na yang// mthong bar yid la [v.63] bya ba myed pa de ni yongs su rdzogs pa'I chos kyi sku ste// chos kyl dbyings dang 'thung bas nam ka dang mnyam ste// ngo bo nyid kyis myi gnas pas// yon tan dpag tu myed pa<s> lhun kyis rdzogs par 'gyur ro//. The other version is PT 813: 2v.4-3v.1.

For those familiar with Dzogchen literature, it is clear that this list will not establish the influence of Chan on Dzogchen once and for all. First of all, not all the terms are characteristic of Dzogchen texts. The “peaceful essence” is not found in the early Dzogchen literature that I am aware of, and the term “no mental activity” is rare. And rather than “spontaneous perfection,” the usual formulation in Dzogchen texts is ‘spontaneous accomplishment’ (*lhun kyis grub pa*). Secondly, and more importantly, all of these terms are found in scriptural texts that would have been familiar to the writers of both Chan and Dzogchen texts. Look for example at the two terms that are popular in Dzogchen texts, *rig pa* and *rang gis rig pa*. Both appear throughout the *Laṅkāvatāra*, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, and many other popular sūtras. Moreover, they are also found throughout some of the most influential tantras, including the *Sarvatāthagata-tattvasaṃgraha* and, crucially for Dzogchen texts, the *Guhyagarbha*.¹⁵

It is not necessarily that the writers of Chan and Dzogchen texts were drawing on exactly the same sources. As we know, much of the terminology of Dzogchen discourse is also found in the tantras, rather than the sūtras, particularly the *Guhyagarbha* and other tantras of the *Māyājāla* class.¹⁶ On the other hand, much of the Tibetan Chan literature of Dunhuang makes its roots in the sūtra literature very explicit. Where there is a convergence of terminology between Dzogchen and Chan, this is because the tantric sources for Dzogchen literature (like the *Guhyagarbha*) are themselves steeped in the terminology of the sūtras that inform Chan discourse (like the *Laṅkāvatāra*). Thus many of Dzogchen's key terms are also found in the sūtras. A very simple diagram of the transmission of technical terms would be this:



¹⁵ For the *Guhyagarbha* instances, see D.834, f.202b, 233b. Likewise, ‘spontaneous perfection’ (*lhun kyis rdzogs pa*) is found in the *Guhyagarbha* (D.834, f.217a). In fact, all of the Tibetan terms Broughton cites linking Dzogchen to Chan appear in popular scriptural texts like the *Laṅkāvatāra* and *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, thus forming the common stock of terminology that could be drawn upon by both Chan and Dzogchen teachers. The phrase ‘no mental activity’ (*yiḍ la bya ba med*) is particularly popular in the Perfection of Wisdom sūtras, especially the *Śatasāhasrikā* and *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*. The term ‘peaceful essence’ (*zhi ba'i ngo bo nyid*), which is, as I mentioned, not characteristic of Dzogchen texts anyway, also appears in the *Śatasāhasrikā* (D.8, f.9a), as well as the *Pitāputrasamāgamana* (D.60, f.109a) and *Sāgaranāgarajapariprechā* (D.153, f.193b).

¹⁶ See Karmay 1988, Germano 1994, and van Schaik 2004b.

If there is one thing in the précis of Shenhui that might give us pause, it is the repeated contrast between thought (*sems*) and awareness (*rig pa*), which is similar to the use of these terms in Dzogchen literature. However, this raises another issue. We have no reason to think that the Shenhui précis is particularly early, as the manuscripts containing it are probably from the tenth century. The version of Shenhui's teachings presented here may have been written by a Tibetan who was familiar with the language of Dzogchen texts. This being so, we cannot conclude any influence running from Chan to Dzogchen (as against the other direction) in the appearance of similar terminology in such texts.

3. Chan, Dzogchen and the tantras

According to the texts of Chan, Sūtra and Mantra, the view is non-fixation.
– Dunhuang manuscript, 10th century

The anonymous writer of this line, from a treatise on Mahāyoga, shows that for some, at least, there was a point at which the texts of the sūtras, the tantras, and Chan teachers converged: the 'view' (*lta ba*), that is, the philosophical position or general attitude to be adopted. This was not an idle observation. Recent studies of Chinese Chan show a great deal of overlap between Chan and esoteric Buddhism during the eighth to tenth centuries.¹⁷ A striking example of this is the manuscript Pelliot chinois 3913, an 87-folio book written in the early tenth century. The book is a compilation serving as a manual for the ritual of entering the maṇḍala of the buddha Vairocana. The text gives two lineages of transmission for its teachings, and these are both unmistakably lists of Chan teachers.¹⁸

Furthermore, the title of the work implies that it is intended for the a ritual on an ordination platform (*jietan* 戒壇). The ritual of initiation into Chan held on ordination platforms was ubiquitous in early Chan lineages, to the extent that, as Wendi Adamek has put it, "Chan can be said to have been born on the bodhisattva precepts platform."¹⁹ Manuscripts like Pelliot chinois 3913 suggest that the ordination platform used in Chan lineages came to be regarded as coterminous with the tantric maṇḍala.²⁰ It is not very useful to call this 'syncretism', a term implying the conjoining of two distinct entities.²¹ Rather, what we are seeing is the transmission of texts and teaching lineages without the firm distinctions imposed by the later traditions. An illuminating example of this trend from the Tibetan manuscripts is found in Pelliot tibétain 996, a treatise on a Sino-Tibetan

¹⁷ See for example Tanaka 1981 and Sørensen 1989.

¹⁸ On Pelliot chinois 3913, see Tanaka 1981. On this and many other manuscripts concerning maṇḍalas, see Kuo 1998.

¹⁹ Adamek 2011: 33. See also Adamek 2007 for a detailed discussion of the historical development of the precepts ceremony in China, with regard to Chan lineages.

²⁰ Kuo Liying (1998) has investigated the maṇḍala diagrams of Pelliot chinois 2012, showing how they depart from normative tantric maṇḍalas, and how they were used for the three rituals of consecration, confession, and ordination. Though she does not suggest it, the unusual forms of these maṇḍalas and their uses suggest that they may also have been developed in Chan lineages.

²¹ On critiques of syncretism, and recent attempts to rehabilitate the term, see the introduction to Stewart and Shaw 1994.

Chan lineage. Towards the end of the manuscript there is a poem attributed to the Tibetan teacher Namkai Nyingpo, titled *In Praise of the Path of Yoga*.²²

Non-abiding, equality — this is the path of ultimate yoga,
 Unchanging, unproduced and unceasing from the start.
 That which appears is like a bird's path through the sky:
 Impossible to objectify it with a view, or express it in words.
 Those noble beings with the wisdom-mind of reflexive awareness,
 Understand and master this freedom from objectifying concepts.
 Homage to the treasury of the tathāgatas themselves,
 The tradition that is the source of noble beings.
 The path of the sages in equality from the beginning,
 The maṇḍala of non-objectification and sameness,
 The equalization without arising or cessation
 Which is the wisdom of the Vajradhātu.
 Those who have mastered bodhicitta
 Can perform the summoning of an immovable mind.
 The mudrā that liberates the children of the Conqueror,
 Is the supreme form, sameness itself — to cultivate it,
 Is to be the dharmakāya, complete and perfect.
 This, it is said, is the supreme siddhi.²³

The presence of terminology drawn from the tantras is unmistakable here – the *maṇḍala* of the *vajradhātu*, the *bodhicitta*, the *mudrā* and the characterization of realization as ‘the supreme *siddhi*’. All of this, especially the allusion to the vajradhātu maṇḍala, points to an association with the tantric literature like the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgrāha*. The way Namkai Nyingpo's verses weave together allusions to concepts from the sūtras and tantras suggests an audience familiar with both Chan discourses and tantric practices.²⁴

This allusive language is intriguing, but does not tell us how Chan meditation techniques might have been applied to tantric sādhana practice. For this, we can turn to a couple of manuscripts which seem to be written by the same scribe. Pelliot tibétain 626 and 634 are instructions for meditation in

²² There has been some discussion about whether the author of these verses is the same Nam mkha'i snying po known to the later Tibetan tradition as a disciple of Padmasambhava and exponent of Dzogchen. Samten Karmay (1988: 98–99) argued that these were two different people, because Pelliot tibétain 996 at one point gives the name as Tshig tsha Nam ka'i snying po, whereas the figure known to the traditions is Gnubs Nam mkha'i snying po. However, unlike Gnubs, Tshig tsha is not a known clan name, and could even be a corrupted form of *cig car*, ‘instantaneous’. The question should probably remain open.

²³ Pelliot tibétain 966: 3r.4–3v.4. mkhan po nam ka'I snying pos/ rnal 'byor gi lam la bstod pa/ myI gnas mnyam pa rnal 'byor nges pa'i lam/ ye nas skye med 'gag par myI 'gyur te/ ji ltar bar snang bya lam rjes bzhIn du/ blta ba'I dmyIgs myed tshIg gls brjod myi rung/ 'phags pa rang rIg ye shes blo ldan bas/ dmyIgs pa'I rtog bral mkhas shIng shes pas rIg/ 'phag 'tshal de bzhIn gshegs pI nyld kyI mdzod/ de ni 'phags pa'I byung gnas lam srol te/ ye nas mnyam pa drang srong chen po'i lam/ dmyIgs myed mnyam pa dkyIl 'khor te/ skye 'gags myed par snyoms pa nI/ rdo rje dbyIngs kyI ye shes so/ byang chub sems ldan mkhas pa yls/ myI g.yo yid la zlos byed pa/ rgyal sras grol ba'I phyag rgya ste/ gzugs mchog mnyam nyld 'dI bsgoms pas/ rdzogs pa yang dag chos kyI sku/ 'dI ni dngos grub mchos ces gsungs/

²⁴ Another early example is Or.15000/494, a manuscript from the imperial-period fortress of Miran. The manuscript contains a Chan text on the verso, and a tantric text on the recto.

the Mahāyoga practice of deity yoga.²⁵ The writing style of the manuscripts is similar to that of many other tantric manuscripts that almost certainly date to the latter part of the tenth century.²⁶

The striking feature of these two sādhanas in particular is that they apply to the practice of deity yoga techniques of viewing the mind normally found in Chan instructions.²⁷ Meditation in the Mahāyoga sādhanas tends to proceed along the structure of the three concentrations (*ting nge 'dzin*, Skt. *samādhi*), and this is what we see in Pelliot tibétain 626 and 634.²⁸ These three are: (i) The concentration on suchness (*de bzhin nyid*), (ii) the concentration on total illumination (*kun tu snang ba*), and (iii) the concentration on the cause (*rgyu*). It is in the first of these that we find the technique of viewing the mind described.

Regarding the phrase 'viewing the mind' – the method is looking at one's own mind, and the knowledge is to neither abide in nor conceptualize it. 'Not being anything' means settling the mind, which is taught in two methods: the method for examining the mind, and the method for settling. Regarding the method for examining: to look at the mind with the mind is a method for realizing that the entity *mind* is without any colour or shape whatsoever. Regarding the method for settling: one should settle the mind without thinking of anything.²⁹

The mental state resulting from this concentration is described in these two sādhanas in terms of non-thought (*mi bsam*), non-conceptualization (*mi rtog*), and not engaging the mind (*nyid la mi byed pa*), a trio seen elsewhere in Tibetan Chan texts, including those attributed to Heshang Moheyan.³⁰ The resulting state of mindfulness is also described using a series of metaphors,

²⁵ This discussion is based on van Schaik and Dalton 2004, with some new suggestions. See also Meinert 2002 and 2007, which discuss Pelliot tibétain 699. The latter, which is written in the same hand, is a Chan text accompanied by a commentary. The argument of van Schaik and Dalton 2004 is that this commentary places the Chan text in the context of Mahāyoga sādhana practice, as a mirror image to Pelliot tibétain 626 and 634. In Meinert 2002 and 2007a, on the other hand, the commentary is identified as coming from the position of Atiyoga. In fact, given that Atiyoga was understood as an approach to sādhana practice in this period, both interpretations are correct. This is made particularly clear by the citation in Pelliot tibétain 699 of the *Rdo rje sems dpa'i zhus lan*, a treatise on Mahāyoga practice that takes a position usually identified with Atiyoga.

²⁶ They may be compared to many of the tenth century Tibetan manuscripts listed in Takeuchi forthcoming.

²⁷ On the practice of "viewing the mind" in the work of Shenxui, see McRae 1986: 196–218; Faure 1997: 58–67. On related works by Wolun, and their influence on Tibetan Chan, see Meinert 2007b.

²⁸ For an extended discussion of the three absorptions, see van Schaik 2008b. Among the Dunhuang manuscripts, see also IOL Tib J 437, 552, 553, 554, 716; Or.8210/S.95/7; Pelliot tibétain 42 (26–29), 283.

²⁹ Pelliot tibétain 626, ff.2v–3r: *sems lta zhes pa ni/ bdag gi sems la lta ba ni/ thabs yin la/ de la myi gnas myi rtog pa ni shes rab yin no/ cir yang myin zhes pa ni/ sems la gzhag thabs gnyis su bstan te/ de yang sems kyi brtag thabs dang// gzhag thabs so// de la brtag thabs ni/ sems la sems kyi bltas na sems kyi dngos po ka dog dang dbyibs cir yang ma yin bar rtogs pa' ni thabs/ gzhag thabs ni/ cir yang myi bsam bar blo gzhag go//.*

³⁰ For these three terms in Tibetan Chan texts see Pelliot tibétain 117 6v.3–4, and STMG 165.4–5. For Moheyan's use of them see Gomez, 1983: 152 n. 43. These three are clearly related to the 'three phrases' of Wuzhu: *no-recollection* (*wuyi* 無憶), *no-thought* (*wuxiang* 無想), and *do not allow the unreal* (*mowang* 莫妄) – see Adamek 2007: 206, 246, 338, and Broughton 2009: 183.

like that of the watchman spotting a thief, which are also drawn from the teachings of Moheyan, and before him, Shenxiu 神秀.³¹

Thus these two sādhanas show that the contemplative techniques taught under the heading of 'viewing the mind' – which were popular in Chinese and Tibetan Chan at Dunhuang – were adapted to the first stage of Mahāyoga meditation practice, the concentration on suchness. These sources, and the verses attributed to Namkhai Nyingpo, strongly suggest that the context for the practice of meditation instructions from Chan lineages was often a tantric one. Since by the tenth century, Mahāyoga had become the most popular form of tantric Buddhism in Tibet, it is not surprising that Mahāyoga sādhanas became one of the main settings for these Chan meditation practices.³²

* * *

Let us now look at the relationship between Dzogchen and tantric Buddhism. From the eleventh century and onwards, the Tibetan tradition came to separate the texts of Dzogchen from other kinds of tantric discourse, eventually assigning them their own 'vehicle'. This has obscured the way Dzogchen developed before this time. Recent work on the earliest sources for Dzogchen has shown that it emerged from the milieu of Mahāyoga tantra in the eighth century and for a long time thereafter was understood primarily as a framework for the practice of Mahāyoga sādhanas.³³

Thus in the *Guhyagarbha tantra*, the term 'great perfection' (*rdzogs chen*) appears in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, on the sexual yoga of the completion (*rdzogs*) stage and its experiential aftermath. This aftermath is expressed in terms of the spontaneous fulfillment of all aspects of enlightenment in a stage that transcends all thought. The sense here that 'great perfection' refers to the realization engendered by the stage of perfection is made explicit on a treatise based on the *Guhyagarbha tantra* and attributed to the eighth-century figure Padmasambhava: the *Garland of Views*. In this treatise, esoteric yoga is divided into three 'modes' – development (*bskyed*), perfection (*rdzogs*) and great perfection (*rdzogs chen*).

When we turn to the two Dzogchen texts preserved in the Dunhuang collections, we find them still in dialogue with Mahāyoga. For example IOL Tib J 647, a commentary on a popular six-line verse known as *The Cuckoo of Awareness*, is full of allusions and direct references to Mahāyoga practice. For example, the author summarizes the general meaning of the verse in question as 'Samantabhadra, great bliss, the mode of perfection', a direct reference to the sexual yoga of the perfection stage. After this the author writes of the 'great inner nectar', a euphemism for the sexual fluids that are tasted at the culmination of the perfection stage, saying that the method here is to 'accept the *bodhicitta*,' (another euphemism for the same thing) 'without accepting'.³⁴ The author goes on to deal with topics relevant to practitioners

³¹ See Gomez 1983: 92, 102, 153.

³² On the popularity of Mahāyoga in the tenth century, see chapter 8 of van Schaik and Galambos 2012.

³³ I have discussed these issues at length in van Schaik 2004b and 2008.

³⁴ IOL Tib J 647, f.3v: 'di spyi don ni/ /dpal kun tu bzang po bde ba chen po rdzogs pa'i tshul zhes bya ba'o/ ... /nang gi bdud rtsi chen po zhes bya ste/ /myi len pa'i byang chub len pa'i thabs dam pa yin pa'i phyir/

of Mahāyoga sādhanas, including the practices of ‘liberation’ and ‘union’ (ritual killing and sex).

The manuscript containing IOL Tib J 647 is from the tenth century, and we do not know how much earlier the text itself was composed. We do have one text that was later accepted into the canon of early Dzogchen scripture that can be placed in the early ninth century, thanks to its being listed in the imperial-period library catalogue, the Ldan dkar ma. This is Mañjuśrīmitra’s *Meditation on Bodhicitta*, also known as *Gold Refined from Ore*.³⁵ This text addresses the themes usually associated with Dzogchen, but makes it quite clear that this is to be applied within the context of Mahāyoga sādhanā practice:

Stabilize the three concentrations. Then bind the three symbolic mūdras. Then in the mūdra of the dharma, generate mind itself. At this point, recite the mantra and abide in meditation. To meditate on Vajrasattva is to meditate unerringly on all paths.³⁶

What this passage shows is that the context for the experiential state evoked in these early Dzogchen texts was deity yoga (which, in Mahāyoga, was generally focussed on the deity Vajrasattva). Furthermore, we encounter here once again the three concentrations – the stages in which the visualization is developed in Mahāyoga sādhanas. As we saw in the previous section, it was here that the techniques of Chan were being applied in the tenth century. Since this had been the role of Dzogchen style teachings since at least the early ninth century, if there is an influence here, it looks like it is Dzogchen influencing the practice of Chan.

4. Conclusions

I have written at length because of my concern about the errors that may be caused by the similarities between the doctrine of sudden enlightenment and Dzogchen.
– *The Lamp for the Eyes of Contemplation*

It seems to me quite valid to suggest that the use of Chan meditation techniques in the context of practising Mahāyoga sādhanas is a case of Chan being influenced by Dzogchen. But I also think it might be better to replace the idea of influence with the better-suited concept of *convergence*. From the eighth century, teachers of Chan texts in China, and Dzogchen texts in Tibet, were engaged with esoteric Buddhism. By the tenth century, these parallel developments converged, at least in the context of Tibetophone Buddhist practitioners, when both Chan and Dzogchen were being practised in the context of the three concentrations of Mahāyoga sādhanas.

The fact that Chan texts came to have a parallel function to Dzogchen texts helps to clarify the motivation behind the composition of the *Lamp for the Eyes of Contemplation* – that is, it explains why the apparent similarities between Chan and Dzogchen had become problematic. The passage cited

³⁵ The Tibetan names as *Byang chub sems sgom pa* and *Rdo la gser zhun*. On the Ldan dkar catalogue, see Lalou 1953: 333–334. This text occurs in a section of the catalogue on meditation texts, including one that may be a Chan text, entitled *Bsam gtan gi yi ge*.

³⁶ D.134: 4a.

above suggests that by the tenth century Chan and Dzogchen lineages had come to occupy the same space in Tibetan Buddhism, and this was perceived, at least by those promoting Dzogchen lineages, as a threat.³⁷ Sangyé Yeshé's solution was to create a four-stage hierarchy, in which the two sūtra-based approaches of gradual and instantaneous awakening were placed lower than the two tantra-based approaches of Mahāyoga and Dzogchen. With this hierarchy Sangyé Yeshé attempted to show, for once and all, that only Dzogchen had the authority to function as a framework for Mahāyoga.³⁸

As we have seen, Chan meditation continued to be practised at Dunhuang after Sangyé Yeshé. Indeed, Tibetan Chan lineages seem to have still be alive in the eleventh century, when the Amdo master Aro Yeshé Jungné is said to have held both Chinese and Indian lineages.³⁹ Still, such marks of influence became fewer and fewer. By the thirteenth century Chan came to be represented in the Tibetan imagination primarily in the narrative of the debate held at Samyé between the Chinese Chan teacher Moheyan and his Indian opponent Kāmalaśīla. The classical forms of this narrative present a caricature of Chan as an extreme quietism, and represent Moheyan as losing the debate, resulting in the banning of all Chinese teachings from Tibet. Once Chan had become stigmatized in this way as a heretical teaching, it was easy for those who distrusted Dzogchen to attempt to identify the one with the other, beginning the tradition that was revived in modern scholarship by Tucci.

I suggested earlier that 'was Dzogchen influenced by Chan?' is a badly-phrased question, one that cannot lead to a satisfactory answer. Yet the temptation to phrase the question in this way is influenced by the traditional portrayals of Dzogchen and Chan as autonomous entities, transcending their own Buddhist context. Though a study of the history of both traditions undermines such portrayals, they seem to have a strong hold on the imagination; as Ludwig Wittgenstein put it, "a picture held us captive."⁴⁰ It might be better for us to turn away from this particular picture, to stop trying to compare ahistorical essences, and look instead for specific historical moments of dynamic interaction.

³⁷ *Lamp for the Eyes of Contemplation*, 186: rnal 'byor mig gi bsam gtan gyi skabs 'dir/ ston mun dang/ rdzogs chen cha 'dra bas gol du dogs pa'i phyir rgyas par bkod do//.

³⁸ On the way Sangyé Yeshé distinguishes Chan from Dzogchen see Dalton and van Schaik 2003. Incidentally, Sangyé Yeshé was, at the same time, making a more distinct separation between Mahāyoga and Dzogchen than had previously been the case. See van Schaik 2005: 195–199. On the doctrinal stratification of sūtra and tantra in Buddhism, and its roots in Indic Buddhism, see Davidson 2005: 286–287. Of course, scheme like these were also developed in China in the process of the "Sinification of Buddhism" (Gregory 1991). Sangyé Yeshé's hierarchy has a similar function to those of Zongmi, compartmentalizing and ranking a diversity of Buddhist approaches, and can certainly be seen as part of the "Tibetanization of Buddhism" even though Sangyé Yeshé's particular system was not directly influential on the later Tibetan tradition.

³⁹ *The Blue Annals*: I.211: yang ldan glong thang sgron mar a ro ye shes 'byung gnas zhes bya ba grub pa'i skyes bu zhig byung ste/ de la rgya gar bdun brgyud dang/ rgya'i hwa shang bdun brgyud kyi gdams na mnga' zhing/. In English, Roerich 1996 [1949]: 167. See also the discussions of Aro in Karmay 1988: 93 n.42 and Davidson 2004b: 75. The dates of Aro Yeshé Jungné are uncertain, but he is most likely to have been active in the early 11th century.

⁴⁰ Wittgenstein 1973: §115.

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The *Mi nub rgyal mtshan Nam mkha' che* And the *Mahā Ākāśa Kārikās*:

Origins and Authenticity

Christopher Wilkinson

Vairocana Rakṣita is famed for his completion of five early translations (*snga 'gyur lnga*), usually described as including: *Rig pa'i khyu phyug*, *rTsal chen sprugs pa*, *Kyung chen mkha' lding*, *rDo la gser zhun*, and *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan nam mkha' che*. A search for the source text for the *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan Nam mkha' che* leads us to a fascinating set of works, works of both individual and collective interest. To understand the full portent of the *Nam mkha' che* literature a thorough and careful study of these works will be required. This article is intended to open that door. There are three parts: a catalogue of extant works in the *Nam mkha' che* cycle, a brief discussion of authenticity, and a look into a set of fifty five verses that have become an important source for the *Nam mkha' che* teachings, The *Mahā Ākāśa Kārikā*. Observations on how these *Kārikās* move through Tibetan history will shed light on the development of the so-called “Old” (*rNying ma*) and “New” (*gSar ma*) traditions of Buddhism in Tibet, and on the concerns of one early *gSar ma* reformer, Pho brang Zhi ba 'od.

The Texts of the *rDo rje sems dpa' Nam mkha' che*

A review of the *bKa' 'gyur* and *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* collections reveals a number of texts on the *Nam mkha' che*. There are Tantras, Mula Tantras, Puṣṭi Tantras, and Tantras that unite the *Nam mkha' che* with the *Guhyagarbha*. The catalogues of *Jigs med gling pa* and the lists of *Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer* offer titles that we can find in these collections as well as titles that are not presently evidenced. Here is a listing of the titles evidenced:

Mula Tantras

Mi nub rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud¹

Indian Title: *Vajrasvabhāwamahākarshakārika*.²
Homage: *bcom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa'*.
Location: *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, vol. 104, pp. 5-20.

¹ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (Kaḥ thog). This is the title given on the front cover page (vol. 105, p. 5). The title in the text itself is *rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che zhes bya ba*.

² The Indian Language title on the cover page is: *Apakarshasyadhājabajasatvamahānabhāmūlatantranāmastisma*.

Translator: None mentioned.
 Colophon: This was spoken orally by the glorious Vajrasattva, the personification of every transmission.

lung thams cad kyi bdag nyid dpal rdo rje sems dpa'i zhal nas gsungs pa rdzogs so.

Note: This text has a cover page of the exact style used in the gTing skyes *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, with an Indic title at the top, a Tibetan transliteration in the center, and the Tibetan title below.

rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba

Indian Title: *Ārya pada Vajrasadva.*
 Homage: None.
 Location: Rig 'dzin, vol. 1, pp. 187b.6 – 190b.2.
 gTing skyes, vol. 1, pp. 424.1 – 430.2.
 Translator: None.
 Colophon: This competes the *Nam mkha' che*, which is an insight into the *Byang chub sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*. The *rDo rje Sems dpa' Nam mkha' che* was proclaimed by the Master of Orgyan, dGa rab rDo rje, in the cave of Asura 'Od ldan.

rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che 'u rgyan gyi slob dpon dga rab rdo rjes dpal a su ra 'od ldan gyi brag phug tu gsungs pa rdzogs so |

Khyung chen lding ba

Indian Title: None.
 Location: *Vairo rgyud 'bum*, vol. 2, p. 357-366.
 Translator: None.
 Colophon: These words were spoken by the glorious Vajrasattva, the personification of all the Blessed One's transmissions. It is the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. The end.

Bcom ldan 'das lung thams cad kyi bdag nyid dpal rdo rje sems dpas de skad gsungs so | rdo rje sems dpa nam mkha' che | rdzogs so |

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud skyes ba med pa

Indian Title: *Vajrakahasamūla Ah.*
 Homage: bCom ldan 'das rDo rje Sems dpa' Nam mkha' che.
 Location: mTshams, vol. 3, pp. 81.7 – 119.1.

Translator: Vairo, vol. 1, pp. 291.1 – 314.6.³
 None.
 Colophon: This Tantra of Root Transmission was taught for the sake of the young Lord. U U U Rakṣika dictated that.

lung rtsa ba'i rgyud rje'u don du btsan pa yin | U U U
Rakṣika Itu Utu

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che'i rgyud

Indian Title: *Vajrasatvagagasamemāhatanāma*.
 Homage: dPal rDo rje Sems dpa'.
 Location: mTshams, vol. 3, pp. 165.3 – 191.
 'Jigs med gling pa lists a text of the same title,
 translated by Śrī Siṃha and Vairocana.
 Chapters: 33.
 Translator: None.
 Colophon: None.

Byang chub sems rdo rje 'od 'phro ba'i rgyud kyi rim pa

Indian Title: *Bodhicittavajraprabhatanāma*.
 Homage: bcom ldan 'das dpal gyi dpal smra bsam brjod pa las
 'das pa.
 Location: gTing skyes, vol. 4, pp. 107 – 121.
 Vairo, vol. 4, pp. 143 – 157.
 mTshams, vol. 1, pp. 571 – 586.
 Chapters: 12.
 Translators: Śrī Siṃha and Vairocana.⁴
 Colophon: *rgyud kyi rgyal po mi nub rgyal mtshan rje btsan dam pa*
rdo rje 'od phros ba'i rgyud rdzogs so.

Puṣṭi Tantras:

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rgyud

'Jigs med gLing pa lists this title, with 11 chapters.
 No corresponding text has been located.

³ The text abruptly cuts off at the end of p. 314. The following text, titled *Srog gi 'khor lo*, a text common to many versions of the *rNying ma rGyud 'Bum* follows the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rTsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa* in the Vairo, but is missing its first part. It can only be deduced that the manuscript used for production of the photo-offset version available to us was missing pages, or that errors were made in the publication process. The Index presented by Tashi Y. Tashigangpa, *Vairo rGyud 'bum*, vol. 1, p. 2 of the *Vairo rGyud 'Bum* photo offset collection) does not note this fact, resulting in a catalogue where five different works are listed as sub-texts of this work.

⁴ mTshams brag and Vairo list no translator.

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa yi ge med pa'i rgyud

- Indian Title: None.
 Homage: None.
 Chapters: 8.
 Location: mTshams, vol. 1, pp. 586.6 – 592.6.
 Vairo, vol. 1, pp. 375.4 – 381.2.
 gTing skyes, vol. 1, pp. 495.2 – 499.7.
 sDe dge, vol. 6, pp. 87a.1 – 88b.6.
 Rig 'dzin, vol. 1, pp. 219b.7 – 222a.4.
 'Jig med gling pa lists this title with 8 chapters.
 Translators: The Tibetan monk Vairocana and the Indian master
 Colophon: Jñanagharbha translated this. It was then edited according to their instructions.

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud

- Indian Title: *Vajrasatoamahā akashapuṣṭināmayogenītantra*.
 Homage: bCom ldan 'das dPal rDo rje 'dzin pa.
 Chapters: 15.
 Location: mTshams, vol. 2 pp. 595.3 – 646.5.
 Vairo, vol. 1, pp. 329.5 – 375.4.
 gTing skyes, vol. 2, pp. 362.3 – 399.1.
 sDe dge, vol. 6, pp. 199.3 – 215b.5.
 Rig 'dzin, vol. 2, pp. 173.6 – 192b.6.
 Colophon: Translated and edited by the Indian master Jñanagarbha and the Tibetan Monk Vairocana. Subsequent revision based on new linguistic standards.
phyis skad gsar bcad kyī kyang bcos pa'o.

'Jigs med gling pa lists a *Nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma rgyud* with 13 chapters Translated by Vimalamitra and dPal brtsegs.

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor pa'i rgyud

- Indian Title: None.
 Homage: bCom ldan 'das dPal rDo rje 'dzin pa.
 Chapters: 11.
 Location: mTshams, vol. 2, pp. 556.7 – 595.3.⁵
 gTing skyes, vol. 2, pp. 332.5 – 362.3.
 sDe dge, vol. 25, pp. 286b.3 – 302b.7.⁶
 Rig 'dzin, vol. 2, pp. 159a.7 – 173b.6.

⁵ mTshams brag lists no translator.

⁶ The *rNal 'byor pa'i rgyud* and the *rNal 'byor ma'i rgyud* are identical up to chapter eleven, where the *rNal 'byor pa'i rgyud* abruptly cuts off. The *rNal 'byor ma* goes to chapter 15 and includes translator and colophon information. The *Vairo rgyud 'bum* does not include the *rNal 'byor pa'i rgyud*. The *sDe dge rNying ma rgyud 'bum* version of the *rNal 'byor pa'i rgyud* does have fifteen chapters, but it is a case of importing the last five chapters from the *rNal 'byor ma* to fill in the perceived lacuna.

Translator: Jñānabhadra and Vairo.
 Colophon: None. Text ends abruptly with conclusion of the eleventh chapter.

zab mo man ngag bstan pa'i le'u ste bcu gcig pa rdzogs so

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che bram ze rgyas pa'i rgyud

Indian Title: *Vajrasatvasamayakhemahādehapuṣṭigaratantra*.
 Homage: bCom ldan 'das dPal Kun to bzang po.
 Chapters: 16.
 Location: Tshams, vol. 2, pp. 529.4 – 556.7.
 gTing skyes, vol. 1, pp. 628.7.
 Rig 'dzin Nor bu, vol. 1 pp. 283b.7 – 284a.3.⁷
 sDe dge, vol. 25 pp. 215a.5 – 224a.2.
 'Jigs med gling pa's catalogue lists this with 16 chapters.
 Translator: None
 Colophon: None

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyal po rgyas pa'i rgyud

Indian Title: *Vajrasatva Khasemahārādzapuṣṭimtantra*.
 Homage: bCom ldan 'das Kun tu bzang po bDe ba chen po.
 Location: mTshams, vol. 3, pp. 119.1 – 165.2.
 Translator: None.
 Chapters: 25.
 Colophon: The rGyal po rGyas rGyud was translated for sNying po.

Nam mkha' che Tantras connected to other Tantra Cycles

rDo rje Sems dpa' Nam mkha' che gsang ba'i snying po rnal ma don gyi rgyud

Indian Title: *Vajraghuyagarbhasatvamahākhabhyerthatantra*.
 Homage: dPal rDo rje Sems dpa'.
 Location: mTshams, vol. 2, pp. 415.6 – 443.2.
 Vairo, vol. 2, pp. 313.1 – 337.3.⁸
 sDe dge, vol. 3, pp. 65.7 – 88.1.
 'Jigs med gling pa lists this with 12 chapters in Vol. 1.
 Chapters: 12.

⁷ Colophon: *ye dharmā hetu prabhava he dun te śanta tha' ga to hya wa da ta | te śnytsa yonirodhe e wam bā di mahā śra ma ṇa | sarva mangalam.*

⁸ Indian Title: *Vajraghuyagarbasatvamahākhabhyerthatantra* The mTshams brag version's Sanskrit title includes the word "artha" in the title.

Translator: None.
Colophon: None.

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che kun tu bzang po gsang ba snying po'i rgyud

Indian Title: *Vajrasatvākṣayamāhā Samantabhadraguhyagarbatantra.*
Homage: bCom ldan 'das dpa' kun tu bzang po.
Chapters: 26.
Location: mTshams, vol. 2, pp. 443.3 – 529.4.
gTing skyes, vol. 3, pp. 537.3 – 606.6.⁹
sDe dge, vol. 25, pp. 179b.4 – 205a.7.
'Jigs med gling pa lists this title.
Translators: The Tibetan Translator Vairocana and the Indian scholar Śrī Siṃha.

The Kun byed rgyal po

Chapter thirty of this work is called *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. The *Kun byed rgyal po* is found in both *bKa' 'gyur* and *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* collections.

Tibetan Title: *Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems Kun byed rgyal po.*
Indian Language: *Sarva dharma mahā sandi bodhi citta kulaya rājā.*
Homage: bCom ldan 'das byang chub sems kun byed rgyal po la phyag 'tshal lo.
Colophon: *Byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po rdzogs so |*
Translator: The Indian Scholar Shri Simhaprabhā and the Tibetan Lotstshaba Bagor Vairocana translated this. Then it was edited and published (*zhus te gtan la phab pa*).¹⁰

At the end of chapter eighty four:¹¹ The India Scholar dPal gyi seng ge dgon po and the monk Vairocana translated this. It was edited and published (*zhus te gtan la phab pa'o*).

Location:
bKa' 'gyur

sDe dge, vol. 97, pp. 1 – 171.
Nar thang, vol. 98, pp. 1 – 173.

⁹ The editor of the gTing skyes presents a differential title at the forward of the text: *rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che kun tu bzang po gsang ba'i snying po spu gri padma ral gri 'khor lo'i rgyud*. This title was probably derived from the closing statements of the last chapter, chapter 16.

¹⁰ This the colophon in the *Kun byed rgyal po* proper, at the end of chapter 57.

¹¹ This is the "Latter *Kun byed rgyal po*".

Lhasa, vol. 97, pp. 1 – 249.
Urga, vol. 98, pp. 1 – 172.

rNying ma rgyud 'bum

mTshams brag, ol. 1, pp. 1 – 192.
gTeng skyes, vol. 1, pp. 1 – 166.
bKa' ma rgyas pa, vol. 30, pp. 1 – 288.¹²

Early Catalogues

'Jigs med gling pa's catalogue

'Jigs med gling pa lived 1729-1798. His catalogue was based on the sMin gling Manuscript of the *rNying ma rGyud 'bum*. The manuscript it catalogues has not yet been found. The *rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che* literature has a major place in the collection.¹³

Volume 1 contained:

1. *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che bram ze rgyas pa'i rgyud* : 16 chapters.
14. *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rgyud* : 11 chapters.
15. *Nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma rgyud* : 13 chapters,
Translated by Vimalamitra and dPal brtsegs.
20. *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che gsang ba snying po rnal ma don gyi rgyud* : 12 chapters.

Volume. 2 contained:

35. *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che* :
Translated by Śrī Siṃha and Vairocana.
39. *Nam mkha' che rgyas pa yi ge med pa'i rgyud* : 8 chapters.

Volume 3 contained:

55. *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che kun tu bzang po gsang ba snying po'i rgyud kyi mdo* : 26 chapters,
Translated by Śrī Siṃha and Vairocana.

¹² In the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* edition the title is "*Kun byed rgyal po'i rgyud*".

¹³ Achard, "La liste des Tantras du *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* selon l'édition établie par Kun mkhyen 'Jigs med gling pa", p. 62.

Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer

The *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud* by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1136-1204) lists two titles among seventeen teachings propagated by Vairocana:¹⁴

- *Mi nub rgyal mtshan nam mkha' che*
- *Nam mkha' che rgyal po*

It also lists six separate *Nam mkha' che* titles in a list of twenty five teachings Vairocana received from Śrī Siṃha:¹⁵

- *Nam mkha' che rtsa ba can gyi rgyud*
- *Nam mkha' che ye ge med pa'i rgyud*
- *Nam mkha' che dbang gi rgyal po'i rgyud*
- *Nam mkha' che grol ba'i rgyud*
- *Nam mkha' che rgyas pa'i rgyud*
- *Nam mkha' che rgyas pa phyi rta'i rgyud*

Questions of Authenticity

General Concerns

In the Tibetan tradition the authenticity of the *Nam mkha' che* literature has been questioned in two basic ways: its authenticity as a Buddhist teaching, and whether an individual text is authentically the same as what Vairocana Rakṣita brought from India to Tibet.

We find that there are statements in the *Nam mkha' che* Tantras themselves that seem to say that it is not the Buddha's teaching while there are other statements that say that it is. It may be the case that there was a difference of opinion in different transmissions of the *Nam mkha' che* or it may be that a central element of this tradition was a spirit of inclusiveness that considered its inspiration to be both what the Buddha taught about and something that was unspeakable, and so beyond even the Buddha's teaching capacity. A thorough study will be required to sort this out. Here is a hint to get started:

The opening words of the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa'i yi ge med pa'i rgyud* describe the *Nam mkha' che* as an innovative teaching:

As it says in the King Tantra, when this *Yi ge med pa* was proclaimed, I was not different from anyone else: We had heard something we had not heard before. We were afraid.

*Rgyal po'i rgyud du gsungs pa | yi ge med pa 'di gsungs pa'i tshena | nyid dang tha mi dad pa rnam sngon ma thos pa 'di thos pas srag par gyur to |*¹⁶

¹⁴ Nyang ral's *Chos 'byung* is not presently available to me. See Norbu and Clemente, pp. 246-247.

¹⁵ Norbu and Clemente, p. 242.

Statements to the effect that the *Nam mkha' che* is not a Buddhist teaching can be found in its own Tantras. The *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud* tells us:¹⁷

This reality is the nature of all things.
 It must be realized in whole.
 The method is to develop wisdom.
 It cannot be seen by looking at things partially.
 The nature of reality
 Cannot be seen by anyone.
 Even the Buddha cannot see it.
 It is a self-arising wisdom, an illumination without locus.

kun gyi rang bzhin de bzhin nyid | |
kun gyi bsgrub bar bya ba ste | |
thabs su ye shes bskyed [3] pa la | |
phyogs su bltas pas mthong ba med | |
de bzhin nyid kyi rang bzhin ni | |
sus kyang mthong bar mi nus te | |
sangs rgyas kyis kyang mi gzigs pas | |
rang byung ye shes gnas med snang | |

There is a quotation in the *Pan sgrub rnams kyi thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma*, to be discussed shortly, of a statement in the *Nam mkha' che* itself regarding the Buddha not having taught this:¹⁸

There is no meditation that goes beyond
 The conventions of speech.
 Conceptions arise in meditation.
 We do not meditate on or search for
 The body of self awareness.
 This is how we place our ordinary nature (*gyin-dhar*)
 In what is.
 We place it, but there is no ground we place it on.
 We place it down on the placing ground
 Where there is no placement.
 The thing we place is the heart of Vajrasattva.
 The Buddha himself does not have teachings that say this.

brjod pa'i tha snyad las 'das bsgom du med;
bsgoms pa nyid na rtog pa skye ba ste |
mi bsgom mi brtsal rang rig nyid kyi sku |
de bzhin de bzhin gyin dhar gzhag
gzhag du 'ang gzhag sa med pas na |
gzhag du med pa'i gzhag sar gzhag la gzhag |
gzhag pa'i dngos po [6] rdo rje sems dpa'i thugs |

¹⁶ mTshams brag, vol. 1, p. 586-587. Note that there are three *Nam mkha' che* Tantras translated with the help of Jñānagarbha: the *Yi ge med pa*, the *rNal 'byor ma*, and the *rGyal po rgyas pa*. It may be that this opening of the *Yi ge med pa* refers to the *rGyal po rgyas pa*.

¹⁷ Vairo, vol. 2, p. 334.

¹⁸ Vairo, vol. 1, p. 67. I have not been able to locate the original reference.

'di zhes bstan du sangs rgyas nyid kyis med |

These kinds of remarks in the Tantras might be taken to indicate that the *Nam mkha' che* was not a teaching of Śākyamuni, or even a Buddhist teaching. As if to address this very point there is a passage in the *rDo rje sems dpa' rtsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa*:

This Root Tantra (*rTsa ba'i rgyud*) is, among transmissions,
The supreme transmission.
It was proclaimed by Śākyamuni,
The protector of living beings,
The lord of sages,
The holder of all good knowledge, without exception.
This great Root Tantra's transmission
Is a vehicle he proclaimed with his own mouth.
Those who wish for the Buddha's enlightenment
Must look into this unsurpassed supreme vehicle.

lung gi lung mchog rtsa ba'i rgyud |
shākya thub pa 'gro ba'i mgon |
yon tan ma lus kun ldan pa'i |
thub pa'i dbang pos gsungs pa yi |
lung gi rtsa ba'i rgyud chen 'di |
zhal nas gsungs pa'i theg pa ste |
sangs rgyas byang chub gang 'dod pa |
theg mchog bla med 'di la ltos |¹⁹

Authenticity in the Commentarial Tradition

The *Paṅ sgrub rnams kyī thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma*

The question of authenticity is more fully developed in the commentarial tradition. The *Paṅ sgrub rnams kyī thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma* is an overview of the significance and practice of the early rDzogs chen translations. It is the premier document in the *Vairo rgyud 'bum*.²⁰ The text is divided up into chapters which include instructions on meditation and practice as specifically related to six *Sems sde* teachings: the five early translations and the *rMad du byung ba*. There is a chapter on how to meditate on the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan Nam mkha' che* on pages 64-84. There follows a chapter on the meditation for the *rMad du byung ba* from page 84 to 104. Then there is an interesting statement right before the colophon that closes the text:

This has no resemblance to what Universal Monarchs or teachers like Śākyamuni have taught. An investigation that will work out or refute the ocean of Upadeśa on the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan*, which is the heart transmission of Samantabhadra dGa' rab, does not disturb my mind. I hope this will be a lamp for those whose fortune it is to see things partially.

¹⁹ mTshams brag *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 3, p. 118.

²⁰ *Vairo rGyud 'bum*, vol. 1, p. 1-104.

*De ni chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba mdzad mkhan dang | shag thub la
sogs par brjod pa lta bu ma yin no | kun tu bzang po dga' rab thugs
brgyud pa'i | mi nub rgyal mtshan man ngag rgyal mtsho' la | bdag
blo bya gag rtsal gyis mi 'khrugs kyang | phyogs mthong skal ldan
rnams kyi sgron med shog²¹*

The unnamed author of the *Paṅ sgrub* recognizes that the *Nam mkha' che* teachings do not resemble the teachings of the Buddha Śākyamuni, but nonetheless finds value in them as Buddhist teachings to the extent that he writes a full commentary on how to practice them. He clearly understands Buddhist teachings to include more than what Śākyamuni taught, and has accepted the transmission of dGa' rab rdo rje as authentically Buddhist. He recognizes that there is a dispute about the *Nam mkha' che's* authenticity as a Buddhist teaching, and has adopted an understanding of what Buddhism is that includes teachings that Śākyamuni might not have given.

The Letter of Pho brang Zhi ba 'od

Pho brang Zhi ba 'od, a Tibetan scholar of the 11th century C.E., does not share the inclusive view of the *Paṅ sgrub*. He wrote an *Open Letter* in which he denounces a large number of scriptures as forgeries.²² The only known remaining source for Pho brang Zhi ba 'od's *Letter* is in the *gSang sngags snga 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa snag phyir byung ba rnams kyi lan du brjod pa nges pa don gyi 'brug sgra* by Sog zlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1552-1624). Of particular interest to us is his interdiction of the *Rig pa'i nyi ma*, a commentary on the *rDzogs pa chen po nam mkha' che* written by gNubs Sangs rgyas ye shes.²³ He also rejects a text called the *rNal 'byor mig gi sgron ma*, which is probably none other than gNubs chen's *bSam gtan mig gi sgron ma*.²⁴ It is also important to this study that Zhi ba 'od rejects the *Kun byed rgyal po*, for chapter thirty of the *Kun byed rgyal po* purports to contain the text of the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan Nam mkha' che*.

Zhi ba 'od's general concern is that the texts he mentions were fabrications made to resemble the Buddha's own oral instructions (*sangs rgyas kyi bka' ltar bcos*) by Tibetans who put Indian names on them (*rgya gar ma'i ming btags shing bod kyis byas pa*).²⁵ His specific concern with the *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma* is that it is referred to as an Upadeśa (*man ngag tu gsol*).²⁶ His specific complaint against the other works under consideration is as follows:

The Thirteen Letter Translations of the *Sems phyogs* which were translated by Ācārya Vimalamitra include the forty three chapters of the *rMad du byung ba*, the *Byang chub sems bDe 'byams rin po che*, and the *lTa ba bal nag*, their

²¹ This transcribes what is actually in the text, orthographical errors inclusive.

²² Karmay, "An Open Letter of Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od", *The Tibet Journal*, 1980, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 1-28.

²³ Karmay, *ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁴ Samten Karmay is of this view. See Karmay, *ibid.*, p. 24 n. 93.

²⁵ Sog zlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan p. 462.

²⁶ Sog zlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan p. 464.

commentaries, synopsis, and notes. *The Eighteen Sems bDe*, which were fabricated in the snowy mountains of upper Nyang²⁷ using a technique of rendering [the original works] into excerpts, include the *Kun byed rgyal po*, the *mDo bcu gsang ba*, and the *Ye shes gsang ba*, their commentaries, empowerments, and Upadeśa. These include the Upadeśa of Bha pa, the Upadeśa of *Sems nyams*, and the *Srid pa rgyud lung*.

Acarya Vimamitras bsgyur ba'i sems phyogs kyi phyis 'gyur bcu gsum la | rmad du byung ba'i le'u bzhi bcu zhe gsum dang. | byang chub sems bde 'byams rin po che dang. | lta ba bal nag la sogs pa'i grel ba dang. | sa bcod dang. | yig chung dang bcas ba dang. | nyang stod khro gangs su drang du shag tshul gyis byas pa'i sems bde bco brgyad kyi rgyud rnams la | kun byed rgyal po dang. | mdo bcu gsang ba dang. | ye shes gsang ba dang. | 'grel pa dang. | dbang bskur gyi man ngag dang. | bha pa'i man ngag dang. | sems nyams kyi man ngag dang. | srid pa rgyud lung la sogs pa |

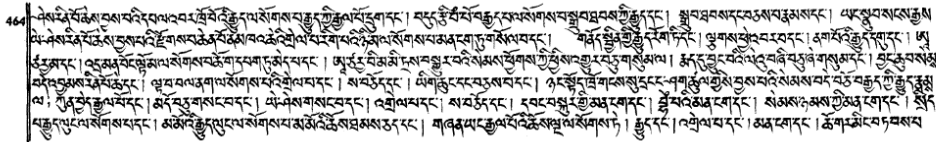
Pho brang Zhi ba 'od held that the *Eighteen Sems sde* texts, including the *Kun byed rgyal po*, were produced by taking texts apart, or rendering them, to get excerpts (*drang du shag*²⁸). The *Eighteen Sems sde* texts are generally held to be the five early translations of Vairocana and the thirteen latter translations of Vimalamitra.²⁹ The *Kun byed rgyal po* is not counted among them. Zhi ba 'od does list the *rMad du byung ba* and the rest of the thirteen latter translations of Vimalamitra in the separate category he mentions at the beginning of the passage. It may be that he duplicates his warnings on these works, but his primary concern with the *Thirteen Latter Translations* is that they were put together by Tibetans. His special concern for the *Eighteen Sems sde* texts and the *Kun byed rgyal po* relates to the techniques used to produce them. The first is a question of authorship, the second a question of editorial policy.

Samten Karmay's transcription does not bring this out fully. I offer an alternate reading to the *Open Letter* below.

²⁷ The text reads "nyang stod khro gangs," which is not an attested place, see Taranatha's *Myang gi chos 'byung*. I believe the best reading is 'nyang stod khrod gangs," which I follow in my translation. Nyang (Myang) was an important area in the early development of rDzogs chen. Nyang Ting 'dzin bzang po, a student of dPal gyi Seng ge, who was also a student of Vimalamitra, built a temple there.

²⁸ Sog zlog pa uses "drang" and "drangs" as nominal forms of "'dren." E.g. *ibid.*, p. 467 line 6 (Sog zlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan).

²⁹ Sog zlog pa also points this out, p. 469: "They say that Vairocana's five early translations are piled on top of the *rMad du byung ba* and the rest of Vimala's latter translations, but this is not what is intended" (*rmad byung la sogs pa bi ma la'i phyis 'gyur bcu gsum gyi steng du | bai ro'i snga 'gyur lnga bsnan pa la zer ba de ma dgongs pa'o*).



Page 464 of Sog zlog pa bLo gros rgyal mtshan's
gSang sngags snga' 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa snga phyir byung ba rnams kyi lan du brjod pa
nges pa don gyi 'brug sgra.³⁰

Note that on Line 4 the reading is: nyang stod khro gangs su drang du shag tshul gyis byas pa'i sems bde bco brgyad kyi rgyud rnams.

On line five the reading is: dbang bskur gyi man ngag dang. | bha pa'i man ngag dang. | sems nyams kyi man ngag dang. |

Samten Karmay³¹ has read: nyang stod khro gangs su drang nga shag tshul gyis byas pa'i sems sde³² bco brgyad kyi rgyud rnams la/ kun byed rgyal po dang/ mdo bcu gsang ba dang/ ye shes gsang ba dang/ 'grel ba dang sa bcod dang/ dbang bskur gyi man ngag dang/ sgom pa'i man ngag dang/ sems nyams kyi man ngag dang/.

There is clearly some problem with the reading. While Sog zlog pa copies "drang du shag tshul" in his quotation of Zhi ba 'od, he comments on the passage saying: "The Dharma Cycles of the *Eighteen Sems sde* that were composed by Drang nga Shak Tshul at Nyang stod khro gangs include the *Kun byed rgyal po*" (*nyang stod khro gangs su drang nga shak tshul gyis brtsams pa'i sems bde bco brgyad kyi chos skor rnams la | kun byed rgyal po*).³³ He also uses this name later on: "They say that the *Kun byed rgyal po* was fabricated by Drang nga Shag Tshul" (*kun byed rgyal po drang nga shag tshul gyis byas zer*).³⁴ Samten Karmay has noted the unusualness of the name.³⁵ I can locate no other appropriate reference to this name. It is possible that Sog zlog pa misunderstood Zhi ba 'od's statement, either by accident or with deliberation, replacing a description of the editing process with a personal name.

The Integrity of the Early Translations

It is especially interesting that Zhi ba 'od does not speak out against the five early translations of Vairocana, the *Nam mkha' che* in particular, even though he does speak out against gNubs chen's commentary.³⁶ Can we be sure that

³⁰ Sog zlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, vol. 1, p. 464.

³¹ Karmay, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

³² Samten Karmay notes that he has read "sde" for "bde".

³³ Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, p. 469.

³⁴ Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, p. 470.

³⁵ Karmay, "A Discussion on the Doctrinal Position of rDzogs-chen from the 10th to the 13th Centuries", *Journal Asiatique*, 1975, Tome CCLXIII, p. 151.

³⁶ Zhi ba 'od does speak out against the "rgyal po chos lnga" (S. G. Karmay p. 16). Sog zlog pa comments on this: "They say the Five Dharmas for the King are Vairo's Five Early Translations, but I believe they are something else. Due to the fact that these books have not been catalogued, there is no reason to categorize them as such" (*rgyal po'i chos lnga ni | bai ro tsa na'i lnga 'gyur lnga po la zer te | gshan shig yin snyam du dgongs pa 'dra'o 'di'i sdebs*

Zhi ba 'od, gNubs chen, and the *Paṅ sgrub* have the same text in mind when they say “*Nam mkha' che*”? Let us have a look at gNubs chen's commentary, the *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma*.

The rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma

The *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma* is a commentary on the *Byang chub kyi sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. It can be found at present in the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* collection.³⁷ The text's colophon does not explicitly state that gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye she is its author. The title *Rig pa'i nyi ma* is directly associated with gNubs chen in Zhi ba 'od's *Open Letter*. The style of writing and vocabulary usage are consistent with that in gNubs chen's *bSam gtan mig sgron*.³⁸ I do not doubt that this is gNubs chen's writing.

The Fifty Five Verses

The text gNubs chen comments on is a fifty five verse monologue. It is substantially the same text we have in Chapter 30 of the *Kun byed rgyal po*. These same fifty five verses also appear in three other texts found in the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* collections: the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud*, the *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba*, and the so-called *Khyung chen lding ba*.

I offer a critical edition of these fifty five verses in Appendix A which takes into account the versions from the *Rig pa'i nyi ma*, the three texts just mentioned, and the following editions of the *Kun byed rgyal po*: the *bKa' 'gyur* collections from sDe dge, Nar thang, Lhasa, and Urga along with the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* collections from mTshams brag, gTing skyes, and the *bKa' ma rgyas pa*. This edition also references quotations of these fifty five verses as found in the *bSam gtan mig sgron* and the *Paṅ sgrub rnams kyi thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma*.

To gain a better understanding of why Zhi ba 'od made warnings about these documents let us examine similarities and differences in the extant versions of the Fifty Five Verses: the introductions, closings, and important differentials in content.

Differentials in the versions

The Rig pa'i nyi ma

gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes tells us that the text he is commenting on is called *Byang chub kyi sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. He describes the content of the work as follows:

rnam la yang rnam gzhas ma yin pa'i gtan tshigs 'god rgyu ma byung bar 'dug l, Sog zlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, p. 471).

³⁷ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, vol. 103, pp. 51-112. This copy of the collection of manuscripts is a personal possession of Dr. David Germano, who has kindly made it available to scholars and translators through Gene Smith's TBRC project. Special thanks are in order.

³⁸ This is an intuitive statement I make, based on 27 years of familiarity with the *bSam gtan mig sgron*.

A proper explanation of the versification of words is that a few words are used to carry a vast significance. There are fifty five ślokas,³⁹ they are suitably arranged so that twenty seven topics (*skabs*) are subsumed into six headings (*thig le*).⁴⁰

*tshig sdeb sbyor legs pas bshad pa ni | tshig nyung la don rgya che
ba'i phyir sho lo ka lnga bcu rtsa phyed dang lnga | skabs nyi shu
rtsa bdun | thig le drug rim par tshig don bsdu legs su bkoā pa
rnams so |*

The text *gNubs chen* describes begins with the words: “Homage to the Blessed One Vajrasattva” (*bCom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa' la phyag 'tshal lo*). His text has no preamble. It does have a colophon, where we find the title of the text presented in the Indian language at the commentary's end:

These words were proclaimed by the glorious Vajrasattva, the personification of all the Blessed One's transmissions. The significance of the title has been explained to be *Mahā Ākāśa Kārikā*.

The *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma* is an illuminator,
An extract of the significant roots
From a vast mental transmission.
This is only for mature vow keepers.
May it not come into contact with degenerates
Who use its words to deceive.
This ends the commentary on the *Nam mkha' che*.

*de skad ces bcom ldan 'das lung thams cad kyi bdag nyid dpal rdo
rje sems dpas gsungs pa | ma haa a ka sha ka ri ka zhes mtshan don
bstan pa'o | don gyi rtsa ba lung sems yongs kyi bcud | rnal 'byor
rig pa'i nyi ma snang byed pa | dam can spu rgyu can las ma gtogs
pa | nyams pa bka' slu rnams dang ma phrad cig | nam mkha che'i
'grel pa rdzogs sto | |*

The *Rig pa'i nyi ma* presents the text of each verse written out in full. The heading and topic titles are also written into the commentary as quotations from the Tantra. The fifty five verses it contains are dissimilar from all other available versions of these verses in two ways: between verse 21 and 22 of all other versions *gNubs chen* has a verse that is otherwise unattested:⁴¹

*lus dang ngag gi bya brtsal med
ting 'dzin sems kyi rims gsal med*

³⁹ Four lined verses with seven syllables each.

⁴⁰ The *Thig le drug* is a known rubric in *rDzogs chen* teaching. See Karmay, *The Great Perfection (rDzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, Brill's Tibetan Studies Library, vol. 11, Leiden, 2007, p. 118. Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (1042-1136) presents a discussion of this grouping in his *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*. See *Rong zom bka' 'bum*, Reproduced from a manuscript copy of an incomplete print from the Ze-chen blocks with the detailed *dkar-chag* of 'Jam-mgon Mi-pham rin-po-che. Published by Kusang Topgay, Thimphu, Bhutan, 1976, pp. 217-219.

⁴¹ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (kaH thog), vol. 104, p. 80.

ma nor lam gyi sa stegs med
mthar phyin gzhan nas 'dod pa med

gNubs chen achieves fifty five verses by leaving out verse number thirty eight.

A number of important *Sems sde* texts are cross referenced in the commentary. These include the *Khu byug*,⁴² the *Khyung chen*,⁴³ the *rMad byung ba*,⁴⁴ the *bDe 'byams*,⁴⁵ and the *sPyi gcod*.⁴⁶

The Kun byed rgyal po

The *Kun byed rgyal po* has at present become the *locus classicus* for Vairocana's five early translations.⁴⁷ It contains these renditions of the Five Early translations:

- Chapter 31: *rDo rje tshig drug* a.k.a. *Rig pa'i khyu phyug*.
- Chapter 22: *Khyung chen lding ba*.
- Chapter 26: *rDo la gser zhun*.
- Chapter 27: *rTsal chen sprugs pa*.
- Chapter 30: *rDo rje sems dpa'i rang bzhin mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*.

Chapter 30 consists of fifty five verses, the same verses we have in the *Mahā Akaśa Kārikas*, excepting the above mentioned differences in verses 22 and 38 and the addition of a preamble at the beginning. Since the fourteenth century C.E. the *Kun byed rgyal po* has been included in the *bKa' 'gyur*, a widely distributed and universally recognized source of authenticated Buddhist literature in Tibet. This was not the case at Zhi ba 'od's time, as the *bKa' 'gyur* had not yet been compiled.⁴⁸

The *Kun byed rgyal po* is currently available in versions from both the *bKa' 'gyur* and from *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* collections. The text of chapter 30, the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan Nam mkha' che*, is basically the same in all of them. The opening to chapter 30 of the *Kun byed rgyal po* sets the stage for the presentation by Kun byed to Vajrasattva:

Then the Bodhicitta, Kun byed rgyal po, proclaimed this *Mi nub rgyal mtshan*, the transmission of being perfect without doing [anything], to Sems dpa' rdo rje, his own essential character, for it is Sems dpa' rdo rje's true nature:

⁴² *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (kaH thog), vol. 104, p. 88.

⁴³ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (kaH thog), vol. 104, p. 66.

⁴⁴ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (kaH thog), vol. 104, p. 62.

⁴⁵ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (kaH thog), vol. 104, p. 92.

⁴⁶ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (kaH thog), vol. 104, p. 69.

⁴⁷ Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682), considered the five early translations to have come from the *Kun byed rgyal po*. See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 207 n. 7.

⁴⁸ The early compilation of the *bKa' 'gyur* was done by Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290-1364). Bu ston did not include the *Kun byed rgyal po*, but it was added soon after. For a detailed discussion see Neumeier-Dargyay *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind The Motherly Buddha* p. 23-26.

O Sems dpa' rdo rje! You! Listen!
Sems dpa' rdo rje,
I must teach you your own true nature.
You are Kun byed. That is me.
I have always been the Bodhicitta.
The Bodhicitta is as follows:

Then the Bodhicitta, Kun byed rgyal po, proclaimed this Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan Nam mkha' che:

De nas byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po des nyid kyi snying po sems dpa' rdo rje la sems dpa' rdo rje nyid kyi rang bzhin bya med rdzogs pa'i lung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan 'di gsungs so

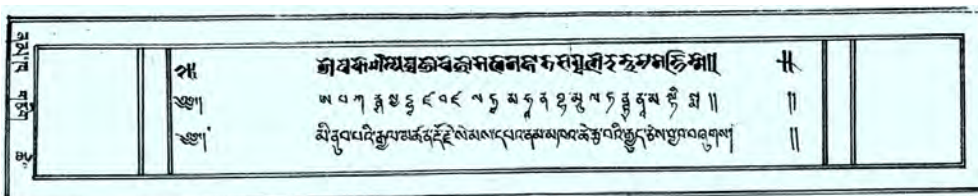
*kye sems dpa' rdo rje khyod nyon cig
sems dpa' rdo rje khyod nyid la
nyid kyi rang bzhin bstan par bya
nyid ni kun byed nga yin te
nga ni ye nas byang chub sems
byang chub sems ni 'di lta'o*

des na byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po des mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan nam mkha' che 'di gsungs so

At the end of the fifty five verses we read:

This ends the thirtieth chapter of the *Byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po*: *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan*, the true nature of Vajrasattva.

byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po las rdo rje sems dpa'i rang bzhin mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi le'u ste sum chu pa'o



Cover Page of *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud*⁴⁹

⁴⁹ bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa (kaH thog), vol. 104, p. 5.

*Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan
rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud*

In the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* collection we find a text which has a cover page with the title *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud*. The title at the beginning of the text itself is *rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. Its Indian language title is *Vajra Svabhāwa Mahākarśa Kārika*. The text contains the same set of fifty five verses as that found in the *Kun byed rgyal po*, but is missing verse thirty eight. It begins with the words: "Homage to the Blessed One Vajrasattva" (*bCom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa' la phyag 'tshal lo*). Without further ado, the fifty five verses are presented. The verses are divided into topics (*skabs*) and headings (*thig le*).

The text does have a colophon:

This ends the oral proclamation by the glorious Vajrasattva, the personification of all transmissions, of the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. At the second heading, that of Samantabhadra,⁵⁰ just after the words "mthong ba med," there follows:

*nyon mongs pa yi dbang gis na |
tā la'i mgo bo bcad pa dang |
sa bon me yis bsregs pa dang |
de yi dbang du mi 'gyur ston*

After that "rNam grangs" and the rest [of verse thirty nine] is proclaimed. This verse about the Bodhicitta not being controlled by karma or emotions is in the *Kun byed*.

*rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che | lung thams cad kyi bdag nyid
dpal rdo rje sems dpa'i zhal nas gsungs pa rdzogs so | | 'di la kun
tu bzang po'i thig le'i skabs gnyis par | mthong ba med | ces pa'i
'phror | nyon mongs pa yi dbang gis na | tā la'i mgo bo bcad pa
dang. | sa bon me yis bsregs pa dang. | de yi dbang du mi 'gyur
ston | de nas rnam grangs sogs gsung te | byang chub kyi sems las
dang nyon mongs pa'i dbang du mi 'gyur ba'i don gi tshigs bcas 'di
kun byed na bzhugs |*

rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba

The gTing skyes and Rig 'dzin nor bu⁵¹ editions of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* contain a text called *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba*. The Indian language title is *Āryapada Vajrasattva*. The text starts right out, without homage or preamble, on the first of the fifty five verses: "rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha che..."

⁵⁰ According to the *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma*, the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che zhes rtsa ba'i rgyud*, and the so-called *Khyung chen lding ba*, the *kun tu bzang po'i thig le* begins with verse 48.

⁵¹ My discussion is based on the gTing skyes edition. I have not yet examined the Rig 'dzin nor bu edition.

The fifty five verses are given in the same order as in the *Kun byed rgyal po*, and are not divided into headings (*thig le*) and topics (*skabs*). At the end of the text there is this colophon:

This ends the *Byang chub sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan lta ba nam mkha' che*. The *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che* was proclaimed in the cave of Asura 'Od ldan by the master from Urgyan, dGa' rab rdo rje.

*Byang chub sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan lta ba nam mkha' che rdzogs so | rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che 'u rgyan gyi slob dpon dga' rab rdo rjes dpal a su ra 'od ldan gyi brag phug tu gsungs pa rdzogs so |*⁵²

The So-called *Kyung chen lding ba*

In Volume 2 of the *Vairo rgyud 'bum* there is a cover page with the title *Khyung chen lding ba*. The text following it is catalogued under this title. The text given is exactly that we find in the *Mahā Akāśa Kārika* except that verse number thirty eight is included. It presents no Indian or Tibetan title, and no preamble. It starts right out with "Homage to the Blessed One Vajrasattva" (*bCom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa' la phyag 'tshal lo*). The text starts out with "The topic of reality" (*chos nyid kyi skabs*). There follow the fifty five verses, beginning with "rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che." The verses are divided up into headings (*thig le*) and topics (*skabs*). At the end there is a colophon:

These words were proclaimed by the glorious Vajrasattva, the personification of all the Blessed One's transmissions. This is the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. The end.

Bcom ldan 'das lung thams cad kyi bdag nyid dpal rdo rje sems dpas de skad gsungs so | rdo rje sems dpa nam mkha' che | rdzogs so |

Distinctions

There are five remarkable distinctions to be noted between these renditions of the fifty five verses: the title, the speaker, added and missing verses, headers and topics, and the five lined verse.

The Title

The *Rig pa'i nyi ma* purports to comment on a text with the title of *Byang chub sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. At the very end of the text gNubs chen tells us that the significance of the title is *Mahā Akāśa Kārika*.

The text with a cover page where we find the title *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud* has a title at the beginning of the

⁵² gTing skyes, vol. 1, p. 430.

text itself: *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. It's Indian language title is *Vajra Svabhāwa Mahā Akarsha Kārika*. The sMin gling manuscript of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* catalogued by 'Jigs med gling pa, which has not yet been recovered, has a text titled *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che* translated by Śrī Simha and Vairocana. It is likely the same text.

The *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba* has a title in the colophon: *Byang chub sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan lta ba nam mkha' che*.

The So-called *Khyung chen lding ba* also has a title in the colophon: *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*.

The *Kun byed rgyal po's* chapter thirty ends with a colophon: *Byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po las rDo rje sems dpa'i rang bzhin mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi le'u ste sum chu pa'o*.

There is an evident interchange between *rDo rje sems dpa'i rang bzhin* and *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba*. There is also an interchange between *rDo rje sems dpa' Nam mkha' che* and *Mi nub rgyal mtshan Nam mkha' che*. The presence of an Indian Language title in only the *rTsa ba'i rgyud*, it appearing to be a Prakrit form of the title's translation in the colophon of Nubs chen's *Rig pa'i Nyi ma*, which appears to be pure Sanskrit, is noteworthy.

The Speaker

The speaker of the fifty five verses in the *Kun byed rgyal po* is Kun byed rgyal po. In the *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud* and the *So-called Khyung chen lding ba* they are spoken by Vajrasattva. In the *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba* they come to us from dGa' rab rdo rje.⁵³

It is not necessary to look for a contradiction in this. Chapter thirty of the *Kun byed rgyal po* starts right out by telling us that the speaker, Kun byed rgyal po, is none other than Vajrasattva, who is the listener. It sounds almost as if Kun byed rgyal po is talking to himself in a mirror. This accommodates the larger structure of the text, where Kun byed rgyal po is the overarching character. In the *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba* dGa' rab rdo rje delivers these verses at a geographical location on earth. We might take this to explain how these lofty teachings became available in our world. It is possible to understand Vajrasattva as the originator of these words in any case, but this understanding will have been informed by the greater tradition. It is not immediately evident in the texts.

Added and Missing Verses

gNubs chen's *Rig pa'i nyi ma* has an otherwise unattested verse between verses 21 and 22. He achieves fifty five verses by leaving out verse 38.

The *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud* also lacks verse 38, although it does not add a verse, as gNubs chen's text does. The resulting text has only 54 verses. The scribe notes this in the colophon and supplies us with verse 38, taking it from the *Kun byed rgyal po*. We may speculate that the scribe was working with a manuscript representing

⁵³ According to the *Vairo 'dra bag*, an early biography of Vairocana, the very first thing dGa' rab rdo rje did when he was born was to recite the *rDo rje sems dpa' Nam mkha' che*. See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 19.

the same lineage that gNubs chen had used for his commentary. It is possible that the scribe lifted the verses out of gNubs chen's *Rig pa'i nyi ma* to build his text. Differentials in details such as the wording of the Indian language title make it preferable to posit that this was not so. In any case a thorough knowledge of the content of the *Kun byed rgyal po* preceded the copying of this manuscript. We cannot guess whether this scribe left out the verse between 21 and 22, believing it to be extraneous due to its absence from the *Kun byed rgyal po*, or it was left out by an earlier scribe in the same lineage. We know for sure that this scribe took the text in the *Kun byed rgyal po* as the *locus classicus* and prepared his manuscript in conformity with it. His integrity is remarkable: he notes the omitted verse and provides his source for the correction, rather than correcting it silently.

Headers and Topics

gNubs chen tells us that the text has six headers (*thig le*) to divide twenty seven topics (*skabs*). In the actual commentary he gives twenty six topics. This is how he explains the difference:⁵⁴

Under the “Heading on *dByings*” the first three topics teach that reflexive awareness is effectively the source of everything, which ascertains the titles. The last one joins the presentation on *dByings kyi mtshan nyid* with the *Ngo bo* into a fourth topic, so there is certainly no contradiction.

*dByings kyi thig le | zhes pa | Skabs dang po gsum gyis don gyis
rang rig pa ni kun gyi 'byungs par bstan pas nges tshig 'grub ste |
tha ma ni dbyings mtshan nyid dang ngo bo ston pas skabs bzhi
bsdu ba'ang mi 'gal bar nges pa'o |*

The *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud* and the so-called *Khyung chen lding ba* present the same headings and topics, indicating a reliable textual tradition where the index is included with the verses as the text of the *Kārikās*. On the other hand, the *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba* and the *Kun byed rgyal po* both lack these headers and topics, indicating a very strong textual tradition without this internal indexing.

The Five Lined Verse

The text gNubs chen comments on in his *Rig pa'i nyi ma* has fifty five verses. Fifty four of them are normal *ślokas* with four *padas* or lines. Verse number four is different. It has five lines:

*'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das
chub par gnas pas bcom ldan 'das
'gro ba kun la rang bzhin gnas
phyin ci log tu rnam brtags kyang*

⁵⁴ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (kaH thog), vol. 104, p. 67. This information tends to disprove any hypothesis that gNubs chen himself wrote the *Mahā Ākaśa Kārikās*.

grol ba rang byung gzhan las min

The *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba* also has five lines:

*'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das
chub par gnas pas bcom ldan 'das
grol ba kun la rang bzhin gnas
phyin ci log tu rnam rtogs kyang
grol ba rang byung gzhan las min*

The only difference is in the first syllable of the third *pada*, the preferred reading being gNubs chen's version. In all other versions the verse reads:

*'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das
'gro ba kun la rang bzhin gnas
phyin ci log tu rnam brtags kyang
grol⁵⁵ ba rang byung gzhan las min⁵⁶*

The second line is missing.

Verse Number Four in Other Nam mkha' Che Tantras

This same verse is found outside of the Fifty Five Verses in a number of *Nam mkha' che* Tantras. The *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa* reads:⁵⁷

*'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das
chub par gnas pas bcom ldan 'das
'gro ba kun la rang bzhin gnas
phyin ci log tu rnam brtags kyang
grol ba rang byung gzhan las med*

The *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che'i rgyud* reads:⁵⁸

*'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das
chub par gnas pas bcom ldan 'das
'gro ba kun la rang bzhin gnas
ye nas rgyal ba'i dkyil 'khor nyid
phyin ci log tu rnam brags kyang
grol ba rang byung gzhan las min*

The *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud* reads:⁵⁹

'byung ba la stsogs bcom ldan 'das | |

⁵⁵ The So-called *Khyung chen lding ba* has "gro".

⁵⁶ The *Urga bKa' 'gyur's Kun byed rgyal po* has "med".
mTshams brag *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 3, p. 114.

⁵⁷ mTshams brag *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 3, p. 171.

⁵⁸ mTshams brag *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 3, p. 171.

⁵⁹ *Vairo rGyud 'bum*, vol. 1, p. 337.

chub par gnas pas bcom ldan 'das | |
'gro ba kun la rang bzhin gnas | |
sangs rgyas kun gyis rgyud nyid las | |
'gro ba rang byung gzhan las min | |

Transmissions and Commentaries

Dudjom Rinpoche tells us that the transmission of Vairocana's teachings has three main branches: one through the Sogdian dPal gyi Ye shes to Gra dPal gyi snying po, one through the Sogdian dPal gyi Seng ge to gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes, and a third through gTsang Shak rdor on down to the Zur.⁶⁰

dPal gyi Seng ge is mentioned as the translator of the *Latter Kun byed rgyal po* along with Vairocana. He is also the teacher of gNubs chen, who wrote the *bSam gtan mig sgron*. According to Zhi ba 'od, gNubs chen also wrote the *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma*.⁶¹ This shows the close relationship between the transmission through dPal gyi seng ge dgon po with three of the texts interdicted by Zhi ba 'od.

The *Pañ sgrub rnams kyi thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma* consists of meditation and practice instructions related to each of six *Sems sde* texts. At its end we find the following statement:

This *Heart Sun* is bequeathed
 To dPal gyi Ye shes,
 Seer of the significance of glory.
 Hold on to it as if it were your heart.
 The End.⁶²

dpal gyi don mthong dpal gyi ye shes la
snying gi nyi gtad do snying ltar chongs
rdzogs sho
I thi

The connection with the transmission through dPal gyi ye shes is clear. We might even wonder whether Vairocana himself wrote this book for his student.

The Blue Annals tells us that Zhig po bdud rtsi, who lived from 1143 to 1199,⁶³ studied "the twenty four Tantras of the "Mental" Class, including the ten *mDo* of *Kun byed*. The basic text of the "Mental Class" (*Sems sde*). . . . Among the great treatises on mind-concentration according to the method of Rong, belonging to the "Great Achievement" (rDzogs chen), he heard the

⁶⁰ Dudjom Rinpoche Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje, vol. 1, p. 540.

⁶¹ The text we have in the *bKa' ma shin to rgyas pa* does not mention an author.

⁶² *Vairo rgyud 'bum*, vol. 1, p. 104. According to my reading this colophon closes the *Pañ sgrub rnams kyi thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma*. The index to the *Vairo rGyud 'bum* and Kapstein ("The Sun of the Heart and the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*") list the *sNying gi nyi ma* as ending on p. 172, where the colophon reads: "This is the teaching on effortlessly acquiring the entirety of all the Buddha's deeds and wonderful qualities (*sangs rgyas kyi mdzad pa thams cad dang' yon tan 'bad med lhun grub du bstan pa'i thi | |*)."

⁶³ See Kapstein, "The Sun of the Heart and the *Bai-ro-rgyud-'bum*", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* (2008, no. 12), p. 276.

exposition of the *rNal 'byor rigs pa'i nyi ma*, the *bSam gtan mig gi sgron ma*, the *bSam gtan snying gi nyi ma*, the *gDar shar*, the *gZer bu*, the *Zhus lan khungs kyi gdab pa*, the *rDo rje sems dpa'i zhu lan*, and others."⁶⁴ Dudjom Rinpoche presents an almost identical clause.⁶⁵ Matthew Kapstein presents the case that our *Paṅ sgrub rnams kyi thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma* may well be the *bSam gtan snying gi nyi ma* mentioned by Dudjom Rinpoche.⁶⁶ At present we note that by the twelfth century the *Kun byed rgyal po*, the *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma*, the *bSam gtan mig gi sgron ma*, and this *Paṅ sgrub rnams kyi thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma* were considered closely related works.

Now the *bSam gtan mig sgron* contains twenty four direct quotations from the *Nam mkha' che*, and all of them refer to text found in the fifty five verses.⁶⁷ The *Rig pa'i nyi ma* comments on this precise set of fifty five verses. The *Paṅ sgrub rnams kyi thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma's* chapter on the *Nam mkha' che*, on the other hand, has thirty eight quotations; only twenty of them correspond with the Fifty Five Verses, indicating that he found more to the *Nam mkha' che* than what is in the *Kun byed rgyal po*.⁶⁸

It is evident that the verses that comprise the Fifty Five Verses were available to both dPal gyi seng ge and dPal gyi ye she's transmissions. It is also evident that gNubs chen has taken the text of the *Kārikās* to represent the entire *Nam mkha' che* teaching, while the author of the *Paṅ sgrub* did not. A larger investigation of all the *Nam mkha' che* literature will be required to determine if there was a difference of opinion in the different transmissions of Vairocana's teachings.

A Difference of Opinion

The *Rig pa'i nyi ma* calls the Fifty Five Verses "*Mahā Ākāśa Kārikā*." It does not say they are the exact text delivered by dGa' rab rdo rje. A careful reading of the colophons tells us that Vajrasattva, who is the personification of all the transmissions, spoke the words. This might be taken to mean that all the verses were originally inspired by Vajrasattva, or it might be taken to mean that Vajrasattva delivered this exact set of fifty five verses as a single text. The scribe who copied the *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud* clearly accepted the latter, as did the scribe who copied the *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba*, attributing the entire text to a proclamation by dGa' rab rdo rje.⁶⁹

The reality is that verses we find in the Fifty Five Verses are to be found throughout the corpus of the *Nam mkha' che* literature, catalogued at the beginning of this article. The preponderance of evidence is that the Fifty Five Verses, referred to hereafter as the *Mahā Ākāśa Kārikā*, were brought together from throughout the oceanic teachings on the *Nam mkha' che* with a specific

⁶⁴ Roerich p. 137.

⁶⁵ Dudjom Rinpoche Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje p. 654. He also lists the ten *mDo* and the *Kun byed rgyal po* as separate works.

⁶⁶ Dudjom Rinpoche Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje, vol. 2, p. 269 and Kapstein p. 276.

⁶⁷ All are transcribed in Appendix B.

⁶⁸ My transcription of the *Nam mkha' che* verses found in the *Thugs kyi Nyi ma* is in Appendix C.

⁶⁹ Ka thog mkhan chen Nus ldan mKhyen brtse'i blo gros supported this view in the early part of the twentieth century.

didactic purpose. This will be documented by a comprehensive study of all these texts.

The *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha che rtsa ba'i rgyud skyes ba med pa* describes a setting where dGa' rab rdo rje requested the teachings of the *Nam mkha' che* from the Bhagavan dPal bDe ba chen po.⁷⁰ Some, not all, of these *Kārikās* are found in the body of that text.⁷¹ It might be argued that these *Kārikās* were the original teaching of Vajrasattva as given to dGa' rab rdo rje, who then passed them down the lineage, but due to turbulent circumstances the verses got scattered into a miscellaneous collection of texts, only to be brought together again by Vairocana's students. This is not a position to be argued with. The present study is merely a study of textual tradition, not a study of the inspiration behind it.

Problems with Designating the Fifty Five Verses as a Root Tantra

Not even one of the versions of the fifty five verses has a colophon stating that Vairocana is the translator. In fact, none of them has a recorded translator at all.

The only text of Fifty Five Verses with the word "Tantra" in its title is the cover page for the *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud*, and this is not the actual title in the text.

We have ten texts that are Tantras (*rgyud*) with "*rDo rje sems dpa' Nam mkha' che*" in their titles that do not present this sequence of fifty five verses, though they do contain verses found in the Fifty Five Verses scattered throughout.

The Hypothesis

The following hypothesis offers a solution. It will be borne out by a careful study of the entire body of *Nam mkha' che* literature along with the *Sems sde* literature in general.⁷²

dPal gyi Seng ge mgon po was a close student of Vairocana and had available to him a number of Tantras concerned with the *Nam mkha' che*. It was he or one of his peers that extracted their outstanding verses, sorting them out with headers and topic titles for a specific presentation, coalescing them into a *Kārikā*. He was involved in the compilation of the *Kun byed rgyal po* materials and was instrumental in the inclusion of the *Mahā Akāśa Kārikās* as chapter thirty. He was a primary teacher of gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes, who wrote the *Rig pa'i nyi ma* as a commentary on this work.

These *Kārikās* were both copied as an individual document and included in the *Kun byed rgyal po* as chapter thirty of that work. Two extant versions of the *Kārikās* retain the original heading and topic titles while they have been

⁷⁰ mTshams brag *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 3, p. 87.1.

⁷¹ Those lines and verses common to both the *Kārikās* and the *rTsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa* have been noted in the present annotated transcription. I have completed a transcript and rudimentary translation of the *rTsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa*, and hope to offer it in an upcoming study.

⁷² The development of a comprehensive database of colophon information is needed. This will allow us to determine to the extent possible who was working on what, with whom, when, where, and under what conditions.

removed from the third one. The original *Kārikās* have five lines in verse number four. The surviving copy that does not have the header and topic titles in the text retains this anomaly, while the *Kārikās* incorporated into the *Kun byed rgyal po* truncate verse number four to four lines, conforming to the format of that text.

The *Kun byed rgyal po* gradually became the *locus classicus* for *Sems sde* Tantras and the *Nam mkha' che* teachings, and came to be accepted as their original source. The so-called *Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud* reflects this with a cover that uses the title *rTsa ba'i rgyud*, even though the true title is "*rDo rje sems dpa nam mkha' che*," simply the first line of the *Kārikās'* first verse. The text is not a *rGyud* at all.

We cannot know what Zhi ba 'od was actually thinking when he wrote his interdictions. The evidence is that the *Mahā Ākāśa Kārikās* were drawn from extant volumes of *Nam mkha' che* Tantras, then put together in a specific order for pedagogical reasons. A Tibetan Language title was created, using the first line of the first verse: *rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*. gNubs chen appears to have translated "*Nam mkha' che*" as "*mahā ākāśa*", adding the word "*kārikā*" to describe the type of document it represents. He did not claim that the text had an Indian title. A version of this text does survive that is presented as a Tantra and formatted with an Indian and Tibetan title, the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha che rtsa ba'i rgyud*. So Pho brang Zhi ba 'od's concern that texts were being created from excerpts and given Indian titles is therefore validated by the evidence. His claim that the *Rig pa'i nyi ma* was presented as an Upadeśa (*man ngag*), however, cannot be substantiated with the available evidence. One explanation for his disgruntlement might be that these *Kārikās* had been incorporated into the *Kun byed rgyal po* as if they represented the entire body of Vairocana's fifth early translation, and that many believed this to be so. This view is supported by Zhig po bdud rtsi's apparent assumption that gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes's works, the *Rig pa'i nyi ma* and the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, were source works on rDzogs chen. If the *Kun byed rgyal po* contained a *Kārikā* in the guise of an authentic Tantra this might also be symptomatic of a general discrepancy between the *Kun byed rgyal po's* recognized status as a Root Tantra for the *Sems sde* teachings and the reality that it was a compendium of these teachings. The *bSam gtan mig sgron* seems to support this misunderstanding by quoting the *Kārikās* as if they were a Mūla Tantra. If this is symptomatic of a larger methodology, Zhi ba 'od may have had reason to be unhappy with the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, along with the *Kun byed rgyal po*.

The *bSam gtan mig sgron* and the *Kun byed rgyal po* are both monumental works that demonstrate the highest understanding. Their brilliance in laying out their topics is inconceivable. They are not, however, Root Tantras, but represent a curriculum for rDzogs chen study.

There is no evidence that gNubs chen acted deceptively in any way. To the contrary, he clearly states that he has extracted his information from other sources. It would seem that by Pho brang Zhi ba 'od's time (the 11th century C.E.) gNubs chen's works and the *Kun byed rgyal po* were believed to be Root Tantras in and of themselves.

We may conclude, then, that a great undertaking toward establishing a curriculum for the study of rDzogs chen, represented by the *Kun byed rgyal po*, was most likely being used in consort with the comprehensive overview

of the great meditation traditions that is the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, these being supplemented by writings such as gNubs chen's *Rig pa'i nyi ma* and the *Paṅ sgrub Nying gi nyi ma*. dPal gi Seng ge and gNubs chen formed a powerful team and no doubt had the blessings of both Vairocana and Vimalamitra. The volumes in question, suitable for a curriculum of advanced study, were produced at the very dawn of the Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism. There was no deception or forgery involved in this great work, but in the course of time these great manuals superceded the original works they had been based upon. The original Tantras were rarely copied, while these manuals became more widely available. It appears that in some cases the manuals were mistakenly presumed to be the original works. Some of them were brought into conformity with standards for the Buddha's teachings and given Indian names by the Tibetans who copied and studied them. Pho brang Zhi ba 'od was not, apparently, speaking out to ridicule the early transmission of the teaching or the message presented in the *Nam mkha' che* literature, but rather to point out that these great manuals represented abridged versions edited by Tibetans rather than original Tantras. His warnings appear to have been motivated by the imperative to separate the Buddha's own words (*bka'*), Sūtra and Tantra, from derivative or commentarial works, Śāstra (*bstan bcos*). This is the reason, then, for his statement that Tibetans were fabricating or developing on (*bcos*) the Buddha's words (*sangs rgyas kyi bka' ltar bcos*).

The Need for Further Research

A true understanding of the *Nam mkha' che* literature will require the development of a critical edition of the body of texts in this cycle. The present annotated transcription of the *Mahā Ākāśa Kārikās* is a start. Concerns of intertextuality will be addressed by locating content different texts share in common, exemplified in this study by differential versions of verse number four. A comprehensive study of intertextual references will facilitate an understanding of which content is common to the *Nam mkha' che* cycle as a whole and which is peculiar to a particular sub-set of its transmission.

The three texts that purport to be root tantras of the *Nam mkha' che*, the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa*, the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che'i rgyud*, and the *Byang chub sems rdo rje 'od 'phro ba'i rgyud kyi rim pa* must be examined for their content as root sources for this teaching.

The three works translated by Vairocana with the assistance of Jñānagarbha, the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa yi ge med pa'i rgyud*, the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud*, and the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyal po rgyas pa's rgyud* should be studied as a special sub-class. The *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa yi ge med pa'i rgyud* and the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud* are attested in virtually every manuscript collection of rNying ma Tantras. Preponderance of instantiation is an important criterion for identifying the most commonly accepted renditions of the teaching. Both of these texts refer to the *rGyal po rgyas pa* internally. Its survival in a single manuscript provides a unique opportunity for research.

The *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud* and the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rgyas pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor pa'i rgyud* appear to be the same text, the *rNal 'byor ma* having a full fifteen chapters while the *rNal 'byor pa* cuts off abruptly at the end of chapter eleven. The *rNal 'byor ma* mentioned by 'Jigs med gling pa was translated by Vimalamitra and dPal brtsegs and had thirteen chapters. This text has not yet been found. A study of how these documents relate to each other and the wider body of *Nam mkha' che* literature is indicated.

The role of Vajrasattva as a cleanser of karmic filth is common to all branches of Tibetan Vajrayana. In the *Byang chub sems rdo rje 'od 'phro ba'i rgyud* there are many verses found in the *Kārikās*, indicating its character as a rDzogs chen document, yet where his function as a cleanser of samaya downfalls is dominant. One important section of the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa* is devoted to behavioral concerns: students killing teachers, teachers killing students, general prohibitions, etc. Morals and discipline as they apply to rDzogs chen in general and the *Nam mkha' che* in particular deserve inquiry.

The classes of *Nam mkha' che* literature that are basic (*rTsa ba*), expanded (*rGyas pa*), and associated with other Tantric cycles should be analyzed for any distinctions they may have as to literary structure and content.

References to non-Buddhist, Buddhist, and amalgamated traditions within the *Nam mkha' che* literature should be identified. A particular starting point might be the reference in verse thirteen of the *Kārikās*, which is attested in the *rTsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa*, the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, and the *Pañ sgrub*, that mentions a "dGon pa'i rgyud" (*Aranyaka Tantra*). The prologue to Chapter thirty of the *Kun byed rgyal po* has Kun byed rgyal po telling Vajrasattva "You are me." Possibilities of some form of Vedanta type thought within the Vajrayana of this period are worth investigation.

The early period this literature represents may give valuable insights into the histories of these traditions. One interesting aspect of this is that there are distinct titles related to Yoginis (*rNal 'byor ma*), Yogis (*rNal 'byor pa*), Kings (*rGyal po*), and Brahmins (*Bram ze*). An inquiry into the ways the *Nam mkha' che* was presented to differing sectors of society will give us a better understanding of rDzogs chen anthropology.

The need for a special study of the relationships between the *Nam mkha' che* cycle and the traditions of Guhyagarbha is indicated by the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che gsang ba'i snying po rnal ma don gyi rgyud* and the *rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che kun to bzang po gsang ba snying po'i rgyud*.

The antiquity of the *Nam mkha' che* literature will provide scholars of language with ample opportunity to look into early Tibetan language and usages. A comparative study of how the different *Nam mkha' che* texts render identical and similar passages will provide valuable insights into the early translation period.



Appendix A

Mahā Ākāśa Kārikā

Annotated Transcript

Legend

Chapter Thirty of the Kun byed rgyal po:

- AA mTshams brag *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 108-113.
BB sDe dGe *bKa' 'gyur*, vol. 1, pp. 71-76.
CC Nar thang *bKa' 'gyur*, vol. 98, pp. 98-105.
DD Lhasa *bKa' 'gyur*, vol. 97, pp. 100-108.
EE Urga *bKa' 'gyur*, vol. 98, pp. 71-76.
FF gTing skyes *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 90-96.
GG *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, vol. 30, pp. 119-127.

rNying ma rgyud 'bum texts:

- HH *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba*
gTing skyes *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 1, pp. 424-430.
II *Khyung chen lding ba*
Vairo rGyud 'bum, vol. 2, pp. 357-366.
JJ *Mi nub rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che zhes rtsa ba'i rgyud*
bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa, vol. 104, p. 5-20.

Commentarial Texts

- RR *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma*
bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa, vol. 104, pp. 51-112.

BGMS *bSam gtan mig gi sgron ma*

Text found in both the Fifty Five Verses and the BGMS is underlined.

Pañ *Pañ sgrub rnam's kyi thugs bcud snying gi nyi ma*

Vairo rgyud 'bum, vol. 1, pp. 65-104.

Text found in both the Fifty Five Verses and the Pan sgrub is bolded.

sKye *rDo rJe sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud skye ba med pa*

mTshams brag rNying ma rgyud 'bum, vol. 3, pp. 81-119.

Text found in both the Fifty Five Verses and the Tantra are in red, annotated to the side.

Headings (*thig le*) and Topics (*skabs*) throughout the transcript are contained only in *Mi nub rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud*, *Khyung chen lding ba*, and *rNal 'byor rig pa'i nyi ma*.

Opening Statements

RR *Rig pa'i nyi ma:*

bcom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa' la phyag 'tshal lo

JJ *Mi nub rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud:*

rgya gar skad du | vajrasvabhaawamahaakarshakaarika Bod skad du | rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che zhes bya ba | | bcom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa' la phyag 'tshal lo | | | chos nyid kyi skabs | rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che. . .

FF *rDo rje sems dpa'i lta ba:*

rgya gar skad du Āryapada Vajrasadva Bod skad du rdo rje sems dpa'i lta ba rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che. . . .

II *Khyung chen lding ba:*

bcom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa' la phyag 'tshal lo | chos nyid kyi skabs | rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che. . . .

Kun byed rgyal po:

De nas byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po des nyid kyi snying
po sems dpa' rdo rje⁷³ la sems dpa' rdo rje nyid kyi rang bzhin bya
med rdzogs pa'i lung mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan 'di gsungs so

kye sems dpa'⁷⁴ rdo rje khyod nyon cig

sems dpa' rdo rje khyod nyid la
nyid kyi rang bzhin bstan par bya
nyid ni kun byed nga yin te
nga ni ye nas byang chub sems
byang chub sems ni 'di lta'o'⁷⁵

des na byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po des mi nub pa'i rgyal
mtshan nam mkha' che 'di gsungs so

The Fifty Five Verses**chos nyid thig le⁷⁶****chos nyid kyi skabs⁷⁷**

1

rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che ----- sKye 113.5
kun bzang⁷⁸ yangs pa chos kyi dbyings
rnam dag lam chen kun sgrol⁷⁹ phyir
mi⁸⁰ skye mi 'gags⁸¹ cir mi dgongs

2

byams pas⁸² don nyid⁸³ rnam spyangs⁸⁴ phyir ---sKye 113.6
snying rje chen po⁸⁵ cir mi mdzad
che bas che ba'i⁸⁶ zab mo yi⁸⁷
yon tan cir yang bsngags⁸⁸ pa med

⁷³ AA "rdo rje sems dpa'".

⁷⁴ FF "kye sems dpa' chen po rdo rje kyod".

⁷⁵ AA FF "'di lta ste".

⁷⁶ II JJ RR.

⁷⁷ Only in RR II JJ.

⁷⁸ II Bzangs.

⁷⁹ HH JJ "grol".

⁸⁰ JJ "ma".

⁸¹ CC DD FF GG HH JJ RR "'gag".

⁸² FF "pa".

⁸³ JJ "ni".

⁸⁴ HH "sbyong" II "dbyangs" RR "sbyang".

⁸⁵ HH "pos".

⁸⁶ HH JJ "ba".

⁸⁷ CC DD "yis" II "mo'I".

⁸⁸ JJ "sngags".

3

don rnam ji bzhin mi⁸⁹ bskyod de⁹⁰ ----- BGMS 295.3 – sKye 113.7
bya ba med pas⁹¹ grol bas⁹² grol
rang⁹³ byung ye shes btsal⁹⁴ med pas
grol na⁹⁵ grol ba'i lam yang ston

rang bzhin gyis gnas pa'i skabs⁹⁶

4

'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das⁹⁷
'gro ba kun la rang bzhin gnas
phyin ci log tu [7] rnam brtags kyang --- Pan 82.2 – sKye 114.1 (line order)
grol⁹⁸ ba rang byung gzhan las min⁹⁹

rang bzhin gyis che ba la gnas pa'i skabs¹⁰⁰

5

che ba'i ye shes rnyed dka¹⁰¹ ba¹⁰²
shes¹⁰³ rab thabs la brten pas¹⁰⁴ 'grub¹⁰⁵ ----- BGMS 27.3
ming tsam gzhan la¹⁰⁶ rten¹⁰⁷ 'dra yang

⁸⁹ BGMS "ming".

⁹⁰ FF "te" BGMS "do".

⁹¹ A "par" RR "las".

⁹² JJ "ba'ang".

⁹³ CC DD "nges 'byung ye shes".

⁹⁴ FF "brtsol" RR "brtsal".

⁹⁵ AA FF HH JJ BGMS RR "nas".

⁹⁶ II "rang bzhin lhun gyis gnas pa'i skabs" JJ RR "rang bzhin gyis gnas pa'i skabs"

⁹⁷ HH

'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das

chub par gnas pas bcom ldan 'das

grol ba kun la rang bzhin gnas

phyin ci log tu rnam rtogs kyang

grol ba rang byung gzhan las min.

RR

'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das

chub par gnas pas bcom ldan 'das

'gro ba kun la rang bzhin gnas

phyin ci log tu rnam brtags kyang

grol ba rang byung gzhan las min.

Note that II follows KBG while RR follows HH. The *rTsa ba'i rgyud skyed ba med pa* p. 114 has:

'byung ba chen po bcom ldan 'das |

| chub par gnas pas bcom ldan [2] 'das;

| 'gro ba kun la rang bzhin gnas |

| phyin ci log tu rnam brtags kyang. |

| grol ba rang byung gzhan las med |.

⁹⁸ II "'gro".

⁹⁹ EE "med".

¹⁰⁰ II gsum pa.

¹⁰¹ BGMS "'dga".

¹⁰² II "bas".

¹⁰³ BGMS "sher".

¹⁰⁴ II RR "rten".

¹⁰⁵ II "grub".

¹⁰⁶ HH "las".

¹⁰⁷ BB DD EE GG HH JJ "brten".

mngon sum¹⁰⁸ bde ba rang las 'byung --- Pan 104.3 - sKye 114.3

rtsol¹⁰⁹ ba dang bral ba'i skabs

6

cho 'phrul chen po dka' ba min-----Pan 78.6

yon tan kun dang¹¹⁰ stobs kyi rnams¹¹¹ --- sKye 300.2

ji bzhin rtogs¹¹² pa¹¹³ phra¹¹⁴ ba yis¹¹⁵ --sKye 299.2

de ma thag tu rang las 'byung¹¹⁶

7

snang ba med pa'i chos nyid ni¹¹⁷ ----- Pan sgrub 67.1

ma brtsal¹¹⁸ gzha¹¹⁹ pas¹²⁰ bsgoms¹²¹ pa yin ----BGMS 414. - sKye 116.6

de dang der ni rnam btsal¹²² na ---- BGMS 352.4 Pan sgrub 66.5

de las de bzhin de mi¹²³ 'byung¹²⁴

brjod pa dang bral ba'i skabs¹²⁵

8

mchog tu gsang ba'i chos nyid ni ----- BGMS 383.4

rna dbang gzhan las¹²⁶ thos¹²⁷ mi 'gyur

de bzhin lce yi¹²⁸ dbang pos¹²⁹ kyang

de la brjod du rdul tsam med - sKye 85.6

dbyings kyi thig le

'gro ba las kyis mi 'khol ba'i skabs¹³⁰

9

'gro ba'i sdug bsngal byang chub sems

kun tu chub pas¹³¹ rnam par rol¹³²

¹⁰⁸ Pan RR "gsum".

¹⁰⁹ JJ RR "brtsal".

¹¹⁰ JJ "ldan".

¹¹¹ AA FF "stobs rnams kyi".

¹¹² RR "brtags".

¹¹³ HH II "pa'i".

¹¹⁴ II Pan "'phra".

¹¹⁵ II Pan RR "las".

¹¹⁶ HH "de ma thag tu 'byung bar 'gyur".

¹¹⁷ AA FF "'di".

¹¹⁸ FF GG II "btsal" HH "rtsal" BGMS "bcol".

¹¹⁹ FF GG II BGMS "bzha" HH "gzhan".

¹²⁰ JJ "na".

¹²¹ AA FF II BGMS "bsgom" HH JJ "sgom".

¹²² HH "rnams brtsal" BGMS "brtsal".

¹²³ II "de las de bzhin de 'byung".

¹²⁴ EE 'gyur" FF adds a symbol that looks like ";;" at the end of the line.

¹²⁵ II adds "lga pa".

¹²⁶ AA II RR "la".

¹²⁷ HH "thob" BGMS "thong".

¹²⁸ CC HH II RR "lce'i" BSMG "ltse'i".

¹²⁹ BGMS "po".

¹³⁰ RR "thig le gsum pa'i don bstan pa'i phyir 'gro ba las kyis mi 'khol ba'i skabs".

¹³¹ JJ "pa".

de la bskyod pa¹³³ med bzhin du
nam mkha'i mtha' ltar mnyam par gnas

10

khyad par cir yang mtshungs pa la ----- BGMS 424.1
las so zhes ni¹³⁴ rnam par brtags¹³⁵
ci ste las¹³⁶ kyi¹³⁷ dbang 'gyur¹³⁸ na
rang byung ye shes yod ma yin

11

rgyu nyid rdo rje rkyen dang 'dra ----- BGMS 342.4
ma skyes pas na 'jig pa med¹³⁹ ----- BGMS 284.3
gdod¹⁴⁰ nas snying po byang chub la ----- sKye 95.3
btsal¹⁴¹ ba'i bsam pas dbyings mi¹⁴² bskyod ----- sKye 110.1

btsal¹⁴³ sems dang bral ba'i skabs

12¹⁴⁴

yon tan chen po'i¹⁴⁵ bsam gtan ni
bsam gtan nyid pas¹⁴⁶ bsam du med -Pan 67.1 - BGMS 412.6
ma bsam¹⁴⁷ ma sbyangs¹⁴⁸ chos bzhin du – sKye 115.7 different translation?
rnam rtog nyid las ye shes¹⁴⁹ skye -- Pan 82.2 – sKye 114.5

13

phra¹⁵⁰ ba'i sgo mor ming btags¹⁵¹ te¹⁵² -- BGMS 434.4 Pan 66.5

¹³² CC “rnam par grog” DD “rnam par grol”.

¹³³ FF “bskyo ba”.

¹³⁴ HH “pa”.

¹³⁵ FF “brtags”.

¹³⁶ HH “de’I dbang gyur na”

¹³⁷ JJ “kyis”

¹³⁸ BGMS RR “gyur”

¹³⁹ This line is quoted at the end of BGMS 342.4 (2 lines) and at the beginning of BGMS 284.3 (3 lines)

¹⁴⁰ CC “gdon”

¹⁴¹ HH “brtsol” JJ “brtsam pa’i” RR “brtsal”

¹⁴² BB “dbyings mir bskyod”

¹⁴³ RR “brtsal”

¹⁴⁴ Compare skye ba med pa 115.7:

| thams cad ma lus kun rdzogs pas |

| yon tan bsam gtan bsam du med |

| ma bsam ma byangs chos su gnas |

| mi rtog rtog [116.1] las ‘das pa na |

| rnam rtog nyid kyang ye shes sku |

| rgyu ‘bras mi ‘byed lhun grub pas |

| phra mo theg pra gdags dang bral |

| chos dbyings dben pa’i [2] dgon rgyud du |

| ‘du mched bcu gnyis gtod mnan pas |.

¹⁴⁵ HH “che ba’i”.

¹⁴⁶ II “las”.

¹⁴⁷ BB EE FF GG HH JJ BGMS “bsams”.

¹⁴⁸ II “dbyangs”.

¹⁴⁹ BGMS is lacking “ye shes” “rnam rtog nyid las skye”.

¹⁵⁰ RR “phra”.

¹⁵¹ GG “brtags” Pan “dogs”.

¹⁵² HH “nas” JJ Pan “shing” BGMS “pas”.

sems kyis¹⁵³ dben pa¹⁵⁴ lam tshol¹⁵⁵ zhing
dgon pa'i rgyud¹⁵⁶ du dben 'dzin zhing¹⁵⁷
brtags na rnam par rtog¹⁵⁸ 'gyur bsgom¹⁵⁹ -- sKye 114.6

14

rgyu dang 'bras bur ming btags¹⁶⁰ te¹⁶¹
 dge sdig gnyis ka¹⁶² rnam par sel¹⁶³
 'jig rten 'di las¹⁶⁴ 'byung ngo zhes
 blang dor brod¹⁶⁵ pa mchog tu bskyed – sKye 115.1 line order different

gnyis su med pa¹⁶⁶ skyon dang bral ba'i skabs

15

chags dang ma chags tshig gi¹⁶⁷ lam
 dbu ma bzhin te¹⁶⁸ brag cha 'dra
 bde dang sdug bsngal rgyu¹⁶⁹ mthun¹⁷⁰ zhes¹⁷¹
 'gro ba'i mgon po sems dpas¹⁷² gsungs

ye shes rang las byung pa'i skabs

16

'dod chags zhe sdang gti mug kyang
 byang chub chen po'i¹⁷³ lam las byung
 kun spyod yon tan rnam lnga yang
 chos nyid dbyings kyi rgyan zhes gsungs -- sKye 86.3

17

nam mkha'¹⁷⁴ rtog pa skye med cing¹⁷⁵ --- Pan 82.2

¹⁵³ II JJ "kyi".

¹⁵⁴ AA FF JJ "pa'i" HH BGMS RR "pas".

¹⁵⁵ II JJ "'tshol" BGMS "rtsal".

¹⁵⁶ II "rgyun tu".

¹⁵⁷ HH II Pan RR "te" JJ "na" BGMS "pa".

¹⁵⁸ HH "rtogs".

¹⁵⁹ II "bsgoms" JJ "sgom".

¹⁶⁰ FF "brtags" HH II RR "'dogs".

¹⁶¹ HH II RR "shing" JJ "nas".

¹⁶² FF HH "gnyi ga".

¹⁶³ Compare skye ba med pa 116.3:

l dge sdig rgyu [3] 'bras gdags su med l

l 'jig rten snga phyi gnyis med cing. l

l thams cad ma lus sangs rgyas pas l

l blang dor brjod pa'i tshig las 'das l.

¹⁶⁴ BB CC EE GG "'jig rten 'di la 'byung".

¹⁶⁵ DD EE "phrod".

¹⁶⁶ RR "pa'i".

¹⁶⁷ JJ "chags dang ma chags tshig lam".

¹⁶⁸ II "du".

¹⁶⁹ EE "bde dang sdug bsngal mthun zhes" There is a marking between bsngal and mthun; there is a similar marking on the bottom of the wood block page; next to it the word "rgyun" is inscribed.

¹⁷⁰ CC FF "'thun".

¹⁷¹ RR "pas".

¹⁷² CC "sems pas".

¹⁷³ GG "byang chub sems dpa'i".

rtog pa de nyid nam mkha' 'dra
 mi chags nam mkha'i¹⁷⁶ bsngo¹⁷⁷ ba las
 rang don chen po nam mkha'¹⁷⁸ 'byung

dbyings rnam par dag pa'i thig le

gzungs kyi sbyor thabs kyi skabs¹⁷⁹

18

rtog med mnyam nyid chos kyi sku
 gzung bas mi zin chu zla 'dra
 kun tu bzang po'i rol pa yis¹⁸⁰
 Aa li Kaa li¹⁸¹ zab tu bstan -----BGMS 27.4

19

'di¹⁸² ni A dang mdzes¹⁸³ pa'i ta
 pa¹⁸⁴ dang yan lag spros¹⁸⁵ pa bzhin
 'jig rten yongs kyi spyod yul la
 sangs rgyas gsung gi zab mo 'byung

20

e ma'o¹⁸⁶ sangs rgyas spyod yul 'di
 btsal¹⁸⁷ bas rnyed pa'i gnas med de
 drug gi chos bzhin yul med pas
 mdongs¹⁸⁸ pas nam mkha' bsnyags¹⁸⁹ pa bzhin

21

gong nas gong du tshangs pa'i lam¹⁹⁰ -----BGMS 319.4
 bya bral chos dang mthun¹⁹¹ pa min¹⁹²
 ci ste lam la¹⁹³ bgrad gyur¹⁹⁴ na
 nam mkha'i¹⁹⁵ mtha' bzhin thob¹⁹⁶ pa med

¹⁷⁴ AA FF HH JJ "mkha'i".

¹⁷⁵ HH "pa".

¹⁷⁶ II RR "mkhar".

¹⁷⁷ DD "sngo ba" JJ "nam mkha'i dngos po la".

¹⁷⁸ II "mkhar".

¹⁷⁹ RR "thig le bzhi pa'I don sbstan pa'i phyir gzungs kyi sbyor thabs kyi skabs".

¹⁸⁰ HH "yi".

¹⁸¹ FF HH II RR "a li ka li" JJ "a li kaa li".

¹⁸² HH BGMS RR "de".

¹⁸³ JJ "mjes".

¹⁸⁴ CC "ba".

¹⁸⁵ HH "spro ba".

¹⁸⁶ II JJ "e ma".

¹⁸⁷ RR "brtsal".

¹⁸⁸ BB GG "ldongs" EE 'sdongs".

¹⁸⁹ BB DD EE GG RR "bsnyabs" CC "brlabs pa" FF "bsnyag" HH "rnyabs" II "rnyag" JJ "bsnyams".

¹⁹⁰ BGMS "las".

¹⁹¹ FF "'thun".

¹⁹² AA FF II JJ "med" HH "bzhin".

¹⁹³ BGMS "gyi".

¹⁹⁴ RR "gyur".

¹⁹⁵ HH "mkha'".

¹⁹⁶ HH II JJ BGMS RR "thug".

RR: At this point gNubs chen includes one verse that is not attested in other sources:¹⁹⁷

lus dang ngag gi bya brtsal med
ting 'dzin sems kyi rims gsal med
ma nor lam gyi sa stegs med
mthar phyin gzhan nas 'dod pa med

yongs su rdzogs pa'i skabs

22
de¹⁹⁸ ltar de bzhin de yi¹⁹⁹ phyir
de la²⁰⁰ de bstan de²⁰¹ yang thob
de ni snying po de bas na
de las²⁰² de byung²⁰³ ngo mtshar²⁰⁴ che

23
sngon gyi de dang da²⁰⁵ ltar de
de bzhin de yi²⁰⁶ gnas su che
de ltar de yi²⁰⁷ lam 'dra ba²⁰⁸
de ni de yi²⁰⁹ rang bzhin no

24
de dang 'dra ba yongs kyi lam²¹⁰
zla ba las byung rten dang bcas
kun gyi mnyam nyid yin pa la²¹¹ ----- BGMS 368.4
phyogs su bltas²¹² pas 'grub²¹³ pa med

chags pa dang bral ba'i skabs

25
da²¹⁴ ltar²¹⁵ bde dang phyi mar²¹⁶ bde

¹⁹⁷ *bKa' me rgyas pa*, vol. 104, p. 80.

¹⁹⁸ FF "da".

¹⁹⁹ II RR "de'i".

²⁰⁰ HH "lta".

²⁰¹ CC "da".

²⁰² RR "bas".

²⁰³ JJ "'byung".

²⁰⁴ EE "tshar".

²⁰⁵ HH "de".

²⁰⁶ HH "ni" II RR "de'i".

²⁰⁷ HH II RR "de'i".

²⁰⁸ AA FF HH RR "bar".

II: sngon gyi de dang da ltar de
de bzhin de'i gnas su che
de ltar de'i rang bzhin no
Apparently the scribe lost a line.

²⁰⁹ HH "de'i".

²¹⁰ AA "la".

²¹¹ HH "kun gyi mnyam pa de nyid yin" II "las".

²¹² BGMS "lta bas".

²¹³ HH II BGMS "grub".

mngon sum²¹⁷ pa dang rgyab nas byung²¹⁸ --- BGMS 433.3 -- sKye 114.5
de yang rnam pa'i skyon yin pas
de la brten²¹⁹ par mi bya'o

gdod ma nas phye ba'i snying po nyid kyi skabs²²⁰

26

dus gsum gcig ste khyad par med
 sngon med phyis²²¹ med gdod nas 'byung²²²
chos skus²²³ khyab pas²²⁴ gcig pa'i phyir ----- BGMS 370.4
che ba'i²²⁵ chen por²²⁶ rang bzhin gnas

kun tu smon²²⁷ dang bral ba'i skabs

27

srid pa gsum na sbyor²²⁸ ba²²⁹ yang ----- BGMS 435.6
 ming tsam sgyu mar snang ba ste
'khor los²³⁰ sgyur ba'i gnas chen yang
sgyu ma²³¹ sbyong²³² ba'i bsti²³³ gnas yin

28

rnam spyod²³⁴ dus la ltos pa²³⁵ rnams -----Pan 80.6
dus der²³⁶ 'byung bar mi²³⁷ 'gyur te
ma bral smon pas²³⁸ spyod²³⁹ pas na
stong pa'i mtshan nyid gsung²⁴⁰ pa bzhin

214 CC "de".
 215 HH JJ RR "lta'i".
 216 HH JJ RR "ma'i".
 217 RR "gsum".
 218 BB EE II JJ "'byung".
 219 II "rten".
 220 RR "gdod ma nas che ba nyid kyi snying po la rang bzhin gyis gnas pa'i skabs".
 221 HH "phyir".
 222 HH RR "byung".
 223 HH "sku".
 224 JJ "par" BGMS "pa'i".
 225 HH BGMS RR "bas".
 226 BGMS RR "po'i".
 227 RR "smon lam".
 228 AA FF II JJ RR "sbyong".
 229 HH "srid pa gsum na sbyor yang".
 230 AA FF HH II BGMS RR "lo".
 231 JJ "mar" BGMS RR "mas".
 232 EE "spyod" HH BGMS "sbyor".
 233 II "gti".
 234 HH "dpyod".
 235 HH "pa'i".
 236 CC GG HH "de".
 237 EE "ma".
 238 AA GG "pa'i" JJ RR "pa".
 239 HH "ma bral smon pa med pas na" Pan "par".
 240 BB EE FF GG HH II JJ "gsungs".

lung ston pa'i skabs

29

gcig ste rnam pa yongs kyis med ----- BGMS 364.5
 rnal 'byor nam mkha'i²⁴¹ bya lam gnas
 ma byung ma skyes snying po la
 sgros²⁴² btags chos kun²⁴³ ga la yod

30

phyi nang gnyis ka²⁴⁴ phyi nyid nang²⁴⁵
 zab mo²⁴⁶ cha shas rtogs²⁴⁷ yul med
 srid pa²⁴⁸ ming tsam log pa'i stobs
 de bas ting 'dzin mnyam dang bral

31

de la tha tshig²⁴⁹ phyi dang nang
 rang²⁵⁰ bzhin phung po kham bzhin gnas
 dus gsum 'di dang mi 'bral bas
 tha tshig²⁵¹ ming²⁵² du btags²⁵³ pa med

ye shes chen po'i thig le

mnyam pa nyid kyi skabs²⁵⁴

32

mi gyo ba ni²⁵⁵ sku yi²⁵⁶ rgya²⁵⁷
 mi bskyod pa²⁵⁸ ni²⁵⁹ ye shes te²⁶⁰
 mi len pa ni²⁶¹ bdag med²⁶² cing
 mi 'dor tshig bral²⁶³ mnyam nyid do

241 HH "mkha".

242 JJ "sgro".

243 HH "su".

244 II "gnyi ga" BGMS RR "gnyis ga".

245 HH RR "na".

246 AA FF BGMS "mo'i".

247 JJ "rtog".

248 FF II "pa'i".

249 CC II RR "tshigs".

250 HH "de".

251 CC II RR "tshigs".

252 RR "ngang".

253 FF "brtags".

254 RR "thig le lnga pa'i don bstan pa'i phyir | mnyam pa nyid kyi skabs".

255 RR "bas na".

256 HH II RR "sku'i".

257 HH "brgya".

258 EE GG "pas".

259 RR "pas na".

260 HH II "che".

261 AA FF HH II JJ RR "mi len pas na".

262 HH "nyid".

263 AA "dang".

33

gang dang gang gi²⁶⁴ gang du yang²⁶⁵ ----- BGMS 331.2
 kun 'khol²⁶⁶ kun²⁶⁷ spyod bdag las²⁶⁸ byung
 'di la skyes pa²⁶⁹ bud med ces
 mnyam pa'i rgyal pos²⁷⁰ yongs²⁷¹ ma gsungs

dnegos grub bde²⁷² la chags pa spong pa'i skabs

34

'di la brtul zhugs drag shul gyis --- BGMS 435.3, Paṅ 78.1
 gnas su bya ba'i ming med de
 a dang²⁷³ par ni rnam ldan na --- Paṅ 81.3²⁷⁴
 sgyu ma'i²⁷⁵ bde ba 'byung²⁷⁶ bar 'dod

35

rang bzhin gcig tu²⁷⁷ ma nges pas²⁷⁸ ----- BGMS 385.1
 ji ltar bstas²⁷⁹ pa²⁸⁰ de ltar snang²⁸¹
 snang 'dod²⁸² rtsol sems²⁸³ bde ba yang²⁸⁴ ----- Paṅ 81.1
 de²⁸⁵ ni de sgrib skyon chen yin²⁸⁶

36

byang chub yan lag kun gyi²⁸⁷ sgo ----- BGMS 64.2
 cha lugs²⁸⁸ bsgoms²⁸⁹ pas chu zla bzhin
 ma gos ma chags 'byung 'gyur yang
 bsgoms²⁹⁰ pas byis ba'i²⁹¹ spyod yul bzhin

²⁶⁴ FF HH JJ "gis".

²⁶⁵ RR "du'ang".

²⁶⁶ AA II "'khor" HH "bkol".

²⁶⁷ BGMS "dun".

²⁶⁸ BGMS "la".

²⁶⁹ AA "ba".

²⁷⁰ II "po".

²⁷¹ DD RR "yong" EE GG "yod".

²⁷² JJ "dnegos grub chen po'i bde ba" RR "dnegos grub chen po bde ba la chags pa spong pa'i skabs".

²⁷³ II "yang dag par".

²⁷⁴ Paṅ puts the last two lines of 34 with the last line of 35:

A dang par ni rnam ldan na
 Sgyu ma'I bde ba 'byung bar 'dod
 De 'dzin pa'i skyon yin te.

²⁷⁵ BGMS "rgyu ba'i".

²⁷⁶ HH "skye" BGMS RR "bskyed".

²⁷⁷ RR "du".

²⁷⁸ This line is in BGMS at 64.2 and 385.1.

²⁷⁹ BGMS "brtags".

²⁸⁰ EE "pas".

²⁸¹ HH "ci ltar ltas pa der snang ste".

²⁸² RR "'os".

²⁸³ RR "ba'i".

²⁸⁴ AA FF "la".

²⁸⁵ Paṅ "di".

²⁸⁶ II "de ni sgrib skyon chen po yin".

²⁸⁷ HH "gyi" BGMS "thi".

²⁸⁸ HH "ma chags".

²⁸⁹ JJ "sgom pa".

²⁹⁰ JJ "sgom pa" BGMS "bsgom pas".

37

dkiyl 'khor ghro²⁹² gnyer cha lugs kyis²⁹³
khro bdag chen po'i lus²⁹⁴ bzung nas
yi ge mngon du phyung²⁹⁵ na²⁹⁶ yang
zhi ba²⁹⁷ de nyid mthong ba min²⁹⁸

38²⁹⁹

nyon mongs pa yi³⁰⁰ dbang gis na³⁰¹ ---- verse missing from JJ & RR
 ta la'i mgo bo³⁰² bcad pa dang
 sa bon me yis bsregs³⁰³ pa dang³⁰⁴
 de yi dbang du mi 'gyur ston

39

rnam grangs brgya stong phrag yas³⁰⁵ pa³⁰⁶
gang ltar spyad³⁰⁷ kyang me tog³⁰⁸ skye ----- Paṅ 77.4
 mtshan ma med pa'i dbang gis na³⁰⁹
 bsti³¹⁰ gnas de³¹¹ las³¹² 'byung mi 'gyur

stsol sems³¹³ dang bral ba'i skabs

40

gleng bral 'di la gnas pa ni³¹⁴
 rnal 'byor de³¹⁵ ni skal³¹⁶ ba bzang
bdag dang gzhan don mi 'byed³¹⁷ pas ----- Paṅ 78.1
 sgyu ma³¹⁸ lhun grub yul la³¹⁹ rol

291 RR "pa'i".

292 BGMS "khra".

293 HH "kyi".

294 HH "cha" BGMS "yul".

295 CC EE GG HH "byung" BGMS "gyur".

296 II RR "ba".

297 RR "ba'i".

298 JJ "med".

299 JJ Verse no. 38 is entirely missing from JJ & RR. There is a comment about this in the colophon of JJ.

300 II "pa'i"

301 AA FF HH "ni"

302 CC "ba"

303 HH "sregs" II "tshig"

304 AA FF "yang" HH II "bzhin"

305 HH "yangs"

306 HH II JJ "pas"

307 HH "skyod"

308 FF "mi rtog"

309 CC DD "ni"

310 HH "sti" II "sti"

311 HH II "'di"

312 AA "la"

313 JJ RR "rtsol ba dang bral ba'i skabs"

314 AA FF "di la gang gnas pa'i" HH "gleng bral 'di la gnas pa yi" II JJ glens bral 'di la gang gnas pa" RR "gleng bral 'di la gnas pa na".

315 JJ "'di".

316 II "bskal".

317 HH "byed".

318 HH "ma'l".

319 HH "las".

chos nyid kun tu mi 'gyur ba'i skabs

41

lhag ma med pas³²⁰ yongs su rdzogs
 'gyur ba ma yin drang³²¹ por gnas
 nam mkha' bzhin du³²² mtha' mnyam zhing
 gzhan la³²³ ltos³²⁴ 'gyur chos ma yin

42

lhun gyis grub³²⁵ pa'i³²⁶ bde chen de³²⁷
 mtshungs ba³²⁸ med pa'i ye shes³²⁹ kyi³³⁰
 rang gi mthu yis³³¹ rig pa las
 chos ni bzhin nas³³² 'byung mi 'gyur³³³

43

sla zhing dka' la³³⁴ sla phyir dka'³³⁵
 mngon sum³³⁶ mi gnas kun tu³³⁷ khyab
 ming tsam³³⁸ 'di zhes bstan par³³⁹ ni --- Paṅ 83.5
 rdo rje sems dpas³⁴⁰ mtshon du med

rgyu rkyen las mi grub³⁴¹ pa'i skabs

44

ngo mtshar rmad byung³⁴² rol³⁴³ pa 'di -----Paṅ 78.1
 bya bral nam mkha' bzhin du gnas³⁴⁴
 cir³⁴⁵ yang mi dmigs gti mug las -----Paṅ 104.3
 de ma thag tu rang³⁴⁶ las 'byung³⁴⁷

320 AA FF JJ "par".
 321 HH "dang".
 322 BB HH "de" EE GG RR "te".
 323 JJ "las".
 324 HH "stobs".
 325 II JJ RR "gnas".
 326 JJ "pas".
 327 HH RR "te".
 328 FF GG RR "pa".
 329 HH "chos nyid".
 330 DD EE GG HH II JJ RR "kyis".
 331 CC EE GG HH II "yi" RR "mthu'i".
 332 II "las".
 333 HH "chos ni 'byung bar mi 'gyur ro".
 334 II "ba".
 335 JJ "dka' phyir sla".
 336 RR "gsum".
 337 JJ "la".
 338 HH "mngon sum 'di zhes".
 339 JJ RR "pa".
 340 HH Paṅ RR "dpa".
 341 JJ "'grub" RR "'gyur ba'i skabs".
 342 Paṅ "'byung".
 343 RR "rim pa".
 344 HH II Paṅ RR "ji bzhin te" JJ "je bzhin du".
 345 HH II "ci".
 346 HH "nga".
 347 HH RR "byung"

45

'di ni thams cad mtshungs pa'i lam
 'gro ba kun la³⁴⁸ rang bzhin gnas
bus³⁴⁹ pas bslad pas 'khrul ba'i phyir³⁵⁰ -----Pan 81.1
smam nyid smam pa tshol³⁵¹ ba bzhin

'gro ba yongs la sangs rgyas³⁵² pa'i skabs

46

go ba'i yul na bde ba che -----BGMS 50.2 and 353.5
 'di ni³⁵³ rnam dag 'jig rten yin
de la phyogs kyi 'od 'dus pas -----Pan 72.3
phyogs bzhi mtshams³⁵⁴ dang bla 'og 'grub

47

ma nges³⁵⁵ 'ja³⁵⁶ tshon kha dog³⁵⁷ las³⁵⁸
rigs kyi khyad par mngon³⁵⁹ par snang
 de bzhin gyo rdul³⁶⁰ mi gyo ba
 'byung ba lnga bas³⁶¹ gtso³⁶² chen yin

kun tu bzang po'i thig le

tshogs 'bul³⁶³ ba'i skabs

48

'das dang ma 'ongs³⁶⁴ da ltar gyi³⁶⁵
 tha snyad ming la³⁶⁶ mi gnas te
 skye 'gag med par rnam³⁶⁷ brtags³⁶⁸ shing
 de³⁶⁹ nyid dus gsum chen por sbyor³⁷⁰

49

mnyam pas³⁷¹ rim par bkod pa med

³⁴⁸ EE GG HH "gyi".

³⁴⁹ JJ "byis".

³⁵⁰ HH "thabs mkhas pa'i spyod yul yin". II: "byis pa 'khrul pas bslad pa'i phyir". RR 'bus pas 'khrul pa bslad pa'i phyir".

³⁵¹ JJ "'tshol".

³⁵² JJ RR "'gro ba yongs la sangs rgyas par bstan pa'i skabs".

³⁵³ BGMS RR "nyid".

³⁵⁴ FF Pan "'tshams".

³⁵⁵ JJ "des".

³⁵⁶ HH "gzha".

³⁵⁷ Pan "dong".

³⁵⁸ HH "gsal".

³⁵⁹ RR "med".

³⁶⁰ RR "dru".

³⁶¹ HH II "las". JJ "po". RR "pas".

³⁶² HH "rtso".

³⁶³ RR "dbul".

³⁶⁴ HH II "byon".

³⁶⁵ HH "gyis".

³⁶⁶ II "las".

³⁶⁷ HH "nas".

³⁶⁸ HH "gtogs". JJ "brtags".

³⁶⁹ II "'di".

³⁷⁰ FF "gnas".

gcig pas phyogs bcu³⁷² bsno³⁷³ dang bral
 tshogs³⁷⁴ kyi rgyan rnams³⁷⁵ bkram pa yang
 rang bzhin gnas pas 'grim³⁷⁶ pa med

50

lhun gyis gnas³⁷⁷ pas mi bsngo³⁷⁸ zhing
 gdod nas dag pas³⁷⁹ bdud rtsi yin³⁸⁰
 'du mched³⁸¹ bcu gnyis khyad par du³⁸²
 lhag pa'i bsam pas gzung ba med

chos³⁸³ kyi rgyan rnams rang bzhin³⁸⁴ lhun gyis grub pa'i skabs³⁸⁵

51

yid kyis³⁸⁶ bsams pas³⁸⁷ yon bdag³⁸⁸ ste ----- BGMS 323.5
 bltas pas³⁸⁹ tshogs³⁹⁰ ni³⁹¹ bkram pa'o³⁹²
 mthong bar gyur pas³⁹³ dngos grub la
 de nyid mnyam gzhag rdzogs³⁹⁴ pa'o

lhun gyis gnas pa'i skabs

52

yud tsam gzung³⁹⁵ bas³⁹⁶ sbyor ba yin
 dga' bar 'gyur³⁹⁷ bas³⁹⁸ dam tshig ste
 thabs kyis³⁹⁹ gar thabs bskyod⁴⁰⁰ pa yis⁴⁰¹

-
- 371 II RR "par".
 372 AA FF HH JJ "su".
 373 HH "sngo". II "gcig pas phyogs su dang bral".
 374 HH "chos".
 375 RR "dang".
 376 II "'grem". RR "'drim".
 377 FF HH JJ RR "grub".
 378 HH II "sngo".
 379 JJ "pa".
 380 RR "la".
 381 AA "bched". HH "phyed".
 382 JJ "las".
 383 RR "tshogs".
 384 RR "rang bzhin gyis".
 385 JJ reads "rang bzhin gyis lhun gyis grub pa'i skabs".
 386 RR "kyi".
 387 JJ "Pa".
 388 DD "gdags".
 389 HH "pa'l".
 390 HH II BGMS RR "stobs".
 391 II "kyis".
 392 JJ "bkram pa yin".
 393 HH BGMS "pa".
 394 II "de nyid mnyam bzhag yongs rdzogs pa'o".
 395 HH "bzung".
 396 HH "bar".
 397 II "gyur pas". JJ "gyur pa".
 398 HH "ba".
 399 AA FF II "kyi".
 400 BB "bskyad". HH "sbyong". RR "spyod".
 401 HH "yang".

gnyis med⁴⁰² sbyor ba phul⁴⁰³ ba yin

las rgya mtsho'i skabs

53

mi gzung gtong⁴⁰⁴ bas gtor⁴⁰⁵ ma yin
 bya⁴⁰⁶ ba med pa'i⁴⁰⁷ las rnams te⁴⁰⁸
 mi rtog ye shes bgegs⁴⁰⁹ bsal⁴¹⁰ nas
 mi⁴¹¹ gsung⁴¹² mnyam gzha⁴¹³ sngags tshig go

bdag dang bcas pa gtong ba⁴¹⁴ 'ching bar bstan pa'i skabs⁴¹⁵

54

bla ma mchod dang gtong ba dang
 de bzhin bsod nams thams cad kyang
 ma chags mi gyo'i⁴¹⁶ stobs med na
 byas na 'ching ba chen por 'gyur

lus grel pa brdar stan pa'i⁴¹⁷ skabs⁴¹⁸

55

de bas de lung de nyid⁴¹⁹ la⁴²⁰ -----Paṅ 81.3
de la⁴²¹ de sbyar⁴²² sgrib par 'gyur
de ltar de la de rtog⁴²³ na
de la de nyid grub⁴²⁴ pa med

⁴⁰² HH "min".

⁴⁰³ DD II "phul".

⁴⁰⁴ HH "rtong". II "stong".

⁴⁰⁵ GG "gtong".

⁴⁰⁶ HH "byed".

⁴⁰⁷ HH "pas".

⁴⁰⁸ HH "yin". II "zin".

⁴⁰⁹ HH gags".

⁴¹⁰ HH "gsal".

⁴¹¹ BB DD EE GG "ma".

⁴¹² BB DD EE GG HH JJ "gsungs".

⁴¹³ HH "pas". II "bzhag". JJ "nyid".

⁴¹⁴ RR "bdag dang bcas pa gtor ma 'ching ba'i skabs".

⁴¹⁵ JJ "bdag dang bcas pas gtor ma 'ching ba'i skabs".

⁴¹⁶ RR "gyo".

⁴¹⁷ JJ "lung 'grel ba ming tsam brdar bstan pa'i skabs".

⁴¹⁸ RR "lung 'grel pa ming tsam brdar bstan pa'i skabs".

⁴¹⁹ FF "snyed".

⁴²⁰ HH

"De bas de bya sgrib par 'gyur

De ltar de la de rtog na".

JJ "las".

⁴²¹ AA FF II "las".

⁴²² JJ Paṅ "byar". RR "byas".

⁴²³ GG Paṅ "rtogs".

⁴²⁴ JJ Paṅ "grub".

Closing Remarks

Mi nub rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che rtsa ba'i rgyud:

rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che | lung thams cad kyi bdag nyid
dpal rdo rje sems dpa'i zhal nas gsungs pa rdzogs so | |

'di la kun tu bzang po'i thig le'i skabs gnyis par | mthong ba med |
ces pa'i 'phror | nyon mongs pa yi dbang gis na | ta la'i mgo bo bcad
pa dang. | sa bon me yis bsregs pa dang. | de yi dbang du mi 'gyur
ston | de nas rnam grangs sogs gsungs te | byang chub kyi sems las
dang nyon mongs pa'i dbang du mi 'gyur ba'i don gyi tshigs bcas 'di
kun byed na bzhugs | |

Khyung chen lding ba:

lhun gyis grub pa'i thig le'o | bcom ldan 'das lung thams cad kyi
bdag nyid dpal rdo rje sems dpa' de skad gsungs so | rdo rje sems
dpa' nam mkha' che | rdzogs so | |

Do rje sems dpa'i lta ba:

byang chub sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan lta ba nam mkha' che
rdzogs so | | rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che u rgyan gyi slob dpon
dga' rab rdo rjes dpal a su ra 'od ldan gyi brag phug tu gsungs pa
rdzogs so | | ces gsungs so

Kun byed rgyal po:

byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po las rdo rje sems dpa'i⁴²⁵ rang
bzhin mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi le'u ste sum chu pa'o



Appendix B

bSam gtan mig sgron references to Nam mkha' che

There are 24 quotations⁴²⁶

1.
27.3
de ni nam mkha' che las kyang //

'che ba'i ye shes rnyid dga' ba //
sher rab thabs la brten pas 'grub //

⁴²⁵ FF “dpa”.

⁴²⁶ gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes. Special thanks to Bun-ei OTOKAWA for excellent transcription.

2.
27.4

'a li k'a li zab tu bstan //
de ni a dang mdzes pa'i ta //
pa dang yan lag spros pa bzhin //
'jig rten yongs kyi spyod yul la //
sangs rgyas (27.5) bsungs gi zab mo 'byung //

ces gsungs so //

3.
50.2
nam mkha' che las

go ba'i yul na bde ba che //
de nyid rnam dag (50.3) 'jig rten yin //

4.
64.1
nam mkha' che las /

(64.2) byang chub yan lag kun thi sgo //
cha lugs bsgom pas chu zla bzhin //
ma gos ma chags 'byung 'gyur yang //
bsgom pas byis pa'i spyod yul bzhin //
(64.3) dkyil 'khor khra gnyer cha lugs kyis //
khro bdag chen po'i yul bzung nas //
yi de mngon du gyur na yang //
zhi ba de nyid mthong ba min //

ces gsungs pas / (64.4)

5.
294.3
rdo rje sems dpa' nam (294.4) mkha' che las /

ma skyes <ngo bo /> pas na 'jig <gnyin tshig /> pa med //
gdod nas snying po byang chub la //
rtsal ba'i bsam pas dbyings mi (294.5) bskyod //

6.
295.3
de yang rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che las /

don rnams ji bzhin ming skyod do //
bya ba med pas grol bas grol /
rang byung ye shes btsal med (295.4) pas //
grol nas grol ba'i lam yang ston //

zhes gsungs te

7.
319.4

nam mkha' che las /

gong nas gong du tshangs pa'i las /
bya bral chos dang mthun pa min //
ci ste lam gyi (319.5) bgrod gyur na /
nam mkha'i mtha' bzhin thug pa med /

ces 'byung pas / bza' zhing bgrod pa 'khrul lo //

8.
323.5

nam mkha' che las /

yid kyi bsam pas yon bdag ste //
bltas pas (323.6) stobs ni bkram pa'o //
mthong bar gyur pa dngos grub la //
de nyid mnyam bzhag rdzogs pa'o //

9.
331.2

nam mkha' che las kyang /

gang dang gang gi gang du yang //
kun (331.3) 'khol dun spyod bdag la 'byung //

10.
(342.4)

nam mkha' che <lung gi /> las /

rgyu nyid rdo rje <bas /> rkyen dang <kyang de /> 'dra <o /> /
ma skyes pas na 'jigs pa med //

zhes gsungs so //

11.
352.4

nam mkha' che las /

de dang der ni rnam (352.5) brtsal na //
de las de bzhin de mi 'byung //

12.
353.5

nam mkha' che las /

go ba'i yul (353.6) na bde ba che //
de nyid rnam dag 'jig rten yin /

zhes gsungs so /

13.

364.5

nam mkha' che las /

gcig ste rnam pa yongs kyis med //
rnal 'byor nam mkha'i bya lam gnas //
ma byung ma skes snying po la //
(364.6) sgros btags chos kun ga la yod //
phyi nang gnyis ga phyi nyid nang //
zab mo'i cha shas rtogs yul med //

ces 'byung

14.

368.4

nam mkha' che las /

kun gyi mnyam nyid yin pa la /
phyogs su lta bas grub pa med /

ces (368.5) 'byung bas /

15.

370.4

gtan tshigs nam mkha' <rang bzhin gnyan tshigs kyilung /> che las /

(370.5) chos skus khyab pa'i gcig pa'i phyir //
che bas chen po'i rang bzhin gnas /

zhes dang /

16.

383.4

nam mkha' che las /

mchog tu gsang ba'i chos nyid ni //
rna dbang gzhan las thong mi 'gyur //
de bzhin ltse'i dbang po kyang //
de la brjod du rdul tsam med //

(383.5) ces 'byung /

17.

385.1

nam mkha' che las /

rang bzhin gcig tu ma nges pas //
ji ltar brtags pa de ltar snang //

zhes gsungs so //

18.
412.6

nam mkha' che las /

bsam gtan nyid pas (413.1) bsam du med //
ma bsams ma sbyangs chos bzhin du //
rnam rtog nyid las skye //

zhes pa'i don dang sbyar /

19.
414.1

nam mkha' che las /

ma bcol bzhag pas (414.2) bsgom pa yin //

zhes 'byung ba dang sbyar na //

20.
424.1

nam mkh' che las //

khyad par cir yang mtshungs pa la //
las so (424.2) zhes ni rnam par brtags //
ci ste las kyi dbang gyur na //
rang byung ye shes yod ma yin //

zhes 'byung //

21.
433.3

nam mkha' che las /

mngon sum (433.4) pa dang rgyab nas byung //
de yang snang ba'i skyon yin te //

zhes 'byung bas mngon te

22.
(434.4)

nam mkha' che las /

'phra ba'i sgo mor ming btags pas //
sems kyis dben pas lam tshol zhing //
dgon pa'i rgyud du dben 'dzin pa //
brtags na <de nyid /> rnam par (434.5) rtog <por /> 'gyur
<re dog > bsgom <mo /> /zhes 'byung ngo //

23.

435.3
nam mkha' che las /

'di la brtul zhugs drag shul kyis //
gnas su bya ba'i ming med de /
(435.4) a dang par ni rnam ldan na //
rgyu ba'i bde ba bskyed par 'dod //

de yang 'dzin pa'i skyon yin te //

24.

435.6
de yang / nam mkha' che las /

srid pa (436.1) gsum na sbyor ba yang //
ming tsam sgyu mar snang ba ste //
'khor lo bsgyur ba'i gnas chen yang //
sgyu mas sbyor ba'i bsti gnas yin //

zhes pa dang /



Appendix C: Paṇ sgrub quotes on Nam mkha' che

Those with a * by the number are attested in the Maha Akasha Kārikās.

1.

65.2

'di skad du

dam du bcas pa'i yul rang gdod nas med
dam du bca' med don rtogs na
dam du bcas kyang skyon med nam mkha' 'dra (Not Attested in Kārikās)
zhes 'byung bas

2.

65.3

zab mor 'jug [3] pa'i sngon logs su
the tsom pyang⁴²⁷ mo thag bcad de
dge ba'i rtsa ba ci nus bsam
'brel pa'i yul nams thag bcad de
lus dang bsam gtan cha rkyen bsdu
dbang dang gdam ngag rdzogs bya ste
yid 'ong dben pa'i sa brtsal la [4]
sngags pa seng ge bzhin nu gnas
de nas rang sems me long blta

⁴²⁷ Sic. "phyang" ?

de ni dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs (Not Attested in Kārikās)
zhes pa bzhin bya ste

*3.

66.1

rgyud nyid las
brtsal med nam mkha' ji bzin du
mi brtsal mi bsgrub mi yengs par
bsgoms tshul [2] zad bya spyod yul gzhom
zhes 'byung bas

*4.

66.4

de dang der ni rnam [5] brtsal na
de las de bzhin de mi 'byung
zhes pa dang.

*5.

66.5

rgyud las

de dang der ni rnam brtsal na
de las de bzhin de mi 'byung.

*6.

66.6

yang dag sangs rgyas lam rang 'gyur zhes pa dang. yang

7.

*66.7

phra ba'i sgo mor ming 'dogs shing.
sems kyi dben pa'i [6] lam tshom zhing.
dgon pa'i rgyud du dben 'dzin te
brtags na rnam par rtog 'gyur bsgom
zhe pa dang.

*8.

67.1

snang ba med pa'i chos nyid ni
ma brtsal bzhag na bsgom pa yin
zhes pa dang [2]

*9.

67.2

bsam gtan nyid las bsam du med
zhes 'byung bas

10.

67.3

rgyud las

mi bsam mi bsgom mi dmigs par
 de bzhin [4] snying po 'di la dmigs su yod min pas
 'dzin pas mi bzung de bzhin gzhag (Not Attested in Kārikās)
 zhes pa dang.

11.

67.4

de gzhin rnal 'byor don la 'jug pa rnams kyis kyang
 'de la mi bsgom mi brtsal rang gzhin gzhag (Not Attested in Kārikās)
 shes pa dang.

12.

67.5

brjod pa'i that snyad las 'das bsgom du med
 bsgoms pa nyid na rtog pa skye ba ste
 mi bsgom mi brtsal rang rig nyid kyi sku
 de bzhin de bzhin *gyin dhar* gzhag
 gzhag du 'ang gzhag sa med pas na
 gzhag du med pa'i gzhag sar gzhag la gzhag
 gzhag pa'i dngos po [6] rdo rje sems dpa'i thugs
 'di zhes bstan du sangs rgyas nyid kyis med⁴²⁸ (Not Attested in Kārikās)
 zhes pa dag las sogs pa 'byung bas

13.

68.2

rgyud las

bsgom mo mnyam pa'i blo byung na
 stong nyid bsgom med zhi gnas pa
 'du shes med par mnyam bzhag bas
 yid kyi rnam shes mi rtog pas
 tha mal 'du shes spangs tsam las
 mnyam rtog mnyam par sbyar ba min (Not Attested in Kārikās)
 zhes 'byung mod kyang.

14.

72.1

'ja dang nam mkha' lta bu ste (Not Attested in Kārikās)
 ma 'dres mkha' la gza' skar [2] bkram
 yongs su rdzogs pa mkha' khyab brdal
 mkha' dan snang 'ja'ji bzhin no
 zhes 'byung ste

*15.

72.3

'di nyid las
 de la phyogs kyi 'od 'dus pas
 phyogs bzhi 'tshams dang bla 'og 'grub
 ma nges 'ja' tshon kha dong las

⁴²⁸ This teaching was not given by even the Buddha! (It is the heart of Vajrasattva).

rigs kyi khyad par mngon par snang
zhes gsungs

16.

73.5

rgyud las

thams cad ye nas mnyam gnas rnam dag cing (Not Attested in Kārikās)

mi rtogs sa ler gnas la rtog par gnas

zhes 'byung

17.

74.3

bsgoms pa'i gnas med dag du rab rtogs na

ji ltar bsgoms kyang skyon med namkha' 'dra (Not Attested in Kārikās)

zhes 'byung . . .

*18.

77.4

gang ltar spyad kyang me tog skye zhes 'byung ste

*19.

78.1

bdag dang gzhan don mi byed pas

ces pa gnyis dang

'di la brtul shugs drag shul kyi

ces pa gnyis dang

no mtshar rmad 'byung rol pa 'di

bya bral namkha' ji bzhin te

ces 'byung ngo

*20.

78.6

namkha' che nyid las

cho 'phrul chen po dka ba men

yon tan kun dang stobs kyi rnam

ji bzhin rtogs pa 'phra ba las

de ma thag tu rang las 'byung

shes 'byung bas

*21.

79.1

de yang rtsa ba las

rnam sbyod dus la ltos pa rnam

dus der 'byung bar mi 'gyur te

ma bral smon par sbyod pas na <81>

stong pa'i mtshan nyid gsungs pa bzhin

zhes pa dang

*22.

81.1

snang 'dod rtsol sems bde ba yang
'di ni de sgrib skyon chen yin
zhes pa dang

*23.

81.2

jus pas bslad pas 'khrul pa'i phyir
sman nyid sman pa tshol ba bzhin
zhes pa dang

*24.

81.2

de bas de lung de nyid la
de la de byar sgrib par 'gyur
de ltar de la de rtogs na
de la de nyid 'grub pa med
zhes gsungs so

*25

81.4

rgyud las
a dang par ni rnam ldan na
sgyu ma'i bde ba 'byung bar 'dod
de 'dzin pa'i skyon yin te (variant reading)
zhes pa dang

26.

81.5

Zhi ba'i ye shes bying rmugs kyis
Ting 'dzin ro la chags pa dag
Nyan thos 'gog par ltung bar 'gyur (Not Attested in *Kārikās*)

27.

81.6

zhes gsungs so
yang drang srong bsgom mkhan spyod pa'i rjes su 'breng
tha snyad tshig la lta ba'i mchog du 'dzin pa yin
zhes gsungs pa na rtsol ba'i don la 'jug zhes 'byung ngo (Not Attested in *Kārikās*)

*28.

82.2

de yang rnam rtog nyid las ye shes skyes
zhes pa dang

*29.

82.2

phyin ci log du rnam brtags kyang
grol ba rang byung gzhan las min
zhes pa dang

*30.

82.3

nam mkha' rtog pa skye med cing
 rtog pa de nyid namkha' 'dra
 zhes ba dag 'byung ngo

31.

82.4

rgyud nyid las
 rang 'byung rang zhir ci dgar gzhag (Not Attested in Kārikās)
 ces pa dang

32.

82.4

byung tshor rjes su sems gtong zhing
 ting 'dzin ro la chags 'gyur na (Not Attested in Kārikās)
 rtag cad mu gnyis mtha' me sel
 ma rabs bus pa tha ma'i sems
 'du shes med pa'i khrod du skye
 de dogs sems la mi gnas pas
 yang dag dmigs med don bsgom ste
 ci la'ang sems ni mi dmigs shing
 gang yang mi 'chos mnyam bzhag nas
 rdul tsam 'dzin pa'i sems med na
 des kyang chos dbyings dam pa ni
 skye med ma bcos shes rab klung
 zhes pa dang

33.

83.1

kun tu ye shes rgyal po ni
 mthong mi snyam tu rung ma yin (Not Attested in Kārikās)
 log rtogs mtshan ma thams cad la
 'du shes mtshan ma mi 'byung zhing
 rtse gcig don la mi yengs par
 cha mnyams kun mnyam mu mnyam na
 zhi gnas tshul ni de na yod
 zhes gsung te

*34.

83.5

de yang
 ming tsam 'di zhes bstan par ni
 rdo rje sems dpa' mtshon du med
 zhes gsungs

35.

83.6

rgyud nyid las
 sgra ming tshig las 'das pas na (Not Attested in Kārikās)

rang gi ngo bo bstan du med
yang

36.

83.6

dam pa nyid ni 'di 'drar bstan du med (Not Attested in Kārikās)
gti mug tshul du shin tu gsal rig med
yang

37.

84.2

chos nyid ro la nyam phag bstan par dka' ste smra yang med (Not Attested in
Kārikās)
zhes 'byung bas

38.

84.4

byang chub kyi sems rmad du byung ba'i don zab mo snyan khung du
brgyud de bsgom pa'i man ngag bstan pa ni

*39.

104.3

mngon gsum bde ba rang las 'byung
zhes pa dang

*40.

104.3

cir yang mi dmigs gti mug las

*41.

104.5

de ma thag du rang las 'byung zhes pas



Bibliography

Tibetan Sources

I would like to insert a special word of thanks to Gene Smith for his establishment of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC), and to the good people who keep it going while Gene is in bDe ba can. This resource has revolutionized Buddhist Studies, making resources that were once supremely difficult to access available to those who truly need them. The world is a better place because of this. Thank you.

1. Canon

bKa' 'gyur

sDe dge — sDe dge par khang chen mo, sDe dge, Tibet
http://www.tbrc.org/#library_work_Object-W30532

sNar thang — Created c. 1730-1732. The scans were prepared from the set at the International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi, with the permission of Dr. Lokesh Chandra

http://www.tbrc.org/#library_work_Object-W22703

Lha sa — Created in 1934. Scanned through a cooperative agreement with Tibet House, New Delhi.

http://www.tbrc.org/#library_work_Object-W26071

Urga — Created between 1908 and 1910 under the patronage of the last Jetsundampa of Mongolia. This copy was brought to India by Prof. Raghu Vira, who received it from the Prime Minister of Mongolia. The scans were prepared from the originals at the international academy of Indian culture with the gracious permission of Dr. Lokesh Chandra.

http://www.tbrc.org/#library_work_Object-W29468

rNying ma rgyud 'bum

mTshams brag

The manuscript from which this collection was printed was found at the monastery of Tsamdrag in western Bhutan and comprises 46 volumes. It was probably calligraphed in the 18th century. National library, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 1982

http://www.tbrc.org/#library_work_Object-W21521

gTing skyes

Canonical texts of the Nyingma tradition; scanned from the reprint of the Tingkye Gonpa Jang manuscript. Scanned with the support of Master Tam Shek-Wing of the Vajrayana Buddhism Association and Ms. Ingmar Gutierrez of New Orleans. Published by Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche, Thimbu, Bhutan, 1975

http://www.tbrc.org/#library_work_Object-W21518

sDe dge

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Rig 'dzin tse dbang nor bu Edition of the *rNying ma rGyud 'bum*. Single extant manuscript held at the Bodlieian Library, England, n.d.

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An edition of the Kama recently compiled at Katok Monastery by students of Khenpo Munsel (1916-1993) and Khenpo Jamyang. Scanned at the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center from an incomplete set belonging to David Germano. Published by Kaḥ thog mkhan po 'jam dbyangs, Cheng du, China, 1999.

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The rgyud 'bum of Vairocana : a collection ancient tantras and esoteric instructions reproduced from a manuscript collection of nyingma canonical materials from the jangtang area in Ladakh. Reproduced from the rare manuscript belonging to Tokden Rimpoche of Gangon by Tashi Tashigangpa, Smanrtsis shesrig Spendzod, v. 16-23. Leh, India, 1971.
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The Exposition of *Atiyoga* in gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' *bSam-gtan mig-sgron**

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Introduction

The importance of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* for our understanding of the early history of the Great Completeness (*rDzogs-chen*) and its interaction with the contemplative traditions of 9th and 10th century Tibet is already well-known.¹ Its author, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (ca. early 10th century), presents a classification of four vehicles that can lead to enlightenment, hierarchically arranged as follows: the gradual approach of the *sūtras*; the simultaneous approach of the *sūtras*; the tantric approach of *Mahāyoga* (which also includes *Anuyoga*); and finally the Great Completeness, also called *Atiyoga*. Although written from the perspective of the Great Completeness, the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* is not a *rDzogs-chen* text *per se*, but rather a doxographical treatise (*grub-mtha'*; Skt. *siddhānta*), as has been pointed out by Achard;² in fact, it is probably the first such doxography to have been written by a Tibetan.

In the present article, it is the long seventh chapter, concerning *Atiyoga*, which will be the focus of our study. The section concerning the view has already been summarized by Karmay.³ Mention should also be made of Meinert, who gives an overview and exposition of the chapter, providing extract translations into German,⁴ and of Baroetto, who recently published a critical edition of the seventh chapter, along with an Italian translation.⁵ It is inevitable that the discussion of the seventh chapter presented here should somewhat overlap with these previous excellent studies; nonetheless, for English readers such an overall presentation of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron's* *Atiyoga* chapter will still be useful. Given the extreme difficulty of this work, there are bound to be differences in various scholars' interpretation of individual passages of the text; these I have signalled, where appropriate, in

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¹ In fact, because of its antiquity, its importance in this regard is second only to the Dunhuang documents. Cf. Karmay, Samten Gyaltzen, *The Great Perfection: A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007, p. 99.

² Achard, Jean-Luc, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret: Recherches philologiques et historiques sur l'origine de la Grande Perfection dans la tradition rNying ma pa*, Turnhout: Brepols, 1999, p. 62, n. 2.

³ Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 107-120.

⁴ Meinert, Carmen, *Chinesische Chan- und tibetische rDzogs chen- Lehre: eine komparatistische Untersuchung im Lichte des philosophischen Heilskonzeptes „Nicht-Vorstellen“ anhand der Dunhuang-Dokumente des chinesischen Chan-Meister Wolun und des Werkes bSam gtan mig sgron des tibetischen Gelehrten gNubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes*, PhD thesis, Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, 2004, esp. pp. 243-283, pp. 352-357.

⁵ Baroetto, Giuseppe, *La dottrina dell'atiyoga nel bSam gtan mig sgron di gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes*, 2 Volumes, Lulu, 2010.

the notes to this essay. Moreover, the comparisons and parallels suggested in this article (such as those between gNubs-chen's nine views of the ground and the seven theories on the same subject discussed by Klong-chen-pa) and the hermeneutical reflections developed, have not been touched upon so far. In my presentation, I have also sought to point out wherever possible the many parallels and interconnections that exist between Chapter VII and the previous chapters of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*.

The *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*'s exposition of *Atiyoga*

The seventh chapter follows a relatively straightforward structure: after an introductory section where the basic premises of *Atiyoga* are exposed, the view, meditation, conduct and fruition are elucidated in turn. A final section is devoted to clarifying the distinction between *rDzogs-chen* and the lower vehicles. In this respect, the structure of the chapter parallels that of Chapter IV (concerning the gradual approach), Chapter V (concerning the simultaneous approach), and Chapter VI (concerning *Mahāyoga*). Only Chapter IV can be said to stand somewhat apart: since the gradualist approach takes the lowest position in Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' classification, there is no entire section devoted to distinguishing it from lower vehicles. Nevertheless, the text does mention that the gradual approach presented there, referred to as *Sautrāntika [Madhyamaka]*, is superior to the *Vijñaptimātra* and to the *Yogācāra [Madhyamaka]*.⁶

In the introductory section to the seventh chapter, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes gives a succinct presentation of the ground, in terms of its being the state of spontaneity (*lhun-gyis-pa'i ngang-nyid*) and the great seminal nucleus of self-originated wisdom (*rang-byung-gi ye-shes thig-le chen-po*);⁷ he emphasises that it is not to be known by evaluating it through individually discerning sapience,⁸ but rather that it is to be assimilated as the actual perception of intrinsic awareness, in which case it is made clear to intrinsic awareness without having to make any assumptions (*blo-bzhag*) about it.⁹

Here one should recall that in *rDzogs-chen*, the ground is neither a cosmological basis localizable somewhere, nor is it to be sought in the mind or any of its functions. It refers to the individual's abiding mode (*gnas-lugs*),

⁶ C 118.3. References to the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* are primarily to Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche's 1974 edition (abbreviated as C): gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes, *rNal-'byor mig-gi bSam-gtan or bSam-gtan mig-sgron: A treatise on bhāvanā and dhyāna and the relationships between the various approaches to Buddhist contemplative practice*, Reproduced from a manuscript made presumably from an Eastern Tibetan print by 'Khor-gdong gter-sprul 'Chi-med rig-'dzin, Smarntsis shesrig spendzod, vol.74, Leh: Tashigangpa, 1974. Other editions consulted [variants are noted in square brackets] are gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes rin-po-che, *sGom-gyi gnad gsal-bar phye-ba bSam-gtan mig-sgron ces-bya-ba*, in *bKa'-ma shin-tu rgyas-pa*, Edited by mKhan-po Mun-sel, vol.97/je, Chengdu: Kaḥ-thog, n.d. (abbreviated as M) and Baroetto, *La dottrina dell'atiyoga nel bSam gtan mig sgron*, vol.2 (henceforth abbreviated as Baroetto).

⁷ C 290-292; an English translation of this passage will be found in Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 107f.

⁸ C 291.4-5: *rang gi so sor rtoḡ pa'i shes rab kyis gzhal bar byar yang med [...]*.

⁹ C 201.3: *rang rig pa'i mngon sum khong du chud nas blo bzhag par byar yang med pa'i don chen po rang gi rig pa la gsal bar bya ba yang!* [...].

which is both the ground of liberation (*grol-gzhi*) and of confusion (*'khrul-gzhi*).¹⁰ Such qualifiers as primordial (*ye-nas*), original (*gdod-ma*), alpha (*ka-nas*) or primeval (*thog-ma*) do not refer to a golden age long past, but indicate this very abiding mode, which is ever-fresh and 'prior to' (in an experiential and phenomenological rather than temporal sense) cyclic existence (Skt. *saṃsāra*) and transcendence (Skt. *nirvāṇa*).¹¹ As the ground of our being and the reason for our being here, this ground is itself not grounded anywhere; being pure dynamics, it has neither a beginning nor an end.¹²

I. The view

1. Six questions regarding the view

Next comes the section concerning the view. gNubs-chen introduces this section by asking six questions, which he answers one after another.¹³ Since this has already been dealt with by Karmay,¹⁴ our presentation will be very brief. Suffice it to say that the six questions allow our author to clarify the view according to the Great Completeness, by answering certain misconceptions or objections that could be raised. One should note that all these questions revolve around the epistemological problem of how to know absolute meaningfulness (*don*), since the tradition of the Great Completeness as it is taught by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes is uncompromising in its insistence that absolute meaningfulness is beyond examination and scrutiny. Let us now turn to these six questions:

1. The first question is introduced by way of a citation from the *Srog-gi 'khor-lo*,¹⁵ to the effect that if the three realms are examined, there is neither cyclic existence nor transcendence.¹⁶ The question, then, is whether this quote does not imply that even here, in the Great Completeness, there is something to be evaluated (Skt. *prameya*)?

gNubs-chen answers the following:

[...] The term "if one examines" is different [in meaning] and does not refer to evaluation. One is struck by intrinsic awareness, neither

¹⁰ As such, the ground is always alpha-pure (*ka-dag*); it is according to an individual's recognition or non-recognition of the ground's illumination (*gzhi-srang*) that it becomes, in the experience of a Buddha, the ground of liberation (*grol-gzhi*) and, in the experience of ordinary sentient beings, the ground of confusion. See Achard, Jean-Luc, 'Le Mode d'Emergence du Réel: L'avènement des manifestations de la Base (*gzhi srang*) selon les conceptions de la Grande Perfection', in *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no.7, April 2005, pp. 64-96, esp. p. 74.

¹¹ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 103.

¹² Guenther, Herbert V., *Meditation Differently*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, p. 25.

¹³ C 292-315.

¹⁴ Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 109-113; a summary of these six questions is also found in Meinert, *Chinesische Chan- und tibetische rDzogs chen- Lehre*, pp. 253f.

¹⁵ *Srog-gi 'khor-lo*, in NGM, vol.1/ka, p. 599.2-3.

¹⁶ I take *mya-ngan* to be an abbreviation for *mya-ngan las-'das-pa* (Skt. *nirvāṇa*), unlike Baroetto, who translates it as "sofferenza". Cf. Baroetto, *La dottrina dell'atiyoga nel bSam gtan mig sgron*, vol.1, p. 68.

thinking nor examining nor scrutinizing: this is the upright path and is maintained to be the supernal evaluation.¹⁷

2. Can the mind be liberated without examining or scrutinizing anything?
gNubs-chen's reply is as follows:

The absence of any liberating action is itself liberation. If it be asked why this is, it is because, transcending examination and scrutiny, one is without imaging any fetters. As a mere designation one speaks of 'liberation'.¹⁸

3. How should absolute meaningfulness (*don*) be indicated?

After replying with quotations from the *sPyi-bcings* and Mañjuśrīmitra's *Sems-bsgom*,¹⁹ gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes writes:

[...] If one shows a clod [of earth] to someone desiring to view gold, he shall not see it; but if he is shown gold, he will recognize it. Likewise, the absolute meaningfulness which is without scrutiny and which liberates from speaking and thinking is not found through the inference of searching and scrutinizing. Being without action and effort, when it is understood as it is revealed, that is the supreme valid measure of actual perception.²⁰

In effect, gNubs-chen is saying that searching and scrutinizing are like a clod of earth and are quite distinct from the gold of absolute meaningfulness, which itself is beyond all forms of evaluation, but must be known through actual perception (Skt. *pratyakṣa*).

4. If these [previously exposed methods] are confused, how is the unmistakable meaning?

The answer given is:

Primordially, it is without the designation of non-duality. Through this state, one is already free from searching, yet there is no exaggeration in terms of being free from searching. Originally, there is no name of spontaneous presence, and the primordial Great Completeness is free from the intellectual label of Great Completeness. Originally, self-originated wisdom is without the

¹⁷ C 293.2-4: *brtags na zhes pa'i sgra yang tha dad pas 'jal ba ni ma yin te/ rang rig pas ci yang ma bsams la ma brtags ma dpyad pa nyid thog tu phebs pas drang po'i lam ste de ni gzhal ba dam pa 'dod do/*.

¹⁸ C 295.1-2: *grol bar byar med pa nyid kyis grol ba ste/ ci'i phyir zhe na/ rtog dpyod las 'das pa la bcings pa nyid ma dmigs pa'i phyir tha snyad tsam du grol zhes bya'ol/*

¹⁹ Norbu, Namkhai, and Lipman, Kennard (trs.), *Primordial Experience: An Introduction to rDzogs-chen Meditation*, Boston: Shambhala, 2001, vv.20-22, pp. 56f (English translation), p. 116 (Tibetan text).

²⁰ C 296.5-6: *de bas na gser lta [lta M 212b.6 : blta C 296.4] 'dod pa la bong ba bstan pas mi mthong gil /gser nyid bstan pas ngo shes pa ltar/ dpyad du med pa smra bsam las grol ba'i don tshol dpyod pa'i rjes su dpogs pas mi rnyed kyil/ bya rtsol med par bstan pa nyid kyis go ba ni mngon sum tshad ma'i mchog go/*.

labelling as self-originated wisdom. Primordially,²¹ in the great seminal nucleus, one does not label ‘a great seminal nucleus’.²²

5. Now for the fifth question along with its answer:

“In any case, absence of strain is said to be a great purpose. Yet how is one to see the truth of the genuine meaning through the means of not examining anything at all?”

It is replied that all phenomena are without the duality of self and other and without the duality of the knowable and the knower. Therefore, ‘seeing’ is merely a metaphor for not seeing anything and not viewing anything. Certainly, there is nothing at all to see aside from this.²³

6. The final question concerns the intent of the vehicle of non-action, i.e. the Great Completeness.

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes’ answer is unequivocal:

The mother who generates all the Victorious Ones is the antidote to all effortful activities. Whatever means and paths one accomplishes, if this is not realized, there is no awakening.²⁴

He goes on to explain that all the way up to *Anuyoga*, the meaning of equality is not seen. This is because the lower vehicles all engage in effortful action; this state of affairs is comparable to the waves on the ocean’s surface covering the ocean’s limpidity – it is only when the waves subside and the ocean recovers its inherent limpidity that the reflections appear therein without one having to search for them. Hence, *Atiyoga* is unique in that one proceeds through non-action and that awakening (called ‘the root Buddha’) appears without searching.²⁵

²¹ The expression *ye phyi-ma-nas* seems quite strange: while *ye* designates primordially, *phyi-ma* refers to that which is later, and is generally opposed to *sngon-ma* (‘before’). It is possible that *phyi-ma* could here indicate the seminal nucleus labelled by the conceptual mind, which is opposed to the primordially present seminal nucleus (Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin: personal communication). However, it is unclear to me why *phyi-ma* should be appended directly to *ye* in this way, and I have hence simply translated the whole expression as ‘primordially’.

²² C 304.6-305.4: ‘o na de dag khrul na don ma nor ba de nyid ji lta ba yin ce na ye gnyis su med pa’i tha snyad med pa/ ngang gis btsal [btsal M 218b.4 : brtsal C 305.1] ba dang bral zin pa la btsal [btsal M 218b.5 : rtsal C 305.2] ba bral bar yang sgro gdags su med pa/ [gdod nas lhun gyis grub pa’i ming med pa ye nyid rdzogs pa chen po la rdzogs pa chen po’i blo gdags bral ba gdod nas rang byung gi ye shes rang byung gi ye shes su’ang gdags su med pa/ ye phyi ma nas thig le chen po nang [nang M 219a.2 : nad C 305.4] thig le chen po zhes ma btags pa/.

²³ C 307.1-4: ‘on tang tshogs med don po che zhes bya’o/ [de lta cir yang ma brtags pa’i thabs kyis [kyis Baroetto, p. 26 : kyis C 307.2, M 220a.3] yang dag pa’i don gyi bden pa mthong ngo zhes bgyi ba ji lta bu lags/ lan du gsol pa/ chos thams cad la bdag gzhan gnyis med/ shes bya shes byed gnyis med pas/ cir yang ma mthong ma gzigs pa nyid la bla dwags [dwags Baroetto, p. 26 : dag C 307.4 : dags M 220a.5] tsam la mthong zhes bya’i/ nges par gud nas mthong ba ci yang med de/.

²⁴ C 312.3-4 : ‘di ni rgyal ba thams cad bskyed pa’i yum/ rtsol ba’i las thams cad kyis gnyen po yin te/ thabs dang lam gang nas sgrubs kyang/ ‘di ma rtogs par sangs mi rgya bas/.

²⁵ C 312f.

2. *Nine views concerning the ground*

Having introduced his subject by way of these six questions, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes proceeds to discuss nine possible views concerning the ground. As recognized by Baroetto,²⁶ each of these can be subdivided into a section concerning that view's proper comprehension and another section (usually briefer) presenting the flaws of incomprehension. In the glosses to the text, each of these views is attributed to certain masters of the Great Completeness lineage. Some of these, such as Vimalamitra and Vairocana, are known historical figures, whereas others, such as King Dhahenatalo or the nun Ānandā, are shrouded in greater mystery. Van Schaik sees the mention of these masters' names in the glosses as a strategy of acknowledging the authors after having removed their names from the texts quoted in the *Atiyoga* chapter; hence, in his view, Sangs-rgyas ye-shes would have been complicit in transforming authored texts into revealed scripture.²⁷

The question of whether these masters actually held the views attributed to them will not concern us: as Burckhardt has reminded us in the context of European alchemical texts, the names mentioned there should not be seen as 'authors' in the modern sense, but rather as indications of an initiatory lineage.²⁸ Hence it seems preferable to view these names as pointer-figures alluding to certain filiations of precepts.

Assuming that the glosses belong to an early redaction of the text,²⁹ the names cited here show that, already in gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' time, the *rDzogs-chen* teachings were associated with a well-defined non-Tibetan origin, which was located in India and Oḍḍiyāna;³⁰ in fact, of the masters mentioned, only two are Tibetan: Vairocana and Sangs-rgyas ye-shes himself. Considering gNubs-chen's work as a translator and the numerous trips he is said to have made to India, Nepal and Gilgit, he would have had direct contact with at least some of these foreign masters.³¹

As with the different formulations concerning the ground in the context of the pith instruction section (*man-ngag-sde* – to which we shall briefly return below), these varying views may be compared to a rhetorical device, in that they allow the *rDzogs-chen* authors to clarify all possible aspects of the ground, thereby dispelling potential misinterpretations.³²

²⁶ See in particular the outline in Baroetto, *La dottrina dell'atiyoga nel bSam gtan mig sgron*, vol.1, pp. 235f.

²⁷ van Schaik, Sam, 'The Early Days of the Great Perfection', in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol.27: 1, 2004, pp. 165-206, esp. pp. 197f.

²⁸ Burckhardt, Titus, *Alchimie: Sa signification et son image du monde*, Milan: Arché Milano, 1979, p. 21.

²⁹ While they probably do not stem from the author's own hand, it is likely that they were written down by an immediate disciple. See the discussion in the Appendix.

³⁰ Cf. Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 20; see also the table below.

³¹ Among the masters mentioned in the table below, Sangs-rgyas ye-shes is known to have studied with Vimalamitra, Śrisimha and Ācārya gSal-ba rgyal. See Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, Translated and edited by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein, vol.1: The Translations, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991, p. 607; and Dalton, Jacob P., *The Uses of the dGongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo in the Development of the rNying ma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, PhD thesis, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002, pp. 145f, n.20.

³² Cf. Achard's remarks in this regard in the context of the seven theories peculiar to the pith instruction section, in Achard, Jean-Luc, 'La base et ses sept interprétations dans la

It will not be without interest to note that two of the views mentioned here – the view of integral being and the view of non-duality – have identical names to two views mentioned in Chapter VI on *Mahāyoga*,³³ where six views are discussed. Of course, the fact that the views share the same name does not mean that their meaning is the same, since they are given in two very different contexts, the one dealing with tantric practice, the other with *Atiyoga*.

2-1. The view that is free from thematic foci

The first of the views to be discussed is freedom from thematic foci (*gza'-gtad dang-bral-ba*); this view is said to be held by Oḍḍiyāna Mahārāja³⁴ and by Vimalamitra.³⁵ The term 'freedom from thematic foci' itself belongs to the special terminology of the Great Completeness.³⁶ In this context, 'thematic focus' (*gza'-gtad*) is used to point out a fault in meditation: instead of resting in the abiding mode (*gnas-lugs*) of intrinsic awareness and dropping all the intellect's foci, the beginner often finds himself wondering whether or not he has found the mind's essence. He thereby becomes once again caught up in a focus which thematizes these possibilities.³⁷ Basically, we can say, with Sangs-rgyas ye-shes, that thematic focus (*gza-gtad*) refers to referential imaging (*dmigs-pa*; Skt. *ālambana*).³⁸ Our author presents this view with the following words:

Its unmistakable meaning is that Buddhas and sentient beings, cyclic existence and transcendence, are all nothing but designations. In their essence, the various appearances are without abode. Through this state in which everything is the scope of self-originated wisdom, one is free [from stains] without having to eliminate them. There is neither the theme of something to pursue on the side of

tradition rDzogs chen', in *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no.1, Octobre 2002, pp. 44-60, esp. p. 59.

³³ In the context of the six views of *Mahāyoga*, these are the fourth and fifth views. I hope to return to the *Mahāyoga* chapter in a future article.

³⁴ Oḍḍiyāna Mahārāja is mentioned in the *Bai-ro 'Dra-'bag chen-mo*, the earliest parts of which go back to the 13th century (Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 18), as the disciple of the Kashmiri preceptor Rab-snang; he is made the master of Gomadevi. See g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, Chengdu: Si-khron mi-rigs dpe-skrunkhang, 1995, p. 53; Norbu, Namkhai, and Clemente, Adriano (tr.), *The Supreme Source: The Kunjed Gyalpo: The Fundamental Tantra of Dzogchen Semde*, Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1999, p. 39.

³⁵ For biographical sketches of many of the masters mentioned here (such as dGa-rab rdo-rje, Mañjuśrīmitra, Śrīsimha, Buddhagupta and Vimalamitra) and a synthesis of the results of Tibetological research concerning them, see Esler, Dylan, 'The Origins and Early History of rDzogs chen', in *The Tibet Journal*, vol.30:3, Autumn 2005, pp. 33-62, esp. pp. 34-37.

³⁶ Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 119.

³⁷ Cf. the definition for *gza'-gtad* given in bTsan-lha ngag-dbang tshul-khrims, *brDa-dkrol gser-gyi me-long*, Beijing: Mi-rigs dpe-skrunkhang, 1997, p. 806: 'that which is focused on upright' (*drang-po gtad-pa*), i.e. a focus that is ready-at-hand for straightforward thematization. Meinert translates "grasping towards an object". See Meinert, *Chinesische Chan- und tibetische rDzogs chen- Lehre*, p. 256.

³⁸ C 318.

enlightenment, nor the theme of desiring to clarify something through absolute awareness. In the nature of oneness, how could there be a referential focus, where [in fact] there is none? It is not that [this view] originates from clarifying thematic foci, but neither is it explained³⁹ by the mere name of 'being primordially free from thematic foci'. Since this very absolute meaningfulness is myself, there is no deliberate pursuing of it. For example, the sun does not search for the light of glow-worms.^{40 41}

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes points out that those who seek to actualize the absence of thematic foci are involved in searching for a fruition, and he compares them to the blind; since they fail to realize that absolute meaningfulness and the fruition are their integral identity, they are like deer chasing after a mirage.⁴² He quotes the *rMad-du byung-ba*:

For him who desires enlightenment, there is no enlightenment –
 The stages and the utterly supreme enlightenment are far away.
 Whoever knows phenomena's beingness (Skt. *dharmatā*), which is like
 a cause,
 Is certain that "This enlightened mind am I" –
 He enters the quintessence of enlightenment.
 Hence, there is nothing to obtain nor to relinquish:
 Designations, such as 'the enlightenment of the Buddhas',
 Are not the meaning.⁴³

2-2. The view of spontaneous presence

The second view, that of spontaneous presence, is attributed to dGa'-rab rdo-rje. Its comprehension can be summarized in the following words:

³⁹ Note that *bsnyad-pa* is archaic for *bshad-pa*, meaning 'explanation'. See sKyogs-ston rin-chen bkra-shis, *brDa-gsar-rnying-gi rnam-gzhag li-shi'i gur-khang*, Beijing: Mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 2000, p. 44.

⁴⁰ Cf. Lamotte, Etienne, *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti (Vimalakīrtinirdeśa)*, Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste, 1987, ch.3, §22, p. 161, where Vimalakīrti warns that the sun's radiance should not be confused with the glow-worm's light.

⁴¹ C 316.4-317.3: *de la don ma nor ba ni/ sangs rgyas sems can 'khor ba dang mya ngan las 'das pa ril kyang tha snyad kyi bla chags tsam stel ngo bo sna tshogs snang la gnas pa med pa/ rang byung ba'i ye shes kyi spyod yul thams cad ngang nyid kyi ma bsal bral ba la/ byang chub logs shig nas gnyer bar bya ba'i gza' [gza' Baroetto, p. 40 : bza' C 316.6, M 226b.2] ba dang/ don rig pas gsal byar 'dod pa'i gza' ba'ang med pas/ gcig gi rang bzhin la dmigs gtad ga la yod de med do/ 'di ni gza' gtad gsal ba las byung ba ma yin tel ye nyid gza' gtad med de zhes bya ba'i ming tsam du yang bsnyad du med pa la don de nyid kyang bdag yin pas/ ched du gnyer du med del dper na nyi mas srin bu'i 'od mi tshol ba dang 'dra'o/.*

⁴² C 318f.

⁴³ *rMad-du byung-ba*, in NGM, vol.2/kha, pp. 779f: *byang chub 'dod pa de la byang chub med/ /sa dang rnam par [rnam par C 318.6, M 227b.5 : rnam thar NGM] byang chub mchog la ring/ /rgyu [rgyu C 318.6, M 227b.5 : sgyu NGM] 'dra'i chos nyid gang gis shes gyur pa/ /de ni [ni C 318.6, M 227b.5 : nyid NGM] byang chub sems [yin ins. C 318.6, NGM] bdag [nyid ins. C 318.6, NGM] yin par nges/ /byang chub snying por bdag 'jug pas/ /thob pa med cing spangs pa [spangs pa C 319.1, M 227b.6 : spang ba NGM] med/ /sangs rgyas rnam kyi byang chub ni/ /tha snyad yin te don du min/.*

In this regard, the unmistakable meaning refers to the essence, i.e. the nature of the entire objective scope pertaining to Buddhas and sentient beings. Being in all aspects⁴⁴ non-existent from the origin, it is non-existent at the end: as the nature of the great state of the spontaneously present beingness of phenomena, there is awakening without remainder (*lhag-ma med-par sangs-rgyas*).⁴⁵

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes elaborates by comparing spontaneous presence to a wish-granting gem,⁴⁶ which fulfils all one's needs and wishes, without it being possible to determine whether the appearances that manifest from the gem are localizable inside it, outside it or in between. Likewise, the uninterrupted stream of qualities that manifest as spontaneous presence, here equated with phenomena's beingness since it is present with all phenomena, arises as intrinsic illumination (*rang-srang*).⁴⁷ He specifies that it cannot be temporarily accrued in the manner of an accumulation nor can it be sought for, since it is beyond waning and increasing.⁴⁸

Concerning the fault of incomprehension, the text points out the danger of thinking that spontaneous presence might be achieved through some pleasant means of practice (*nyams-su blangs-pa'i thabs*) – here, we must emphasize, of *any* kind whatsoever, since spontaneous presence cannot be 'practised' precisely because it is spontaneously accomplished – in particular through pith instructions concerning referential fixation (*dmigs-'dzin-gyi man-ngag*): all such means have the fault of being encircled by effort.⁴⁹ In support of this, our author invokes the *Nam-mkha'i rgyal-po*:

The great means is primordially spontaneously accomplished;
Engaging in causes and rectification is not a great means.
If one is not free from engaging with causal means,
What can one do with the great means of non-discursiveness?⁵⁰

Here it may not be without interest to turn briefly to Klong-chen-pa's (1308-1364) discussion of spontaneous presence in the context of the seven

⁴⁴ *Yong-ye* must here be read as an archaic synonym for *rnam-pa kun-tu*. See rNam-rgyal tshering (ed.), *Bod-yig brda-rnying tshig-mdzod*, Beijing: Krung-go'i bod-rig-pa dpe-skrunkhang, 2001, p. 514.

⁴⁵ C 320.1-3: *de la don ma nor ba ni/ sangs rgyas dang/ sems can dang/ de'i spyod yul ril gyi rang bzhin gyi* [gyi M 228b.4 : ni C 320.2] *ngo bo nyid na/ yong ye gdod ma med pa nas tha ma med par lhun gyis grub pa'i chos nyid ngang chen po'i rang bzhin du lhag ma med par sangs rgyas so/*.

⁴⁶ The simile of the wish-granting gem is developed in the *Aṣṭasahasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; see Conze, Edward (tr.), *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary*, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1994, ch.4, §2, pp. 117f. The illustration of spontaneous presence with the simile of the wish-granting gem is also used by Klong-chen-pa; see Dowman, Keith, *Old Man Basking in the Sun: Longchenpa's Treasury of Natural Perfection*, Kathmandu: Vajra Books, 2006, pp. 145f.

⁴⁷ C 320f.

⁴⁸ C 326.

⁴⁹ C 328.

⁵⁰ Only first two lines are found in the *Nam-mkha'i rgyal-po*, in NGM, vol.1/ka, p. 605.5: *ye nas lhun gyis grub pa'i thabs chen la/ rgyu bcos spyod pa thabs chen ma yin* [spyod pa thabs chen ma yin C 328.4, M 234a.4 : *rtog pas grub pa mi 'gyur* NGM] *te/ rgyu 'chang thabs kyi spyod dang ma bral na/ /mi rtog* [rtog M 234a.5 : rtogs C 328.4] *thabs chen de yis ci zhig bya/*.

affirmations concerning the ground (*gzhi-bdun*) found in his *Tshig-don mdzod* and *Theg-mchog mdzod*.⁵¹ It must be emphasized at the outset that the context is different, since in Klong-chen-pa's case the discussion is based, not as here on texts of the mind section (*sems-sde*), but on the *sGra-thal-'gyur* and the *Klong-drug*, texts of the pith instruction section (*man-ngag-sde*). Furthermore, it can be ruled out that Klong-chen-pa had gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-she's exposition in mind when referring to the view of spontaneous presence, since the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* was probably unknown to him: while it is true that a *bSam-gtan mig-gi sgron-me* is mentioned by Klong-chen-pa among the texts received by his own master, Kumarāja, from sLop-dpon sGom-pa, the text in question is not by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-she's but by Vimalamitra.⁵²

Of the different theories mentioned by Klong-chen-pa, only that concerning spontaneous presence (the first in Klong-chen-pa's enumeration) is nominally identical to a view discussed by gNubs-chen, so we shall limit our comparison to this theory alone.⁵³ For Klong-chen-pa, the conception of the ground as spontaneous presence (*lhun-grub*) is in danger of reifying the ground's attributes and thereby of closing off and rigidifying what is in fact an open dimensionality. For instance, if cyclic existence and transcendence were both spontaneously present as the ground's attributes, then a path to liberation would be meaningless; cyclic existence, like coal whose blackness cannot be removed no matter how long one cleans it, would be permanent; and the qualities of enlightenment would be innate without needing any further development, leading to fatalism on the spiritual path.⁵⁴

Through this example, we can see that the approaches and concerns of the two authors differ: Klong-chen-pa, for the reasons described above, considers the theory of spontaneous presence as one of several 'flawed' (*skyon-can*) interpretations of the ground,⁵⁵ and hence rejects it, either in favour of alpha-purity (*ka-dag*) in his *Tshig-don mdzod* or of alpha-purity inseparable from spontaneous presence in his *Theg-mchog mdzod*.⁵⁶ Sangs-rgyas ye-she's, for his part, nowhere rejects the view of spontaneous presence

⁵¹ See Klong-chen-pa, *Tshig-don rin-po-che'i mdzod*, in *Klong-chen mdzod-bdun*, vol.ca, Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltzen and Khyentse Labrang, 1983, pp. 157-519, the discussion of the seven theories occurs on pp. 160-170; *Theg-mchog rin-po-che'i mdzod*, in *Klong-chen mdzod-bdun*, vols. ga - nga, Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltzen and Khyentse Labrang, 1983, the discussion occurs in vol.ga, pp. 274-284.

⁵² Arguillère, Stéphane, *Profusion de la Vaste Sphère: Klong-chen rab-'byams (Tibet, 1308-1364): Sa vie, son œuvre, sa doctrine*, Leuven: Peeters Publishers & Oriental Studies, 2007, p. 91, p. 672.

⁵³ These seven theories have received detailed treatment by several Tibetologists: a translation of the relevant sections of chapter 1 of the *Tshig-don mdzod* will be found in Germano, David F., *Poetic Thought, the Intelligent Universe, and the Mystery of Self: The Tantric Synthesis of rDzogs-chen in Fourteenth Century Tibet*, PhD thesis, Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1992, pp. 143-154. Cornu, for his part, provides a French translation of this section of the *Theg-mchog mdzod*, in Cornu, Philippe, *La Liberté Naturelle de l'Esprit*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1994, pp. 153-161; Achard bases his discussion mainly on the *Theg-mchog mdzod*, providing important extracts in translation, in Achard, 'La base et ses sept interprétations dans la tradition rDzogs chen'; Arguillère bases his discussion primarily on the *Tshig-don mdzod* and gives a pertinent philosophical analysis; see Arguillère, *Profusion de la Vaste Sphère*, pp. 344-379.

⁵⁴ Arguillère, *Profusion de la Vaste Sphère*, p. 355f.

⁵⁵ Achard, 'La base et ses sept interprétations dans la tradition rDzogs chen', p. 59.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 55f.

as a whole, and he seems unconcerned by the danger of fatalism mentioned by Klong-chen-pa; he is merely wary of a possible misunderstanding of spontaneous presence as implying that it can be 'practised' through various forms of referential imaging (*dmigs-pa*; Skt. *ālambana*). It will be seen that for gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes, each of the views he discusses can be correct, as long as it is not conceptualized into a goal that is somehow to be attained, something contrary to the spirit of the Great Completeness.

2-3. *The view of integral being*

The third view to be discussed is attributed to Vairocana and concerns integral being (*bdag-nyid chen-po*; Skt. *mahātman*); as mentioned above in the introduction to this section, a view of integral being is also found in Chapter VI on *Mahāyoga*.⁵⁷ Given the Buddhist context in which this view is professed, some words of caution are necessary at the outset. It is well-known that the Buddha refuted the notion of an eternal self (Skt. *ātman*): in the *Poṭṭhapāda-sutta* (*Dīghanikāya, sutta no. 9*), for example, the ascetics' speculations about an eternal self are likened to the fancies of a man who longs for 'the most beautiful woman in the land', yet has neither met nor seen the lady in question, or to a person setting up a staircase at a crossroads in order to climb to the upper storey of a mansion, yet without knowing the location of the mansion.⁵⁸

Having denied the existence of this eternal self, one of the problems of Buddhist philosophy has been to account for continuity; for example, how can there be wandering in cyclic existence if there is no self who wanders? The answer: just as it is impossible to say whether a flame in a given moment is the same as the flame in a preceding moment, so the incessant continuum of aggregates, etc., is named, metaphorically, a 'being', although there is no substantial self to be found therein; supported by craving, this continuum wanders through cyclic existence.⁵⁹ Likewise, to explain recollection, Vasubandhu writes that a past thought of sight (Skt. *darśanacitta*) can give birth to another thought, the present thought, which is a thought of recollection (Skt. *smaraṇacitta*); moreover, it is specified that a thought must belong to the same conscious continuum, otherwise one person could remember another's thoughts!⁶⁰

This, then, is the orthodox position of Buddhist philosophy. It may therefore come as some surprise to see this view of integral being (Skt. *mahātman*) discussed in a Buddhist treatise on contemplation. Would this be an attempt to surreptitiously reintroduce the idea of an eternal self? Unequivocally, the answer must be in the negative, since here the term 'integral being' is not reified into an eternally enduring entity. Rather, it

⁵⁷ See C 200-204.

⁵⁸ Walshe, Maurice (tr.), *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995, p. 166. The same comparison is also found in the *Tevijja-sutta* (*Dīghanikāya, sutta no. 13*), *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁵⁹ La Vallée Poussin, Louis de, *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, Traduction et Annotations, vol.5, Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1971, ch.9, p. 271.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol.5, ch.9, p. 276.

points to the inseparability of emptiness and clarity (*stong-gsal dbyer-med*), which is experienced by the individual as his or her true condition. The fact that it is explicitly described as being both empty and luminous excludes reification into a monolithic self. This becomes clear from gNubs-chen's own exposition, where he writes that all that appears in terms of the phenomena pertaining to 'self' and 'other' is intrinsically clear as the integral identity (*bdag-nyid*) of intrinsic awareness' non-abiding wisdom.⁶¹ The Tibetan language precisely distinguishes between integral being (*bdag-nyid chen-po*) or integral identity (*bdag-nyid*) and the ordinary egocentric 'I' (*nga*) or self (*bdag*), which is an instance of misplaced concreteness.⁶² It is precisely when egocentric apprehension, the mistaken moment-by-moment reification of a self (Skt. *ātman*), falls aside that one can speak of integral being (Skt. *mahātman*), without this notion contradicting more normative Buddhist ideas of selflessness (Skt. *anātman*). The term 'integral being' is used because it conveys that which is most naturally present to oneself once the dualistic dichotomies that fragment one's holistic experience of appearance (*snang-ba*) into self and others have collapsed.⁶³ These words by Guenther are well to the point:

[...] Being-in-itself cannot be known as an object, nor can it be grasped as a subject behind the phenomena. It is its very own and so far as I am concerned it is my very self. It is nothing determinate and hence infinitely open to new possibilities. It cannot be defined or characterized in any way. But it seems (or is felt) to be a vast continuum, out of which all entities are somehow shaped, and which surrounds and pervades the worlds.⁶⁴

If the ground is spoken of in terms of integral being, then, it is in order to emphasize the fact that it is experienced as an immediately present reality. In gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' words, it is so that neophytes might avoid their ill-founded hope that the fruition can come from elsewhere.⁶⁵

The foregoing discussion should make it clear that the tantric and *rDzogs-chen* notion of integral being (Skt. *mahātman*) should not be misconstrued to contradict the orthodox Buddhist insistence on selflessness (Skt. *anātman*), simply because of the use of related words with *different* shades of meaning. As mentioned above, the terminology used is sufficiently precise to ward off misunderstanding, and that is to say nothing of the contextual meaning, which leaves no trace of doubt. Furthermore, it is futile to try to determine whether a given tradition, such as *rDzogs-chen*, is orthodox simply by judging outwardly the occurrence of certain words and phrases. This is not to say that orthodoxy is simply a matter of opinion or of political expediency, as many, who falsely consider esotericism and mysticism to be by nature heterodox, would have these days. Rather, it is necessary to

⁶¹ C 328f.

⁶² Guenther, Herbert V., *The Teachings of Padmasambhava*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996, p. 201, n.192.

⁶³ Higgins, David, 'Non-mentation Doctrine in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism', in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol.29: 2, 2006, pp. 244-303, esp. p. 279.

⁶⁴ Guenther, Herbert V., *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 117.

⁶⁵ C 329.4-5. See the translation of this passage below.

examine whether a given tradition is *intrinsically* orthodox: whether it can be viewed as an organic development of the wider tradition in which it is embedded; whether its doctrine presents an internal coherence; and whether its soteriological path is capable of embracing the whole of man and hence of producing the flower of holiness.⁶⁶ In the case that concerns us here, it must be borne in mind that the orthodox position of Buddhism is the middle way which avoids the two extremes of eternalism (Skt. *śāśvata-dṛṣṭi*) and nihilism (Skt. *uccheda-dṛṣṭi*): the former refers to the belief in an eternally valid and self-contained self and an omnipotent external God; the latter refers to the utter annihilation of any continuity at death and to the denial of karmic cause and effect. Since integral being is precisely the inseparability of emptiness and clarity, it avoids these two extremes: its empty aspect prevents any reification into an eternal self, whereas its aspect of clarity means that one avoids falling into the trap of nihilism, the belief that there is nothing.

Having given these preliminary words of caution, let us return to gNubschen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' own exposition concerning the right understanding of this view:

[...] All phenomena without exception included in self and other – everything that appears in terms of 'I' and 'mine' – without being transformed or corrupted, are primordially intrinsically clear as the integral identity of intrinsic awareness' non-abiding wisdom; [this is so] even without labelling them with the designation of 'integral being'. They primordially transcend the designations expressed through words and letters. In that case, it may be asked whether it is not unnecessary to label it with words. [It is replied that words are used] in order that neophytes, individuals who believe in the great vehicle, should repel their craving for other paths and their hope in a fruition from somewhere else. Yet in its essence it is inherently without the exaggeration and denigration pertaining to self and other.

Therefore, in the state of integral being one does not pick out phenomena pertaining to others, and these are abolished in one's integral identity. If it be asked why, [we reply with] the *sPyi-bcings*:⁶⁷

I am; others are not. Great self and other are due to spontaneous presence. Since there is oneness in the state of Samantabhadra, there is no other.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ On this notion of intrinsic orthodoxy, see Schuon, Frithjof, *Treasures of Buddhism*, Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 1993, pp. 18f; and Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 79.

⁶⁷ Non-extant source; see Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 24. It evidently does not correspond to the *Rin-po-che'i spyi-bcings-kyi le'u bcu-pa*, in *sKu'i rgyud padma 'khyil-ba*, in NGM, vol.9/ta, pp. 363-367.

⁶⁸ C 328.6-329.6: [...] *bdag dang gzhan gyis bsdu pa'i chos ma lus pa dang/ bdag dang bdag tu snang ba thams cad/ ma bsgyur ma bsad [bsad Baroetto, p. 61 : slad C 329.1, M 234b.2] par ye nas rang rig pa mi gnas pa'i ye shes ky'i bdag nyid du rang gsal ba la bdag nyid chen po zhes bya ba'i tha snyad kyis kyang mi thogs te/ ye [ye M 234b.3 : yi C 329.2] tshig dang yi ges brjod pa'i tha snyad las 'das so/ 'o na tshig tu btags pa'i dgos pa [C 329.3 ins. shad] de rang med dam zhe na/*

gNubs-chen warns against certain individuals still subject to referential imaging who, while accepting that the view of integral being reflects the intent of the Thus-gone One (Skt. *tathāgata*), obstinately hold that for those unable to see absolute meaningfulness effortful exertion could lead them to awakening. He writes that their experience is dismal and compares them to someone owning a renovated castle⁶⁹ who would still put up a tent on a lawn.⁷⁰

2-4. *The view of self-originated wisdom*

According to the fourth view, attributed to the nun Ānandā,⁷¹ one sees all the phenomena included in birth and destruction as being in essence self-originated wisdom, inherently free from causes and conditions. In support of this view, the *Yon-tan bcu* is invoked:

Earth, water, fire and air,
The vessel of the world and its inhabitants –
All is by nature the open dimension of wisdom;
There is no wisdom apart from that.⁷²

This *Yon-tan bcu*, a no longer extant text attributed to dGa'-rab rdo-rje,⁷³ is quoted five times in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* – twice in the context of *Mahāyoga*⁷⁴ and thrice in the chapter on *Atiyoga*.⁷⁵ This makes it clear that at

theg pa chen po la mos pa'i gang zag gsar bu rnam lam gzhan du zhen pa dang/ 'bras bu gzhan du re ba dag bzlog pa'i phyir tel ngo bo la bdag gzhan gyi sgro skur ngang gis med del/ ldes na bdag nyid chen po'i ngang la gzhan pa'i chos ma bkol bar bdag nyid kyi snubs pa'o/ de ci'i phyir zhe na/ spyi bcings las/ bdag ni yod do/ gzhan ni med do/ bdag gzhan chen po lhun gyis grub pas yod do/ kun tu bzhang po'i ngang du gcig pas gzhan med del/ zhes bya ba'i don gyis [...].

⁶⁹ Note my emendation of 'khar-lan to mkhar-lan ('renovated castle').

⁷⁰ The castle stands for primordial awakening, whereas putting up a tent on a lawn represents the useless activity of searching for awakening outside oneself. Cf. C 339.3-5: [...] *dus deng sang gi gang zag dmigs pa can rabs gcig/ thams cad bdag yin na bsgrub ci dgos/ de skad bya ba'i rang bzhin tel/ de bzhin gshegs pa'i dgongs pa'o/ l'gang zag gis de mthong du mi rung bas/ bsgrub dgos te rtsol bas 'bad na/ sangs rgya'o zhes rang nyams ngan pas smra ba kha cig mkhar [mkhar em. : 'khar C 339.4, M 241b.2] lan spangs la phub ste tshi chad do/ de ci'i phyir/ sangs rgyas bdag yin pa la/ gzhan nas re ba rnyed pa'i dus med pa'i phyir rol.* Note that my interpretation of this passage differs from Meinert's, in that she takes it to mean that gNubs-chen recommends effort as a last resort for those still subject to referential imaging, thereby ignoring the explanation that follows in the text. Cf. Meinert, *Chinesische Chan- und tibetische rDzogs chen- Lehre*, p. 258.

⁷¹ As well as being Vimalamira's master, she was one of Padmasambhava's teachers. An emanation of the sky-farer (Skt. *ḍākini*) Guhyajñānā, she is said to have transformed Padmasambhava into the syllable HŪM and swallowed him, thereby granting him the four empowerments. See Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol.1, p. 469. In the *Bai-ro 'Dra-'bag chen-mo*, she is described as the daughter of a prostitute; her own master is given as Śrīsimha. See g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, p. 61; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, p. 45.

⁷² C 340.6: *sa dang chu dang me dang rlung/ de bzhin 'jig rten snod bcud [bcud M 242a.6 : bcus C 340.6] kyang/ /kun kyang rang bzhin ye shes dbyings/ de las ma gtogs [gtogs M 242a.6 : rtogs C 340.6] ye shes med/.*

⁷³ See C 191.

⁷⁴ C 191, 272.

least by the time of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes, dGa'-rab rdo-rje's name was already associated with the doctrine of the Great Completeness. Furthermore, as mentioned by Achard, we can deduce from the passages quoted in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* that the *Yon-tan bcu* was a doxography which covered at least the view of *Mahāyoga* to the conduct of *Atiyoga*.⁷⁶

The proper comprehension of this view is explained as being without any objective scope (*spyod-yul*), and hence without discursive grasping towards any view.⁷⁷ Quotations are given to this effect from various texts, including the *Khyung-chen ldings-pa*:

Self-originated wisdom always abides as it is in non-discursiveness;⁷⁸

And the *Nam-mkha'i rgyal-po*:

Without the intellect that is intrinsic to the sense-faculties, it is free from an objective scope.⁷⁹

On the other hand, when one fails to have confidence in this view, one ends up desiring and searching for the clarity of self-originated wisdom. This searching causes one to be embroiled in suffering and is compared to a doctor searching a doctor,⁸⁰ a comparison taken from the *Nam-mkha'-che*:

Because of the confusion of corruption through childishness,⁸¹
One is like a doctor searching for a remedy.⁸²

2-5. *The view without action and searching*

The fifth view is attributed to Buddhagupta; here, one's ordinary experience of the world and its inhabitants is transfigured into that of a seraphic mansion (*gzhal-yas-khang*) filled with Buddhas. It might be asked whether this is not akin to the process of tantric transformation. The answer would have to be negative, in that here there is nothing to transform or to search

⁷⁵ C 340, 341, 453.

⁷⁶ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 32, n.36.

⁷⁷ C 341.

⁷⁸ *Khyung-chen ldings-pa*, in NGT, vol.1/ka, p. 419.5; *Kun-byed rgyal-po*, ch.22, in NGM, vol.1/ka, p. 87.5; *Khyung-chen-gyi rgyud*, in NGM, vol.1/ka, p. 540.1: *rang byung ye shes mi rtog kun tu ji bzhin gnas/*.

⁷⁹ C 341.4: *dbang po rang gi blo med spyod yul bral/*. Cf. *Nam-mkha'i rgyal-po*, in NGM, vol.1/ka, p. 602.2-3, which reads "without the scope of objects and sense-faculties" (*/yul dang dbang po'i spyod yul med pa la/*).

⁸⁰ C 344.

⁸¹ Klong-chen-pa too compares ordinary conditioning to childish games. See Dowman, *Old Man Basking in the Sun*, pp. 77-79.

⁸² *Nam-mkha'-che*, in NGM, vol.3/ga, p. 189.7: *byis pas bsalad pas* [*pas* C 344.4, M 244b.3 : *pa'i* NGM] *'khrul pa'i phyir* [*phyir* NGM : *phyin* C 344.4, M 244b.3]/ */sman nyid sman pa 'tshol* [*tshol* NGM : *tshol* C 344.4, M 244b.3] *ba bzhin/*.

for: “suffering is spontaneously present as great bliss; the obscurations intrinsically blaze forth as wisdom.”⁸³

This view of freedom from action and searching (*bya-btsal dang bral-ba*) presents, as already noted by Karmay,⁸⁴ a certain lexical similarity to *Ch'an*; hence, gNubs-chen is keen to point out the differences between both approaches. The gist of his argument lies in the fact that such freedom from action does not mean that actions are to be rejected – this would again be falling into a one-sided conceptual trap; indeed, *Atiyoga* is beyond both discarding virtues and taking them up, so there is no need to interrupt whatever it is one is doing.⁸⁵ Hence, ‘freedom from action and searching’, far from referring to an artificial form of quietism in which one refrains from action, signifies that the practitioner rests in phenomena’s open dimension (Skt. *dharmadhātu*) beyond the contrived opposition between doing and non-doing.⁸⁶

This becomes especially clear when gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes points out the fault of not comprehending this view: one becomes caught up in effort precisely by pursuing the concept of non-action, all the while speaking the word ‘effortless’.⁸⁷

2-6. The view of great bliss

The next view, that of great bliss, is attributed to Kukurāja⁸⁸ and Śrīsimha. Here, the various phenomena pertaining to suffering, the afflictions as well as their effects, are considered to be primordially non-existent. This is not to postulate an inert nothingness, but rather points to a plenum, referred to as a pure expanse of bliss.⁸⁹ Thus, great bliss does not reside apart from suffering, or behind it, and suffering is not first to be relinquished in order to experience bliss; the non-obstructed plenitude of this expanse of bliss actually pervades each and every experience on a level ‘prior to’ the fragmentation into pain and pleasure. Put differently, great bliss is an individual’s most basic natural state, whereas the fluctuating feelings of pleasure and suffering represent various levels of disturbance of this state.⁹⁰ This inalienable nature of great bliss becomes clear when Sangs-rgyas ye-shes explains that intrinsic awareness is luminously clear as great bliss.⁹¹ In this regard, we must remind ourselves that existence⁹² itself is ‘ec-static’ in the etymological sense of ‘standing bare’ in the open clearing of the ground,

⁸³ C 345.1: *sdug bsnal bde ba chen por lhun gyis* [gyis Baroetto, p. 89 : *gyi* C 345.1, M 245a.1] *grub/sgrib pa ye shes su rang 'bar/*.

⁸⁴ Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 116, p. 120.

⁸⁵ C 351.4: *de ltar shes na ci byas kyang mi 'gog stel/*.

⁸⁶ Cf. C 351f.

⁸⁷ C 352.3-4.

⁸⁸ Note that two Kukurājas are mentioned in the *Bai-ro 'Dra-'bag chen-mo*. See g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, p. 55, pp. 57f; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, p. 41, p. 43.

⁸⁹ C 353.2: *bde ba chen po'i klong dag pa/*.

⁹⁰ Guenther, Herbert V., *The Tantric View of Life*, Berkeley: Shambhala, 1972, p. 41.

⁹¹ C 353.4-5.

⁹² Seen in itself, existence (Skt. *bhāva*) is the fragmentary vision characterized by the dualistic pairs of happiness and pain, etc.

and that “we are, in an ontological sense, centres of visionary ecstasy, and not egological subjects.”⁹³

To comprehend this view means that whatever is ordinarily perceived as being characterized by suffering is instantly seen in a new, ever-fresh light, as pervaded by bliss:

The third order chiliocosm is installed in bliss. Deviations and obscurations are shifted to great bliss.⁹⁴

Indeed, a shift in perception is called for, whereby one’s experience of ordinary temporality (the ‘three times’) is transformed. Such a transfigured experience of temporality means that one “refuses the temptation to totalize and instead embraces the temporal *ekstasis* which spans our past, present, and future. [It is thereby possible to understand and enjoy] the intertwining of potential and retentional experiences, living to the fullest its opening up to the present.”⁹⁵

By failing to comprehend this view, one desires to be free from suffering and seeks bliss as a separate reality; one thereby turns one’s back to one’s integral identity, which in itself is already blissful. gNubs-chen compares such an attitude to someone who, although riding an elephant, does not realize this and seeks it separately.⁹⁶ Here, our author cites the *Khyung-chen ldings-pa*, which says:

Desiring bliss, one turns one’s back thereto;
Where there is already bliss, one searches for bliss with bliss.
Confused about enlightenment, one’s primordial greed casts doubt
on the doctrine:
Such a subject does not see the Buddha.⁹⁷

2-7. The view of non-duality

The seventh view to be discussed concerns non-duality and is attributed to Mañjuśrīmitra, the author of the previously quoted *Sems-bsgom*. As was mentioned above, a view of non-duality is also discussed in Chapter VI on

⁹³ Levin, David Michael, *The Opening of Vision: Nihilism and the Postmodern Situation*, London: Routledge, 1988, p. 213.

⁹⁴ C 355.3: *stong gsum bde ba la bkod/ /gol sgrib bde chen du skyas btab* [*skyas btab* C 355.3, M 251b.1 : *bskyal btang* Baroetto, p. 107]/.

⁹⁵ Levin, *The Opening of Vision*, p. 458.

⁹⁶ C 356.2-3.

⁹⁷ *Khyung-chen ldings-pa*, in NGT, vol.1/ka, p. 421.6; *Kun-byed rgyal-po*, ch.22, in NGM, vol.1/ka, pp. 89f: *bde ba 'dod pa* [*pa* C 356.3, M 252a.3 : *pas* NGT, NGM] *bde bar* [*bde bar* C 356.3, M 252a.3 : *bde la* NGT, NGM] *rgyab kyis phyogs/ /bde ba* [*bde ba* C 356.4, M 252a.4 : *bde des* NGT : *bde bas* NGM] *zin te bde bas bde ba 'tshol* [*'tshol* C 356.4, NGT : *tshol* M 252a.4, NGM] /*byang chub 'khrul pa* [*'khrul pa* C 356.4, M 252a.4, NGM : *'khrul bas* NGM] *ye rngam chos la za/ /de lta* [*de lta* C 356.4, M 252a.4 : *de lta'i* NGT : *'di lta'i* NGM] *yul can sangs rgyas mthong ba med/*.

Mahāyoga.⁹⁸ To illustrate what non-duality means in the context of the Great Completeness, gNubs-chen explains that by examining the enlightened mind as to its essence, it is non-existent; yet at the same time, it can appear as anything. The manner it appears depends to a great extent on the way one thinks about it, yet it cannot be limited to any of its guises: hence, existence and non-existence are non-dual. Similarly, its nature is completely indefinite, yet it rests with all phenomena, which are its qualities, so that eternalism and nihilism are non-dual.⁹⁹

In this context, incomprehension refers to mouthing the view of non-duality when in fact one is merely focusing on a limitation. The fact that the limitation happens to be unchanging changes nothing to the matter – indeed, this rather indicates a form of spiritual sclerosis, whereby one becomes caught up in referential imaging. Unable to find absolute meaningfulness, one deviates towards limiting positions.¹⁰⁰

2-8. *The view of the great seminal nucleus*

The penultimate view, attributed to Rājahastin,¹⁰¹ concerns the great seminal nucleus (*thig-le chen-po*). In the teachings of the Great Completeness, the abiding mode (*gnas-lugs*) of intrinsic awareness is often described as the unique seminal nucleus (*thig-le nyag-gcig*) to indicate its unitary and non-fragmentary character. This might remind us of the mystery of the supreme point mentioned in Jewish esotericism, which is comprehended in the inner palace of the heart.¹⁰² This supreme point manifests as a multitude of central points, each one being surrounded by an expansion that simultaneously veils and reflects its cause; each point of this expanding configuration is dependent on a point hierarchically above it, yet at once virtually contains the centre of all centres.¹⁰³ From the perspective of sacred geometry, the point cannot be said to pertain to space, representing as it does the principle of space, a principle which it manifests by situating itself in the spatial dimension.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, in the case which concerns us here, this unitary nature of the seminal nucleus remains ever-present, so that the atemporal process of the manifestation of the awakened bodies and wisdoms (*sku dang ye-shes*), known in the pith instruction section (*man-ngag-sde*) as the ground's illumination (*gzhi-s nang*), is in no wise separate from the ground itself. What is more, in the visions of crossover (*thod-rgal*) of the pith instruction section, the ground's self-illumination (*rang-s nang*) appears as chains of seminal nuclei; in spatial terms, every point of space becomes the centre from which a kaleidoscopic display of light manifests.¹⁰⁵ The contemplation of these

⁹⁸ C 204-210.

⁹⁹ C 357.1-2.

¹⁰⁰ C 368.3-4: *des na nam yang don mi rnyed de phyogs las gol lo/*.

¹⁰¹ In the *Bai-ro 'Dra-'bag chen-mo*, Rājahastin is said to be the son of Dhahenatalo; he received direct teachings from dGa'-rab rdo-rje and deepened his understanding through his father's instructions. See g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, pp. 49f; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, p. 36.

¹⁰² Guénon, René, *Le Symbolisme de la Croix*, Paris: Editions Vega, 2007, p. 45.

¹⁰³ Schaya, Léo, *L'Homme et l'Absolu selon la Kabbale*, Paris: Editions Dervy, 2009, pp. 73f.

¹⁰⁴ Guénon, René, *Le Symbolisme de la Croix*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁵ Achard, 'La base et ses sept interprétations dans la tradition rDzogs chen', pp. 48f.

visions reveals to the *yogin* the unique seminal nucleus which is none other than his ever-present abiding mode.¹⁰⁶

gNubs-chen's description of this view, despite perhaps his more sober style typical of the mind section (*sems-sde*), confirms the above allusions to the seminal nucleus' non-fragmentary reality. He writes that phenomena merely appear to be different for those with misconceptions and those still on the path. However, when awakening to the great seminal nucleus, the enlightened mind no longer referentially images such dualistically elaborated phenomena, yet needs not reject them.¹⁰⁷ This non-referential wisdom which knows non-discursively is, in a quote from the *rMad-du byung-ba*, paradoxically spoken of as 'stupidity' (*gti-mug*; Skt. *moha*):

Stupidity inseparably assimilates the individual views regarding all the phenomena that originate from integral identity. Since it does not possess the intent that analyses them individually, it is stupidity. [...] ¹⁰⁸ Since all phenomena become the awakened mind of the Bliss-gone One (Skt. *sugata*), in this gladness of the supreme secret, everything dwells in the single identity. Since it does not possess [the intent that] analyses the stages and their phases, it is stupidity. [...] ¹⁰⁹

Here the affliction of stupidity (*gti-mug*; Skt. *moha*) takes on a spiritually 'positive' sense in that it is principally identified with the wisdom of phenomena's open dimension (Skt. *dharmadhātu-jñāna*), which is beyond all discursiveness and conceptualization. This is clearly reminiscent of the 'wise ignorance' (Lat. *docta ignorantia*) spoken of by Dyonisius the Areopagite (ca. 5th-6th centuries) and his spiritual heir Scotus Erigena (ca. 815- ca. 877). In this current of mystical theology, man's apotheosis is inseparable from his progression in divine knowledge: the highest form of wisdom is that where conceptual thought falls away completely, laying bare the ultimate reality in the dark light of unknowing. From the limited perspective of discursive rationality, the divine self-disclosure must always appear as an abysmal darkness, which is why the knowledge of this transcendent reality is termed 'unknowing'.¹¹⁰ In this same line of understanding, the *Cloud of Unknowing*, a medieval English mystical work, states:

Be blind for the time being, and cut away desire for knowledge, for it will hinder you more than help you.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, pp. 111f.

¹⁰⁷ C 369.4-6.

¹⁰⁸ Several additional lines in NGM.

¹⁰⁹ *rMad-du byung-ba*, in NGM, vol.2/kha, pp. 788.4-789.1: *gti mug ni bdag nyid las byung ba'i chos thams cad la/ [shad om. NGM] lta ba so sor [so sor C 372.5, M 262b.1 : so so NGM] dbyer med par thugs su chud de/ so sor [so sor C 372.6, M 262b.1 : so so NGM] dbye ba'i dgongs pa mi mnga' bas gti mug pa dang/ [...] chos thams cad bde bar gshegs pa'i thugs nyid du gyur pas/ gsang ba mchog gi dgyes pa na thams cad bdag nyid gcig pur [gcig pur C 373.1, M 262b.3 : gcig pu NGM] bzhuvs te/ sa dang sa'i rim par dbye ba'i dgongs [dbye ba'i dgongs NGM : dbye ba'i C 373.2, M 262b.3] pa mi mnga' bas gti mug pa dang/ [...].*

¹¹⁰ Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, pp. 19f, p. 25.

¹¹¹ Spearing, A.C. (tr.), *The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works*, London: Penguin Books, 2001, p. 57.

The reason is that:

By grace it is possible to have full knowledge of all other created things and their works, and indeed of the works of God himself, and to think clearly about them, but of God himself no one can think. And so I wish to give up everything that I can think, and choose as my love the one thing that I cannot think.¹¹²

Importantly, the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* reminds us that the seminal nucleus even defies the description of being 'one'. This is crucial since the incomprehension of this view implies an artificial search for 'oneness' aside from duality; Sangs-rgyas ye-shes describes those subject to this misunderstanding as seeking to assemble disparate phenomena as one and compares this to pouring something into a reduced and tattered sack¹¹³ – the metaphor is telling in that it conveys the fundamental inadequacy of conceptual thought (it is both too narrow and too weak) in grasping non-referential reality.

2-9. *The view concerning the ground of all phenomena as it is*

The final view is espoused by our author himself and is also shared, according to the gloss, by dGa'-rab rdo-rje¹¹⁴ and King Dhahenatalo.¹¹⁵ Sangs-rgyas ye-shes writes:

As for the view concerning the ground of all phenomena as it is,¹¹⁶ it is especially unmistaken. If it be asked why this is the case, [it is replied that,] since the very suchness of reified entities is uncontrived and uncontaminated, it is the Great Completeness of *Atiyoga*. Concerning the enumeration of its names, the parts of its qualities as they appear transcend numbering. Since suchness is without referential grasping, it is renowned as 'free from thematic foci'. Since everything is complete in the fruition, it is also renowned as 'spontaneous presence'. Since as such there is not even the name of suffering, it is also renowned as 'great bliss'. Since it is without extrinsic phenomena, it is also renowned as 'integral being'. Since it is without peer or elaboration, it is renowned as 'the great seminal nucleus'. Since it is without limiting phenomena, it is also renowned

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹¹³ C 374.3-4.

¹¹⁴ Note that dGa'-rab rdo-rje is also associated with the second view described above, that of spontaneous presence (C 315.6, 320.2).

¹¹⁵ According to Lopon P. Ogyan Tanzin (personal communication), Dhahenatalo is probably an *Apabhramśa* name. In the *Bai-ro 'Dra-'bag chen-mo*, Dhahenatalo is said to have been a direct disciple of dGa'-rab rdo-rje, from whom he received the essence of the *rDzogs-chen* teachings. He then went on to study more detailed instructions under Mañjuśrīmitra's guidance. See g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, pp. 48f; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, p. 35.

¹¹⁶ Note that an alternative name of this view is given earlier in the chapter (C 316.2-3): 'the great intrinsic mode which, without relinquishing them, is free from all limitations'.

as ‘non-duality’. Since as such everything is luminously clear, it is also renowned as ‘self-originated wisdom’. Because there is no hope for a fruition and it is non-effort, it is also renowned as ‘free from effortful action’.¹¹⁷ Since the indications may be different while the essence is non-different, and since though it is one it is everything, and though it is everything it is one, these are the enumerated names of the ground as it is.¹¹⁸

This passage should make it clear that for gNubs-chen this ninth view, concerning the ground of all phenomena just as it is, virtually includes the eight previous views. Hence, the different views are not contradictory, but rather represent varying angles from which to view the ground. In our author’s perspective, it is the ninth view which enables the *yogin* to gain a truly complete and holistic understanding of the ground, just as it is. This echoes a similar statement made in the context of the six views of *Mahāyoga* (Chapter VI, §1.7), where gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes explains that the different teachings concern the faculties of individuals, but that all of them appear from the essence of thusness according to the particular qualities required under the circumstances.¹¹⁹

Compared to Klong-chen-pa’s exposition of the seven theories concerning the ground alluded to above, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes seems less severe towards the alternative views. In his *Tshig-don-mdzod*, Klong-chen-pa affirms the superiority of the theory of the ground as alpha-purity (the seventh view in his classification). On the other hand, in his *Theg-mchog mdzod*, he also rejects this view, since, if the ground were merely alpha-pure, it would be devoid of self-originated wisdom itself, being merely empty. Hence, in the *Theg-mchog mdzod* he accepts the view that the ground is both alpha-pure in terms of its essence (*ngo-bo*) and spontaneously present in

¹¹⁷ Here the text reads *bya-rtsol bral-ba* (‘freedom from effortful action’), whereas previously the expression *bya-btsal dang-bral-ba* (‘freedom from action and searching’) was given; cf. C 316.1, C 344.4 and M 249a.1 (correcting C 351.1 *brtsal* to *btsal*). I have resisted the temptation of standardizing the expression, as the meaning is, in any case, quite similar. There is indeed a close connection in *rDzogs-chen* between the notions of non-searching (*ma-btsal*) and non-effort (*mi-rtsol*) or effortlessness (*rtsol-med*). See Achard, *L’Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 63, n.6.

¹¹⁸ C 375.5-377.1: *de la chos thams cad gzhi ji bzhin par lta ba ni/ khyad par du’ang ma nor ba ste/ de ci’i phyir zhe na/ dngos po rnam kyid de kho na nyid kho [kho M 264a.6 : kha C 375.6] na ma bcos ma bslad pa nyid pas a ti yo ga rdzogs pa chen po’o/ de’i mtshan gyi rnam [rnam M 264a.6 : rnam C 376.1] grangs ni yon tan gyi cha las snang ba grangs las ‘das so/ /de kho na nyid la dmigs ‘dzin med pas/ gza’ gtaḍ bral zhes bya ba yang grags/ de la ‘bras bu ril rdzogs pas lhun gyis [gyis Baroetto, p. 139 : gyi C 376.2, M 264b.2] grub pa zhes bya bar yang grags/ de kho na sduḡ bsgal ming med pas bde ba chen po zhes bya bar yang grags/ gzhan pa’i chos med pas bdag nyid chen por yang grags/ zla dang spros pa med pas thig le chen por grags/ mtha’i chos med pas gnyis su med par yang grags/ de nyid du thams cad du gsal bas rang [C 376.5 ins. rang (ditto)] byung [byung M 264b.4 : ‘byung C 376.6] ye shes su yang grags/ ‘bras bu la re ba med pas mi rtsol ba’i phyir/ bya rtsol bral ba zhes bya bar yang grags tel/ de dag rtags tha dad kyang ngo bo la tha dad med pas/ gcig kyang thams cad yin la/ thams cad gcig pas/ gzhi ji bzhin pa’i mtshan gyi rnam [rnam Baroetto, p. 139 : rnam C 376.6, M 264b.6] grangs so/.*

¹¹⁹ C 215.6.

terms of its nature (*rang-bzhin*).¹²⁰ In this optic, he qualifies the lower views as 'flawed' (*skyon-can*).¹²¹ One could also say that each of the six erroneous formulations concerning the ground is right to the extent that it picks out an aspect of the ground, but wrong in the sense that it absolutizes this aspect.¹²²

While it is true that gNubs-chen considers the ninth view to be "especially unmistaken,"¹²³ he does not reject the eight other views. In each case, it is merely a particular form of incomprehension that he rejects; typically, this incomprehension entails reifying the view under question into an abstract conceptualized goal, something that is to be attained – such reification, as we have seen, implies being caught up in referential imaging (*dmigs-pa*; Skt. *ālambana*). For example, the view of freedom from action and searching, if misinterpreted, becomes the deliberate rejection of action.¹²⁴ Likewise, the individual who misunderstands self-originated wisdom becomes caught up in a futile search for that which has never left him.¹²⁵

Returning to the ninth view under discussion, Sangs-rgyas ye-shes explains that the manner of properly comprehending the suchness (*de-khona-nyid*) of reified entities is such that each of the preceding views is realized in its primordially, so that the concept of that view disappears; hence, he writes that "primordial freedom from thematic foci is without freedom from thematic foci" or that "the primordial view of the great seminal nucleus is without viewing the great seminal nucleus." Moreover, suchness itself is not viewed, since there is neither viewer nor object to view.¹²⁶ gNubs-chen goes on to point out that to follow after anything is a mistake and prevents one from realizing the ground.¹²⁷ After giving a lengthy enumeration of various characteristics of suchness, our author concludes:

In any case, suchness as it is, the luminous nature of mind, is non-obstructed by any such characteristics, since it is not maintained to be graspable in terms of being this or that. Abiding in the great Eminent *Yoga*, since one is dissociated from all thoughts without inhibiting them, appearances are not discursively examined. Why is this so? Everything is the self and the self appears as everything. Therefore, the meaning of not imaging appearances is that, at one time, there is clarity without referential focus.¹²⁸

¹²⁰ Achard, 'La base et ses sept interprétations dans la tradition rDzogs chen', pp. 55f, quoting Klong-chen-pa, *Tshig-don rin-po-che'i mdzod*, pp. 167f and *Theg-mchog rin-po-che'i mdzod*, pp. 282-284.

¹²¹ Achard, 'La base et ses sept interprétations dans la tradition rDzogs chen', p. 59.

¹²² Arguillère, *Profusion de la Vaste Sphère*, p. 346.

¹²³ C 375.6.

¹²⁴ C 351f.

¹²⁵ C 344.

¹²⁶ C 377.

¹²⁷ C 378f.

¹²⁸ C 401.5-402.1: 'on tang na ji bzhin pa de kho na nyid sems kyi rang bzhin 'od gsal ba de'i mtshan nyid cir yang ma 'gags pa/ yin yin du bzung [bzung C 401.5; M 283b.3 : gzung Baroetto, p. 187] du mi 'dod pa'i phyir/ lhag pa'i rnal 'byor chen po che [che M 283b.3 : chen C 401.6] la gnas pa yang bsam pa thams cad ma ba kag bral bas snang zhing mi rtog go/ de ci'i phyir thams cad kyang bdag yin la/ bdag thams cad du snang bas/ snang ba dang mi dmigs pa'i don dus gcig tu dmigs gtad [gtad M 283b.5 : gtang C 402.1] med par gsal lol.

In this context, incomprehension refers to taking the ordinary reified entities of one's concretistic conceptual grasping to be suchness. This, it is warned, is again referential grasping (*dmigs-'dzin*) and pertains to the stage of an ordinary person.¹²⁹

II. Meditation

In the second section of the chapter, which is devoted to meditation, gNubs-chen describes two methods, which focus on the body and mind respectively: the means of resting the body and those of the mind's approaching [suchness].

1. *The means of resting the body*

Regarding the first, quoting the *Man-ngag rgum-chung* of gNyan dpal-dbyangs,¹³⁰ our author points out that any emphasis on a physical posture reflects grasping towards the body, which prevents one from seeing absolute meaningfulness.¹³¹ This does not mean, however, that he is in favour of rejecting such physical posture in meditation; the point is not to engage in any deliberate action (*ched-du bya-ba*) – as such, this does not contradict taking up a physical posture.¹³² (Here, we are reminded of what was said above in the context of the view 'without action and searching'.) In support of this, he quotes the *rNal-'byor grub-pa'i lung*:

Neither contemplation nor the body nor solitude should be contrived;
In this regard, uncontrived solitude
Is the abode of primordial solitude,
The domain of the supreme *yogin*.¹³³

Here, one might recall gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' statement in Chapter I that true solitude is not to be found outside, and that those who are attached to outward solitude will not see the great meaning.¹³⁴ An interesting parallel might be drawn with the solitude (Germ.

¹²⁹ C 403.

¹³⁰ gNyan dpal-dbyangs, *Man-ngag rgum-chung*, in TD, vol.211/no, p. 770; Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 84f; cf. Norbu, Namkhai, *sBas-pa'i rgum-chung: The Small Collection of Hidden Precepts: A Study of an Ancient Manuscript of Dzogchen from Tun-huang*, Arcidosso: Shang-Shung Edizioni, 1984, pp. 100f (the latter corresponds in part only).

¹³¹ C 404.6.

¹³² C 403.6.

¹³³ *rNal-'byor grub-pa'i lung*, in NGM, vol.16/ma, p. 452.4: *bsam gtan lus dben bcos mi bya/ /de la de dben ma bcos pa/ /de nyid ye nas* [nas NGM : shes C 404.3, M 285b.3] *dben pa'i gnas/ /'di ni rnal 'byor mchog gi yul/*.

¹³⁴ C 8f.

Abgeschiedenheit) or detachment emphasized in the thought of the German mystic Meister Eckhart (ca. 1260- ca. 1327), where it is considered as the highest virtue;¹³⁵ Eckhart writes that in its inward sense, solitude refers not so much to outer isolation, but rather to an attitude of complete unwavering towards any experience, whether pleasant or painful.¹³⁶

2. *The means of the mind's approaching [suchness]*

Regarding the second means, gNubs-chen observes that the mind enters suchness without entering anything. He goes on to explain this as a non-referential state where "no scrutinizing thoughts are produced in the intellect."¹³⁷

Next, three possible defects of concentration are listed: the concentration of apprehension, that of thorough searching and the hybrid concentration.

1. As it is, absolute meaningfulness is without any thoughts whatsoever; to be convinced: "This is it!" is to apprehend it. The genuine absolute cannot be seen thereby. One can trust that this is said to be a defect of grasping.¹³⁸
2. Concerning thorough searching, the vast expanse of phenomena's beingness is inherently free from scrutinizing thoughts; resting in equipoise therein, one searches for the mind's locus of resting. For example, notions are like a fly searching for a hollow; discursive thoughts that ponder: "Is it comfortable to meditate like that?" or "Is it suitable to rest like that?", are a defect that creates thoughts.¹³⁹
3. As for the hybrid concentration, in the expanse of equality, concepts are alpha-pure; phenomena's beingness is without action or searching. Because one's intellect does not assimilate the crucial point of non-duality, at times the meaning of signlessness is clear, whereas at others the conceptions of signs fluctuate. When such a medley occurs, there is hybrid [concentration]; one thereby does not realize meditation without thematic foci.¹⁴⁰

There then follows a long passage where our author explains that, if meditating correctly, all the previously listed nine views concerning the

¹³⁵ Caputo, John D., *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1978, p. 13.

¹³⁶ Eckehart, Meister, *Schriften und Predigten*, Aus dem Mittelhochdeutschen übersetzt und herausgegeben von Hermann Büttner, vol.1, Jena: Eugen Dietrichs, 1923, p. 60.

¹³⁷ C 406.5-6.

¹³⁸ C 407.2-3: /don ji bzhin pa cir yang bsam du med pa la/ 'di kho na la'o zhes nges par bzung nas yid la byed pa ste/ des yang dag pa'i don mi mthong ngo/ /de yang 'dzin pa'i skyon yin te/ /zhes pas yid ches so/.

¹³⁹ C 407.3-5: /yongs su tshol ba ni/ chos nyid yangs pa'i klong [klong Barotto, p. 196 : klongs C 407.4, M 288a.2] bsam dpyod ngang gis bral ba la mnyam par 'jog cing sems kyi gzhas [gzhas C 407.4 : bzhas M 288a.3] sa tshol te/ dper na bung ba khung tshol ba lta bur 'du shes te/ 'di ltar bsgoms na bde'am/ de ltar bzhas na rung ngam snyam pa'i bsam pa tshor rtog can/ de yang bsam pa byed pa'i skyon yin no/.

¹⁴⁰ C 408.1-3: /'phra men gyi ting nge 'dzin ni/ mnyam pa'i klong la rnam rtog ka nas dag pa/ chos nyid bya ba tsam du yang btsal du med pa la blo gnyis med kyi gnad ma chud pas/ res mtshan ma med pa'i don gsal/ res mtshan ma'i rtog pa rgyu stel 'dren mar byung na 'phra men te/ des gza' gtad med pa'i bsgom [bsgom M 288b.4 : bsgoms C 408.3] pa mi rtogs so/.

ground will be included in the *yogin's* realization. Sangs-rgyas ye-shes writes:

Because absolute meaningfulness and the meditator are not delimited and are one, phenomena's beingness is the essence of being as it is. Hence, one rests without deliberately resting the intellect. Likewise, since phenomena's beingness is spontaneously accomplished, intrinsic awareness too rests in spontaneous presence. Since phenomena's beingness is luminously clear as the essence of the great seminal nucleus, intrinsic awareness too rests as the great seminal nucleus. Because absolute meaningfulness is free from effortful action, intrinsic awareness is free from effortful action. Since phenomena's beingness is non-dual, awareness is non-dual. Since phenomena's beingness is free from thematic focus, awareness is free from thematic focus.¹⁴¹

He continues in the same vein, in effect covering each of the nine views, though not necessarily in the same order as listed in the previous section. What we can see from this citation is that gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes juxtaposes phenomena's beingness (*chos-nyid*; Skt. *dharmatā*) on the one hand with intrinsic awareness (*rang-rig*) on the other: these two aspects correspond to what might be called the ontological and sapiential dimensions of the realization of the Great Completeness; one could also say, to the 'objective' and 'subjective/cognitive' poles of this realization, if these terms were not overburdened with precisely the kind of subject-object dichotomy that the doctrine presented here intends to overcome. The indivisibility of these two aspects is indicated by the inseparable union of the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, symbolizing intrinsic awareness, with his consort Samantabhadrī, symbolizing phenomena's beingness, which is then evoked as phenomena's open dimension (*chos-kyi dbyings*; Skt. *dharmadhātu*).¹⁴²

Phenomena need not have the solidified concreteness that we habitually attribute to them – such concreteness is, in fact, merely the result of inveterate reification, technically termed the all-imputing ignorance (*kun-tu btags-pa'i ma-rig-pa*).¹⁴³ It may not be without interest to recall that the

¹⁴¹ C 409.1-4: *don dang bsgom pa por rgya ma chad de* [C 409.1 ins. *shad*] *gcig pa'i phyir chos nyid ji bzhin pa'i ngo bo yin pas/ bla ji bzhin par ched du ma bzhig par bzhag go/ de bzhin du chos nyid lhun gyis grub pas rang rig pa'ang lhun gyis* [gyis M 289b.1 : gyi C 409.2] *grub bar bzhag go/ chos nyid thig le chen po'i ngo bor gsal bas/ rang rig pa'ang thig* [thig M 289b.2 : theg C 409.3] *le chen por bzhag go/ don bya ba rtsol ba dang bral ba'i phyir/ rang rig pa bya ba rtsol ba dang bral ba'o/ chos nyid gnyis su med pas/ rig pa gnyis su med pa'o/ chos nyid gza' gta'd dang bral bas/ rig pa gza' gta'd dang bral ba'o/*

¹⁴² Cf. Guenther, Herbert V., *From Reductionism to Creativity: rDzogs chen and the New Sciences of Mind*, Boston: Shambhala, 1989, pp. 197f.

¹⁴³ This all-imputing ignorance is itself the final phase in a triune dynamic of nescience, which the *rDzogs-chen* texts of the pith instruction section describe as the ignorance of one's single identity (*bdag-nyid gcig-pu'i ma-rig-pa*: the most basic non-recognition of one's true nature), the co-emergent ignorance (*lhan-cig skyes-pa'i ma-rig-pa*: it manifests as a misapprehension of one's basic wisdom – hence co-emergent with it – and the subtle conceptualization that accompanies it), and the all-imputing ignorance (*kun-tu btags-pa'i*

etymological sense of 'phenomenon', which many translators use to render one of the meanings of *dharmā*,¹⁴⁴ is precisely that which appears, which shows itself, presences itself, or lights up.¹⁴⁵ In this sense, phenomena (*chos*; Skt. *dharmā*) are appearances (*snang-ba*). Whereas the Tibetan word *snang-ba* first means 'appearance' in the sense of phenomenon, we also witness a move whereby this term comes to mean illumination, hence being closely associated with the clarity (*gsal-ba*) aspect of the ground's nature (*rang-bzhin*). This is how the same word comes to refer to vision in the wider sense, as that which lights up to and as one's perception.¹⁴⁶

In their lighting-up, phenomena manifest within an open dimensionality which is their very nature. This open dimension suffuses and nurtures phenomena in their lighting-up, though we habitually become forgetful of this fact. The beingness of phenomena is therefore not some mysterious force animating phenomena, nor is it a cause: *dharmatā* refers simply to the way things are, hence to their beingness; it does not even begin to answer the question of why they are or happen a certain way.¹⁴⁷ That is why phenomena's beingness (Skt. *dharmatā*) or open dimension (Skt. *dharmadhātu*) cannot be sought separately from phenomena. Furthermore, that is why, once awareness is attuned to this open dimension, it consists "in a 'state' of continual presence, or continual openness: a lively, vigorous attentiveness which serenely rests in, or stays at, the primordial ground of awareness, while at the very same time it moves in a shifting succession of focusings from one being to the next. Thus, we may say that, regardless of 'content', regardless of the beings with which we are concerned, [...] we stay with, or dwell in, a ground of awareness – a ground which always opens limitlessly before, and around, any particular content, any particular being."¹⁴⁸

In *rDzogs-chen*, awareness, itself inseparable from the ground, is the act of 'awaring' whereby the ground comes to be aware of, to know, itself.¹⁴⁹ Hence, it refers to the direct, non-discursive and immediate cognition of phenomena's beingness, which is none other than the ground.¹⁵⁰ Since this unmediated act of cognition is, in effect, *already* potentially present as the ground's innate intelligence, it is *always* possible as an *ever-fresh* re-cognition (*ngo-shes*) of one's own true face – in fact, the practice of contemplation as described in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* is precisely what permits one to re-

ma-rig-pa: it refers to the ordinary mind's inveterate tendency to impute a reality to the sense-objects). See Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 107f.

¹⁴⁴ Traditionally, ten meanings of the word *dharmā* are listed; see Dorje, Gyurme, and Kapstein, Matthew, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, vol.2: Reference Materials, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991, p. 166. See also the elucidation of the term *dharmā* in Conze, Edward, *Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962, pp. 92-106.

¹⁴⁵ Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 51. See also Partridge, Eric, *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, p. 199.

¹⁴⁶ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, pp. 120f.

¹⁴⁷ Rahula, Walpola, 'Wrong Notions of *Dhammatā* (*Dharmatā*)', in Cousins, Lance, et al. (eds.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974, pp. 181-191, esp. p. 182, p. 184, p. 188.

¹⁴⁸ Levin, David Michael, *The Body's Recollection of Being: Phenomenological Psychology and the Deconstruction of Nihilism*, London: Routledge, 1985, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 125.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

attune to this most primordial way of being and knowing, a state of open-dimensional presence suffused with innate wakefulness.

Eight systems of meditation

For this purpose, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes presents eight different methods of meditation according to different instructors, the names of which are given in the glosses. Each of the approaches is introduced with the words “According to one perspective...” (*rnam-pa gcig-tu*; Skt. *atha vā*).

1. The first method, associated with Ācārya gSal-ba rgyal,¹⁵¹ elucidates meditation as being the realization¹⁵² of the expanse (*klong*):

In awareness one neither deliberately gives in to the mind, nor does one lapse therein. If one intrinsically rests with recollection where there is nothing to recollect, one’s meditation is unmistakable. Furthermore, if one prolongs [one’s meditation] with the diligence of non-action, the root, phenomena’s beingness, becomes actual.¹⁵³

2. The second system is attributed to the nun Ānandā (whom we have already come across above in the context of the fourth view, that of self-originated wisdom) and teaches that meditation on the view of *Atiyoga* is settling in quietude (*mnal-du phebs-pa*).¹⁵⁴ It is further explained that self-originated wisdom is without any objective scope (*spyod-yul*; Skt. *gocara*), so that awareness is beyond all scrutinizing thoughts.

3. The third system is again attributed to gSal-ba rgyal.¹⁵⁵ Here it is mentioned that meditation allows one to rest the intellect. Awareness is compared to an ocean, wherein are reflected the planets and stars – whatever reflections arise in the ocean of awareness are neither inhibited nor grasped at.¹⁵⁶

4. The fourth approach is attributed to Buddhagupta; it will be recalled that this master was associated with the fifth view of freedom from action and

¹⁵¹ This personage is an Indian master also known as bDe-ba gsal-mdzad; he is said to have written a number of short texts on evocations and empowerments based on the *dGongs-pa 'dus-pa'i mdo*; these were collected, edited and translated by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes. See Dalton, *The Uses of the dGongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo*, pp. 145f, n.20.

¹⁵² Note that *phol-ba* is archaic for *rtogs-pa*. See sKyogs-ston rin-chen bkra-shis, *Li-shi'i gur-khang*, p. 58.

¹⁵³ C 412.4-5: [...] *rig pa la sems ched du ma btang ma shor tsam du dran pas dran rgyu med pa rang bzhag nal de bsgom pa ma nor ba ste/ de yang bya ba med pa'i brtson 'grus kyis yun bsrings nal phyi mo chos nyid rang mngon du gyur rol*.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Chos-kyi grags-pa, dGe-bshes (attributed to), *brDa-dag ming-tshig gsal-ba*, Beijing: Mirigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1995, p. 477, where the etymologically related expression *mnal-du 'bebs-pa* is found under the perfective form *mnal-du phab-pa* and is defined as *bsam-pa skyid-po* ('happy').

¹⁵⁵ Cf. the first system mentioned above; note that the epithet Ācārya ('instructor') is not given here.

¹⁵⁶ The simile of the reflections appearing in water is also used by Klong-chen-pa; see Dowman, *Old Man Basking in the Sun*, p. 106.

searching. This meditative approach is introduced with a citation from the *Nam-mkha'-che*:

Phenomena's beingness is without appearance;
Resting therein without searching is meditation.¹⁵⁷

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes writes that quintessential enlightenment is beyond limitations and that the appearances that are experienced as objects are essenceless in absolute meaningfulness. Hence, one should desist from making anything into a referential focus (*dmigs-gtad*).

5. The fifth system, attributed to Mañjuśrīmitra, teaches that spontaneously complete wisdom is untouched by limitations and is without concept-endowed loci (*rnam-rtog ldan-pa'i sa*). Its clarity is compared to that of the sun, since it is clear without any deliberate effort.

6. The sixth method is associated with Vimalamitra. Quoting the *Nam-mkha'i rgyal-po*,¹⁵⁸ Sangs-rgyas ye-shes compares the beingness of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*) to space (*nam-mkha'*; Skt. *ākāśa*), which is without thought; neither discursively examining nor imaging anything, the intellect (*blo*) does not waver from phenomena's beingness, and the *yogin* thereby rests in meditative equipoise.

7. The seventh system is said to be maintained by Vairocana and concerns freedom from action; having resolved to be free from an object of meditation, one's meditation is uninhibited. Mention is made of the diligence of non-action (*bya-ba med-pa'i brtson-'grus*), whereby "one is without grasping towards the conception of meditating, and without the conception of imaging or non-imaging."¹⁵⁹

8. The eighth approach is said to have been held by dGa'-rab rdo-rje: here, the principle is meditation in the expanse of self-originated wisdom without extremes (*rang-byung ye-shes mu-mtha' med-pa'i klong*), in which the poles of awareness as subject and appearances as object are non-existent, everything being suffused¹⁶⁰ in one's integral identity (which, as mentioned above, is of course beyond the subject-object dichotomy).¹⁶¹

It will have been noticed that several of the teachers mentioned in the glosses are identical to those associated with the nine views concerning the ground. The relationship will be made explicit in the following table, which also includes references to the *'Dra-'bag chen-mo*:

¹⁵⁷ *Nam-mkha'-che*, in NGM, vol.3/ga, p. 175.5: *snang ba med pa'i chos nyid ni [ni C 414.1, M 293a.5 : la NGM] / ma btsal bzhags pas [pas C 414.1, M 293a.5 : na NGM] bsgom pa yin/.*

¹⁵⁸ Cf. *Nam-mkha'i rgyal-po*, in NGM, vol.1/ka, p. 601.5-7.

¹⁵⁹ C 417.1: [...] *bsgom pa'i rtog [rtog Baroetto, p. 212 : rtogs C 417.1, M 295b.1] 'dzin med la/ dmigs pa ma dmigs pa'i rtog [rtog Baroetto, p. 212 : rtogs C 417.1, M 295b.1] 'dzin med pa/.*

¹⁶⁰ Though *snum*s as a verb is not attested in any of the dictionaries (even those specialized in the archaic terms), it is evidently related etymologically to *snum* ('oil'), which suffuses whatever substance it comes into contact with (Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin: personal communication).

¹⁶¹ The above is summarized from C 412-417.

Name of master ¹⁶²	9 views concerning the ground	8 systems of meditation ¹⁶³	Comments from <i>Bai-ro 'Dra-'bag chen-mo</i> ¹⁶⁴ (13 th century) ¹⁶⁵
Ānandā (nun)	No.4 self-originated wisdom (<i>rang-byung ye-shes</i>)	No.2 “settling in quietude”	Disciple of Śrīsiṃha, master of Vimalamitra
Buddhagupta	No.5 freedom from action and searching (<i>bya-btsal dang dral-ba</i>)	No.4 “resting without searching”	Disciple of Devarāja, master of Śrīsiṃha
Dhahenatalo (king)	No.9 ground of all phenomena as it is (<i>chos thams-cad gzhi ji-bzhin-pa</i>)		Disciple of dGa'-rab rdo-rje and Mañjuśrimitra I, master and father of Rājahastin
dGa'-rab rdo-rje	No.2 spontaneous presence (<i>lhun-grub</i>) No.9 ground of all phenomena as it is (<i>chos thams-cad gzhi ji-bzhin-pa</i>)	No.8 “expanse of wisdom free from extremes”	Originator of the human lineage of <i>rDzogs-chen</i> ; he receives the teachings from Vajrapāṇi as an emanation of Vajrasattva ¹⁶⁷
Kukurāja	No.7 non-duality (<i>gnyis-su med-pa</i>)		Kukurāja I: disciple of A-tsan-tra Āloke, master of Ṛṣi Bhāṣita. He is also held to have met dGa'-rab rdo-rje ¹⁶⁸
gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes	No.9 ground of all phenomena as it is (<i>chos thams-cad gzhi ji-bzhin-pa</i>)		Not mentioned
Oḍḍiyāna Mahārāja	No.1 freedom from thematic foci (<i>gza'-gtad dang bral-ba</i>)		Disciple of Kashmiri preceptor Rab-s nang and master of Gomadevi
Mañjuśrimitra	No.7 non-duality	No.5 “spontaneously	Mañjuśrimitra I:

¹⁶² Given in Roman alphabetical order, whereby Tibetan words are listed under the first occurring radical letter (*ming-gzhi*), so that dGa'-rab rdo-rje appears under 'g' rather than 'd'.

¹⁶³ Unlike the nine views concerning the ground, the eight systems of meditation do not have names assigned to them in the text; however, the phrases given in quotation marks taken from their respective descriptions are sufficiently evocative to capture what is being referred to.

¹⁶⁴ Mainly taken from g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, pp. 48-62; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, pp. 35-46.

¹⁶⁵ Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 18.

	(<i>gnyis-su med-pa</i>)	complete wisdom"	disciple of dGa'-rab rdo-rje and master of King Dhahenatalo ¹⁶⁹
Rājahastin (crown prince)	No.8 great seminal nucleus (<i>thig-le chen-po</i>)		Received the essence from dGa-rab rdo-rje; then studied in greater detail under his father King Dhahenatalo
Śrīsiṃha* ¹⁶⁶	No.6 great bliss (<i>bde-ba chen-po</i>)		Disciple of Buddhagupta and master of the nun Ānandā, of Vairocana and of Vimalamita
gSal-ba rgyal* (Ācārya)		No.1 "realization of expanse" No.3 "ocean-like awareness"	Not mentioned
Vairocana	No.3 integral being (<i>bdaḡ-nyid chen-po</i>)	No.7 "freedom from action"	Disciple of Śrīsiṃha ¹⁷⁰
Vimalamitra*	No.1 freedom from thematic foci (<i>gza'-gtad dang bral-ba</i>)	No.6 "phenomena's beingness (Skt. <i>dharmatā</i>) as like space"	Disciple of Śrīsiṃha

It is important to understand that, similarly to the nine views concerning the ground, these eight systems of meditation are not in contradiction or competition with each other. gNubs-chen takes pains to explain that it is not from the perspective of the doctrinal texts or supreme persons that these systems differ, but merely in terms of the intellects of various individuals,

¹⁶⁷ g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, p. 43; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, pp. 30f.

¹⁶⁸ Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, p. 35. A second Kukurāja is also mentioned, who was the disciple of Nāgārjuna and the master of Mañjuśrīmitra II. See g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, pp. 57f; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁶ Names followed by an asterisk are considered direct teachers of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes.

¹⁶⁹ g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, pp. 44-48; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, pp. 31-35. A second Mañjuśrīmitra is mentioned, who was the disciple of Kukurāja II and the master of Devarāja. See g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, p. 58; Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, pp. 43f.

¹⁷⁰ Vairocana's search for and meeting with Śrīsiṃha is described in g.Yu-sgra snying-po, *Bai-ro'i rnam-thar 'dra-'bag chen-mo*, pp. 115-139; the passage is summarized in Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 22-25.

observing that any of these systems of meditation, if practised properly, allows one to strike the point (*thog-tu phebs-par 'gyur-ro*).¹⁷¹

It is noteworthy that rather than providing a set of meditative techniques, the different contemplative approaches discussed in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* appear as poetic evocations of the ground that enable the practitioner to re-tune to the intrinsic awareness of the abiding mode. Hence, there appears to be a rhetorical negation of meditation technique, something quite typical of the mind section;¹⁷² in this regard, one might recall gNubs-chen's denial of physical posture.¹⁷³ However, it must not be forgotten that this rhetorical deconstruction does not take place in a spiritual vacuum, but occurs within a particular context, which is that of a contemplative life dedicated to the practice of meditation: one will recall Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' emphasis on the importance of retiring to a retreat location¹⁷⁴ and of relinquishing worldly attachment¹⁷⁵ in Chapter I, as well as the teaching concerning the defects of non-meditation¹⁷⁶ and the qualities of meditation¹⁷⁷ found in Chapter II. What the deconstructive approach to meditation taken in Chapter VII seems to hint at, is that the different systems of meditation do not really diverge from the perspective of contemplative praxis; rather, they are so many vistas open on to the ground, each one having the potential of eliciting a response according to the needs of particular individuals.

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes continues his exposition by pointing out various defects in a beginner's meditation, noting in particular that any dislike of signs in favour of signlessness, or any dislike of wavering in favour of unwavering, prevents realization of equality.¹⁷⁸

The next subsection¹⁷⁹ contains instructions for the moment of passing away: in view of all that has been written on the subject concerning Karma gling-pa's famous *Bar-do thos-grol*, it may not be without interest to say something of the matter here: whereas the usual description of the appearance of deities in the post-mortem state is clearly connected to the four visions of crossover (*thod-rgal*) of the pith instruction section,¹⁸⁰ gNubs-chen's presentation belongs to the mind section. This part (C 423-425) mainly consists of a long quote from an unidentified source, the *Man-ngag bde-klong*, which is translated here in full:

The greatly secret pith instructions are for the moment of passing
away:
With regard to the uncontrived sphere of the seminal nucleus,
It is hidden at the centre of three secret treasuries.
Becoming confident in planting the mind's vitality,

¹⁷¹ C 419.2.

¹⁷² Germano, David, 'Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of rDzogs-chen', in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol.17:2, 1994, pp. 203-335, esp. pp. 227f.

¹⁷³ C 404.

¹⁷⁴ C 5, also C 21.

¹⁷⁵ C 17-20.

¹⁷⁶ C 36-40.

¹⁷⁷ C 40-45.

¹⁷⁸ C 420f.

¹⁷⁹ Note that this subsection still belongs to the 'means of the mind's approaching suchness'.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 127f.

One ambles about in the open dimension of the three peaks.
 Since its depth is unfathomable, it is vast
 Like a treasure of utterly pure jewels.
 In the seraphic mansion of *bodhicitta*¹⁸¹
 One plants the deathless vitality
 And shows the path without deviation.
 In the phalanx-sized jewelled seraphic mansion
 The king of the fruition's vitality rides
 The stallion of the unhoisted breath.
 Raised through *A* and *YA*,
 It radiates without birth and death
 In the pervasive expanse of the seminal nucleus of *Akaniṣṭha*,
 In the pervasive expanse without hope and misgiving.
 Just as, when pouring molten gold [over a statue], its form becomes
 luminous,
 So when appearance-existence is luminously clear as the mind, it is
 integral being.
 As for both meditation and non-meditation, they are just the path of
 words;
 Becoming proficient is the king of meditation.¹⁸²

This quote is interesting, since its symbolic language (“The uncontrived sphere of the seminal nucleus [...] hidden at the centre of three secret treasuries”) appears to allude to the fact that the matrix of enlightenment – imaged as a seraphic mansion (*gzhal-yas*) – is physically ‘located’ in the heart, something that will of course take on a great importance in the pith instruction section (*man-ngag-sde*).¹⁸³ Moreover, practices involving the use of the inner winds are hinted at (“The king of the fruition’s vitality rides / The stallion of the unhoisted breath”), as well as the fact that the ultimate purpose of meditation is to realize that appearance-existence (*snang-srid*) is the luminous clarity of the mind, which is none other than integral being.

3. Defects in meditation

We now come to various defects in meditation. It is pointed out¹⁸⁴ that the defects are similar to those in *Mahāyoga* and in the common vehicles,¹⁸⁵ but it is in the manner of rectification that a distinction lies. Indeed, the uniqueness of *Atiyoga* is that it does not seek to rectify defects;¹⁸⁶ knowing the defects to

¹⁸¹ The Tibetan text gives the word *bodhicitta* as transliteration from Sanskrit.

¹⁸² C 424.3-425.3.

¹⁸³ See Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, pp. 129-136.

¹⁸⁴ C 425.

¹⁸⁵ The defects of the lower vehicles are listed in the corresponding sections of the previous chapters; i.e. Chapter IV (the gradual approach): C 79-83, also C 77 (defects specific to calm abiding); Chapter V (the simultaneous approach, *sTon-mun*): C 162-170; Chapter VI (*Mahāyoga*): C 228-238 (concerning the defects of the gradual tantric approach) and C 242-250 (concerning the simultaneous tantric approach).

¹⁸⁶ C 440f.

be the beingness of phenomena, they are instantaneously appeased, as is pointed out in the *Don-drug*,¹⁸⁷ which is quoted here:

Whatever conceptual signs occur,
If one knows conceptions to be the beingness of phenomena,
One need not meditate on phenomena's open dimension
elsewhere.¹⁸⁸

There seems little point to give a list of these defects, demons (*bdud*) and obscurations here, except to point out that each of the lower vehicles can be considered a deviation from the perspective of the ones above; *a fortiori*, all of these vehicles are deviations from the point of view of *Atiyoga*. Aside from the gradual approach, the simultaneous approach and the *Mantrayāna* (comprising both *Mahāyoga* and *Anuyoga*),¹⁸⁹ the following deviations are also mentioned: the deviation of nihilism, the deviation of distracted evenness (*phyal-ba g.yeng-ba*), the deviation of unclarity and that of ordinary worldlings, the deviation of the four contemplations, the deviations of the auditors and independent victors, and the deviation of *Cittamātra*.¹⁹⁰

III. Conduct

Our presentation of the practice of *Atiyoga* as described in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* would be incomplete without a mention, however brief, of the role of conduct. Conduct is the integration of meditative realization into daily life; hence, it is elsewhere referred to as post-attainment (*rjes-thob*; Skt. *praṣṭhalabdha*) and concerns the period following meditative equipoise (*mnyam-bzhag*; Skt. *samāhita*); for example, 'Jam-mgon kong-sprul (1813-1899) writes that the accumulations of wisdom and merit are to be completed through meditative equipoise and post-attainment, both of which are to be integrated to each other.¹⁹¹

1. Four types of conduct

In the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*, four types of conduct are detailed, which will briefly be discussed here. Let us note in passing that yet again the structure parallels the presentation of Chapter V on the simultaneous approach and

¹⁸⁷ This *Don-drug* is equivalent to the *sGom-pa don-grub*, itself identical to the third chapter of the 'Khor-ba *rtsad-nas gcod-pa'i nyi-zla-dang myam-pa dri-ma med-pa'i rgyud*. See Liljenberg, Karen, 'On the history and identification of two of the Thirteen Later Translations of the Dzogchen Mind Series', in *Revue d'Études Tibétaines*, no.17, Octobre 2009, pp. 51-61, esp. p. 54.

¹⁸⁸ *Don-drug*, in NGM, vol.1/ka, p. 697.4: *rnam par rtog pa'i mtshan ma ci byung yang/ /rtog pa de nyid chos nyid yin shes* [shes NGM : zhe C 441.4, M 314b.3] *na/ /chos kyi dbyings nyid gzhan du bsgom* [du bsgom C 414.4, M 314b.3 : *nas btsal* NGM] *mi dgos/*.

¹⁸⁹ C 433-437.

¹⁹⁰ C 429-433.

¹⁹¹ Cf. 'Jam-mgon kong-sprul, *Thun-mtshams rnal-'byor-la nye-bar mkho-ba gsar-rnying-gi gdams-ngag snying-po bsdus-pa dgos-pa kun-tshang*, in 'Jam-mgon kong-sprul, *rGya-chen bka'-mdzod*, vol.12, Paro: Ngodup, 1975, pp. 289-367, esp. pp. 366f.

Chapter VI on *Mahāyoga*, each of which mention four types of conduct.¹⁹² In the context of *Atiyoga*, the four types of conduct are as follows:

1-1. The conduct of great compassion¹⁹³

Concerning the behaviour of great compassion, since it becomes the great origin of the compassionate means, great compassion shines forth without bias and effects the purpose [of wandering beings]. If it be asked in what manner this takes place, [it is replied that] by sending forth [emanations] in order to lead [sentient beings] away from cyclic existence,¹⁹⁴ one's non-obstructed mind is aware without imaging: this is not the great compassion that is primordially finished. The uninterrupted actions and emanations [that manifest] from self-originated wisdom are the behaviour of one's integral identity. He who knows this effects the purpose [of others] without searching for great compassion and without reference.¹⁹⁵

Let us here recall Achard's important observation that in *rDzogs-chen*, the semantic range of the term 'compassion' (*thugs-rje*) includes both awareness and ignorance. Literally, *thugs-rje* means the 'lord of the heart'. 'Heart' refers to the awakened body, speech and mind, whereas the term 'lord' refers to the fact that it contains within itself the potential of full awareness of the ground's abidingness (*gnas-lugs*).¹⁹⁶ When this awareness of the ground is actualized, its natural responsiveness to the needs of others manifests as compassion: without premeditation or contrivance, one is able to fulfil the purpose of others (*gzhan-don*; Skt. *parārtha*).

Compassion, or solicitude, essentially involves an awareness of universality and wholeness: we are not alone; and we are not whole, without caring for others.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² In Chapter V (C 173-177) the four types of conduct are (1) conduct that responds to resentment; (2) conduct that is subsequent to conditions; (3) conduct that does not search for anything; and (4) conduct that is compatible with the accumulations. In Chapter VI (C 258-265) the four types of conduct are (1) the conduct of intrepid deportment; (2) the conduct without attachment or hatred; (3) the emulation of absolute meaningfulness; and (4) the conduct of agreeable conformity.

¹⁹³ Detailed in C 444-447.

¹⁹⁴ Baroetto's insertion of a negative particle, emending *btang* to *ma-btang* (Baroetto, *La dottrina dell'atiyoga nel bSam gtan mig sgron*, vol.2, p. 261) seems unnecessary; cf. Meinert's translation, which would confirm the interpretation of the phrase proposed here, in Meinert, *Chinesische Chan- und tibetische rDzogs chen- Lehre*, p. 275. Furthermore, my interpretation of the following phrase (*thugs-rje chen-po ye-zin-pa yang min*) differs both from Baroetto's (who emends *min* to *yin*) and from Meinert's (who does not seem to see the link between both phrases, signalled by the emphatic particle *ni* that follows *rig-pa*).

¹⁹⁵ C 444.6-445.3: */de la thugs rje chen po'i mdzad spyod ni/ 'dir thugs rje thabs kyi 'byung gnas chen por gyur pas/ /snying rje chen po phyogs med par shar bas don mdzad do/ /de yang tshul ci 'dra zhe na/ 'dir 'khor ba 'dren ['dren M 317b.1 : bdren C 445.1] ched du [Baroetto, p. 261 ins. ma] btang bas sems ma 'gags la ma dmigs par rig pa ni/ thugs rje chen po ye zin pa yang min [min C 445.2, M 317b.1 : yin Baroetto, p. 261]/ rang byung gi ye shes las mdzad pa dang sprul pa rgyun mi chad pa nyid bdag nyid kyi mdzad spyod do/ bdag gis de ltar shes nas/ thugs rje chen po btsal ba dang/ /dmigs pa med par don mdzad do/.*

¹⁹⁶ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 111.

¹⁹⁷ Levin, *The Body's Recollection of Being*, pp. 97f.

Indeed, the obstinate insistence of some translators on rendering *thugs-rje* by such words as 'energy', 'dynamism', etc., in the *rDzogs-chen* context betrays a failure on their part to grasp the multiple connotations of a single word that continue to resonate on different hermeneutical levels of meaning.¹⁹⁸ Far from being mere sentimentality, compassion is intimately connected to the awareness of the ground's intrinsic illumination. In the triadic mode of the ground's unfolding – as essence, nature and compassion – described in the pith instruction section,¹⁹⁹ compassion is particularly associated with the ground's illumination. As when not recognizing one's reflection in a mirror, the non-recognition of intrinsic illumination (*rang-srang*) means that for sentient beings, their awakened body coagulates into their physical body, the open dimension is fragmented as objects, and their intrinsic awareness manifests as their ordinary mind.²⁰⁰

The compassion evoked by *gNubs-chen* is one that is without deliberate action and without reference; hence, any attempt to deliberately send forth emanations in order to help others is not great compassion, but merely a form of altruism that may be morally laudable yet remains metaphysically incomplete. Self-originated wisdom is understood as being the effortless source of uninterrupted actions and emanations for the purpose of others. Furthermore, this compassion has the specificity of never vanishing throughout the three times; that is because "it is without wavering from the state which is equal to oneself that one completes the purpose of wandering beings. In the state of great compassion, any objectifying or referential imaging is liberated as self-originated wisdom."²⁰¹

1-2. *The conduct free from effortful action*²⁰²

This aspect of conduct is described as being free from following any deliberate purpose. It should be noted that from the perspective of the Great Completeness, whatever actions one performs are deviations if they are not sealed by the recognition of mind's beingness.²⁰³ *gNubs-chen* writes that if one were to take up non-action, that would again be falling in the trap of an action and agent. This echoes the similar statement made in connection with the fifth view of freedom from action and searching.²⁰⁴ To the question whether one is to stay without action, *Sangs-rgyas ye-shes* replies that one should not even referentially imagine 'staying'. If there is such a thing as staying, then there is also its absence. One should engage in the four types of

¹⁹⁸ Arguillère, *Profusion de la Vaste Sphère*, pp. 486f.

¹⁹⁹ As will be explained below, this notion of the ground's triadic expression is absent from the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*'s presentation.

²⁰⁰ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 161.

²⁰¹ C 446.5-6: *bdag mnyam pa'i* [pa'i C 446.5 : pas M 318b.4] *ngang las ma g.yos pas 'gro don rdzogs pa stel snying rje chen po'i ngang la yul du byed pa la dmigs pa rang 'byung ye shes su bsgral lol*.

²⁰² Detailed in C 447-450.

²⁰³ Achard, 'La base et ses sept interprétations dans la tradition *rDzogs chen*', p. 46.

²⁰⁴ Cf. C 351.

conduct²⁰⁵ without obstructing or referentially imaging anything; in that case, whatever one does, there is no doing.²⁰⁶

1-3. The conduct of salvific means²⁰⁷

Our author explains that in the state of Samantabhadra, the primordial Buddha, there is nothing whatsoever to accept or to relinquish.²⁰⁸ Once one has assimilated this with confidence, one's conduct does not deviate, without there being anything to reject – the salvific means are nothing else. As an illustration of this form of conduct, gNubs-chen quotes the *Sems-bsgom* of Mañjuśrīmitra:

Because {both} the conduct of sapience and {the conduct of} means are not abided in, to engage therein is akin to Māra's [activity]. Even the teachings of the six [heretical schools]²⁰⁹ and the activities of Māra are not rejected nor are they discursively examined as evil.²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ These are are strolling ('*chag-pa*; Skt. *caṃkrama*), standing up ('*greng-ba*; Skt. *sthāna*), sitting ('*dug-pa*; Skt. *niṣadyā*) and lying down (*nyal-ba*; Skt. *śayyā*). See Negi, J.S., *Dharmasaṅgraha-Kośaḥ*, Sarnath: CIHTS, 2006, p. 216.

²⁰⁶ C 447.4: *cir yang byas kyang byas pa med*.

²⁰⁷ Detailed in C 450-453.

²⁰⁸ See also Norbu, Namkhai, *Dzogchen: L'Etat d'Auto-Perfection*, Paris: Les Deux Océans, 1994, pp. 116f.

²⁰⁹ The gloss here lists the six heretical teachers: Kakuda Kātyāyana, Ajita Keśakambala, Pūraṇa Kāśyapa, Maskarī Gośālīputra, Nirgrantha Jñātiputra and Sañjayī Vairādīputra. Their Sanskrit names are here given according to Negi, *Dharmasaṅgraha-Kośaḥ*, p. 115. These six heretical teachers were contemporaries of the Buddha. The latter criticized their teachings because they were unable to lead to release from cyclic existence. According to the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* (*sutta* no.2), their respective doctrines can be summarized as follows: Kakuda Kātyāyana taught that various entities exist as uncreated and indestructible monads, so that one cannot talk of killing anyone, but merely of inserting a blade in the space between these monads. Ajita Keśakambala maintained the doctrine of nihilism, according to which there is no consciousness that can be said to survive death. Pūraṇa Kāśyapa held that virtuous and non-virtuous deeds have no karmic effect. For Maskarī Gośālīputra all of man's actions are predetermined by fate, so there is no free will. These four teachers completely denied karmic retribution. While Nirgrantha Jñātiputra accepted karmic cause and effect, he maintained that self-mortification is the way to release. Finally, Sañjayī Vairādīputra would not commit to any position whatsoever. See Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, pp. 93-97.

²¹⁰ Norbu and Lipman, *Primordial Experience*, v.98, v.97, p. 63 (English translation), p. 120 (Tibetan text). Note that in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* the verses are given in reverse order.

1-4. *The conduct of spontaneous completeness*

Here it is mentioned that everything is awakening, without there even being the name of cyclic existence. "Since in all directions there is nothing that is not the action of the Buddha, all conduct is the behaviour [of the Buddha]." ²¹¹

gNubs-chen is careful to point out that the four types of conduct just mentioned are not different in essence; indeed, whether one refers to conduct as one or fourfold is a matter of taste. What is important is that one's conduct should not be fractional (*dum-bu-can-du med*), but rather should be equal. This way, "whether or not one emerges from equality, there is no distinction in one's mode of seeing." ²¹²

Next are mentioned certain deviations of conduct. gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes speaks of certain *mantrins* who merely mouth the view without having properly assimilated it with confidence. He describes them as engaging in various forms of licentious conduct (he mentions sexual union and killing), all the while shouting *PHAT*. His comment is telling: "they are like stones falling to the depths of hell." ²¹³

2. *Proper conduct*

Proper conduct is then described in terms of body, speech and psyche. ²¹⁴

2-1. *The conduct of the body*

In this regard, the conduct of the body is as follows: in the state where all phenomena are equal, there is no cause for one to be on a high stage, so one does not hope to be good through hypocrisy. Since everything is integral being, one is detached from companions and remains alone. Like the elephant, one should act with great prudence and with resplendent stability.

In terms of one's physical conduct, one does not deliberately rectify anything. Constantly staying in the wilderness, any place will be suitable. [...] Throughout the four types of conduct, one restricts ²¹⁵ one's physical actions and is never free from one's purpose. ²¹⁶

²¹¹ C 453.5-6: *phyogs thams cad sangs rgyas kyi mdzad par ma gyur pa med pa'i phyir/ spyod pa ril 'dir mdzad spyod do/*.

²¹² C 454.

²¹³ C 455.

²¹⁴ C 456-462.

²¹⁵ This sense of *skyur-ba*, the perfective form (*bskyur-ba*) of which is given here, is attested in bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje, *Zab-lam mkha'-'gro thugs-thig-gi rim-gnyis-kyi khrid-yig*, in bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje, *The Collected Writings and Revelations of H.H. bDud-'joms Rin-po-che 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje*, vol.16/ma, Kalimpong: Dupjung Lama, 1979-1985, pp. 371-461, esp. p. 404.

²¹⁶ C 457.3-6: *de la lus kyi spyod pa yang chos thams cad mnyam pa'i ngang la bdag mtho sar rgyu med pas tshul 'chos bzang du re mi bya ba dang/ ril bdag nyid chen po yin pas grogs la mi chags par bya ba dang/ gcig pur [pur M 327b.2 : pu C 457.4] gnas pa dang/ glang po che ltar zon bag che bar bya zhing brjid brtan che bar bya ba dang/ lus spyod ci yang ched du bcos par mi bya ba dang/*

gNubs-chen recommends that one cultivate a certain indifference with regard to food, clothing, etc., in order to avoid getting distracted from one's purpose.

2-2. *The conduct of speech*

In terms of speech, one should avoid lies and lax (*'chal ba*) speech, in particular "when there is no requirement, when the time is not right, when assembling with companions of contemplation."²¹⁷ When one speaks using examples, one's speech should meet the understanding of one's interlocutors.

2-3. *The conduct of the psyche*

Here gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes gives a long quote from the *rNal-'byor grub-pa'i lung*, of which an extract will be translated here:

As for the scope of the adamantine psyche,
It is uncontrived, undistracted and free from thought.
It is neither distracted nor lethargic, but is clear and abides.
Being detached from desire, it is free from exaggeration and denigration.
It is without acceptance and rejection, as well as without attachment and hatred.²¹⁸

Concluding the section on conduct, Sangs-rgyas ye-shes reminds his readers that whatever actions the *yogins* engage in, they should refrain from becoming attached to their austerities; rather, their conduct should be natural and without thematic focus.²¹⁹

IV. The fruition

The penultimate section of Chapter VII is devoted to the fruition. gNubs-chen describes the fruition in terms of the warmth of experience (*nyams-drod*), of which there are three phases, called 'wavering', 'attainment' and 'stability'.²²⁰ Such a threefold classification is also alluded to in a gloss in

gnas gang yang rung ba'i dgon par rtag par 'dug pa dang/ [...] spyod lam bzhi kar lus bya ba bskyr zhing don dang ma bral ba dang/.

²¹⁷ C 459.6.

²¹⁸ *rNal-'byor grub-pa'i lung*, in NGM, vol.16/ma, p. 453.1-7; the citation appears in C 460.5-462.3: *rdo rje yid kyi spyod yul ni [ni NGB : nyid C 460.5, M 330a.3]/ /ma bcos ma yengs bsam dang bral/ /mi g.yeng ma rmugs gsal zhing gnas/ /'dod la ma chags sgro skur bral/ /blang med dor med chags sdang med/.*

²¹⁹ C 462.4-5.

²²⁰ C 464.1.

Chapter IV on the gradual approach,²²¹ and is elucidated in greater detail in the context of Chapter VI on *Mahāyoga*. There, the three experiences are likened to a waterfall, a stream and a lake respectively: during the first experience, the mind is unstable, producing many conceptions; during the experience of attainment, a subtle oscillation of conceptions still occurs, but one remains relaxed and practises the principle of equanimity; finally, during the experience of stability, the mind remains in a clear and non-discursive state, so that there is no need even to implement equanimity.²²² The explanation given in Chapter VI is very close to that provided in the present context, where our author quotes a no longer extant text, the pith instructions of the three *ācāryas* (*A-tsar rnam gsum-gyi man-ngag*). The difference is mainly in terminology: here, the three experiences are referred to as the first, intermediate and final feelings (*tshor-ba*) of the mind.²²³ He goes on to quote from orally transmitted instructions, which describe the unfolding of warmth in terms of the triad outer, inner and secret:

Outer warmth: the outer and inner fluctuations of the breath are no longer felt. Inner warmth: when the actual perception of equality appears, the aggregate of form, like a bale of cotton tossed about by the wind, is no longer seen as having an aggregate. Secret warmth: when the mother Samantabhadri becomes the clear mother-like sky, one experiences the great bliss which is the taste of phenomena's beingness.²²⁴

The fact that spiritual progress should be spoken of in terms of warmth is neither arbitrary nor unique to the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*.²²⁵ For example, a recent text on contemplative praxis by bDud-'joms Rinpoche (1904-1987) states that "having obtained the warmth of stable realization, both the common and supreme accomplishments occur without difficulty".²²⁶ Without doubt, such 'warmth' indicates that the new vista opened up through contemplation is experienced as a feeling-tone of lived embodiment, which goes far beyond mere representational assessment.²²⁷

To illustrate the unfolding of this warmth, Sangs-rgyas ye-shes gives an extensive list of dream omens²²⁸ and indications (*rtags*)²²⁹ as signs of the fruition. Some of these have a more internalized quality: being unaffected by praise or blame, neither considering as good a vision of the Buddha nor

²²¹ C 162.

²²² Cf. C 251.

²²³ C 464.

²²⁴ C 464.6-465.2: *de la phyi'i drod ni/ dbugs phyi nang du rgya ba yang mi tshor ba'o/ /nang gi drod ni/ mnyam pa nyid mngon sum du snang tsam nal gzugs kyi phung po shing [shing M 333b.2 : shil C 465.1] bal gyi 'dab ['dab M 333b.2 : 'dam C 465.1] ma rlung gis g.yengs pa ltar/ phung po yod par mi mthong ba'o/ /gsang ba'i drod ni/ yum kun tu bzang mo yum gyi mkha' gsal bar gyur pa'i dus nal chos nyid kyi ro bde ba chen po nyams su myong ste/.*

²²⁵ See, for instance, Guenther, *Meditation Differently*, p. 16, p. 157.

²²⁶ bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral ye-shes rdo-rje, *Rim-gnyis-kyi khrid-yig*, p. 400. I have prepared a translation of this text under the direction of Lopon P. Ogyan Tanzin; it is planned for publication with Khye'u-chung Lotsāpa Translations.

²²⁷ Guenther, *From Reductionism to Creativity*, p. 163.

²²⁸ C 470-473.

²²⁹ C 473-483.

being afraid of seeing a female ghost.²³⁰ Others take on a rather dramatic character: being able to transform earth and sand into gold and silver,²³¹ hurling the world over great distances,²³² or being able to teach various beings in their individual languages.²³³

Again, this exposition parallels what we find in the previous chapters.²³⁴ It has already been pointed out by Meinert that, as such, these indications pertain to *Mahāyoga* rather than to *Atiyoga per se*.²³⁵ She bases herself on gNubs-chen's own statement to this effect, who in the introductory section concerning the fruition, writes that such experiences are used in the context of *Mahāyoga* rather than *Atiyoga*,²³⁶ this position is, moreover, repeated later on: at the end of the lengthy exposition of indications, the question is asked whether the vehicle of *Atiyoga*, being in itself essenceless, does not contradict the occurrence of such signs. The answer provided is, on the one hand, that the indications do indeed, as such, pertain to *Mahāyoga* rather than to *Atiyoga*; but, on the other hand, that the enlightened mind (Skt. *bodhicitta*) – here, of course, understood in its specifically *rDzogs-chen* sense of referring to the true nature of mind, intrinsic awareness (*rang-rig*)²³⁷ – does not reject any such indications since it does not relinquish any of the signs pertaining to cyclic existence or transcendence. The unborn beingness of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*) is comparable to the ocean, the waves of which are the various miracles and signs²³⁸ that ceaselessly occur upon its realization; elsewhere, the indications and signs are compared to the display of rainbows or to a flash of lightning in the sky:²³⁹ they are beyond referential grasping.

Therefore, it would seem that gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' intent is to relativize the importance of such experiences and indications and to warn against becoming overly attached to them; this is not surprising, since he does so in the corresponding sections for each of the previous chapters

²³⁰ C 475.

²³¹ C 482.1, quoting *rDo-rje bkod-pa*, in NGM, vol.15/ba, p. 432.4.

²³² Cf. Lamotte, *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, ch.5, §12, p. 253, where the inconceivable release (Skt. *acintyavimokṣa*) enables the *bodhisattva* to throw the third order chiliocosm across a distance of universes as numerous as grains of sand in the Ganges, and then to put it back in its place; all this takes place without the beings inhabiting this world noticing anything.

²³³ C 482f, quoting *rDo-rje bkod-pa*, in NGM, vol.15/ba, p. 436. Of course, the latter feat echoes the famous stanza in the *Bhadracaryaprañidhānarāja*, where the *bodhisattva* vows to teach the doctrine in all languages, whether those of gods, serpent-spirits, humans, etc. See *bZang-po spyod-pa'i smon-lam*, in *sDong-po brgyan-pa'i mdo*, in KD, vol.38, p. 718.5-6.

²³⁴ The corresponding section on dreams of Chapter IV, itself based on the *rMi-lam bstan-pa* of the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*, has been dealt with quite extensively in a previous article: Esler, Dylan, 'Note d'oniromancie tibétaine : réflexions sur le Chapitre 4 du *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* de gNubs-chen sangs-rgyas ye-shes', in *Acta Orientalia Belgica*, vol.25, 2012, pp. 317-328.

²³⁵ Meinert, *Chinesische Chan- und tibetische rDzogs-chen-Lehre*, p. 278, p. 279, p. 281, p. 356.

²³⁶ C 463.1. Cf. gNubs-chen's statement in Chapter VI on *Mahāyoga* (C 255.2) concerning the reason to teach such indications: "They are taught so that beginners may cheerfully anticipate them as they proceed onwards." (*de dag bstan pas las dang po pa shin tu brod pas mdun bsu nas grims par 'gyur ba'i phyr rol*).

²³⁷ Cf. Norbu and Lipman, *Primordial Experience*, pp. 9-11, p. 73.

²³⁸ C 483f.

²³⁹ C 484f.

concerning the lower vehicles.²⁴⁰ However, he does not reject the indications as such, since that would be to conceptually delimitate the infinite potentiality of intrinsic awareness.

Having made this clarification, our author further specifies that the fruition is spontaneously accomplished. This is the occasion for him to explain that unlike in *Mahāyoga*, where, in an alchemical process, the obscurations must be transformed into wisdom,²⁴¹ here there is nothing to transform, since the obscurations are intrinsically clear as great wisdom. He writes:

It is not the case that, as in alchemy, what at present are temporarily obscurations are transformed into wisdom. In the knowledge of inherent alpha-purity (*ka-dag*), there is not even the name of that which obscures. Like the limpid ocean, this abode is free from all the seeds of the impregnations.²⁴²

Likewise, the accumulations of merit and wisdom are said to be already completed, and the accomplishments to be spontaneously present. gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes further explains that the accomplishments and the fruition are self-originated,²⁴³ meaning that they cannot be found elsewhere.

V. Distinguishing *Atiyoga* from the other vehicles

The fifth and final section of the chapter presents an interesting attempt to distinguish *Atiyoga* from the other vehicles. Most of the section²⁴⁴ is devoted to a series of questions posed from the vantage point of the lower vehicles (this includes the *Yogācāra Mādhyamika*, *Sautrāntika Mādhyamika*, *sTon-mun*, *Mahāyoga* and *Anuyoga*), which are replied to in due sequence. The series of questions and answers allows the author to draw precise distinctions between each of these traditions and *Atiyoga*, establishing the latter's superiority. He contends that this superiority is established by using the arguments of his challengers.²⁴⁵

Prior to this series of questions and answers, two subsections are specifically devoted to the relationship of *Atiyoga* to the simultaneous approach (*sTon-mun*) and to the *Mantrayāna* (including both *Mahā-* and *Anuyoga*) respectively. This is undoubtedly because these two approaches were, in his day, frequently confused with *Atiyoga*. For instance, Kimura²⁴⁶

²⁴⁰ See C 83 (for Chapter IV), C 177f (for Chapter V) and C 255f (for Chapter VI).

²⁴¹ Cf. Chapter VI (C 270.4, 271.2-4). On the *Mantrayāna* as a path characterized by transformation, see Norbu, *Dzogchen: L'Etat d'Auto-Perfection*, pp. 42-44.

²⁴² C 486.1-3: *da 'phral du gser 'gyur rtsi ltar sgrib pa ye shes su gyur par bya yang med del ka nas ngang gis dag par shes pa nyid la sgrib byed ming med del rgya mtsho dwangs pa ltar gnas pa nyid la bag la nyal gyi sa bon thams cad dang bral ba'o/.*

²⁴³ C 488f.

²⁴⁴ C 491-493.

²⁴⁵ C 490.2-3.

²⁴⁶ Kimura, Ryūtoku, 'Le Dhyāna Chinois au Tibet ancien après Mahāyāna', in *Journal Asiatique*, vol.269, 1981, pp. 183-192.

and Meinert²⁴⁷ have worked on Dunhuang manuscripts exhibiting a marked syncretism between *Ch'an*, *Mahāyoga* and *rDzogs-chen*. In this regard, it is essential to bear in mind the distinction between synthesis and syncretism. The latter refers to the artificial assemblage of disparate elements, whereas the former proceeds from the inside, as it were, by perceiving the unitary principle behind various appearances.²⁴⁸ In the present text, an example of synthesis would be the ninth view of the ground elucidated above, which includes the other approaches not through syncretism but through unification.

Already at the end of Chapter V, gNubs-chen explicitly says that the lexical similarity between certain expressions of *Ch'an* and the *rDzogs-chen* doctrine have been the cause of deviations in understanding.²⁴⁹ This argument is further developed here; the gist of it is that despite a certain similarity of diction, the *sTon-mun* focus on the ground as being unborn and empty (thereby losing sight of its clarity aspect, represented in *rDzogs-chen* by the notion of spontaneous presence, *lhun-grub*). Moreover, they still are – albeit unwittingly – involved in effort and duality: according to the author of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*, this duality is apparent in that they move discretely between the two truths.²⁵⁰ It may not be without interest to point out that already in Chapter VI, this inability to integrate the two truths and excessive attachment to absolute truth is contrasted with the non-dual enlightened mind of *Mahāyoga*.²⁵¹

As far as *Mahāyoga cum Anuyoga* is concerned, gNubs-chen's verdict is that by generating deities from out of thusness, whether gradually as in *Mahāyoga* or instantaneously as in *Anuyoga*, one loses sight of the "great behaviour of the non-action of self-originated wisdom."²⁵² the difference lies in the fact that for *Mahāyoga* and *Anuyoga*, the generation of deities is necessary in order to accomplish the purposes of self (Skt. *svārtha*) and others (Skt. *parārtha*); in *Atiyoga*, on the other hand, resting in non-discursiveness suffices to accomplish both purposes. Perhaps even more importantly, there is a distinction in the manner of envisaging absolute meaningfulness itself: whereas the tantric approach focuses on non-dual intrinsic awareness as universal luminosity (*kun-tu 'od-gsal*), in *Atiyoga* ultimate thusness is spontaneously complete, so that great non-duality is without dividing.²⁵³

²⁴⁷ Meinert, Carmen, 'Chinese *Chan* and Tibetan *rDzogs chen*: Preliminary Remarks on Two Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts', in Blezer, Henk (ed.), *Religion and Secular Culture in Tibet: Tibetan Studies II*, PIATS 2000, vol.2, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002, pp. 289-307, esp. p. 303.

²⁴⁸ Guénon, *Le Symbolisme de la Croix*, p. 9.

²⁴⁹ C 186.

²⁵⁰ C 490.

²⁵¹ Cf. C 281, 283.

²⁵² C 491.2.

²⁵³ C 491.4.

**Distinctive features of Sangs-rgyas ye-shes'
presentation of *Atiyoga***

It may be somewhat anachronistic to portray the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* and other such early *rDzogs-chen* works as belonging to the mind section (*sems-sde*), since, according to van Schaik, the term itself does not occur prior to the 11th century.²⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the texts now known under that rubric do share certain characteristics and are believed to represent the earliest strata of *rDzogs-chen*.²⁵⁵ It is in this sense that we can say that gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' exposition of *Atiyoga* in his *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* follows the perspective of the mind section.²⁵⁶ Typical in this is an approach that focuses on mind's beingness (*sems-nyid*; Skt. *cittatā*), called the enlightened mind (Skt. *bodhicitta*), as being beyond the scope of ordinary mind's representational thought.²⁵⁷ A further characteristic, witnessed quite clearly in Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' text, is the deconstruction of formal categories of practice: the view is said to be without deliberate seeing,²⁵⁸ and the ground, itself ungrounded, cannot be examined, entered or meditated on.²⁵⁹ Whereas much space is devoted to the exposition of different meditative approaches that allow the practitioner to meditatively attune to the ground, it will be clear from our presentation above that these approaches exhibit a marked tendency to undermine any focus on meditative technique in and for itself; rather, they appear as poetic evocations of intrinsic awareness, intended to guide the practitioner to immerse himself in the abiding mode of his natural state.²⁶⁰

Of course, as we have pointed out repeatedly, this rejection of various forms of action and of meditation as something that can be implemented through an act of will does not signify that all religious and ethical structures are to be literally discarded; one might here recall gNubs-chen's criticism of those who take these teachings as an excuse to engage in licentious forms of conduct.²⁶¹ While it can be said that the rejection is, to some extent at least, rhetorical, with the aim of preventing fixation upon particular meditative techniques,²⁶² it is telling that Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' reasoning in his criticism of such misinterpretations is not so much one of moral expediency, but rather that any deliberate rejection of action would itself entail entanglement in a conceptualized view.²⁶³

Looking at the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*'s seventh chapter, we can see that the basic themes of *rDzogs-chen*, such as the universal ground and the manner of meditatively attuning to it, are found here in a highly developed manner. On the other hand, other notions, more typical of the pith instruction section – e.g. the rainbow body (*'ja'-lus*), the practices of breakthrough (*khregs-chod*) and crossover (*thod-rgal*), as well as the visionary anatomy typical of the

²⁵⁴ van Schaik, 'The Early Days of the Great Perfection', p. 167, n.6.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 166f.

²⁵⁶ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 17.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol.1, p. 321.

²⁵⁸ C 310.

²⁵⁹ C 382.

²⁶⁰ Germano, 'Architecture and Absence', p. 229, p. 240.

²⁶¹ C 455.

²⁶² Germano, 'Architecture and Absence', pp. 227f.

²⁶³ C 351f.

latter – are absent.²⁶⁴ This of course is not surprising, given the orientation (that of the mind section) of this text.

This is not to say, however, that such visionary elements need be lacking in the approach of the mind section: Achard has already signalled that this is a wrong impression that distorts our understanding of the cycle's literature.²⁶⁵ While the visionary practices are certainly less prominent than in the pith instruction section, the instructions for the moment of death translated above are valuable in showing that vision-based practices are to be found in the mind section too.

Moreover, apart from its contents, there are formal elements that justify this classification of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* as a text belonging to the mind section: gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes cites almost all of the eighteen texts of the mind section (*sems-sde bco-brgyad*), the transmission of which he received mainly from gNyags Jñānakumāra and his disciple, the Sogdian dPal-gyi ye-shes.²⁶⁶ Here is a list of these eighteen texts, though it should be noted that there are variations in their appellations, and indeed that several of these texts exist in multiple recensions:²⁶⁷

(1) *Rig-pa'i khu-byug*; (2) *rTsal-chen sprug-pa*; (3) *Thig-le drug-pa*; (4) *Khyung-chen ldings-pa*; (5) *Mi-nub rgyal-mtshan*; (6) *Yid-bzhin nor-bu*; (7) *rJe-btsun (/ btsan) dam-pa*; (8) *Yid-spyod rgyal-po*; (9) *Rin-po-che kun-'dus*; (10) *bDe-'byams*; (11) *Srog-gi 'khor-lo*; (12) *Nam-mkha'i rgyal-po*; (13) *bDe-ba 'phra-bkod*; (14) *sPyi-bcings*; (15) *rDo-la gser-zhun*; (16) *rTse-mo byung-rgyal*; (17) *rMad-du byung-ba*; (18) *rDzogs-pa spyi-gcod*.²⁶⁸ Except for the *Mi-nub rgyal-mtshan* and the *Yid-spyod rgyal-po*, all of these texts are quoted in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*; this shows that already in the early 10th century these texts formed a coherent corpus.²⁶⁹

The notable exception is of course the *Kun-byed rgyal-po'i mdo*, considered by later tradition to be the main *tantra* of the mind section, which is nowhere quoted in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*; since many of the chapters of the *Kun-byed rgyal-po* are constituted by the eighteen mind section texts – for example, the *Rig-pa'i khu-byug* (cited in C 347), also known as the *rDo-rje tshig-drug*, constitutes chapter 31 of the *Kun-byed rgyal-po*,²⁷⁰ whereas chapter 30 is composed of the *Nam-mkha'-che*²⁷¹ and chapter 22 is made up of the *Khyung-chen ldings-pa*²⁷² – it is more than likely that the *Kun-byed rgyal-po* was compiled after the redaction of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*.²⁷³

²⁶⁴ This was already noted upon by Guenther in his seminal article on the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*; see Guenther, Herbert V., 'Meditation Trends in Early Tibet', in Lai, Whalen, and Lancaster, Lewis R. (eds.), *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, Berkeley: Buddhist Studies Series 5, 1983, pp. 351-366, esp. p. 353.

²⁶⁵ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 247, n.40.

²⁶⁶ Meinert, *Chinesische Chan- und tibetische rDzogs chen- Lehre*, p. 241.

²⁶⁷ Cf. Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 26.

²⁶⁸ The first five belong to the five early translations (*snga-'gyur lnga*) made by Vairocana. The other thirteen texts belong to the thirteen later translations (*phyi-'gyur bcu-gsum*). See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 23f.

²⁶⁹ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 25.

²⁷⁰ Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, pp. 47f.

²⁷¹ For an English translation see Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, pp. 168-173.

²⁷² See Hillis, Gregory, 'Khyung Texts in the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum'*', in Eimer, Helmut, and Germano, David (eds.), *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism, Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*, Leiden: Brill, 2002,

Another oddity (though it does not specifically concern Chapter VII) is the mention of a text called the *Klong-drug* in Chapter II²⁷⁴ as being one of the books that can be relied on by the adept of the Eminent *Yoga* (*lhag-pa'i rnal-'byor-pa*; Skt. *adhiyogin*);²⁷⁵ this is explained in the context of the four compatible reliances (*mthun-pa bsten-pa bzhi*) required by the *yogin*.²⁷⁶ This is most probably a reference to the *Kun-tu bzang-po klong-drug-pa'i rgyud*, an important *tantra* of the pith instruction section.²⁷⁷ Although van Schaik considers it unlikely that the text mentioned in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* is the same as the *Klong-drug* of the pith instruction section, given the late date he assigns to the *sNying-thig tantras*,²⁷⁸ Achard's research, by focusing on the visionary practices of crossover (*thod-rgal*), has tended to show that the texts of the pith instruction section are earlier than hitherto supposed by scholars.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, whereas the *Klong-drug* is mentioned without being quoted, Vimalamitra's commentary to the *Klong-drug*, the *Kun-tu bzang-po klong-drug rgyud-kyi 'grel-pa*,²⁸⁰ is cited three times in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*.²⁸¹ Hence, corroborating this hypothesis would require systematic comparison of Vimalamitra's commentary with the citations found in gNubs-chen's work; given the length of Vimalamitra's commentary, I have not been able to do this so far.

It is also significant that the text most quoted in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron's* seventh chapter is the *rNal-'byor grub-pa'i lung*, a text later classified as pertaining to *Anuyoga* rather than *Atiyoga*; this would suggest that gNubs-chen sought to impose an order on a still disparate body of texts, and that this order was in a state of flux.²⁸²

From the point of view of philological and philosophical analysis, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' exposition of *Atiyoga* is as interesting for what it contains as for what it does not. In the pith instruction section, the ground is described in terms of essence (*ngo-bo*), nature (*rang-bzhin*) and compassion (*thugs-rje*). These are collectively termed the 'three wisdoms which abide in the ground' (*gzhi gnas-kyi ye-shes gsum*). They are not three distinct things, but rather represent the triadic mode of the ground's expression.²⁸³ While the three terms are found in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*, they appear separately and nowhere as a triad with the same weight of significance attached to them in

pp. 313-334, esp. p. 316, p. 330. For an English translation see Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, pp. 158-161. Note that the spelling *Khyung-chen ldings-pa* is that corresponding to *Khyung-chen ldings-pa*, in NGT, vol.1/ka, pp. 419-423, whereas *Khyung-chen lding-ba* is found in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* (except on C 319.2).

²⁷³ See Germano, 'Architecture and Absence', p. 235; and van Schaik, 'The Early Days of the Great Perfection', p. 196.

²⁷⁴ C 33.4.

²⁷⁵ Note that the term *Adhiyoga* is frequently used as a synonym for *Atiyoga* in the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*.

²⁷⁶ These are a master, a consort, books and a servant; they are detailed in C 30.1-34.2.

²⁷⁷ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 240.

²⁷⁸ van Schaik, 'The Early Days of the Great Perfection', p. 196, n.88.

²⁷⁹ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, esp. pp. 240-247.

²⁸⁰ Vimalamitra, *Kun-tu bzang-po klong-drug rgyud-kyi 'grel-pa*, in *bKa'-ma shin-tu rgyas-pa*, Edited by Kaḥ-thog mKhan-po 'Jam-dbyangs, vol.109/dze, Chengdu: Kaḥ-thog, 1999, pp. 5-930.

²⁸¹ C 9, C 276, C 456.

²⁸² van Schaik, 'The Early Days of the Great Perfection', p. 199.

²⁸³ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, p. 104.

the pith instruction section. When one knows that in the *Kun-byed rgyal-po* the order of the first two of the three wisdoms is reversed²⁸⁴ and that, as mentioned above, the compilation of the *Kun-byed rgyal-po* is probably subsequent to gNubs-chen's work, it is clear that during this early period the description of the ground as a triad had not yet gained foothold, at least as far as the mind section is concerned.

Similarly, whereas the terms alpha-purity (*ka-dag*) and spontaneous presence (*lhun-grub*) are found frequently throughout the text, they are juxtaposed only once. The passage in question concerns the proper comprehension of the second view of the ground, that of spontaneous presence: Sangs-rgyas ye-shes explains that unmistakable alpha-purity is the spontaneous seeing when one no longer looks at, thinks of or pursues anything.²⁸⁵ The association of alpha-purity with the essence and of spontaneous presence with the nature, typical of the pith instruction section,²⁸⁶ is clearly absent here. This becomes evident when one compares gNubs-chen's view of spontaneous presence with Klong-chen-pa's discussion of the homonymous view from the perspective of the pith instruction section. Whereas Klong-chen-pa treats alpha-purity and spontaneous presence as a natural pair which complement each other, Sangs-rgyas ye-shes does not share this concern. For him, spontaneous presence is to be taken in its primary sense as implying the futility of any attempt to accomplish enlightenment through effort.

Concluding remarks

These remarks should suffice to demonstrate gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' genius in his exposition of *Atiyoga*. His *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* is unique in the history of *rDzogs-chen* literature in that it is the first doxography to treat *Atiyoga* as a distinct vehicle (*theg-pa*),²⁸⁷ rather than a mere mode (*tshul*) of practice.²⁸⁸ The detail of Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' presentation and the rigour of his arguments clearly show that he inherited a tradition that was already rich in nuances.

What transpires through his work is a tireless concern to organize the teachings he had received and to present them in such a way that the distinctions between the various contemplative approaches of his time would not be lost sight of. This may well be in reaction to various syncretistic movements of his time, that sought to blend *rDzogs-chen*,

²⁸⁴ Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source*, p. 275, n.149.

²⁸⁵ C 327.5-6.

²⁸⁶ Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, pp. 109-112.

²⁸⁷ van Schaik, 'The Early Days of the Great Perfection', p. 178.

²⁸⁸ The latter approach is witnessed, for example in Padmasambhava, *Man-ngag lta-ba'i phreng-ba*, in NKD, vol.23/'a, pp. 159-175, which Sangs-rgyas ye-shes quotes several times in his *Mahāyoga* chapter: C 192, C 196, C 207, C 238 (gloss). For a critical edition and translation, see Loseries, Ulrich, *Guru Padmasambhavas „Instruktion ‘Die Kette der Anschauungen’“ (Man-ngag lta-ba'i Phreng-ba) erläutert durch Methoden der Auslegung des „die Essenz des Geheimen“ lehrenden Tantras (gSang-ba'i sNying-po'i rGyud)*, PhD thesis, Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, 1989, pp. 175-190 (critical edition), pp. 191-202 (German translation).

Mahāyoga and *Ch'an*.²⁸⁹ In this respect, his task is facilitated by the parallel arrangement of the four main chapters, which has been repeatedly signalled in this article. The fact that these chapters mirror each other in their structure enables the author to present each of the four doctrines independently according to a coherent framework, while at once making comparison of individual elements relatively straightforward.

Many of the categories he uses, such as the four meditative approaches themselves, the nine views concerning the ground, etc., failed to become normative for the later *rNying-ma* school, and gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' masterpiece was neglected for centuries, until its publication in 1974 by the late Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche. This is precisely why delving into the deep waters of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron* can offer us such a unique glimpse into the fairly uncharted territory of early Tibetan formulations of *rDzogs-chen* doctrine and practice.



Appendix: A remark concerning the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*'s glosses

The Tibetan text is interspersed with many interlinear notes. It is unlikely that these are the work of the author himself. Meinert has shown, for instance, that the second gloss in the text (C 2.3) is grammatically incorrect,²⁹⁰ and many more such examples could be adduced. This is not to say that the glosses should be rejected, but merely that one must treat them with a certain caution.

One of the glosses in particular (C 15.4) gives a hint about the date of composition of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*, since it alludes to Glang-dar-ma's religious persecution:

At the time of Glang-dar-ma, because of the obstacles which came towards the venerable Ye-shes dbang-po, the lineage of the instructors of dialectics declined.²⁹¹

This gloss occurs in the context of the advice to obtain the lineages of the various approaches (Chapter I, §5.2), where it is explained that the Tibetan branch of the lineage of the simultaneous approach (which had belonged to the [Tibetan] emperor and monks) had declined by gNubs-chen's time.

²⁸⁹ Cf. van Schaik, Sam, and Dalton, Jacob, 'Where Chan and Tantra Meet: Tibetan Syncretism in Dunhuang', in Whitfield, Susan (ed.), *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, London: British Library Press, 2004, pp. 63-71, esp. pp. 69f.

²⁹⁰ Meinert, *Chinesische Chan- und tibetische rDzogs chen- Lehre*, p. 238, n.599.

²⁹¹ C 15.4: *Glang dar ma'i ring la btsun pa Ye shes dbang po bar chad du gyur pas mtshan nyid kyi slob dpon brgyud pa nub/*.

One of the problems with this gloss concerns Ye-shes dbang-po, who is presumably identical to dBa' Ye-shes dbang-po, the first abbot of bSam-yas and successor of Śāntarakṣita; however, dBa' Ye-shes dbang-po (whose secular name was dBa' gSal-snang) is generally believed to have passed away before the death of Khri-srong lde'u-btsan in 797 CE, thus far predating Glang-dar-ma (r. 836-842 CE).²⁹²

A further question arises as to why Ye-shes dbang-po, who is generally referred to as a master of the gradualist approach,²⁹³ should be mentioned in the context of the decline of the simultaneous approach. Of course, the term 'dialectics' (*mtshan-nyid*; Skt. *lakṣaṇa*), which is found in the expression 'vehicle of dialectics' (*mtshan-nyid-kyi theg-pa*; Skt. *lakṣaṇayāna*), can be said to refer to the *sūtra* vehicle in general, and hence to englobe both the gradualist and simultaneous approaches.²⁹⁴ Nonetheless, it is clear from the context that it is the decline of the simultaneous approach that is being referred to.

The impression one gains from all these factors is that the text (or, at the very least, this gloss) was written quite some time after the events here alluded to. That is why Ye-shes dbang-po is wrongly made a contemporary of Glang-dar-ma, and perhaps also why his death is associated with the decline of the simultaneous approach.

Furthermore, the very mention of the sobriquet Glang-dar-ma seems odd, since this nickname is not found in the Dunhuang documents; this would point to the fact that the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron's* glosses are insertions by a later hand.²⁹⁵

It is likely that these glosses were written down by a disciple of the author, probably an immediate one. Indeed, several indications point to the fact that the glosses incorporate fragments of an oral commentary to the text. The lack of grammatical rigour alluded to above (which contrasts with the main text) and the fact that many of the glosses are obviously incomplete²⁹⁶ indicate that they were written down hastily as notes taken during an oral teaching. It is true that two of the glosses contain the self-reference 'small venerable',²⁹⁷ a sobriquet which gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes uses in the main text of Chapter VIII;²⁹⁸ while this could be interpreted to mean that they were written by the author himself,²⁹⁹ it seems more likely, given the above considerations, that the disciple noting down gNubs-chen's oral explanations is here quoting the master verbatim.

²⁹² See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 101; cf. the *sBa-bzhed's* mention of dBa' Ye-shes dbang-po's death in Wangdu, Pasang, and Diemberger, Hildegard, *dBa' bzhed: The Royal Narrative concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000, p. 90.

²⁹³ Cf. Wangdu and Diemberger, *dBa' bzhed*, p. 78, p. 88.

²⁹⁴ On the dialectical nature of *Ch'an*, see Faure, Bernard, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, pp. 29-31.

²⁹⁵ Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 94, n.44.

²⁹⁶ For example, cf. some of the glosses to the dreams in Chapter IV, e.g. C 90.2, C 92.2-3; in these cases, the problem can be remedied by referring to the corresponding passages in the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*. However, see also Chapter VII, C 419.4-6: this gloss is a particularly good example in that it preserves but fragments of an originally continuous structure of thought and hence is untranslatable and, to some extent at least, unintelligible.

²⁹⁷ C 375.6, C 419.2.

²⁹⁸ C 497.5; the stanza is repeated in the colophon, C 502.5.

²⁹⁹ van Schaik, 'The Early Days of the Great Perfection', p. 197.

Moreover, the fact that some of these glosses contain phonetic renderings of Chinese terms (such as *'bu-ta*³⁰⁰ and *bo-de*³⁰¹ for Buddha and *bodhisattva* respectively), typical of Chinese Buddhist translations, renders it probable that the glosses go back to a time when Chinese Buddhist translations still circulated in Tibet. Such a use of Chinese phonetic terms is not limited to the glosses, as is witnessed by the word *Par-na-pan-gyi mdo* for *Parinirvāṇa-sūtra* in Chapter V.³⁰²

We can conclude by saying that whereas the glosses are unlikely to have been written by the author himself, they do probably go back to an early redaction of the text, and were perhaps even noted down by one of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes' immediate disciples.



Bibliography

Abbreviations: editions of the *bSam-gtan mig-sgron*

C: gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes, *rNal-'byor mig-gi bsam-gtan or bSam-gtan mig-sgron: A treatise on bhāvanā and dhyāna and the relationships between the various approaches to Buddhist contemplative practice*, Reproduced from a manuscript made presumably from an Eastern Tibetan print by 'Khor-gdong gter-sprul 'Chi-med rig-'dzin, Smarntsis shesrig spendzod, vol.74, Leh: Tashigangpa, 1974.

M: gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes rin-po-che, *sGom-gyi gnad gsal-bar phye-ba bsam-gtan mig-sgron ces-bya-ba*, in *bKa'-ma shin-tu rgyas-pa*, Edited by mKhan-po Mun-sel, 110 Volumes, vol.97/je, Chengdu: Kaḥ-thog, n.d.

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Abbreviations: Collections

³⁰⁰ E.g. C 91.1, C 102.4, C 107.6, etc.; cf. *butsu*, the Chinese transcription of Buddha; see *Hôbôgirin: Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'après les Sources Chinoises et Japonaises*, pt.3, Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1974, p. 190.

³⁰¹ E.g. C 88.3, C 91.1; cf. *bosatsu*, the Chinese transcription of *bodhisattva*; see *Hôbôgirin*, pt.2, Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1930, p. 136.

³⁰² C 138.2.

KD: *bKa'-gyur*, Facsimile of the sDe-dge 1733 edition prepared by Si-tu pañ-chen Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas, 103 Volumes, Delhi: Karmapae Chodhey Gyalwae Sungrab Partrun Khang, 1976-1979.

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NGT: *rNying-ma rgyud-'bum*, gTing-skyes edition, 36 Volumes, Thimphu: Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, 1973-1975.

NKD: *rNying-ma bka'-ma rgyas-pa: A Collection of Teachings and Initiations of the rNying-ma-pa Tradition, passed through Continuous and Unbroken Oral Lineages from the Ancient Masters*, Edited by bDud-'joms Rinpoche, 58 Volumes, Kalimpong: Dupjung Lama, 1982-1987.

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Kun-byed rgyal-po, in NGM, vol.1/ka, pp. 2-192.

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rMad-du byung-ba, in NGM, vol.2/kha, pp. 774-856.

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On the *Thig le drug pa* and the *sPyi chings*, two of the *Thirteen Later Translations of the rDzogs chen Mind Series*

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In an earlier article¹ I discussed two missing texts from the group known to tradition as the *Thirteen Later Translations*, a sub-set of the *Eighteen Major Statements*² of the rDzogs chen Mind Series. Proposing new identifications of the *sGom pa don sgrub* and the *Yid bzhin nor bu*, I relied for corroboration on matching citations from both texts contained in the ninth-to-tenth century *bSam gtan mig sgron* by gNubs sangs rgyas ye shes.

My doctoral research,³ now concluded, has led to identifications of two further members of this important text group. One, the *sPyi chings*, was previously thought lost, while the other, the *Thig le drug pa*, was only tentatively established. In addition to outlining these discoveries, this paper will also present critical editions and English translations of both texts.

1. The *Thig le drug pa*

Several scholars have considered Tb. 26,⁴ the *Byang chub sems mi 'gyur ba'i thig le tig*, to be the *Thig le drug pa*.⁵ This is presumably because of its similar title, its location in several editions of the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*⁶ among the other *Thirteen Later Translations*,⁷ and because it does indeed list six *thig le*.⁸

Tb. 26 is the same as that in the Rig dzin Tshe dbang nor bu *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*⁹ entitled *Mi 'gyur thig le tig* in its final line, but *sKye med ti ka* at its beginning. This fortuitously allows us to identify it with the *sKye med ti la ka'i lung* found in Nyang Ral Nyi ma 'od zer's twelfth-century *Zangs gling ma* list of the *Eighteen Major Scriptural Statements*.¹⁰

¹ Liljenberg, 2009, pp. 51-61.

² In Tibetan: *lung chen po bco brgyad*.

³ I am grateful to the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council for their support for my research.

⁴ That is, text 36 in the *mTshams brag* edition of the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*. The same text is also found in the *gTing skyes* edition (Tk. 33).

⁵ Jim Valby identifies the *Thig le drug pa* as this text. (Personal communication dated 27 September 2007). Also, noting that Klong chen pa in his *Grub mtha' mdzod* refers to the *Thig le drug pa* on p. 370, Stephan Arguillere comments: "Il n'est pas impossible qu'il s'agisse d'un des textes du premier vol. du rNying rgyud, le *Byang chub kyi sems mi 'gyur ba'i thig le tig*." Online index of citations from Klong chen pa <http://www.arguillere.org/article-20779772.html> item 421. Accessed June 2008.

⁶ This text is not in the *sDe dge* NGB. There is, however, an editor's note after text Dg. 158, the *Thugs kyi rgyud rin po che spungs pa'i rgyan*, stating "The *Byang sems mi 'gyur ba'i thig le* should be inserted here." (*'di mtshams byang sems mi 'gyur ba'i thig le 'dzud*).

⁷ In *mTshams brag*, for example, it is situated after the *rJe bstan dam pa* and before the *Srog gi 'khor lo*.

⁸ The list is found in *mTshams brag* p. 597.2-3.

⁹ Rig 'dzin *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, vol. Ka, 34.

¹⁰ Nyang Ral describes the *sKye med ti la ka'i lung* as teaching that "the nature of mind is the single sphere" (*sems nyid (kyi) thig le nyag gcig tu bstan pa'i phyir*). In his later work, the *Me*

Although Tb. 26 does have a list of the six *thig le* (p. 597. 2-3), this text presents related doctrinal elements that one might expect to be later developments. For example, it elaborates the schema of six *thig le* into a further nine, which in turn encompass thirty-six smaller *thig le*.¹¹ In addition, there are various other technical enumerations, such as the Five Certainties, Five Greats, Three Hidden Aspects, and Twenty Five Nails¹², that do not appear in any of the other *Eighteen Major Statements*.¹³ These are all aspects of rDzogs chen doctrine that are likely to post-date the late eighth or early ninth century, when, according to the tradition, the *Thirteen Later Translations* were made.

The principal problem with Tb. 26, apart from these doctrinal issues, is, however, that it lacks the three quotations from the *Thig le drug pa* given in the *bSam gtan mig sgron*.¹⁴ This is the earliest (relatively) well-dated source that cites, with a high degree of accuracy, from all of the texts included in the *Eighteen Major Scriptural Statements*. Nowhere does it refer to a text called *Mi 'gyur ba'i thig le tig*.

If we rule out Tb. 26, another candidate for identification with the *Thig le drug pa* would be chapters six to eleven of Tb. 40/Bg. 25, the *Nyi zla dang mnyam pa dri ma med pa'i rgyud*. The *Thig le drug* is referred to in the list of the titles given in the text's first chapter.¹⁵ Furthermore, since this tantra situates the *Thig le drug* chapters alongside the actual root texts of the *Five Earlier Translations*¹⁶, one would expect these chapters to be of equal status with them, and not just an ancillary work such as a commentary, for example.¹⁷ As in the case of Tb. 26, however, the absence of the three relevant *bSam gtan mig sgron* citations precludes identifying these chapters as the *Thig le drug pa*.

The *Thig le drug pa* is usually included among the *Thirteen Later Translations*. We must ask why, therefore, the *Thig le drug pa* chapters of Tb. 40 are located among the *Five Earlier Translations*, the *sNga 'gyur lnga*? I have found what I believe to be an explanation for this apparent anomaly in a *rNying ma bKa' ma* commentary on the *Rig pa'i khu byug* entitled *Sa gcig pa'i 'grel*, by Dampa bde gshegs (1122-1192).¹⁸ Recounting how Vairocana received the teachings from Sri Simha, this text says: "The *Thig le drug pa*, because of all the sources of the tantras it is extant, although it is a later translation, is included in this [group of five]." (*thig le drug pa ni rgyud kyi khung thams cad nas de nyid yod pas phyi 'gyur yin kyang 'di nyid bcug pa'o*).¹⁹ Most remarkably, it adds: "due to the fact that the *Thig le drug pa* is the head of the later translations, it is also present in Sanskrit" (*thig le drug pa la phyi*

tog snying po, this title is replaced by *Yang tig*, which almost certainly refers to the same text. There is no *Thig le drug pa* in his list.

¹¹ Tb 26, p. 597.3: *thig le drug gi mkha' klong nal thig le dgu yi 'od gsal zhing/ thig phran sum cu rtsa drug gis/ thams cad gsal bar bkra ba yang/*.

¹² The *Rig 'dzin* edition cuts short the ending that mentions the Twenty-five nails.

¹³ In Tibetan: *nges pa lnga, che ba lnga, sbas pa gsum, gzer bu nyi shu rtsa lnga*.

¹⁴ The citations in the *bSam gtan mig sgron* are at 314.3; 347.5; 452.2.

¹⁵ Fol. 348v.3/p.696: *tshig drug rtsal drug don drug ste/ che ba drug dang thig le drug*.

¹⁶ In this case, the *Rig pa'i khu byug*, *rTsal chen*, *sGom pa don drug*, and the *Yangs pa che ba drug*, which I have identified as a partial version of the *Khyung chen lding ba*.

¹⁷ On this point see also Liljenberg, 2009, p. 54 and note 23.

¹⁸ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, vol. 103, pp. 757-824.

¹⁹ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, vol. 103, p. 764.4.

'gyur gyi dbu yin pa'i dbang gi rgya gar skad kyang yod de).²⁰ According to Dampa bde gshegs, therefore, it appears there was a Sanskrit version of the *Thig le drug pa* extant in the 12th century. It is noteworthy that title lists in the *Bairo 'dra 'bag*²¹, the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*,²² and the *rNying ma bKa' ma* text entitled *Realizations of the Eighteen Statements*²³ also underline the special eminence of the *Thig le drug pa* by likewise including it among the *sNga 'gyur lnga*.

After investigating numerous texts,²⁴ I succeeded in locating²⁵ all three of the *bSam gtan mig sgron* quotations from the *Thig le drug pa* in Tb. 124, the *rDzogs pa chen po chos nyid byang chub kyi sems thig le rgya mtsho gnas la 'jug pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud*.²⁶ This tantra has two introductory chapters describing a standard sūtra-style setting. Six of its chapter titles, from chapter three onwards, each contain the main part of the names of the six *thig le* as set out by the *bSam gtan mig sgron*.²⁷

All three *bSam gtan mig sgron* citations from the *Thig le drug pa* are contained in chapter three of Tb. 124.²⁸ Thus this chapter should predate the composition of the *bSam gtan mig sgron*. This naturally begs the question: does the same conclusion apply to the whole text, or did chapter three originally circulate independently of the ten-chapter text we now have? I have established that Chapter three is unmistakably the core of the text; what precedes it serves as an introduction, and what follows expands on it in the manner of a commentary. The complete text is lengthy in comparison with the other *Thirteen Later Translations*, at fourteen folios. This, together with its sūtra-style framework, suggest to me that it could be a slightly later elaboration (although still firmly within *Sems sde*) based on Chapter Three.

It is noteworthy that Chapter Three contains numerous phrases and parts of lines found near the beginning of the *rDo la gser zhun*, a text normally

²⁰ Tb 124 does give a Sanskrit title. When the Tibetanized spelling is corrected this is: *Mahāsāndhidharmatābodhicittabindusamudrasthāvātāraṅtra*.

²¹ *Bairo rgyud 'bum*, vol. Ja, p. 519.

²² The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* list (vol. 1, p. 221) describes it as "de bzhin du bsam gtan ston pa".

²³ *Sems sde bco bryad kyi dgongs pa rig 'dzin rnam kyis rdo rje'i glur bzhengs pa, rNying ma bka' ma*, vol. Tsa, pp. 298-314.

²⁴ Among the numerous texts that I examined, the *Bang mdzod 'phrul gyi lde'u mig*, Chapter 31 (Tb. 159/Dg. vol. Cha, relevant passage on fol. 158a-b) contains a very concise teaching on the Six *thig le*, which emphasizes how they are all contained or condensed into each other and not separate. The *mTsham brag* version differs slightly, but is basically the same text. This summary takes for granted that the reader is already familiar with the basic teaching on the Six *thig le*. More crucially, it does not contain the relevant *bSam gtan mig sgron* citations. I would like to thank Jean-Luc Achard for kindly drawing my attention to this text.

²⁵ Giuseppe Baroetto, in his recent Italian edition of chapter seven of the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, apparently makes the same identification of the *Thig le drug pa*. See Baroetto, 2011, vol. II, bibliography, p. 380.

²⁶ *mTshams brag rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, vol. Ca, fol. 50b.5-64a. This text is also found in Dg. vol. Ra, text 22, pp. 269b-278a; and Tk. vol. 2, text 47, pp. 128 – 148.

²⁷ These are identical except that they omit the actual word *thig le*, which is simply replaced by "chapter: (le'u). The *bSam gtan mig sgron* (STMG 374.6-375.4.) describes the *thig le chen po* as having six types of aspect (*thig le drug pa*), which are enumerated separately in the text as follows: *dbyings kyi thig le/dbyings rnam par dag pa'i thig le/ chos nyid thig le/ye shes thig le/kun tu bzang po'i thig le/lhun gyi(s) grub pa'i thig le*. Karmay, 1988, p. 118, n.55 adds a further reference to a detailed explanation in Rongzom chos kyi bzang po's *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*, ff. 218-9.

²⁸ Tb. 124, fol. 54a. 2-3 (p.107); fol. 54b.4; fol. 55.a.1.

considered one of the *lnga 'gyur lnga*. Dam pa bde gsheg's statement that the *Thig le drug pa* is the "head" of the rest of the Thirteen Later Translations makes more sense in the light of this link with the early *rDo la gser zhun*. I consider it possible that it began as a short instruction inspired by and elucidating at least part of the *rDo la gser zhun*.²⁹

The colophon of Tb. 124 states that Vimalamitra and g.Yu sgra [snying po] were its translators. In the light of its close relationship with the *rDo la gser zhun*, this attribution is at least feasible.

2. The [rDzogs pa] sPyi chings

This is the fourth of the texts that Klong chen rab 'byams includes³⁰ among the *Thirteen Later Translations* that have until now been thought to be lost. The *Zangs gling ma* lists this under the variant title of *bKa' lung gi spyi chings*, "the epitome of teachings." It describes it as teaching that "the mind (of enlightenment) encompasses all Vehicles".³¹ The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* describes it as "clearly distinguishing between the vehicles".³² It and the *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum* concur in placing it in their category of four greater or larger texts, together with the *rDo la gser zhun*. The numerous title lists show several variants in their spelling of the title.³³

From its title and from these characterizations, it is clear that the *sPyi chings* discussed the various different *yāna* recognised at the time of its composition. There are several early parallels for such a work. The most well-known is the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba* attributed to Padmasambhava, and of course, the *bSam gtan mig sgron* itself. Such treatments eventually gave rise to the *grub mtha'* literary genre. However, one would expect the *sPyi chings* to give clear precedence to rDzogs chen, judging by Nyang Ral's description.

The *bSam gtan mig sgron* has four citations from the *sPyi chings*,³⁴ all of them located within its seventh chapter, on rDzogs chen.³⁵ The first citation concerns the concept of the *bdag nyid chen po*, literally the "great self". The *bSam gtan mig sgron* describes this as the all-inclusive state of Samantabha-

²⁹ Baroetto indeed characterises this chapter of the *Thig le rgya mtsho gnas la 'jug pa'i rgyud* as an "epitome" of the *rDo la gser zhun* (*op. cit.*, p. 372).

³⁰ *Chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa lung gi gter mdzod*, fol. 334/p.749; *Grub mtha' mdzod*, fol. 284/p. 1169.

³¹ *Sems kyis theg pa thams cad spyir bcings pa'i phyir*. *Zangs gling ma*, in *Rin chen gter mdzod* Vol. 1, p. 78-9.

³² *Theg pa'i shan 'byed pa spyi chings*. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, vol.1, p. 221.

³³ The *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum* precedes *ching* with an *a-chung*; Longchenpa's *Grub mtha' mdzod* adds a postfix -s; the *Me tog snying po* spells *spyi* as *phyir*. Some texts also omit the preceding "rdzogs pa".

³⁴ The STMG spells it *spyi bcings*.

³⁵ There is also one reference (in chapter 6, on Mahāyoga) to a *Man ngag spyi bcings*. After citing a passage from another text concerning the error of not realizing all-inclusive sameness but regarding the absolute and relative truths as being different, gNubs Sang rgyas ye shes states that this point is also clearly made in the "*man ngag spyi bcings*", as he has already set out earlier. STMG 284.3: *man ngag spyi bcings las kyang gsal bar 'byung l de ni sngar yang bkod zin to*.

dra, in which there is no “other”, only “the great selfless self”.³⁶ The next citation is very short, describing how the realization of the insubstantiality of phenomena and consequent release of attachment to such concepts as good and bad leads to the state of natural great bliss.³⁷ The third citation illustrates a discussion of how the ultimate truth cannot be found by the activity of mental analysis or reasoning.³⁸ The final citation³⁹ is in the context of Nub Sang rgyas ye shes' differentiation of the view of rDzogs chen from that of mere emptiness verging on nihilism. While the author himself distinguishes between rDzogs chen and Madhyamaka,⁴⁰ the *sPyi chings* citation refers rather to the Chan school of simultaneous enlightenment, known as *ston mun*.⁴¹ This implies that at the time of composition of the *sPyi chings*, an effort was underway to distinguish rDzogs chen from Chan.⁴²

After examining numerous texts to locate the four *sPyi chings* citations,⁴³ I found them all embedded as *lemmata* in the *bKa' ma* commentary text *sPyi gsang sngags lung gi 'grel pa*.⁴⁴ This commentary is attributed to gNyags Jñānakumara both on the title page and in its colophon.

It was sometimes difficult to distinguish the text of the *sPyi chings* from the commentary. In general, however, I determined that there are four main

³⁶ STMG p.329.4: *des na bdag nyid chen po'i ngang la gzhan pa'i* (329.5) *chos ma bkol bar bdag nyid kyi snubs pa'ol/ de ci'i phyir zhe na/ spyi bcings las/bdag ni yod do/gzhan ni med do/bdag gzhan chen* (329.6) *po lhun gyis grub pas yod do/kun tu bzang po'i ngang du gcig pas gzhan med del zhes bya ba'i don gyis/ bdag* (330.1) *gzhan du snang 'dzin ngang gis dag pa la/ nga med pa'i nga chen po ni bdag nyid chen po'o/*.

³⁷ STMG: *spyi bcings las /ma bkag ci bde byang chub yan du khye /* (453.1).

³⁸ 'O na don nyid re (295.5) *zhig gang gis mtshon zhe na //spyi bcings las kyang /gsang sngags rgya mtsho chen po ni /dpe dang tshad ma gtan tshigs dang /rjes su dpag pa'i shes* (295.6) *rab kyiis /rtogs par nus pa ma yin te /de bas gsang sngags bdag nyid che /dngos grub rlabs chen 'phrags pa can /bsam yas* (296.1) *gting ni dpag dka' bas /lung dang man ngag thob pas 'grub /ces 'byung /*. This passage is translated in Karmay, 1988, p. 110.

³⁹ *De kho na rdzogs* (311.4) *pa chen po yin te / de la ni bya ba dang mthong ba ni med do /zhes smra ba'i gang zag ni / rdzogs chen du khas 'ches nas dbu ma'i bsam gtan la* (311.5) *rten 'cha' ba yin / sbyi bcings las kyang /rdzogs chen bla na med par khas 'ches nas /ston men bsam gtan tsam la rten 'cha' ba /rgyal* (311.6) *po'i sras 'bangs babs pa lung dang 'gal /zhes 'byung ste / des rgyal po'i sras dam pa 'bangs su babs pa dang 'dra ste / lung dang yang 'gal* (312.1) *lo /* This passage is translated in Karmay 1988, p. 112.

⁴⁰ However, Karmay points out that the *Cig car ba* doctrine considered itself to be *bdu ma / Madhyamaka*, referencing Dunhuang texts PT 117 and PT 812. Karmay, 1988, p. 112, n. 27.

⁴¹ On this term see Karmay, 1988, p. 88, n. 13.

⁴² Similarities between the two traditions nevertheless became in later centuries a pretext for criticism of rDzogs chen by proponents of the New Schools of Buddhism in Tibet. See Karmay, 1988, pp. 121-133.

⁴³ These included: in the *Bairo'i rgyud 'bum*, the *Byang chub sems kyi spyi lung chen po rdzogs pa'i rgyud* (Bg 99, Vol.4); Bg 124, Bg 125, (vol. 5); Bg 130, Bg 167 (vol. 6). In *mTshams brag: Sems lung chen moi' mdo gsang ba spyi rgyud* (Tb 126); *rDzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems rin po che spung ba gsang ba man ngag gi rgyud* (Tb 101); Tb 115; Tb 132; Tb 159; Tb 160; *Byang chub sems kyi spyi lung chen po rdzogs pa'i rgyud/man ngag gser gyi ru sbal bskum pa'i rgyud* (Tb 175); *A ti rdzogs pa chen po'i rgyud* (Tb 231); *lTa ba shan chen po rin chen sgron ma rtsa ba'i rgyud* (Tb 252). Another text, the *rDzogs pa chen po'i spyi chings*, was authored by gZhan phan mtha' yas 'od zer (18th-19th century CE).

⁴⁴ *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, vol. 103, p. 439.

ways in which the commentary introduces or demarcates its root-text citations:⁴⁵

1. The previous clause terminates emphatically with the final particle "'o".
2. The previous clause ends with a rhetorical phrase indicating that what follows will address a possible question or objection. E.g. *snyam pa la*.⁴⁶
3. The previous clause ends with the phrase *bstan pa'i phyir*.⁴⁷
4. The citation is followed by an end-quote phrase, e.g. *zhes bya ba*.

Cantwell and Meyer recently encountered similar difficulties in isolating the text of the *Thabs kyi zhags pa*.⁴⁸ The Dunhuang copy of that text⁴⁹ often highlights its *lemmata* with a semi-transparent wash, thus showing that its scribe understood the boundaries between the root text and commentary. However, the *sDe dge* and *bKa' 'gyur* versions of the *Thabs kyi zhags pa* include the commentary undifferentiated from the root text. It is possible that a similar loss of highlighting occurred to the *sPyi chings*.

Another factor in the disappearance of the *sPyi chings* may have been the development of the *grub mtha'* genre itself. The proliferation of later systems of classification and analysis of the various vehicles might have left its treatment of these themes sounding outmoded. In particular, its discussion of the Chan (*ston mun*) school, apparently already altered to Madhyamaka in Nub Sang rgyas ye shes' comment on one passage, supports this hypothesis.

3. Translations and critical editions

The Six Spheres - *Thig le drug pa*

Then all the Buddhas praised [this] and conferred empowerment in all directions, [each] teaching their own secret mantra, uniting infinite Buddha-realms in the supreme maṇḍala, and dispelling the mesh of conceptual thought, the waves of Saṃsāra. Samantabhadra, lord of the maṇḍala of [all] the Buddha-families, gazed in every direction and considered, then [spoke] in the naturally secret unexcelled manner:⁵⁰

"The non-dual meditation on the totally pure, natural mind of enlightenment, the teacher that is praised by all as the light of the world, the

⁴⁵ I include this provisional list, whose criteria will no doubt be obvious to many textual experts, for the convenience of those who may find themselves faced with a similar difficulty in future.

⁴⁶ "To whoever thinks..."

⁴⁷ "In order to show..."

⁴⁸ In a lecture on the *Thabs kyi zhags pa* delivered at SOAS 17/3/2010, Cantwell remarked that there was often a "fuzzy boundary" between this text and its own commentary.

⁴⁹ This is IOL Tib. J 321, 42r-45r.

⁵⁰ This opening passage is a necessary part of the chapter structure of the larger text, but the passage that follows may once have circulated independently before being incorporated into it.

teaching that is the essence of the Dharma, the embodiment of youthful Mañjuśrī, is [this] – one rests in equanimity in the authentic, uncontrived blissful expanse in which nothing need be done.

The basis of the immeasurable⁵¹ activity of ethical discipline and so forth, although its many different aspects are explained as the path⁵², unless the path that is the mother⁵³ of the Sugatas and is equal to all [of them] is present, they will not come about. Therefore this is the path of the supreme yoga.

Hard to travel and to understand, this is the path of all [beings], and transcends both thought [and] non-thought. Non-abiding, non-conceptual, simple and free of thinking, words do not express it. Without shape or colour, it is not the domain of the senses. Difficult to demonstrate⁵⁴ or examine, it is without even a trace of anything that can be put into words.

It is not the path of accomplished sages of the past. Whoever enters onto the path of the sages of the past will end up gripped by the sicknesses of the path - meditation, attachment, and exertion.

As [is taught] in the [oral] statements of the teacher(s), if one views limited verbal analysis⁵⁵ as the path, that is actually [just] continuing the process of conceptual thought, like an animal pursuing a mirage. The ineffable path of total purity cannot be defined by words. Teaching [about] purity and impurity is actually just deluded words. Pure and impure are integral, non-dual, and indivisibly equal. Therefore, [this is] the way without the perception of duality [such as] renouncing and adopting, negating and affirming.

Making no differentiation whatsoever between any aspects, primordial wisdom is a continuum with ignorance. [Just as] a lamp that casts its light without any obstruction is free of all thoughts, the unwavering state presides supreme over [both] dullness and meditative concentration. The very act of seeing [that] there is nothing⁵⁶ to really see is itself the goal to be attained. This is why this is called "the eye of omniscience".

Thus this state of resting transcends the objects of the six senses. This natural spaciousness has no limits or centre, and rests as the sovereign of equality that neither accepts nor rejects. Mind and karmic imprints are not dual, [but] are mixed and equivalent. Because subjective conceptions and phenomena appear as one's own adornment⁵⁷, one should not reject or renounce them. Not thinking about any [specific] aspects whatsoever, one enjoys the bliss⁵⁸ of [skilful] means.

Because [even] things that are disagreeable to all and [normally] completely renounced are pure, the five disturbing emotions and the five

⁵¹ Literally, the ocean of conduct.

⁵² If the Dg/Tk reading here is adopted, the translation would read "...distinctions of liberation on the path are explained as the path..."

⁵³ The Tk reading (*yul* rather than *yum*) translates as "the object/goal of the Sugatas".

⁵⁴ Amending the reading *brtan* to *bstan*, in accord with the elaboration on this passage on fol. 58b

⁵⁵ Amending *mtha' spyod* to *mtha' dpyod*.

⁵⁶ Amending *mthong bas* to *mthong med*, in agreement with the commentary on this passage on fol. 60a.

⁵⁷ If the alternative reading is adopted, "appear through [their?] own conditions".

⁵⁸ Amending the phrase *thabs kyi de la rol* to *thabs kyi bde la rol*.

inexpiable actions have no actual substance. By entering this path of total purity one attains [the state] of the sovereign of equality.

No mental formations and so on are renounced, adopted or rejected. Placing [reliance] on past narratives, information and valid cognition, and then wishing for the signs of accomplishment of the three meditative *samādhis*, and so on,⁵⁹ goes against the statements regarding effortlessness, and is a delusion.

Resting without anything that needs to be done in the blissful domain of spontaneous perfection is the very essence of total self-arising primordial wisdom, unwavering, immutable, and free of all narratives.

The nectar that is [already] attained conquers the suffering of effort; one rests without needing to do anything in the state of total authenticity. The unaltered state is free of all the limitations of conceptualizing thoughts, [and] its unimpeded qualities are forever undiminished. Without renouncing [them], shortcomings and mental objects are pure. Everywhere, inner and outer, is the unobscured *locus* of great, primordial wisdom.

Samantabhadra Buddha, transcending the limitations of effort and accomplishment, naturally manifests, himself, the tantras of the⁶⁰ pristine, primordially arranged spontaneously present Dharma. [All] Dharmas are without elaboration in the great sphere;⁶¹ they are of the nature of bodhicitta, [and that] nature clearly manifests its essence [and] all objects.⁶²

They are all, through the natural condition, free from creeds of actor and action,⁶³ and constructed [concepts] of birth and cessation; they are the embodiment of primordial wisdom that transcends conventional terms of subject and object, and all conceptual thought."

[So] he spoke. [This concludes] the third chapter, establishing the meaning of the ultimate reality, of the Tantra that Enters into the Ocean-like State of the Essential Sphere of Bodhicitta, the true nature of reality that is Great Perfection.

Thig le drug pa critical edition

(Source: Chapter 3 of Tb. 124, entitled
rDzogs pa chen po chos nyid byang chub kyi sems thig le rgya mtsho gnas la 'jug pa'i rgyud)

Passages cited in the *bSam gtan mig sgron* (where they are attributed to the *Thig le drug pa*) are shown in italics.

⁵⁹ Adopting the Tk reading *sogs* in place of *tshogs* here.

⁶⁰ The reading here (*de dag de rgyud*) appears corrupt, and I have amended it to *de dag gi rgyud*, in order to offer a tentative translation.

⁶¹ In Tibetan, *thig le chen po*.

⁶² My translation of this terse passage is tentative. In common with other *sems sde* texts, it reverses the order, that would become standard in *rDzogs chen* doctrines, of the first two aspects of the triad of *ngo bo*, *rang bzhin*, [*thugs rje*].

⁶³ That is, dualistic notions of subject and object.

de nas sangs rgyas kun gyis bstod byas shing/ phyogs rnam⁶⁴ dbang bskur
rang gi gsang sngags ston/ zhing khams mtha' klas mchog gi⁶⁵ dkyil 'khor
sbyor/ mya ngan rba glong⁶⁶ rnam rtog dra ba sel/ kun tu bzang po rigs kyi
'khor lo dag/ phyogs rnam kun tu gzigs shing dgongs mdzad de/ rang gi
gsang ba bla na med pa'i tshul/ (fol. 54a) ston pa 'jig rten sgron mar gyur pa
kun gyis⁶⁷ rab bsngags⁶⁸ pa/ chos la chos kyi snying por gyur ba 'jam dpal
gzhon nu nyid/ rnam dag byang chub sems kyi rang bzhin gnyis med sgom
pa ni/ bya bral bde ba'i klong du ma bcos ji bzhin btang snyom gnas/ tshul
khrims la sogs spyod pa rgya mtsho⁶⁹ gzhir gyur pa/ tha dad ji snyed⁷⁰ lam
du bshad pa yang/ bde gshegs yum⁷¹ du⁷² gyur cing kun gyis mtshungs pa'i lam/ de
med mi 'byung de phyir de ni rnal 'byor mchog gi lam/ 'gro zhing shes dka' kun
gyi lam ste mi rtog rtog las 'das/ mi gnas mi dmigs spros med bsam dang
bral/ tshig gis mi theg dbyibs dang kha dog⁷³ dbang po'i spyod yul med/
bstan⁷⁴ zhing rtag⁷⁵ par dka' la brjod du rdul tsam med/ sngon gyi drang
srong rnam kyi lam du med/ sngon gyi drang srong rnam kyi⁷⁶ lam du
gang 'jug pa/ sgom chags rtsol ba⁷⁷ lam gyi nad⁷⁸ kyis zin ta re/ ston pa'i
lung bzhin tshig gi mtha' dpyod⁷⁹ lam du de mthong na/ de nyid rtog⁸⁰ pa'i
rgyun 'brang ri dvags⁸¹ smig rgyu snyegs pa 'dra/ brjod med rnam⁸² dag lam
ni tshig gis mtshon du med/ dag dang ma dag⁸³ bstan pa⁸⁴ tshig nyid tsam
ste 'khrul/ dag dang ma dag gnyis med 'dres shing dbyer med mtshungs⁸⁵/
de bas gnyis snang spang blang dgag (fol. 54b) sgrub med pa'i tshul/ rnam
pa cir yang mi 'byed ye shes gti mug ngang⁸⁶/ thogs⁸⁷ med gsal ba'i mar
mer⁸⁸ bsam pa kun dang bral/ ngang gi⁸⁹ mi⁹⁰ g.yo rmugs⁹¹ shing ting 'dzin
rgyal por gnas/ mngon du mthong med⁹² mthong byed de nyid thob pa'i

⁶⁴ Tk omits *rnam*.

⁶⁵ Tk *gis*.

⁶⁶ Dg and Tk *klong*.

⁶⁷ Tk *gyi*.

⁶⁸ Tk *sngags*.

⁶⁹ Tk *mtsho* 'i.

⁷⁰ Dg and Tk insert: *lam grol*.

⁷¹ Tk *yul*.

⁷² Tk omits *du*.

⁷³ Tk (*mi theg*) *kha dog dbyibs dang*.

⁷⁴ Emending *brtan* to *bstan*, in accord with the explanation of this passage on fol. 58 b.

⁷⁵ Dg *brtag*.

⁷⁶ Tk *kyis*.

⁷⁷ Dg *ba* 'i.

⁷⁸ Tk *gnad*.

⁷⁹ Emending *spyod* to *dpyod*.

⁸⁰ Tk *rtog*; Tb *rtogs*.

⁸¹ Tk and Dg (?) *dvags*; Tb *dags*.

⁸² Dg and Tk *yang*.

⁸³ Dg *yang dag* (*bstan pa*).

⁸⁴ Tk *pa* 'i.

⁸⁵ Tk *mtshud*.

⁸⁶ Dg and Tk *dang* (?).

⁸⁷ Tk *thog*.

⁸⁸ Dg and Tk *me*.

⁸⁹ Tk *gis*.

⁹⁰ Dg omits *mi*.

⁹¹ Dg inserts *dangs*.

⁹² Emending *bas* to *med*, in accord with the explanation of this passage on fol. 60 a.

dmigs⁹³/ de phyir thams cad mkhyen pa'i spyan zhes de la bya/ de bzhin dbang po drug gi yul gnas de nyid 'das/ mtha' dang dbus med yangs pa'i rang bzhin te/ mi len mi spong mnyam pa'i rgyal por gnas/ sems dang bag chags gnyis med 'dres shing mtshungs/ 'dzin pas brtags⁹⁴ shing snang ba'i chos rnam ni/ rang gi rgyan du snang bas mi 'dor spong⁹⁵ mi byed/ rnam par cir⁹⁶ yang mi dgongs thabs kyis⁹⁷ bde⁹⁸ la rol/ kun dang mi mthun yongs kyis spong ba'i⁹⁹ chos dag pas/ nyon mongs lnga dang mtshams med lnga yi¹⁰⁰ dngos nyid med/ rnam dag lam¹⁰¹ der zhugs pas mnyam pa'i rgyal po thob/ 'du byed la sogs kun kyang spang blang dor mi byed/ lo rgyus don nyid tshad¹⁰² ma'i blor bzhags¹⁰³ nas/ ting 'dzin gsum sogs¹⁰⁴ rtags rnam grub 'dod pas/ rtsol bral lung las gol te 'khrul pa yin/ bya bral lhun rdzogs bde ba'i yul la gnas/ ye shes rang byung che ba'i snying po nyid/ mi g.yo mi 'gyur bsnyad¹⁰⁵ pa kun (fol. 55a) dang bral/ zin pa'i bdud rtsis rtsol ba'i sdug bsngal 'joms/ bya bral yul la¹⁰⁶ kun tu ji bzhin gnas/ ma bcos mtshan ma'i rtog¹⁰⁷ tshogs mtha' rnam kun dang bral/ ¹⁰⁸ma 'gags yon tan dus gsum 'grib pa¹⁰⁹ med/ ma spangs nyes tshogs rtog¹¹⁰ pa'i yul rnam dag/ sgrib med phyi nang kun tu ye shes chen po¹¹¹ gnas/ rtsol sgrub mtha' 'das sangs rgyas kun tu bzang/ ye nas rnam bkod lhun gyis grub pa'i chos/ de dag de rgyud rang gi rnam dag ston/ thig le chen por chos rnam spros pa med/ de dag byang chub sems kyir rang bzhin la/ rang bzhin ngo bo yul kun gsal bar ston/ thams cad byed dang bya ba'i chos rgyud las/ skye 'gag rnam brtags¹¹² rang bzhin don gyis¹¹³ bral/ yul dang yul can mtshan ma'i tha snyad¹¹⁴ de/ bsam rtog kun las 'das pa'i ye shes nyid/ ces gsungs so/ rdzogs pa chen po chos nyid byang chub kyir sems thig le rgya mtsho gnas la 'jug pa'i rgyud las/ de kho na nyid kyir don gtan¹¹⁵ la 'bebs¹¹⁶ pa'i le'u ste gsum pa'o/

*

93 Dg mig.
 94 Dg brtags; Tb/Tk rtags.
 95 Dg and Tk spang.
 96 Dg spyir.
 97 Tk kyir.
 98 Emending de to bde.
 99 Tk yongs pa'i.
 100 Tk yis.
 101 Tk las.
 102 Tk mtshan.
 103 Dg and Tk bzhags; Tb gzhags.
 104 Tk sogs, Tb/Dg tshogs.
 105 Tk snyed.
 106 Tk las.
 107 Tk rtogs.
 108 Dg inserts: zin pa'i.
 109 Tk 'gre ba.
 110 Tk rtogs.
 111 Dg po'i.
 112 Tk dag.
 113 Tk gyi.
 114 Tk snyed.
 115 Tk bstan.
 116 Tk phab.

The Universal Inclusiveness [of Perfection] - *Spyi bcings*

Homage to glorious Samantabhadra!¹¹⁷

[This] is the clarification, without confusion, of the all-inclusive Mantra[yāna] scriptural transmissions.

The self exists. There is no other. Spontaneous perfection exists, as the Great Self. Because it is one with the state of Samantabhadra, there is no other. In [the notion of] no-self, one falls into the error of nihilism.

As sentient beings' conceptual thoughts increase, [those] thoughts spin [them in Saṃsāra]. Once concepts have left their karmic imprint, [they] become [caught] in the conceptual state.

The Sūtra section and treatises that are provisional in meaning explain [phenomena] as empty. Moreover, they explain them as non-existent. Even more than that, emptiness [itself] is explained as non-self. This, unless comprehended by scriptural transmission, is not proper, and is the non-Buddhist view of nihilism, which is difficult to alter, and a serious misdeed. Therefore it is taught that a conceptual view, which is easier to alter, is less dangerous.

Even meditation on non-thought is a mental process, with a great risk of leading to [a view of] mere nothingness, which is difficult to correct. Therefore, grasping at a visualized swift¹¹⁸ cause¹¹⁹ is easier to correct, because grasping arises from obtaining.¹²⁰

What shows this?

Just as grasping a snake is bad, so is a mistaken approach [to] knowledge mantras. Emptiness is hard to censure, [but] conceptual thoughts are basically easy.

But if so, [you] may say, doesn't [this] become a concept? In this sense it is not a concept: because permanence does not exist, therefore [the concept of] "other" is negated. Because nothingness does not exist, therefore the self is included; and so both eternalism and nihilism are purified.

Since there is no production or cessation, they are also negated, and because there is no self or duality, there is also purity. The whole universe in its identity with the self is the spontaneous accomplishment of Great Perfection in oneself.

When the great perpetuity [that is] Vairocana, Sattvavajra [and] supreme Akṣobhya¹²¹ clearly manifests in this way, since one is completely free of any

¹¹⁷ There is no end-quote particle after the homage, but even so I take it to be part of the root text.

¹¹⁸ *drag dal* appears in the *Man ngag lta ba'i 'phreng ba* as part of a longer phrase *drag dal du 'gro ba* "to go with firm steps", which Karmay (1988, p. 161, n. 99) notes is explained as "to go with fast steps means to go simultaneously and not gradually".

¹¹⁹ The word "*rgyu*" here could simply mean "cause", but it is also the name of the second of the three *samādhi* of Mahāyoga, the causal *samādhi*.

¹²⁰ The word "obtaining" (*lon*) may have a special technical meaning here as found perhaps in the title of the Chan text "*sems lon*" that is frequently referred to in the *bSam gtan mig sgron*. It also occurs in Dunhuang text PT 117, in the title of the *bSam gtan gyi lon*, a work attributed by Sa skya Paṇḍita to Hva-shang Mahāyāna. See Karmay, 1975, p. 153.

¹²¹ Vajrasattva is Akṣobhya's *sambhogakāya* form, and Vairocana is his *nirmanakāya* aspect, so we have here the three *kāya*.

ground for doubt after thoroughly investigating the Mahāyāna Sūtra Section Middle Way and so forth, for that reason one is vividly cognizant of everything, without concepts. After gaining certainty through this view, there is only a slight mention [here] of the lower Secret *Yānas*.¹²²

Concerning the actual explanation: although those [lower vehicles] are said not to explain the distinctions in the context of the fruition, in the context of the cause they do not go wrong. However, they do stray from the [oral] statements. How do they go astray [from] the Mantra[yāna]? The [*samādhi* of] Suchness [encompasses] the Causal and the [All]-illuminating [*samādhis*]. As for those who state that Suchness [is] the deity meditation: in the view of those who have not studied¹²³ the great [oral] statements and are not learned, although the Suchness that they describe [as] the stage of meditating on the deity may seem to correspond to *samādhi*, the mantra[yāna] precepts [teach that it] leads to the Meditation of the Gods, and that *samādhi* hinders [future] rebirths. Although one may cleanse the mind-stream through the absence of thought and by remaining in the three isolations¹²⁴, [there is] apprehension¹²⁵ of even the slightest thought arising.

The method of entry, the explanation of the View, and each of the different types of actions, from the basics, and also the Mantra[yāna *samādhi* of] Suchness, unless comprehended through the [oral] statements, are inappropriate. How is that? If you just practice one [*samādhi*], you will not succeed, but since [practicing] the three [*samādhis*] one by one is an [even] graver error, although there are precepts for beginners that just teach each of these three individually, they should all be practiced simultaneously.

In that case, [you may] object that, because [the *samādhi* of] Suchness is without any [visualized] object, but the Causal [*samādhi*] has an object, it seems difficult if [not] impossible to practice them [both] at the same time. But through the [oral] statements, it is easy to progress.

This is illustrated, for example, by the [reflection of] the moon in water, [or] a mirror, [or] an ocean wave - the cause that arises from within shines out from its own depths. There is no fault of becoming fixated.

Meditation on the human body endowed with mind¹²⁶ as the body of a Buddha, and the radiation and reabsorption from a¹²⁷ single self of the many deities of the maṇḍala and an unimaginable [number] of emanations, are purified by the clear visualization itself.

The pleasure and suffering of dreams, when one awakes, are exactly the same in nature; and similarly, conceptual thought and non-thought, too, when [one has] pristine awareness, are equal in their essential nature.¹²⁸ In [their] non-fabricated [nature] they¹²⁹ are primordial, spontaneously-accomplished perfection.

¹²² Concerning these "lower secret *yānas*" the KSG commentary specifies "the Mahāyoga and so on".

¹²³ Literally, "not heard" (*ma thos*).

¹²⁴ I assume that *dgon pa gsum* here is equivalent to *dben pa gsum*, that is, isolation of body, speech and mind.

¹²⁵ Literally, "two fears" (*dogs pa gnyis*).

¹²⁶ I have tentatively emended the phrase *sems can mi las* to *mi lus*.

¹²⁷ The phrase *bdag gcig su las* is difficult to construe and my translation here is provisional.

¹²⁸ Although explicated in the commentary, this passage may possibly be quoted from a different source, rather than the *sPyi bcings*, as it ends with *zhes gsungs pa*.

¹²⁹ The commentary explains this as referring to "the Three *Samādhis* and so on."

In that case, if they are perfect from the beginning, one may wonder whether meditation is now pointless. It is not pointless. From the non-existing cause existence manifests: the supreme maṇḍala of familiarization with what was [previously] not seen. If there is a cause that at first is non-existent, what substance does it have [to create] conceptual thought?

These are the teachings on the Great Activity.

The clarification of the [oral] statement of the Mantra [...] ¹³⁰ monks [and?] sthāviras ¹³¹ will be blind. ¹³²

This wonderful vajra [and] lotus of the totally-pure self is the father, [and at the same time] his own child. ¹³³ This lineage is the primordial view.

This great ocean of the Secret Mantra [yāna] can not be realized through comparisons, logical reasoning, inference, or superior knowledge. ¹³⁴ Therefore, the great Self ¹³⁵ of the Secret Mantra[yāna] that abounds in a great wave of accomplishments, whose unimaginable depth is hard to fathom, is accomplished by obtaining the statements and esoteric instructions.

¹³⁶ For example, after barley and buckwheat have been mixed up, though they are poured together, they show up individually, [and] similarly, although mantra[yāna] and meditative absorption may be mixed up, from the point of view of the wise, the greater special qualities of the mantra[yāna] manifest distinctly.

That which abides in great bliss, [is] the great perpetuity, the perfect Sambhogakāya. Precious enlightenment that transcends the Three Realms - since it is empty, where will it be found by searching for it? The essence of primordial wisdom is no different from the beings that are primordially present in the fluid of the great sphere. ¹³⁷

¹³⁸ The person who, individually elucidating these inner and outer teachings, without mixing them up, combines the provisional meaning,

¹³⁰ Part of the source text seems to be omitted here.

¹³¹ I have not so far found a convincing explanation for the reading "*ban thangs mi phyed*" that would corroborate the interpretation given in the commentary. See following note.

¹³² This passage resists meaningful translation and is very probably incomplete. The commentary on it makes no specific mention of monks (*ban*). It states that mixing up the explanations of Mantrayāna with those of other vehicles, in particular the sūtra vehicle, leads to the foundation of erroneous scriptural systems, causes obscurations in those who confuse them, and blindfolds the vision of others.

¹³³ The commentary explains that the Basis and Essence of enlightenment act as mutual cause and result: "*gzhi dang ngo bo nyid kyi phyir / rtogs nas snang bar 'gyur ba'i phyir / phan tshun rgyu dang 'bras bur gyur pas*".

¹³⁴ This passage beginning "This great ocean..." is quoted in the STMG at fol. 295.5.

¹³⁵ In Tibetan *bdag nyid che*.

¹³⁶ Two lines that occur here may also be part of the root text. They translate as: "In terms of analysis, even what is to be actually accomplished is explained without being mixed up, as well as not mixing up the experiences that follow."

¹³⁷ The "Great sphere" (*thig le chen po*) is a synonym in rDzogs chen for the all-encompassing state of enlightenment.

¹³⁸ There is a passage preceding this which could also be part of the root text: - "When the supreme vehicle that teaches in this way and the samādhi of the sūtra section are mixed, the meditation and conduct [are like this] - they destroy the power of the mantra[yāna] and have the fault of seeking the view and conduct of the sūtra section. If gum is mixed into butter, as well as the gum's strength being damaged, the butter's colour is also damaged, so it is wrong for both." This passage ends with the phrase *zhes gsungs so*, indicating the end of a citation, but less often found here than *zhes bya ba* after root text citations. Moreover, it is not itself commented on, which would also suggest that it is not part of the root text. However, the passage is important for doctrinal history as it stresses

without abandoning anything, with the state of great equality, the Dharmadhātu, understands all the Buddha's teachings without exception and remains within the great oral precepts, though his body is human, his mind is a Buddha. [Such a] teacher is called "the light of the world",¹³⁹ and even the Victorious ones of the three times pay him homage,¹⁴⁰ and all of the inner and outer oath-bound [guardians] also pay him heed and carry out whatever he commands.

Someone who does not have such realization, who does not have the statements, in his extreme ignorance [will be] seized by arrogance, and his speech will also be extremely deluded and contradictory [to the Dharma]. Claiming that it is the unsurpassed Great Perfection, sons of the Victorious ones who rely merely on the samādhi of the instantaneous approach¹⁴¹ violate the statements by assuming the role¹⁴² of commoners.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁴ Therefore, this non-waning lamp of the teachings is the province of those persons who have thoroughly purified their minds through an unimaginably [long] series of lives, placed their minds in the natural state over and over again, and paid reverence to the Victorious ones. But for those who only know how to mouth the meaning of their samaya, who mix up inner and outer teachings as a casual concoction, and lack the esoteric precepts of the Mantra[yāna], considering¹⁴⁵ the risks [of it] entering their hearts, it is secret.

If an unsuitable recipient should hear it, it will become a great burden, and he will wander continually. There are three statements of esoteric precepts¹⁴⁶, therefore,¹⁴⁷ because of the great danger and the difficult burden. [Of] the Precepts [in] Three Statements, the first gives a clear idea, the second gives understanding, and through the third, the meaning has been properly understood.¹⁴⁸

If they have not heard these three [precepts] or have not understood their meaning, some people will talk [of] emptiness, and others of permanence,

the distinction between "the supreme vehicle", which here is Mahāyoga but with a very pronounced rDzogs chen flavour, and "sūtra section samādhi" - a reference to Chan.

¹³⁹ This phrase occurs in the *rDo la gser zhun*, (1.4) where it may also be a quotation.

¹⁴⁰ Literally, "place him on the crown of their heads".

¹⁴¹ That is, Chan.

¹⁴² STMG "falling to the role of commoners."

¹⁴³ This passage, from "Claiming that it is the unsurpassed Great Perfection ..." is quoted in the STMG at fol. 311.5-6.

¹⁴⁴ Between the end of the previous passage and the start of this one there are two quotations, but they are not commented upon, and do not seem to be part of the root text.

¹⁴⁵ Amending *bstos* to *bltos*.

¹⁴⁶ There is an intriguing echo here of the famous three-line teaching known to the tradition as "*Tshig gsum gnad brdegs*", "Hitting the essential point in three statements", said to be the last testament of the eighth century rDzogs chen master dGa' rab rdo rje.

¹⁴⁷ There is a row of dots between "therefore" and the rest of this sentence, possibly indicating a lacuna in the source text. This hypothesis is supported by the commentary on this line: "Because there is a very great risk in not knowing the chosen recipient, it is hard [for him] to hold it in mind."

¹⁴⁸ The commentary (fol. 20 r.4-20 v. 3) elaborates on these esoteric precepts. It includes a reference to the Peaceful and Wrathful (*zhi khro*) deities. Its explanation includes the term *kun rtags pa*, the first of the Three Natures or Three Aspects (*trisvabhāva*) of Cittamātra. The Three Precepts may therefore have consisted of an explanation of the Three Samādhi of Mahāyoga, with perhaps some influence from Cittamātra doctrine.

and these will be signs of their having only understood just a few words, and also expose [the fact] that they lack the three precepts.

Moreover, that which remains without contriving in the single state of these three is the spontaneously-accomplished Great Perfection. Apart from this, there is no other state beyond concepts. Because he remains in the unitary state of Samantabhadra, the bhagavān is ornamented with emptiness.

The [oral] statements of the Great Perfection [explain that] the sphere of the secret moon¹⁴⁹ perfects birth [and] cessation in the self; the cause that perpetually shines forth in the mind of great beings, [and that] all Buddhas [are] non-existent.¹⁵⁰ The enlightened [state] roams freely and without impediment.¹⁵¹ "Therefore, whatever [their] thoughts and deeds may be like, do not give [this teaching] to anyone who is fixated on attaining [this] goal" is the advice.¹⁵²

Having lucidly drawn out all the coiled words of Universal Inclusiveness, it should be listened to¹⁵³ by [only] one or two. Glorious Hayagrīva, having grasped the stacked entrance to the maṇḍala of the heart, will reside [there]. If this is violated, since the Buddha has said in numerous scriptures that this will cause many evils to occur to the author in this and future lives, just as a magnet attracts iron, this should be borne in mind.

Spyi bcings Critical edition

Based on the version contained in the KSG commentary text *sPyi gsang sngags lung gi 'grel pa gnyags dza nya ku ma ras mdzad pa* (Vol. 103 p.439)¹⁵⁴

Dpal kun tu bzang po la phyag 'tshal lo/
spyi bcings sngags kyi lung / ma 'dres gsal ba'o/ *bdag ni yod do/gzhan ni med do/ bdag nyid*¹⁵⁵ *chen por lhun gyis rdzogs*¹⁵⁶ *pas yod do/ kun tu bzang po'i ngang*

¹⁴⁹ The commentary explains (fol. 20 v.3/p. 480.3) that the "Sphere of the secret moon" (*zla gsang thig le*) signifies primordial wisdom. This is also the title of an extant Mahāyoga tantra.

¹⁵⁰ This line is extremely terse and challenging to translate. I have relied for my interpretation on the commentary (fol. 22r.1-3), which states that the true nature of all conventionally-designated things is insubstantial, without color or desire, and that to be free of thoughts of such things is to enter the definitive oral precepts.

¹⁵¹ See previous note. The line *ma bkag ci bder byang chub yan du khye* is cited in the STMG at fol. 453.1

¹⁵² This passage ending with the "is the advice" (*ces gdams pa'o*) indicates the end of a citation that could be from elsewhere, but it is also possible that the *sPyi bcings* itself concluded here, as what follows begins with the text's title and refers to how it should be transmitted, and appears to be supplemental in character. It does however, receive some commentarial explanation

¹⁵³ Literally, "grasped in the ear".

¹⁵⁴ Verified by cross-checking with the quotations from the *sPyi bcings* in the *bSam gtan mig sgron*, which all match. The passages cited in the *bSam gtan mig sgron* (STMG) are shown in italics in this edition.

¹⁵⁵ STMG fol. 329.5 (*bdag*) *gzhan*.

¹⁵⁶ STMG fol. 329.6 *grub*.

*du gcig pas gzhan med do*¹⁵⁷ / bdag med par chad par ltung ngo¹⁵⁸ / sems can rtog pa che ches la / rtog pas 'khor / rtog pa'i bag chags rtas nas rtog pa'i ngang du 'gyur / mdo sde dang bstan chos bkrid¹⁵⁹ drang gi don gyis ni stong par bshad / de bas kyang med par bshad / de bas kyang stong pa bdag med par bshad / 'di yang lung gis ma zin na mi rung ste / mu stegs chad par lta ba ni bsgyur dka' la sdig che / de bas rtog par lta ba bsgyur sla la nyen chung bar gsungs te / rnam par mi rtog pa sgom pa'ang sems 'grod¹⁶⁰ de phyang chad par song ba ni bcos dka' la nyen che / de bas dmigs pa'i rgyu drag dal la 'dzin pa bcos sla bar 'dzin pas lon las 'byung ste / de yang cis mngon zhe na / ji ltar sbrul la bzung nyes na / rigs sngags log par bsgrubs pa bzhin / stong pa ni klan dka'o / rtog pa gzhi la sla'o / 'o na rtog par mi 'gyur ram zhe na / rtog par mi 'gyur ba'i don ni / rtag pa med pas na gzhan bsal / chad pa med pas ni bdag du bsdus pa ste / rtag chad gnyis dag go / skye 'gag med pas kyang bshig la / bdag dang gnyis su ma gyur pas kyang dag ste / thams cad nas thams cad du ril bdag du gcig par rang la rdzogs pa chen po lhun gyis grub pa'o / rtag pa chen po rnam snang mdzad / sems dpa' rdo rje mi bskyod mchog / 'di ltar gsal ba'i dus na / 'di ni theg pa chen po mdo sde dbu ma la sogs pas gdar bcad nas / the tshom gyi gleng gzhi ril dang bral bas na / rnam rtog mi mnga' cir yang sa le mkhyen¹⁶¹ / lta ba 'dis thag bcad nas gsang ba'i theg pa 'og ma dag la zur tsam yang ma brjod do / bshad pa nyid ni 'bras bu'i gnas skabs kyis phye ba ste / de dag ma bshad par zer ba yang rgyu'i skabs kyis 'gal ba med do / yang lung las gol te / sngags gol ba ni gang zhe na / de bzhin nyid ni rgyu dang snang / lha bsgom pa'i rim pa smos pa'i de bzhin nyid ni / lung chen po ma thos zhing / mi mkhas pas bltas na / bsam gtan dang cha mthun par 'dra na yang / de ni sngags kyis lung lha'i ting nge 'dzin du 'gro ba dang / bsam gtan ni tshe rabs kyis bgags / rnam par mi rtog pas rgyud sbyang zhing dgon pa gsum la gnas te / cung zad kyang rtog pa 'byung du dogs pa gnyis / 'jug pa'i sgo dang / lta ba'i bzhed dang / phrin las kyis khyad par gzhi nas so so ste / sngags kyis de bzhin nyid kyang lung gis ma zin na mi rung ste / ji ltar zhe na¹⁶² / gcig bsgoms na gcig mi btub ste / gsum so so pa nyid gol tshabs che bas / 'di gsum yang gsar bu rnam la so sor bstan pa'i lung yin par zad kyis / kun gyis ni dus cig du bsgom dgos so¹⁶³ 'o na de bzhin nyid ni mi dmigs pas / rgyu ni dmigs pa can te / 'di gcig du bsgom par dka' 'am / mi btub 'dra na yang / lung gis bgrod dang sla'o / de la dper na chu zla dang me long dang mtsho rlabs kyis mtshon pa ni / khong nas 'byung ba'i rgyu rang las gsal to / zin chags kyis

¹⁵⁷ The *rNying ma bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (KSG) vol. 103 commentary entitled *sGom don drug 'grel* at p.162.6 quotes this passage as follows: (*spyi bcings las*) / *bdag nyid chen po lhun gyis rdzogs pas / bdag ni yod do / kun tu bzang po'i ngang du gcig pas gzhan med do*.

¹⁵⁸ This line is followed by the formula *zhes gsungs te*, whereas the most usual one for quotations from the root text is: *zhes bya ba ni*. It is possible that it is not part of the root text, but on balance I think it is, as the commentary does explain it.

¹⁵⁹ Emending *bkri drang* to *bkrid drang*.

¹⁶⁰ Emending *grod* to *'grod*.

¹⁶¹ This line is probably part of the root text, as it is followed by the short comment "*go sla'o*". However, its end-quote phrase (*zhes gsungs te*) is not the one most commonly found in this text (cf. note 5 above).

¹⁶² This rhetorical phrase may not be part of the root text.

¹⁶³ I have assigned the lines that follow (up to and including *mi btub 'dra na yang*) to the root text because they are explicated by the commentary, even though they do not terminate with the usual end-quote phrase *zhes bya ba ni*, but with *zhes brgal ba ste* – "it may be objected".

skyon med do/¹⁶⁴ sems can mi lus¹⁶⁵ sangs rgyas kyi skur bsgom pa dang/
 bdag gcig su las dkyil 'khor kyi lha mang po dang/ sprul pa bsam gyis mi
 khyab pa'i 'phro 'du gsal ba nyid kyis dag go/ rmi lam dag gi bde dang
 sdug bsngal yang/ sad pa'i dus na rang bzhin yong gis mnyam/ de bzhin
 rnam par rtog dang mi rtog kyang/ rig pa'i dus na rang bzhin ngo bos
 mnyam/ ma bcos par ye nas lhun gyis rdzogs pa yin no/ 'o na gdod nas
 rdzogs na da bsgom pa 'di ni don med do bar dogs pa la/ don med pa ni ma
 yin te/med pa'i rgyu las yod gsal ba/ ma mthong 'dris pa'i dkyil 'khor
 mchog/ dang po med pa'i rgyu yin na/ de la rtog pa'i rdzas ci yod/ 'di dag
 ni spyod pa chen po'i bzhed do/ sngags kyi lung gsal ba/ ban thangs mi
 phyed de mdongs so/¹⁶⁶ e ma'o rab du dag pa'i/ bdag gi rdo rje pad mo
 'di/pha yin te ni bdag gi bu/ rigs 'di ye nas lta ba'o/ *gsangs sngags rgya
 mtsho chen po 'di*¹⁶⁷/ *dpe dang tshad ma gtan tshigs dang/ rjes su dpog dang shes
 rab kyis/ rtogs par nus pa ma yin te/ de bas gsang sngags bdag nyid che/ dngos grub
 rlabs chen 'khrigs pa can/ bsam yas gting ni dpag dka' ba*¹⁶⁸/ *lung dang man ngag
 thob pas 'grub*¹⁶⁹/ ¹⁷⁰*dper na nas dang bra bo bsres nas gcig du blugs kyang so
 sor gsal ba dang 'dra bar/ sngags dang gsam gtan bsres kyang/ mkhas pas
 bltas nas sngags che ba'i khyad par ma 'dres par gsal lo/ bde ba chen po
 gang gnas pa/ rtag pa chen po longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku/ khams gsum
 las 'das byang chub rin po che/ stong pas brtsal bas rnyed par ga la 'gyur/
 thig le chen por ye gnas chu gnas pa/ ye shes snying po de las gud na med/
 '171*phyi dang ngang gi chos 'di dag ma 'dres par so sor gsal la/ bkri drang gi
 don gang yang ma spang par mnyam pa chen po'i ngang chos kyi dbyings
 su bzlums pa de/ sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa ma lus par mkhyen cing/ lung
 chen po la gnas pa'i skyes bu ni/ lus mi yin yang sems sangs rgyas so/ ston
 pa po 'jig rten gyi sgron ma zhes bya ste¹⁷²/ dus gsum gyi rgyal ba rnam
 kyang spyi gtsug gi len pa/ phyi nang gi dam can thams cad kyang bka'
 nyan te ci bsgo ba'i las byed do/ 'di ltar ni ma rtogs/ lung ni med/ ma rig
 pa'i mu nga rgyal gyis bzung nas smra ba ni shin tu yang 'khrul par 'gyur te

¹⁶⁴ The commentary elucidates the previous passage with a quotation from the *Kun 'dus* (as found in the KSG version), as follows: *bsgom pa'i gnas med dag du rab rtogs na/ bsgoms kyang skyon med chos dbyings nam mkha' 'dra zhes gsungs so.*

¹⁶⁵ I have tentatively emended the reading *mi las* to *mi lus* here, in the light of the commentary on this passage which reads: *'byung ba'i lus nyid sems kho na las mi gzhan par ma skyes par gsal ba ni ye shes kyi phyag rgya ste.*

¹⁶⁶ Here the full passage in the commentary reads: *sngags kyi lung gsal ba zhes bya ba nas ban thangs mi phyed de mdongs so zhes bya ba'i bar du ni*, i.e. "from....to....", implying that it has not quoted the entire passage from the root text.

¹⁶⁷ This passage (beginning *gsangs sngags rgya mtsho...*) is cited in STMG 295.5 and following. There is one variant in this line: STMG [...*rgya mtsho chen po*] *ni*.

¹⁶⁸ STMG 296.1 (*dka'*) *bas*.

¹⁶⁹ The citation in the STMG ends here, at STMG 296.1.

¹⁷⁰ Two lines that follow here may also be part of the root text: *gtan tshig kyi sgo nas bsgrub bya nyid kyang ma 'dres par bshad la/ rjes su 'jug pa'i nyams kyang ma 'dres so zhes 'go yang drang ngo.*

¹⁷¹ There are several lines here which could be part of the root text, but as they are not commented on in the usual way, I am inclined to think that they are quoting a different source. They read: *mar dang spyin du brses pas/ spyin gyi stobs kyang nyams la/ mar gyi mdog kyang nyams te gnyis ka ma rung ngo/ zhes gsung so.* This imagery is explained as referring to confusing the teachings of the supreme vehicle and the samādhi of the sūtra section, in preceding lines which could also conceivably be part of the root text, but are less likely to be so.

¹⁷² This quotation is from the *Gold refined from ore* (*rDo la gser zhun*), one of the *Five Earlier Translations*. See the edition by Norbu and Lipman, 1985, p. 115.5.

'gal lo/ ¹⁷³rdzogs chen bla na med par khas 'ches nas/ ton mun¹⁷⁴ bsam gtan tsam la rten 'cha ba/ rgyal ba'i sras 'bangs bcas pas¹⁷⁵ lung dang 'gal /¹⁷⁶ de bas na/ bstan pa mi nub pa'i sgron me 'di/ tshe rabs bsam gyis mi khyab pa nas shin tu blo sbyangs te/ sems rnal du 'jog 'jog pa/ rgyal ba rnams bsnyen bkur byas pa'i skyes bu dag gi spyod yul yin gyi/ dam tshig tsam kha don shes pa dang/ phyi nang gi chos lod pa'i thug pa bzhin du bsres pa dang/ sngags kyi man ngag med pa rnams la snying sgor byung ba'i nyen dang bstos¹⁷⁷ te gsang ngo/ snod ma yin pas thos na skur pa chen por 'gyur te/ gtan du 'khyams so/ de bas na¹⁷⁸ nyen che zhing bkur dka' ba/ man ngag gi tshig gsum mo/ man ngag tshig gsum pa gcig gis ni 'phrigs/ gnyis kyis ni go/ gsum gyis ni legs par brda¹⁷⁹ phrad/ 'di gsum ma thos sam brda' ma phrad dang/ la la ni stong zer/ la la ni rtag zer te/ 'di dag tshig 'ga' tsam la go ba'i rtags yin la/ gsum med pa yang des mngon no/ 'di gsum yang gcig gi ngang ste/ ma bcas par bzhugs pa yi/ lhun gyis rdzogs pa chen po'o/ de las la bzlar med do/ kun tu bzang po'i ngang la gcig bzhug pas/ bcom ldan 'das la stong pa nyid kyis brgyan/ zla gsang thig le skye 'gag bdag du rdzogs/ skyes chen thugs la rtag du gsal ba'i rgyu/ thams cad sangs rgyas med par rdzogs pa chen po'i lung/ ma bkag ci bder¹⁸⁰ byang chub yan du khye¹⁸¹/ de bas na bsam pa dang spyod pa gang yang 'dra ste/ ched du gdod 'dzin gar yang ma byed cig ces gdam pa'o/ ¹⁸²spyi bcings kyi tshig 'khyil pa ril gsal bar phyung nas/ gcig gnyis kyi rna bar zung la/ tsi tta'i dkyil 'khor brtsegs pa'i sgo/ dpal rta mgrin gyis bzung nas gnas so/ gal te 'das na sangs rgyas ni/ byed pa po nyid kyi phyir na de nyid kyis/ 'di dang phyi ma'i nyes pa mang po khab len la lcags 'du ba ltar/ 'byung bar gzhung du ma las gsungs pas de nyid rjes su dran par bya'o/

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¹⁷³ The three lines that follow are cited in the STMG at fol. 311.5-6.

¹⁷⁴ STMG *ston men*.

¹⁷⁵ STMG (*sras 'bangs*) *babs pa*.

¹⁷⁶ Two quotations follow at this point which are not commented upon, and do not seem to be from the root text. The passage reads: *sangs rgyas sems can so so na/ ye shes chen pos yod ma zin/ ces pa dang/ ci ste las kyi dbang brtsan na/ rang byung ye shes yod ma yin/ zhes kyang gsungs pas de dag bzhad pa bzhin du thog ma'i lung nyid nas khyad par du gsung/*.

¹⁷⁷ Emending *bstos* to *bltos*.

¹⁷⁸ There is a line of dots here in the text before the next word. This probably signifies a lacuna in the source text. The commentary on this line reads as follows: *snod 'dam ma shes pa'i nyen shin du che ba'i phyir bcang dka'o*.

¹⁷⁹ Emending *brdab* to *brda'*.

¹⁸⁰ STMG *bde*.

¹⁸¹ This line is cited in the STMG at 453.1.

¹⁸² It is possible that the original text concluded here. The reference to Hayagrīva, unusual for early Mind Series texts, would tend to support this hypothesis.

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Five Principles of rDzogs chen Transmission in the *Kun byed rgyal po*

Jim Valby

As long as practitioners meditate any buddhist or non-buddhist view, it is impossible for them to realize primordial enlightenment. Practitioners realize primordial enlightenment by totally relaxing in Natural Presence¹ beyond cause and effect. Five principles of rDzogs chen transmission — historical, root, yoga, intentional and literal — explain how to totally relax in Natural Presence. These five principles are explained in the 200 folios of the 84 chapters² of the *Kun byed rgyal po*,³ the principal tantra of *rDzogs chen sems sde*. Khenpo Zhenphen Öser⁴ explains in detail these principles in his 2400 folio commentary⁵ on the *Kun byed rgyal po* named *Ornament of the State of Samantabhadra*.

These five principles establish conceptually the meaning of unmistakable effortless, self-perfected Natural Presence. Practitioners with high capacity⁶ do not struggle on the paths of spiritual vehicles.⁷ Instead, they totally relax in Natural Presence, directly recognizing the immediacy and totality of primordial enlightenment.

Historical Principle

The *Kun byed rgyal po* says:⁸

*dang po yid ches pa yi khungs bstan phyir
lo rgyus don gyi bshad lugs bstan par bya*

¹ Natural Presence is also called pure, perfect, intrinsic, non-dual, primordial, instant *rigpa*-knowledge-awareness.

² These principles are explained explicitly in chapter 13. Chapters 21, 29 and 45 give additional explanations.

³ *Kun byed rgyal po* editions include: *sNga 'gyur bka' ma shin tu rgyas pa*, folios 6-285 of volume 3935 of TBRC W25983; *mTshams brag*, folios 1-198 of volume 604 of TBRC W21521; *mKhyen brtse (gTing skyed)*, folios 1-186 of volume 1757 of TBRC W21518; *Bai ro'i rgyud 'bum*, folios 383-435 of volume 1; *sDe dge*, folios 1-170; and *sGang steng*, folios 1a-93b.

⁴ mKhan po gzhan phan 'od zer is person P2DB5991 in the TBRC digital library. His seat was Ser shul rdzong, and this commentary is his only known composition.

⁵ The commentary appears in volumes 4010 and 4011 of section W25983, available as Adobe-readable PDF files from the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC) founded by Gene Smith.

⁶ Capacity is usually explained with five topics: confidence in the primordial enlightenment of the master, oneself and all beings; devoted interest and active participation in the master's oral and symbolic transmissions; continuous attentive presence inside time; cultivation of *prajña* presence to directly experience the emptiness of mind and phenomena; and timeless contemplation in Natural Presence beyond cause and effect.

⁷ Vehicles include non-buddhist traditions, Śravakayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna, Bodhisattvayāna, Kriyatantra, Caryatantra, Yogatantra, Mahāyoga and Anuyoga.

⁸ Folio 61, chapter 13, *mTshams brag* edition.

First, the historical principle is explained in order to provide confidence in the source.

The historical principle⁹ is explained to disciples to produce confidence in the primordial source, which transmits its knowledge in three ways: direct transmission is the natural empowerment of primordial emptiness with infinite potential; symbolic transmission is the raw energy of each experience, which demonstrates its definitive meaning through its own nature; oral transmission is speech and elegant compositions with profound concepts and words.

Practitioners with low to medium capacity gradually develop the high capacity to completely relax in the knowledge of primordial enlightenment by working with these three aspects of the transmission of qualified rDzogs chen masters, inside a community of practitioners who help each other.¹⁰

Oral transmission involves words and concepts which masters and texts explain to help disciples develop capacity to continue in the recognition of the immediacy and totality of primordial enlightenment. The essence of the oral transmission is that everything is already the wisdom-energy of primordial enlightenment, beyond renunciation, antidotes, development, accomplishment, purification, transformation and attainment. Practitioners with high capacity do not take refuge in the words and concepts of oral transmission.

The meaning of symbolic transmission is that every experience of every being is already the pure, empty, self-perfected wisdom-energy of primordial knowledge. There is no hierarchy of wisdom-energy experiences. The raw energy of each experience demonstrates its definitive meaning through its own nature. Also, we may begin to recognize the immediacy of wisdom-energies through sacred symbols, such as a mirror, a crystal, space, a peacock's feather, mandala attributes, and so forth. Practitioners with high capacity do not take refuge in the experiences of symbolic transmission.

Direct transmission is the secret refuge¹¹ for practitioners with high capacity. Through our experiences of sensation, clarity and emptiness we find ourselves concretely in Natural Presence with our vajra master and each other. We use oral and symbolic transmission to develop our capacity to stabilize our realization of the timeless naked awareness of direct transmission, beyond cause and effect.

All teachers, teachings, disciples, times and places are already the uncorrected natural state of primordial enlightenment. Enlightenment is not newly produced by disciples who follow the teachings of teachers in particular places at specific times. Causes, conditions, effects, struggles and practices are already the self-originated wisdom of Natural Presence.

⁹ The historical principle answers questions like these: What is knowledge? From where does knowledge come? What is our situation now? From where do teachings come? What is the natural state? What is refuge? What are the three aspects of rDzogs chen transmission?

¹⁰ In addition to intellectual study, practitioners apply secret methods to produce experiences which help to develop higher capacity. Methods are more secret. Ideas are less secret.

¹¹ Outer refuge is buddha, dharma and sangha. Inner refuge is guru, deva and dakini. Secret refuge is the unchanging path of Natural Presence.

Everything of the universe of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arises as the enlightened energy of the one self-perfected Natural Presence. But teachers still mistakenly teach that disciples should fabricate enlightenment by applying discipline, renunciation, interruption, purification and transformation.

Root Principle

The *Kun byed rgyal po* says:¹²

*chos kun rtsa ba sems su 'dus pa'i phyir
de nas rtsa ba'i don de bstan par bya*

The root principle is explained so that (one understands that) the root of all phenomena is Presence.

The root principle¹³ explains that all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are primordially enlightened and unified in Natural Presence. Uncreated, primordial, all-pervasive and insubstantial Natural Presence is the source of all teachers, teachings, disciples, times and places. Natural Presence is not some object or experience to produce, discover or maintain. We relax with unstructured, raw, timeless awareness in the primordially empty source, which has infinite potential to manifest anything through sound, light and rays. 'Sound' means the vibration and movement of emptiness. 'Light' means that subtle energies begin to manifest through vibrating emptiness. 'Rays' means the diversification of the empty wisdom-energies of light. All phenomena of the animate and inanimate universe are already the wisdom-energies of essenceless light. All phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are direct manifestations of self-originated wisdom and are already liberated in all-pervading, uncorrected Natural Presence. No action is necessary to produce enlightenment. Primordial liberation does not depend upon behavior, ideas, meditation, words or mind.

All phenomena are already unified in primordial unique, indivisible, non-dual Natural Presence, which transcends all frames of reference and cannot be established through words. Practitioners with capacity learn how to relax naturally in authentic unfabricated equality, beyond negation, affirmation, rejection, acceptance, fear, hope, struggle or practice. There is no need to apply mudras, recite mantras, imagine visualizations, preserve samayas, meditate deities, perform sacred activities, travel on paths, purify obstacles, or search for wisdom. Natural Presence already abides in the bliss of natural contemplation and transcends the dualistic diseases of meditation practices.

¹² Folio 61, chapter 13, mTshams brag edition.

¹³ The root principle answers questions like these: What is the source? What is the main principle of *rDzogs chen* teaching? How does energy manifest? How are energies unified?

Yoga Principle

The *Kun byed rgyal po* says:¹⁴

*theg pa'i khyad par so sor dbye ba'i phyir
yo ga'i don gyi rtsa ba bstan par bya*

The base of the yoga principle is explained in order to differentiate the features of the vehicles.

The yoga principle¹⁵ differentiates the features of spiritual vehicles, so that serious practitioners with high capacity can completely transcend actions, efforts, acceptance, rejection, cause, effect, struggle, achievement, purification and transformation.

Because all spiritual paths lead away from the recognition of the immediacy and totality of primordial enlightenment, we must learn how to use anything from any teaching without being conditioned by it. We learn how to study, practice and live in the context of Natural Presence. It is impossible to get familiar with Natural Presence when we are taking refuge in the ideas, words and experiences of spiritual vehicles. But we can quickly develop capacity using the ideas and methods of any spiritual vehicle when we do so inside the transmission of Natural Presence.

The obstacles and deviations of spiritual vehicles include views, meditations, initiations, mandalas, samayas, behaviors, paths, levels, wisdoms, sacred activities and goals. It is impossible for practitioners to get familiar with Natural Presence while conditioned by and attached to these obstacles and deviations.

'Obstacle' means that the practitioner fails to recognize the immediacy and totality of primordial wisdom. Obstacles of action are based upon the failure to recognize effortless Natural Presence. Obstacles of knowledge are based upon the failure to recognize that everything in the universe manifests as the ornamental energy of Natural Presence. Obstacles include concepts of two truths, three purities, acceptance and rejection, the four aspects of approach and attainment, good and bad, self and other, nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, enlightenment and non-enlightenment, and so forth. Basically, obstacles are concepts that something exists which is other than the self-manifesting wisdom energy of Natural Presence.

'Deviation' means entering into action based upon an obstacle. Deviation means searching for something other than self-perfected, all-pervading primordial enlightenment. Practitioners deviate from natural primordial enlightenment by traveling paths with conceptual characteristics. Failing to recognize the immediacy and totality of primordial wisdom, practitioners deviate through their struggles to achieve something else.

Sattvayoga, Mahāyoga and Anuyoga reject, accept, struggle and achieve. Atiyoga transcends all actions, efforts, struggles, causes and effects. Al-

¹⁴ Folio 61, chapter 13, mTshams brag edition.

¹⁵ The yoga principle answers questions like these: How do practitioners use spiritual vehicles to block the possibility of realization? How do we get free from all limitations, especially those of teachings? How do practitioners transcend correction, transformation, rejection and acceptance? What are obstacles and deviations?

though Natural Presence is beyond differentiation or exclusion, Atiyoga explains how different teachings struggle with views, behaviors, *samayas*, practices, and so forth. Natural Presence is far superior to any vehicle.

Because followers of spiritual vehicles are attached to methods, such as renunciation, interruption, development, purification, transformation and accomplishment, they do not know how to relax in uncorrected Natural Presence. Followers of Śravakayāna use the four truths to reject the self-originated wisdom-energies of Natural Presence. Followers of Pratyekabuddhayāna use meditation on the twelve links of interdependent origination to block relaxation in Natural Presence. Followers of the Bodhisattva vehicle conceive relative and absolute truths and gather merits and wisdom by gradually traveling on the five paths and training on the ten levels for eons. Followers of Kriyatantra try to purify and empower all phenomena, using mantras, mudras and visualizations related to *jñānasattva* and *samayāsattva* deities. Followers of yogatantra do not understand unchanging Natural Presence, so they meditate deities, using the five factors of manifest enlightenment and the four types of miracles. They cultivate contemplation of the relative *vajradhātu maṇḍala* with characteristics and contemplation of absolute emptiness without characteristics. Followers of Mahāyoga use the three contemplations and the four aspects of approach and attainment to transform the five aggregates and five elements into the pure *maṇḍala* of enlightenment. Followers of Anuyoga do not understand how to relax in uncorrected Natural Presence, so they assign the name 'cause' to the *dharmadhātu* object, assign the name 'effect' to the self-originated wisdom subject, emanate and re-absorb light rays, and try to obtain ordinary and supreme *siddhis*. Followers of Atiyoga with high capacity realize primordial enlightenment beyond action and achievement by relaxing in uncorrected Natural Presence.

Intentional Principle

The *Kun byed rgyal po* says:¹⁶

*rtsol sgrub bya mi dgos par bstan pa'i phyir
dgos ched don gyi dgos pa de ru bstan*

The purpose of explaining the intentional principle is to reveal that it is not necessary to struggle for and achieve (enlightenment).

The intentional principle¹⁷ explains that struggle and achievement are not necessary for the realization of effortless primordial enlightenment. Practitioners with high capacity totally relax in direct, immediate, accessible pri-

¹⁶ Folio 61, chapter 13, mTshams brag edition.

¹⁷ The intentional principle answers questions like these: What is the purpose of rDzogs chen teaching? How does one realize? What is the main point of study and practice? Why are struggle and achievement not necessary for primordial enlightenment? Why is rDzogs chen teaching secret?

primordial knowledge, beyond views, meditations, *samayas*, sacred activities, paths, spiritual levels, trainings, antidotes, struggles, achievements and purifications.

The main point of rDzogs chen teaching is relaxation in Natural Presence beyond cause and effect. We do not try to set up some new, improved frame of reference in which to take refuge. We do not try to escape from the circumstances of our situation. We can take care of our responsibilities much more easily if we govern our ever-changing presence inside time with Natural Presence outside time. Right now we can understand total primordial liberation, beyond vehicles, with their views to understand, meditations to accomplish, *samayas* to preserve, sacred activities to perform, paths to travel, levels to practice, antidotes to depend upon, and purifications to apply for removing obstacles.

The intention is that each practitioner directly experiences unconditioned, primordial, Natural Presence, beyond words, ideas and actions. There is nothing to deny, establish, accept or reject based upon the dualism of relative and absolute truths. Fortunate practitioners with high capacity effortlessly self-liberate by relaxing in unfabricated primordial enlightenment beyond searching and struggling.

Natural Presence already abides as the all-pervading enlightened state of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, beyond efforts to achieve some imaginary state of enlightenment. All phenomena are the enlightened energies of unborn Natural Presence, beyond the origination and cessation of four noble truths, beyond dependent origination, beyond ritual cleanliness, and beyond the development and accomplishment stages.

Beyond struggle and practice, Natural Presence experiences diverse phenomena as one flavor, beyond good, evil, pure, impure, rejection and acceptance. Practitioners with low to medium capacity hold onto the frames of reference of the provisional teachings of the gradual paths of the vehicles of cause and effect. As long as practitioners continue to grasp suggestive teachings, they will not understand and should not be taught the effortless realization of the self-originated wisdom of Natural Presence.

Literal Principle

The *Kun byed rgyal po* says:¹⁸

mi rtogs don de rtogs par bya ba'i phyir
tshig gi don de sgra ru brjod par bya

The words of the literal principle are communicated in order to provide understanding of the non-conceptual meaning.

The meaning of the literal principle¹⁹ is that words are precisely communicated to provide conceptual understanding of the non-conceptual meaning

¹⁸ Folio 61, chapter 13, mTshams brag edition.

¹⁹ The literal principle answers questions like these: How do rDzogs chen practitioners understand the literal meaning? What is never the main point? How does a practitioner

of the absolute equality of Natural Presence beyond all struggle and achievement. The intellectual meaning of words and concepts is connected with non-conceptual meaning. For a practitioner with high capacity, the oral transmission is never the secret refuge. The application of the literal principle depends upon the capacities of individuals. We learn how to use words and concepts to undermine our frames of reference. We learn to connect with the intended non-conceptual meaning beyond the words and concepts.

Some practitioners almost automatically build a new 'rDzogs chen cage' in which to live. But the main point is never the words and ideas of the oral transmission. The intended meaning is always the naked Natural Presence beyond the words and ideas. We can use our human capacities to think, judge and speak to loosen up the concreteness of our temporary cages. We do not take refuge in the thinker, judger, speaker. We recognize our limitations while relaxing in the Natural Presence of the primordial source.

The proclamation in words providing intellectual understanding of the literal principle plants seeds for non-conceptual understanding. Practitioners on their own rarely get familiar with Natural Presence. When someone wants to understand Natural Presence, a teacher already familiar with knowledge explains by pointing out that Natural Presence has no essence. The real condition of Natural Presence, which cannot be expressed, is pointed out with words such as 'inexpressible'.

The sounds and words of the literal principle communicate effortless self-perfection using the ten topics: beyond views and meditations, beyond initiations, beyond *samayas*, beyond *maṇḍalas*, beyond paths, beyond levels, beyond sacred activities, beyond behaviors, beyond limited wisdom, and beyond goals. Practitioners who develop capacity may recognize and get familiar with the qualities of unborn, non-conceptual, self-perfected Natural Presence beyond arguments and logic. Practitioners who develop high capacity totally relax in the empty natural state of primordial perfection, beyond dualities such as cause and effect, affirmation and negation, relative truth and absolute truth, manifestation and emptiness, development and accomplishment, realization and non-realization, enlightenment and non-enlightenment, and so forth.

These five principles present the essence of *rDzogs chen sems sde* transmission.




*The Nine Cycles of the Hidden, The Nine Mirrors,
and Nine Minor Texts on Mind:
Early Mind Section Literature in Bon*

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Abstract

In sGa ston's list of the Southern Treasures discovered by gShen chen Klu dga' a series of texts referred to as the *Facets of Mind, Nine Minor Texts on Mind* are mentioned. The Bon tradition has acknowledged from that time to the present day that these are seminal texts in the literature of Bon. Furthermore, these texts would eventually be classified as the exemplary works of the Mind Section of Bon Dzogchen. Nevertheless, the precise content of these texts has been unclear to modern scholars, both Tibetan and Western, working outside of Tibet. With the publication in 1999 of *Mongyal Lhase's Edition of the Bon Kangyur*, as well as with other subsequent publications, we are now in a better position to identify and understand these works. The aim of this paper is to clearly identify the titles of these texts, to identify the various editions in which they are available, and to begin to understand how they work together with tantric elements to form a holistic system of training.

Introduction

 natural place to begin to understand the history of Mind Section (*sems sde*) literature in Bon Dzogchen, is Karmay's *The Treasury of Good Sayings* (Karmay, 1972), an edition and translation of Shardza's history of the Bon tradition. There Karmay's translation reads: "Although the texts of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) are innumerable, they can all be reduced to *The Four Cycles of Scriptural Tradition, The Three Cycles of Propagation, and The Nine Cycles of Mind Abatement*."¹ *The Four Cycles of the Scriptural Tradition (bka rgyud skor bzhi)*, can be easily identified with *The Four Cycles of Scriptural Tradition/Transmission of the Aural Tradition of Zhang Zhung (bka' rgyud skor bzhi, 1968 and Kangyur 171)*. Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen (Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan) identifies this cycle as the exemplar within the Quintessential Instruction Section (*man ngag sde*) of Dzogchen.² In *The Treasury of Good Sayings* Karmay helps us to identify the reference to *The Three Cycles of Propagation* as *The Three Cycles of Propagation of Dzogchen (bsGrags pa skor gsum, Kangyur 174, Tengyur 207)*.³ Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen identifies this cycle as the exemplar within the Great Vastness Section (*klong chen sde*) of Dzogchen.⁴

¹ *The Treasury of Good Sayings*, p. 51. Karmay's translation of Shardza's description of these texts, "*sems smad sde dgu*", as "*Nine Cycles of Mind Abatement*" is misleading. We prefer to render this phrase as "*Nine Cycles of Minor [Texts on] Mind*."

² *dByings rig*, vol. 1, p. 7.

³ *The Treasury of Good Sayings*, p. 15, n3.

⁴ *dByings rig mdzod*, vol. 1, p. 7. However, this association is apparently not entirely shared by either indigenous scholars of the tradition or contemporary scholars such as Jean-Luc Achard. Unfortunately, a consideration of the *The Three Cycles of Propagation* is beyond the scope of this paper.

From the start we should note that the phrase Mind Section (*sems sde*) may be used in three different ways. In the first use Mind Section (*sems sde*) means a section (or text) on Mind. This is the most general use and common in the early instances of the literature that we will examine. The second usage is the use of the term Mind Section (*sems sde*) as a technical term for organizing the sections of the Bon *Kanjur*. Used in this way the Mind Section of the Bon *Kangyur* is descriptively defined as Volume 171–178 as cataloged in the *Handlist of the Tibetan Kangyur and Tengyur* (Keutzer and O'Neill, 2009) or the *Mdzod* section (Section IV) as cataloged in *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur* (Martin *et al.*, 2003). The third use of the term Mind Section is as a technical term describing a tri-partition of Dzogchen. Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's terse description of Dzogchen, as given above, is enough to tell us that the exemplar of the Quintessential Instruction Section, *The Four Cycles of the Scriptural Tradition of the Aural Tradition of Zhang Zhung* (*bKa' rgyud skor bzhi*, 1968 and *Kangyur* 171), and the exemplar of the Vastness Section, *The Three Cycles of Propagation of Dzogchen* (*bsGrags pa skor gsum*, *Kangyur* 174), are each contained with the Mind Section (Volumes 171–178) of the Bon *Kangyur* as described in the *Handlist*. Thus, we must be careful not to confound the use of Mind Section (*sems sde*) as a way of organizing the Bon *Kangyur* with the use of Mind Section (*sems sde*) as a technical term describing a tri-partition of Dzogchen practice.⁵

In phrases such as “*Nine Minor Texts on Mind (Sems smad sde dgu)*,” the word “*sde*” is used very generally to describe a section of a text or an individual text. Early in Volume 1 of the *Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness*, Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen uses the phrase “*sems sde dgu*” in a more technical manner that implies the “*Nine [Texts of] the Mind Section [of Dzogchen]*,” and in this way presents these “*Nine Minor Texts on Mind*” (*Sems smad sde dgu*) as exemplars within the Mind Section (*sems sde*) of Dzogchen.⁶ One might wonder: if “*Nine Texts on Mind*” are precisely the “*Nine [Texts of] the Mind Section*” then isn't this a distinction without a difference? The problem with making these two uses equivalent is that it lulls us into thinking that when early works⁷ use the phrase “*sems sde dgu*” it implies that they are classifying these texts as Mind Section (*sems sde*) literature. In fact the tri-partition of Dzogchen is not a classification scheme that is native to this early literature of Bon. We will discuss again the classification schemes natively applied to these nine texts briefly in Section 1.2. In the meantime we will simply take care to note that although Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen considers these texts to be exemplars of the Mind Section (*sems sde*) literature, the early literature itself has no such self-reference.

⁵ An example of a potentially confusing statement is found in the otherwise enormously useful *A Catalogue of the Bon Kanjur*, page 437: “The *mDzod* Section (*mDzod sde*) may also be called Sems Section (*Sems sde*), which for present practical purposes means exactly the same thing.” This does help us to understand the criticism, periodically heard in tea stalls in the East and coffee shops in the West, that Bon Dzogchen has no Quintessential Instruction Section (*man ngag sde*).

⁶ *dBying rig mdzod*, vol. 1, p. 7. That these “nine texts” mentioned in *The Treasury of Space and Awareness* refer to the same group of texts as mentioned in the *Treasury of Good Sayings* will become clearer in Section 1.4.

⁷ Such as ‘A zha Blo gros rgyal msthan's *bKod pa'i rgyan* (*bKod pa'i rgyan*, 2004).

With these caveats and considerations aside, let us progress to identifying the titles that constitute these *Nine Minor Texts on Mind* (*Sems smad sde dgu*). In another footnote of *The Treasury of Good Sayings*⁸ Karmay enumerates the *Sems smad sde dgu* as [1] *gab pa dgu skor*, [2] *khu byug* and seven smaller texts known as [3—9] *Sems phran sde bdun*. There are a variety of texts containing the phrase *Nine Hidden* (*gab pa dgu*) in *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*; our challenge will be finding the precise texts intended. Kapstein breaks new ground in his consideration of the *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* (Kapstein, 2009), but he doesn't seem to share our preoccupation with precisely identifying the root text. As the Bon canon has a number of major titles containing *khu byug* we face a similar challenge of finding the precise text intended.

As we dive in to find the titles of the texts that constitute the remainder of the nine sections (*i.e.*, the *Seven Smaller Texts on Mind* [*Sems phran sde bdun*]), the water becomes even murkier. What may constitute the *Seven Smaller Texts on Mind* (*Sems phran sde bdun*) is not at all clear from either *A Catalogue of the Bon Kanjur* or *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts* (Karmay, 2003). Given that these Mind Section works are treasures of gShen chen Klu dga', we look to the comprehensive treatment of the treasures of that treasure revealer in Martin's book entitled *Unearthing Bon Treasures* (Martin, 2001). In his discussion of the "Nine series of lesser Mental Class Texts" Martin simply reiterates Karmay's terse description cited above.⁹ Annotating a biography of rMe'u dGongs mdzod Ri khrod pa¹⁰ Kvaerne's explanation of "*sems phran*" as perhaps the "*sems phran bdun*" also credits a personal communication from Samten Gyaltsen Karmay. From Karmay onward, not one particular title of a text in the *Seven Smaller Texts on Mind* (*Sems phran sde bdun*) is ever mentioned. In short, while Tibetan authors consider the *Nine Minor Texts on Mind* (*sems smad sde dgu*) to be important works in the Bon tradition, aside from a consideration of only one of these nine texts, *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* (Kapstein, 2009), the totality of what has been published in the West on these texts Mind has been largely confined to the contents of one terse footnote by Samten Karmay.

In order to improve our understanding of these early texts that Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen classifies as the exemplary Mind Section literature in Bon we will work in Section 1 to systematically identify the root text among the collection of works associated with *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden*, as well as to catalog the variant titles of the Minor Texts on Mind as they have occurred over time. To construct this list of variant titles we will use the following five resources:

- The list of gShen chen Klu dga's Southern Treasures found in the *sGa ston gyi gter gyi kha byang* as published in *Collection of Rare Bonpo Texts* (Namgyal, 2009);
- The *gSang ba bsen thub kyi rgyud* (*gSang ba bsen thub*, 2004) together with its commentary, the *bKod pa'i rgyan* (*bKod pa'i rgyan*, 2004), by

⁸ *The Treasury of Good Sayings*, p. 51 n. 8

⁹ In other words, *Unearthing Bon Treasures*, p. 65 n. 42, simply references *The Treasury of Good Sayings*, p. 51 n. 8.

¹⁰ "Bonpo Studies: The A Khrid System of Meditation" (Kvaerne, 1973).

the 13th century author 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan, as published by the Bon Dialectic School;

- Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's *The Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness* (*dByings rig mdzod*, Volume 1) ; and
- The work on lineage transmission by dBra ston Ngag dbang sKal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan as quoted in *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*.

In Section 2 we will then work to identify instances of the texts themselves among the Bon *Kangyur*, Bon *Tengyur*, and other independently published works. In particular, we will identify editions of this literature in four publications:

- The third edition of the Bon *Kangyur* edited by Mongyal Lhasé (Lhasé, 1999).
- An edition of the *Tengyur* as cataloged in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*.
- A collection of Minor Texts on Mind from Triten Norbutse entitled *The Cycle of the Nine Minor Texts on Mind: Scriptures of the Highest Dzogchen*. (*Sems smad sde dgu*, 2005).
- A text entitled *gSas mkhar rin po che spyi spung sgron ma gsal ba'i tantra las ngang thag bskal pa'i sgron ma ston* that is collected with other texts together in a book entitled *sPyi spungs rin po che a dkar gsang sngags kyi bka' srung drwa ba nag po'i rgyud skor*, (Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974).

In Section 3 we will try to understand how these early texts of the Mind Section of Bon work together with elements from tantra to form a coherent program of practice in Bon as described in a commentary of 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan, as practiced today in the Geshe training of sMan ri Monastery, and as described by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen in *The Treasury of Space and Awareness*.

1. Clarifying the Titles of the Texts that Constitute the Principal Early Works of the Mind Section of Bon

In our efforts to establish a list of the titles in the Nine Minor Texts on Mind (*Sems smad sde dgu*) we face three challenges. The first is simply to establish a list of candidates for inclusion. The second is to make correspondences among different variations of the titles of the same texts. The third is to reconcile lists of names to some over-arching system of enumeration, such as "the Nine Minor [Texts of the] Mind Section (*Sems smad sde dgu*)."
We will begin by an examination of a list of Minor Texts on Mind found in gShen chen Klu dga's Southern Treasures.

1.1 *gShen chen Klu dga's Southern Treasures*

An account of the hiding of the Bon treasures at the time of King Gri gum btsad po and their discovery by *gShen Klu dga'* (996-1035)¹¹ has been published in *Collection of Rare Bonpo Texts* (Namgyal, 2009). This account, attributed to the Bon scholar *sGa ston Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan*, contains a section on the Southern Treasures.¹² The following extract from this account gives an early description of texts discovered by *gShen chen Klu dga'* (formatting added for visual clarity):

“As for the emergence of the Facets of Mind (*sems phyogs*), Nine Minor Texts on Mind (*Sems smad sde dgu*):

1. *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden (Gab pa dgu skor)*
2. *The Golden Weighty¹³ Scripture (gSer gyi lung non)*
3. *The Lesser Scripture (Lung chung)*
4. *Resting Freely of the Mind (Sems kyi cog bzhag)*
5. *The Cuckoo of Mind-Awareness (Rig pa sems kyi khu byug)*
6. *The Continuity of Awareness (Rig pa rgyun thag)*
7. *The Continuity of Transmission (Lung rgyun thag)*
8. *Resting Loosely (Lhug 'jug)*
9. *View and Meditation in One Page (lta sgom shog gcig ma).¹⁴*

While the names of the first eight texts are readily apparent and need relatively little decoding, it was initially unclear how this list constituted Nine Minor Texts on Mind (*Sems smad sde dgu*). We thank Jean-Luc Achard for unravelling the title of the ninth text.

For further identification of the texts of the Mind Section we turn to an important tantric work within the Bon *Kangyur*, the *gSang ba bsen thub*.

1.2 *The Enumeration of the Texts on Mind in the gSang ba bsen thub*

The *gSang ba bsen thub* is not evident in the versions of the *Kangyur* found in *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*; however, the tantric cycle may be found as Volume 145 in Mongyal Lhasé's edition of the *Kangyur* as cataloged in the *Handlist*, as well as volume 193 of the *Tengyur* as described in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bon Katen Texts*. For convenience we will use a modern edition of the *gSang ba bsen thub* written in *dbu can* script published by the

¹¹ This date is mentioned incidentally in the biography of Blo gros rgyal mtshan by Jean-Luc Achard at <http://www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Azha-Lodro-Gyeltsen/13092>.

¹² Namgyal, 2009, p. 94–102. Martin suggests this text belongs to the late 14th century (*Unearthing Bon Treasures*, 2001), p. 280.

¹³ In rendering the Tibetan word “non” as “Weighty” we attempt to give the dual associations of mental reflection and the ability to weigh down, without the heaviness (pun intended) of terms such as “suppressive” or “oppressive.”

¹⁴ Namgyal, 2009, p. 100: *sems phyogs sems smad sde dgu byung ba la/ gab pa dgu skor/ gser gyi lung non/ lung chung sems kyi cog bzhag /rig pa sems kyi khu byug/ rig pa rgyun thag/ lung rgyun thag /lhug 'jug lta sgom shog gcig ma/*.

Bon Dialectic School (*gSang ba bsen thub*, 2004). In Chapter 29 of the *gSang ba bsen thub*, entitled *Teaching the Branches of Practice*, we find (formatted for visual clarity):

“As for the mirrors of the immutable enlightened body:

- The mirror of methods, activity (*spyod pa*) in the The Single (*rkyang*) and Combined (*sbag*) *Thigle*
 - The mirror of apprehending, The Greater Golden Weighty Scripture
 - The mirror of abiding, apprehending the root, the Minor Scripture
 - The mirror of speech, the playfully resounding (*sgrogs*) Cuckoo
 - The mirror of mind, the state of equality, Resting Freely,
 - The mirror of clarity, prolonging the Continuity of Awareness
 - The mirror of meditation (*sgoms*), sustaining (*skyong*) the Continuity of Transmission
 - The mirror of the phases¹⁵ (*bskal pa*), splicing together the rope of the Continuity of State
 - Resting Loosely, pointing to the insubstantiality of appearances.
- Practice these as the principles (*don*) of the branches of the primordial Shen (*ye gshen*).¹⁶

Note also that this direct quote immediately above classifies the texts referred to as “the nine mirrors” in the 8th Vehicle of the Primordial gShen and not the 9th Vehicle of Dzogchen. Kapstein gives a concise presentation of the Nine Vehicles according to the system of the Southern Treasures of gShen chen kLu dga’ in Kapstein, 2009. His translation indicates that according to the *The Commentary of the Four Clever Men*¹⁷ the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is classified as belonging to the 9th or Highest Vehicle. One of the principle distinguishing features between the 8th and 9th Vehicles is that there is no conceptual activity in the entrance to the 9th Vehicle. Unfortunately, a resolution between the tri-partition of Bon Dzogchen by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen as briefly discussed in the Introduction, and the classification scheme of the Nine Vehicles, is beyond the scope of this article.

¹⁵ The *gSang ba bsen thub* and its commentary use *bskal pa* in a highly technical way. Geshe Chaphur Lhundup explains the *bskal pa bzhi* as birth/generation (*skye*), abiding/sustaining (*gnas*), declining (*jig*), and empty (*stong ba*). These four phases can be on the scale of a single individual life or an entire eon. Compare with the archaic use of *bskal ba* as “bar chod” meaning “interruption” as defined in *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod*, p. 39.

¹⁶ *gSang ba bsen thub*, 2004, page 76: /'gyur ba med pa'i sku yi me long du/ /thabs kyi me long thig le rkyang sbags spyod/ /'dzin pa'i me long gser gyi long non che/ /gnas pa'i me long lung phran rtsa bar zungs/ /gsung gi me long khu byug rol bar sgrogs/ /thugs kyi me long cog bzhag mnyam pa'i ngang / /gsal ba'i me long rig pa'i rgyun thag bsring / /sgom pa'i me long lung gi rgyun thag skyongs/ /bskal pa'i me long sems kyi ngang thag mthud/ /snang la dngos med mdzub tshugs lhug par zhog /ye gshen yan lag don du 'di spyod cig/.

¹⁷ Another name for the *Sems lung gab pa dgu skor gyi 'grel ba rgya cher bshad pa*, *Tengyur* 216-5.

1.3 The Enumeration of the Works on Mind in the *yid bzhin bkod pa'i rgyan*

Significant help in the identification of variant names is given by the *bKod pa'i rgyan*,¹⁸ a commentary to the *gSang ba bsen thub* written by 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1198–1263).¹⁹ A full list of the names of texts that constitute the “nine mirrors” as in the *bKod pa'i rgyan*²⁰ is shown in Part 1 of Appendix B and will not be repeated here. We find in the *bKod pa'i rgyan* a number of useful minor variants of names relative to the other four sources we consider in this Section; however, two variants will be particularly important. First we should note that since the *bKod pa'i rgyan* is a commentary on the *gSang ba bsen thub*, we can be confident that the names in the commentary that refer to the texts of the “nine mirrors” should correspond with the names of the texts of the “nine mirrors” in the root. With this we can obviate two potential sources of confusion. The first is the confirmation of a correspondence of a single text entitled *lung phran* in the *gSang ba bsen thub* with the text entitled *lung non chung* in the *bKod pa'i rgyan*. The meaning of the Tibetan words “*phran*” and “*chung*” is similar; however, as in the case of gShen Chen Klu dGa's discoveries, the phrase *sems phran* is periodically used to refer to an entire family of Smaller (*phran*) [Texts on] Mind. Another potential point of confusion is obviated by the establishment of equivalence between the text entitled *sems kyi ngang thag mthud* and the text entitled *ngang thag*. Given the difficulty of finding even a single legitimate instance of a text by either name, were it not for the mention of these variants in the discussion of the nine mirrors in 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan's commentary, we might be forever wondering whether these two titles reference the same text.

1.4 Description and Enumeration of the Titles of Minor Texts on Mind by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen

Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's two Volumes of *The Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness* contain his masterwork on the theory and practice of Dzogchen. Shardza puts himself to the task of enumerating the *sems sde* literature in the first volume of the *Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness* where he writes:

The nature of the sections of the tantras to be explained ... has three parts: the *Smaller [Texts on] Mind* (*sems phran*), the *Cycles of Propagation*, and the *Cycles of Scriptural Tradition*.²¹

Enumerating the first of these three Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen continues:

¹⁸ *bKod pa'i rgyan*, 2004.

¹⁹ Dates in the biography of Blo gros rgyal mtshan by Jean-Luc Achard at the website <http://www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Azha-Lodro-Gyeltsen/13092>.

²⁰ *bKod pa'i rgyan*, 2004, p. 485.

²¹ *dByings rig mdzod*, vol. 1, p. 46ff: *bshad bya rgyud sde'i rang bzhin/ go rim so so'i nges pa'o/ dang po la gsum stel/ sems phran gyi skor dang / bsgrags pa'i skor dang / bka' brgyud kyi skor ro/ dang po la gsum stel/ grangs nges/ dgos ched/ go rim mo/*.

As for the first, the root is the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* (*gab pa dgu skor*) and the branches are the *Nine Minor [Texts] on Mind* (*sems smad dgu*) or the nine mirrors of minor tantras (*rgyud phran me long dgu*).²²

Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen then goes on to quote the *gSang ba bsen thub* to give his full enumeration of the Nine Mirrors. As we have just quoted the *gSang ba bsen thub* directly in the previous section we will not reiterate Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's version here but only add Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's quotation of the titles to our growing list of variants of titles of the Minor Texts on Mind in Appendix B: Part 1. We will treat Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's discussion of *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* and *The Nine Small Texts on Mind* in detail later in Section 3.3, but for now we only wish to note a few pieces of additional information that will be useful in identifying the texts. First, Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen gives us the number of chapters of several of these texts. *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is noted as having thirty-seven chapters, and this information is added to Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's titles of the texts in Appendix B: Part 1. Second Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen gives us a sensible enumeration of the texts. He identifies the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* as the root text and then goes on to enumerate nine minor texts as synonymous with the Nine Mirrors; however, we can see that sGa ston's list of the Nine Minor Texts on Mind in Section 1.1 doesn't fully reconcile with the Nine Mirrors of the *gSang ba bsen thub* in Section 1.2. Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen warns us that the *Continuity of Bodhicitta* (*Byang chub sems kyi nyag thag*), which the *bKod pa'i rgyan* enabled us to associate with *The Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*),²³ was already lost in his time. Finally, although he includes the mention of *The Single and Combined Thigle* (*Thig le rkyang sbag*) in his quote from the *gSang ba bsen thub*, he never mentions this text again in the entire two volumes of his *Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness*.

1.5 Mind Section Titles from the Lineage of Transmission, the *brGyud rim*

Another helpful text is a description of lineage transmission by Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's disciple and biographer, dBra ston Ngag dbang sKal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, referred to as the "*brgyud rim*" in *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*.²⁴ We quote this text indirectly from *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*. (We have added line-breaks to facilitate grouping the texts.)

bla ma gshen chen klu dgas dngos grub tu rnyed pa'i byang sems gab pa dgu skor la / byang sems gab pa'i gzhung lung gi yi ge dgu pa / yan lag bcu pa'i le tshan / zur rdeg (?) [sic] yan lag lnga pa / mde'u thung yan lag bzhi pa'am sum cu rtsa bdun pa /

²² *Ibid.*, p. 46ff: *dang po la rtsa ba gab pa dgu bskor dang / yan lag sems smad sde dgu 'am rgyud phran me long dgu yod de/*.

²³ See the discussion of Section 1.3.

²⁴ The full title of the text is: *sKu gsum ston pa'i gsung rab bka' 'gyur rin po che'i lung rgyun ji snyed pa phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i bzhugs byang brgyud rim bcas pa dri med shel gyi phreng ba*.

'bru tig gi 'grel ye shes drug cu rtsa gnyis 'bru la bcar te bshad pa / mde'u thung gi yan lag the tshom yang khol du bstan pa / bchings tshad kyi le'u / byang sems gab pa'i gzhung gi sa bcad / mkhas bzhis [illeg. mchan] gab 'grel / [343] [illeg. mchan]

sems phran gyi skor la / gser gyi lung non che chung gnyis dbu 'chad le'u bcas / rig pa khu byug gi rtsa 'grel sa bcad bcas / cog bzhag gi rtsa 'grel sa bcad bcas / rig pa'i rgyun thag gi gzhung 'grel pa sa bcad bcas / lung gi rgyun thig gi rtsa ba / 'grel pa / sems kyi ngang thag gi gzhung 'grel pa sa bcad / snang la dngos med mdzub tshug lhug pa bzhag pa'i le'u bcas.²⁵

With the list of Mind Section texts in the quotation above, we now feel ready to make some adjudication of the titles of the principal works of the Mind Section of Bon, and in particular on what works constitute the Minor Texts on Mind.

1.6 Initial Conclusion: A List of the Principle Early Works on the Mind Section in Bon

We are thankful for Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's identification (see Section 1.4) of the root text of *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* as having thirty-seven chapters. This indicates that the particular root text is *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta* (*Byang sems gab pa dgu skor*) in thirty-seven chapters. This will be more fully explained in Section 2.1.

As for what constitutes the Minor Texts on Mind, the situation is not quite as straightforward. The results of our inventory of titles associated with the Minor Texts on Mind are assembled in Part I of Appendix B. The obvious similarity of titles from among the variants we have gathered has naturally built our confidence. In addition, Blo gros rgyal mtshan's commentary to the *gSang ba bsen thub*, the *bKod pa'i rgyan*, has helped us to gain confidence to find equivalents among the various titles for *The Lesser Golden Weighty Scripture* (*gSer gyi lung non chung*) and *The Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*). In the end we identify the following nine texts as the Nine Mirrors:

1. *The Single and Combined Thigle* (*Thig le rkyang sbag*)
2. *The Greater Golden Weighty Scripture* (*gSer gyi lung non che*)
3. *The Lesser Golden Weighty Scripture* (*gSer gyi lung non chung*)
4. *The Cuckoo of Awareness* (*Rig pa'i khu byug*)
5. *Resting Freely* (*Cog bzhag*)
6. *The Continuity of Awareness* (*Rig pa rgyun thag*)
7. *The Continuity of Transmission* (*Lung thag*)
8. *The Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*)
9. *Resting Loosely* (*Lhug par bzhag*).

²⁵ *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*, p. 438. This corresponds to pp. 342–343 of the *brGyud rim*. Regrettably, in *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* this volume has no number and as a result it was not properly cataloged in the *Handlist*.

We may now finally give full meaning to Karmay's famous footnote in *The Treasury of Good Sayings*.²⁶ Following Tshul khrim rgyal mtshan's enumeration in *A Commentary on the Complete Discernment of the Secret Principles*²⁷ if we subtract the work *The Single and Combined Thigle* and remove, as Karmay did, *The Cuckoo of Awareness* from the list above, then we do indeed get *Seven Smaller Texts on Mind* (*Sems phran sde bdun*).

Alternatively, we can identify a different list of the *Seven Smaller Texts on Mind* (*Sems phran sde bdun*) by simply following third paragraph of the *brGyud rim* as quoted above. Among the list of minor texts we should not forget *View and Meditation in One Page* or that some also include *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* as a minor text on mind. Adding these to the list of nine titles above gives us eleven different titles. As a result we will use *Minor Texts on Mind* to generally refer to any subset of this complete list of eleven titles. We now turn to locate the texts associated with these titles.

2.0 Identifying Editions of Texts Associated with these Titles

We now locate the texts associated with the titles identified in Section 1 as distilled into Appendix B, Part 1. We will review published editions of the *Bon Kangyur*, *Tengyur*, as well as other independent publications.²⁸

2.1 *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden in the Bon Kangyur and Tengyur*

A volume entitled *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden Sprout, Bodhicitta* (*Byang chub sems kyi myu gu gab pa dgu skor*) is described as number 74 (running number 99) in *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*. Six independent texts are identified in this volume and the best candidate for the root text we are seeking is entitled *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta* (*Byang sems gab pa dgu skor*). The associated running entry for this text, numbered 99.2, carefully identifies a list of eighteen "chapter titles", but is unable to relate them to the nine chapters that they anticipate from the *Kangyur* catalogs (*dkar chags*) at the

²⁶ *The Treasury of Good Sayings*, p. 51, n.8.: "They [(the *sems smad sde dgu*)] are the *byang sems gab pa dgu skor* ... then the *khu-byug*, and lastly the seven small texts called *sems-phran sde-bdun* making nine in all."

²⁷ *gSang don rnam 'byed 'grel*, p. 38 (*Tengyur* 227-1 as cataloged in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*). This text also has meaningful descriptions of the names of the texts of the Nine Mirrors. Unfortunately we discovered this text too late to fully integrate its contents in this paper; however, we will use it later to identify *The Single and Combined Thigle*.

²⁸ For those most familiar with the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* of the New Translation Schools, the notion of looking for the title of a text in both the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* may be puzzling. The Introduction in *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur* and the Introduction in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts* provide good context for what constitute the canonical collections of the *Bonpo Kangyur* and *Tengyur* respectively. Probably the most pertinent information is that the collection of texts cataloged in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts* and in the *Handlist* has a number of duplicates with elements of the *Bon Kangyur*.

catalogers' disposal. It is also hard to reconcile the eighteen chapter titles listed for this work in a *Catalog of the Bon Kanjur* to dBra ston's enumeration of titles associated with the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* that we reproduced in Section 1.5.

A volume of the *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Bon Kangyur* entitled *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden: the Sprout of Bodhicitta* (*byang chub sems kyi myu gu gab pa dgu skor*) is identified as Volume 172 in the *Handlist*. An investigation of the natural "chapter headings" of this volume doesn't clearly indicate any text with nine chapters either.

While absent from Volume 172 of *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Bon Kangyur*, the *Bon Tengyur* as described in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts* contains a text entitled *Outline of the Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta: (Byang chub gyi sems gab pa dbu skor gyi dgu'i sa gcod kyi le'u)*.²⁹ This short text describes the contents of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* as thirty-seven branches (*yan lag*) distributed over four sections:

- 1) byang chub sems kyi myu gu gab pa dgu skor (18 branches)
- 2) yan lag bcu ba (10 branches)
- 3) zur rdeg yan lag lnga pa (5 branches)
- 4) gab pa mde'u thung gi yan lag bzhi (4 branches)

These thirty-seven branches correspond well with Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's identification of the thirty-seven "chapters" of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* mentioned in Volume 1 of the *Treasury of Space and Awareness* (See Section 1.4). These four divisions numbered above also correspond with the first four section titles in Volume 172 of *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Bon Kangyur*. We provide the entire table of contents for that volume in Appendix A. Finally, we may now see the correspondence with the titles in the first paragraph of the fragment of the dBra ston's *brGyud rim* presented in Section 1.5. Thus we can say with some confidence that these four texts (or sections or chapters) constitute the root text of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden*. Moreover, we can shed light on the title "zur rdeg" which apparently puzzled the catalogers of *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*. Reading the *Outline of the Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta* we discover that the five branches (*yan lag lnga pa*) are five corners (*zur*) that are staked down (*rdeg*) by the great view (*lta ba chen pos*), hence the title *zur rdeg yan lag lnga pa*.

Another edition of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* may be found in volume 216-2 as described in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*. This edition corresponds exactly to the text with running number 99.2 in *Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*, and it has the same eighteen sections (or chapter) divisions noted in that latter catalog. Unfortunately, time has not permitted a reconciliation of this set of eighteen sections with the four texts and thirty-seven branches named above. There still remains the question: If there are not nine chapters in the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden*, then what is "nine" about the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden*? We will finally resolve this question in Section 3.1.

There are a number of commentaries on the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden*. An extensive commentary known as *The Commentary of Four Sagacious Men*

²⁹ *Tengyur* 216-2.

(*mKhas pa'i bzhi 'grel ba*) or as *The Very Extensive Commentary on the Nine Cycles of the Hidden: Mind and Scripture* is found as 216-5 in the *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*. This commentary is the focus of a paper by Kapstein (Kapstein, 2009) and his article serves as one of the few investigations of the Bon Mind Section literature in the English language. Unfortunately, a broader consideration of the numerous commentaries and supplemental literature of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is beyond the scope of this article.

We now turn to identify the various editions of the Minor Texts on Mind.

2.2 The Minor Texts on Mind in the Bon Kangyur and Tengyur

Although they are hidden behind a single title and entry — *Tengyur* 164-6 *gser gyi lung non che chung* — in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*, seven of the Minor Texts on Mind listed in Section 1.6, together with their commentaries, may be found in the *Tengyur* volume 164. In addition, following a brief colophon at the end of the *Commentary on Resting Freely* (*cog bzhas gi 'grel ba*) is a text that begins with “from the scripture of generalities on meditation” (*spyi sgom pa'i lung las*) and ends with a title “view and meditation [in] one [page]” (*lta sgom cig pa*) and a statement that indicates that this text is from the *terma* system of sGom chen gShen chen klu dga'.³⁰ Here “hiding in plain sight” is an edition of *View and Meditation in One Page* (see Section 1.1). This publication of the minor texts ends on page 501 with a sobering note, echoed by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen, that the *Byang chub sems kyi nyag thag*, which we associate with the minor text entitled *Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*), has been lost.

While the titles of the Minor Texts on Mind listed in Section 1.6 cannot be found in the first two editions of the *Kangyur* as described in *A Catalogue of the Bon Kanjur*, we will apparently find eight of them in volume 172 of *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* as described in the *Handlist*. The six texts found in the *Tengyur* all have counterparts in this edition of the *Bon Kangyur*. The *Cuckoo of Awareness* may also be found here together with an outline (*sa gcod*), and commentary (*'grel*). Most exciting is the fact that we find even the *Continuity of State*, an *Outline*, and a *Commentary* (*Ngang thag gi gzhung 'grel pa sa bcad*) with the title just as we would expect from dBra' ston's *brGyud rim* quoted in Section 1.5, although these texts were indicated as lost by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen as well as by the compilers of the *Tengyur*.

Unfortunately, the edition of the *Continuity of State* found in the *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* does not bear up to careful scrutiny. An independent title page is given for the outline of the text, *Sems kyi ngang thag 'thud*,³¹ however, the brief colophon at the end of the text gives the name of the text as the *Rig pa sems kyi rgyun thag gi sa gcod*. This is not among the variants of the title of the *Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*) that we have found. The core text is entitled the *Ngang thag gzhung*,³² but the colophon gives the

³⁰ *Tengyur* 164, pages 439 -444. Thanks go to to Jean-Luc Achard for alerting us to this text.

³¹ *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Bon Kangyur*, vol. 172, p. 547.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 545.

title as the *Sems lung gi rgyun thag gis rkyus*. So, in fact, we find that the text itself is merely a variant edition of the *Continuity of Transmission of Mind* (*Sems lung gyi rgyun thag*) that appears only a few pages before in the same edition of the *Kangyur*.³³ Similarly, the commentarial text entitled *Commentary on the Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag gis 'grel ba*) is merely a variant edition of the *Lung gyi rgyun thag 'grel* that appears only a few pages before.³⁴ Thus, while *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* indicates that it contains the outline, root text, and commentary of *The Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*), in fact it only presents variant editions of the *The Continuity of Transmission* (*Sems lung gi rgyun thag*) with erroneous titles. While it is unsettling to find such an error in the third edition of a canonical collection, perhaps this inaccuracy justifies to some extent the efforts of this article. This volume of the *Kangyur* does not appear to have an edition of *View and Meditation in One Page*.

2.4 Triten Norbutse Edition of the Minor Texts on Mind

A book entitled *The Cycle of Nine Minor Texts on Mind: Scriptures of the Highest Tradition of Dzogchen* (*Bla med rdzogs pa chen po'i bka' sems smad sde dgu'i skor bzhuks so*)³⁵ has been published by the library of the Bon monastery Triten Norbutse. The introduction of the work expresses the humble goal of producing a convenient and easy to use (*spyod bde*) book, relative to the hard to obtain and bulky volumes of the canonical works. To identify their list of the minor texts on mind the compilers use the "Nine Mirrors" as described in 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan's commentary on the *gSang ba bsen thub* much as we used them in Section 1.3, but no mention is made of sGa ston's list of Minor Works on Mind (Section 1.1). No specific editions of the minor texts on mind that are used to produce the book are mentioned. The compilers apparently discovered, as we did, that the versions of root text (*gzhung*) and commentary (*'grel ba*) of the *Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*)³⁶ in *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* are in fact none other than *The Continuity of Transmission* (*Lung gi rgyun thag*), and as a result they did not reprint those texts. This book does contain an edition of *View and Meditation in One Page*³⁷, but it is included, without so much as a linespace, with the colophon for *Resting Freely* and before the outline of *Continuity of Awareness*. The text here in these pages differs from the Tengyur edition discussed in Section 2.3, so it seems that they were likely working from another edition than that compiled in the Tengyur.

2.5 Identifying the Missing *ngang thag*

In the introduction to *The Cycle of Nine Minor Texts on Mind: Scriptures of the Highest Tradition of Dzogchen* (*Sems smad dgu*, 2005) the compilers indicate

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

³⁵ *Sems smad sde dgu*, 2005.

³⁶ Although they quote the *Kangyur* title as *ngang thag le'u*.

³⁷ *Sems smad sde dgu*, 2005. pp. 140-142.

that they do set themselves to the task of finding a version of the *Ngang thag*, and they look to *gSas mkhar rin po che spyi spungs sgron ma gsal ba'i tantra* where they find the text entitled *Ngang thag bskal pa'i sgron ma*. They leave the reader to ascertain whether this is or is not the missing *Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*).

We could not find the title "*sgron ma gsal ba'i tantra*" using any of the catalogs at our disposal, but at the suggestion of Jean-Luc Achard³⁸ we looked to an Indian reprint of the *Drwa ba nag po'i rgyud skor*.³⁹ The initial text of that bound volume is indeed entitled *gSas 'khar rin po che spyi spung sgron ma gsal ba'i tan tra las ngang thag bskal pa'i sgron ma ston*. We find in the colophon of this first work the title *bsKal pa'i me long sems kyi ngang thag mthud* and in the following pages we find a commentary entitled *sams ngang thag don 'grel*. This edition, together with its archaic spellings, seems to be the edition reprinted in *The Cycle of Nine Minor Texts on Mind: Scriptures of the Highest Tradition of Dzogchen*.⁴⁰

Is this work, together with its commentary, the missing *Continuity of State* (*ngang thag*) indicated as lost by the compilers of the *Bon Tengyur* as well as Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen? The self-reference of this work as the mirror of the phases (*bskal pa'i me long*), echoing the *gSang ba bsen thub* and its commentary, is encouraging. For further evidence we note that, aside from its mention during the enumeration of the Nine Mirrors, the *Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*) is mentioned in 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan's *bKod pa'i rgyan* two times. First there is a direct quote from the *Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*):

bKod pa'i rgyan: Second, as for conduct of wisdom: "Being free from cause to act and object of action, conduct is totally unceasing." As this is stated in the *Ngang thag* [it has] three [parts].⁴¹

This quote is found exactly in the text, *Sems kyi ngang thag mthud*, from the *drwa ba nag po* (the identical passage is underlined):

Ngang thag: "The lion as an exemplar of power: Being free from cause to act and object of action, conduct is totally unceasing. As that conduct is without attachment, it is pure conduct. It is the principle of skillful action that transcends everything."⁴²

Later 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan's *bKod pa'i rgyan* states:

³⁸ Jean-Luc Achard: personal communication.

³⁹ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974.

⁴⁰ *Sems smad dgu*, 2005.

⁴¹ *bKod pa'i rgyan*, etext, p. 219: *gnyis pa shes rab kyi spyod pa la bya rgyu bya yul med pa la spyod pa gar yang ma 'gag te zhes ngang thag las gsung pas na gsum ste/*.

⁴² *Drwa wa nag po* (Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974), p. 3: *seng ge stobs kyi dpe mtshan cing / bya rgyu bya yul myed pa la/ spyod pa gar yang ma 'gags ste/ spyod la ma chags rnam dag spyod/ bya rtsal kun las 'das pa'i don/*.

Through skillful training in the *bardos* of the four phases⁴³ (*bskal pa bzhi*) [and] through the [teachings of the] *Ngang thag* the interfaces of the past and future lives are stitched together.⁴⁴

Indeed, in our text under consideration, the *Sems kyi ngang thag mthud*, training regarding the *bardos* of the four phases is a significant topic. In the absence of further quotations or other evidence it is difficult to make a final judgment regarding this candidate for the *Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*), but everything we have learned about this text supports its identification as an edition of the *Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*) of the Nine Mirrors (See Section 1.2).

2.7 Editions of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* and Minor Texts on Mind, a Summary

A summary of our efforts in identifying editions of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* and Minor Texts on Mind, together with a table of contents for most of the texts, is given in Part 2 of Appendix B. Briefly, for the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* we have editions in both *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* (volume 172) and the *Bon Tengyur* (volume 216-2). For six of the Minor Texts on Mind – *The Greater Golden Weighty Scripture*, *The Lesser Golden Weighty Scripture*, *Resting Freely*, *The Continuity of Awareness*, *The Continuity of Transmission*, and *Resting Loosely* – we have editions in the *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* (volume 172), and in the *Bon Tengyur* (volume 164). In *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* (volume 172), we have an edition of the *Cuckoo of Awareness* and an additional edition of the *Continuity of Transmission* incorrectly labeled as the *Continuity of State*. In the *Bon Tengyur* (volume 164) we have an edition of gShen chen Klu dga's *View and Meditation in One Page*. All of these texts have been reprinted in an edition that was recently published at Triten Norbutse Monastery (*Sems smad sde dgu*, 2005), although *View and Meditation in One Page* is quite hard to find there. We had to look beyond the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* for sources for an edition of the *Continuity of State*; however, we did find a promising candidate for this text in a book entitled *gSas 'khar rin po che spyi spung sgron ma gsal ba'i tan tra las ngang thag bskal pa'i sgron ma ston* (Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974), and a modern edition as well (*Sems smad sde dgu*, 2005). Identifying an edition of the *Single and Combined Thigle* (*thig le rkyan sbag*) has not been straightforward and we will revisit this topic again in Section 3.5 and Appendix C.

Briefly reviewing the sizes of the root texts of this literature may also be useful. *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is approximately 94 manuscript pages (See Appendix A.) *The Greater Weighty Scripture* is comparably sized. The

⁴³ As mentioned before, the *gSang ba bsen thub* and the *bKod pa'i rgyan* use *bskal pa* in an archaic way to mean "bar chod" or interruption or phase. Compare with *bskal ba* in *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod*, p. 39.

⁴⁴ *bKod pa'i rgyan*, etext, p. 219: *bskal pa bzhi'i bar do la rtsal sbyong bas ngang thag gis tshe snga phyi mtshams mthud pa*.

Continuity of State is 30 manuscript pages. The remaining root texts are all relatively small – under 20 pages of manuscript each.

Having established our universe of discourse, we now turn to say something about the subject matter of these texts.

3. The Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta and the Minor Texts on Mind as a System

In this section we now consider the content of the early literature of Bon Mind Section, beginning with the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta*.

3.1 *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta*

Because of its size, influence, and diversity of commentaries, the *Nine Hidden* (*Gab pa dgu*) must be considered the principal work on the Mind Section among gShen chen Klu dga's treasures. There still remains the question: If there are not nine chapters in the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden*, then what is "nine" about the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden*? Fortunately, our question has been anticipated by the authors of the *Outline of the Nine Cycles of the Hidden* (Tengyur 216-1) mentioned in Section 2.1. This short text gives a folk-etymology of the title of *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta*:

It is known as the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta*. Why is that?

In the ultimate sense, it is pure (*byang*) because the nature of the mind is primordially unborn;

It is perfect (*chub*) because it does not die;

It is a mind (*sems*) because it contemplates the non-dual principle.

It is hidden (*gab pa*) because it is difficult to realize and rare to understand.

It has nine cycles (*dgu skor*) because this pure and perfect mind (*byang chub sems*) is shown to be enveloped (*skor*) by nine principles from its beginning to its end.

This is the way to apply its name.⁴⁵

Among the literature associated with *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is a text known by the name *The Nine Letters of Scripture*. In the extensive commentary on the *Nine Hidden* (Tengyur 216-5) this name is also explained:

As for the *Nine Letters of Scripture*: The scripture of the *yung drung* mind is taught by nine principles from its beginning to its end.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Tengyur 216-1, p. 6: byang chub kyi sems gab pa dgu bskor zhes bya ste/ de ci'i phyir zhe na/ don dam par sems kyi rang bzhin ye nas ma skyes pas ni byang / mi 'chi bas ni chub/ gnyis su med pa'i don la sems pas sems so/ / rtogs par dka' zhing rig par dkon pas gab pa/ mgo mjug tu don dgu dgus bskor nas byang chub kyi sems ston pas na dgu bskor ro/ / de ni mtshan gyi gdags lugs so/ / .

⁴⁶ Tengyur 216-5, p. 201 (pdf page 333): /lung gi yi ge dgu dang ldan pa ni/ g.yung drung sems kyi lung dgu skor mgo mjug tu don dgu dgu'i ston pa 'di'o/ / .

These descriptions of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta* indicate that the primary focus of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is the demonstration of *bodhicitta* or, by another name, *g.yung drung* mind. The term *bodhicitta* is used in its manner, characteristic of Mind Section literature, as synonymous with the nature of mind (*sems nyid*). Throughout the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* we will find numerous synonyms expressing different facets of *bodhicitta*. This point is also discussed in Kapstein's article on *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden*.⁴⁷ In fact, for reasons that will become clearer in Section 3.2 below, a significant portion of the root text of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is devoted to contrasting different synonyms of *bodhicitta* with facets of ordinary conceptual mind.

So what are the above-mentioned nine principles by which *bodhicitta* is taught? Given the diversity of systems of enumeration of principles, paths, *thigle*, branches, sections, systems and so forth as given in the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* and its commentaries, it is hard to be absolutely certain; however, we were able to determine only one passage which enumerates *exactly* nine principles (*don*) in the *Extensive Commentary on the Nine Cycles of the Hidden*. Quoting from that commentary:

Again, with regard to that, the condensed meaning is taught by nine principles:

It is taught as space [that is like an] unmoving ocean.

It is taught as primordial wisdom [that is like] an immutable fish.

It is taught as a condition that is free of movement or delusion.

It is taught as a dormancy that equalizes two extremes.

It is taught as a conclusion that is latent.

It is taught as an example that epitomizes the single *thigle*.

It is taught as a [pair of] metaphor and meaning regarding the non-duality of space and primordial wisdom.

It is taught as obtaining the result of the non-dual.

Ninthly, it is taught as the *bodhicitta* of the primordial itself.⁴⁸

We now wish to examine the teachings of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* in a broader context of practice.

3.2 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan on the Nine Cycles of the Hidden and the Minor Texts on Mind as a System

One of the most interesting questions we wish to understand is the relationship between the practice of these Mind Section works and the

⁴⁷ Kapstein, 2009, p. 109.

⁴⁸ *Sems lung gab pa dgu skor gyi 'grel ba rgya cher bshad pa in* (Byang sems gab pa dgu skor, etext), p. 367: *de la yang bsdu pa'i don dgu yis bstan te/ g.yo ba med pa'i rgya mtsho dbyings su bstan pa dang / 'gyur ba med pa'i nya ye shes su bstan pa dang / g.yo zhing 'khrul ba med pa'i rkyen bstan pa dang / mtha' gnyis mnyam pa'i bag la nyal ba bstan pa dang / bag la nyal pa'i mjug sdud bstan pa dang / thig le gcig la 'dus pa'i dpe bstan pa dang / dbyings dang ye shes gnyis su med pa'i dpe don bstan pa dang / gnyis med kyi 'bras bu thob par bstan pa dang / ye nyid kyi byang chub sems bstan pa dang dgu'o/.*

tantric practices that apparently served as their foundation. In his commentary on the *gSang ba bsen thub* 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtsan presents the Nine Mirrors (see Section 1.2) as working integrally with generation and completion stage practices.

What is the cycle of the nine *thigle*? As for the manner in which what is without distinctions (*mtshan ma med*) is discovered through [practices that use] distinctions (*mtshan ma*): It is through each of the nine cycles of principles (*don*) of three channels (*rtsa*), the three winds (*rlung*), and the three *thigle* (*thig le*) together with the nine cycles of the principles (*don*) of the Nine Mirrors ...⁴⁹

The three channels are surely the left, right and central (*dbu ma*) channels. In other words, they are the three principle channels of the subtle body. A broader reading of this commentary indicates that the three winds in this context refers to the three intensities of force used in practicing with the winds: gentle (*'jam rlung*), neutral (*ma ning*), or rough (*rtsub rlung*). The three *thigle* are associated with the wheels (*'khor lo*) of the subtle body: the white (associated with the crown wheel), the red (associated with the navel wheel) and the blue (associated with the heart wheel). In brief, to realize “that which is without distinction” the completion stage practices of channels, winds, and *thigle* are performed in conjunction with the Nine Mirrors that he also seems to consider equivalent to Nine Minor [Texts on] Mind (*sems smad dgu*).⁵⁰

'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan further nuances the uses of the Nine Mirrors a few pages later in his commentary, the *bKod pa'i rgyan*:

As for the method of practicing the principle (*don*) of bliss (*bde ba*): It is the union of father and mother, bliss and emptiness. As for the method: it is the Magical Display (*sgyu 'phrul*)⁵¹; through the generation stage of the peaceful and wrathful [deities] and the completion stage of the *thigles* one [obtains] the primordial Buddhahood that is the self-liberated effortless essence of *bodhicitta*.

The branches are the mirrors:

- the supreme one which clarifies the mind is the mirror of the enlightened body, namely (*ste*) The Single and Combined Thigle (*Thig le rkyang sbag*) which reveals the immutable principle of the the nature of mind (*sems nyid*); it occurs [similarly] in the *sGron ma* or in the present [text];

⁴⁹ *bKod pa'i rgyan*, 2004, p. 482: *gang yin na thig le dgu skor te mtshan mas mtshan med btsal ba ni rtsa gsum rlung gsum thig le gsum dang rnam me lo nga dgu dang bcas pa rnam don dgu dgu yis ...[bskor nas snod med la gsang zhing snod ldan la ston pas gsang ba de lam gzhan las 'phags pas mchog dang]...*

⁵⁰ *bKod pa'i rgyan*, 2004, p. 104: *cha lag me long dgu bskor ni sems smad dgu ste/ thabs kyi me long thig le rkyang sbrag spyod dol ...*

⁵¹ Presumably this is the set of practices given in the Chapter 9: the Magical Display—Secret Conduct (*sgyu 'phrul gsang spyod kyi le'u*) from the root tantra of the *gSang ba bsen thub*. This chapter occupies pp. 29–33 of *gSang ba bsen thub*, 2004.

- the apprehension (*'dzin*) of the [nature of] mind is the Greater Weighty Scripture (*Lung non che ba*) and the abiding in the recognized (*zin*) mind is the Lesser Weighty Scripture (*Lung non chung ba*);
- the mirror of speech, which generates inspiration and faith is the Cuckoo (*Khu byug*);
- the mirror of the mind, is the Resting Freely (*Cog bzhag*);
- the one which clarifies the principles of equality is the Continuity of Awareness (*Rig pa rgyun thag*);
- the one which prolongs clarity, without meditation and without distraction, is the Continuity of Transmission (*Lung rgyun thag*);
- the one through which one trains skillfully during the *bardo* of the four phases (*bskal pa*) is the Continuity of State (*Ngang thag*) and through that [training] the demarcation between past and future births is joined (*mthud*);
- the ultimate meaning of those [past and future births] and their resolution (*la zlo bas*) is Resting Loosely (*lhug par zhog*) directly pointing [to appearances as lacking substantial reality].⁵²

Through these, the Nine *Thigles* are revealed as the root-teachings of the volume (*mchong*).⁵³

In these two quotes 'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan describes a system of practice in which the practices of these Mind Section texts are highly integrated into a system of practice grounded in the tantric practices of the

⁵² Jean-Luc Achard suggests an alternative translation of the portions associated with the last two mirrors:

- the one through which one trains skillfully during the Bardo of the four Ages, is the *Ngang thag*;
- the demarcation between past and future births, as well as their ultimate meaning and their transcendence is directly pointed as being "the *Lhug-pa*."

We translated as we did because of the manner in which the more extensive titles of the texts associated with the Nine Mirrors (See Appendix B: Part I) are cleverly woven into the text. Thus we associate the phrase "*tshe snga phyi mtshams mthud pa*" with *The Continuity of State* and we complete "*mdzub tshugs lhug par zhog*" with "[*snang la dngos med*] *mdzub tshug lhug par bzhag*."

⁵³ *bKod pa'i rgyan*, 2004, pp. 484–485: *bde ba'i don nyams su len pa'i tshul ni bde stong yab yum gnyis med snyoms par 'jug ste/ tshul ni sgyu 'phrul te zhi khro'i bskyed rim dang thig le'i rdzogs rim kyi byang chub sems kyi ngo bo 'bad med rang grol du ye sangs rgyas pa'ol / de'i yan lag ni me long ste sems nyid gsal bar byed pa'i mchog la sku yi me long ste sems nyid mi 'gyur ba'i don ston pa thig le rkyang sbag ste sgron mar 'byung ba'am 'di nyid do / / sems 'dzin pa lung non che ba dang sems bzung ba gnas par byed pa lung non chung ba dang / spro zhing dang ba bskyed pa la gsung gi me long khu byug dang / thugs kyi me long cog bzhag gis mnyam pa'i don gsal bar byed pas rig pa rgyun thag dang / gsal ba la bsgom med yengs med du goms par byed pas lung rgyun thag dang / bskal pa bzhi'i bar do la rtsal sbyong bas ngang thag gis tshe snga phyi mtshams mthud pa dang de'i don mthar thug cing la zlo bas mdzub tshugs lhug par zhog ces bya'ol / des thig le dgu pa dngos pa'i mchong gi rtsa sdom du bstan pa'ol /.*

generation and completion stages. We will learn more of the practical application of this immediately below.

3.3 *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden in Contemporary Geshe Training at sMan ri Monastery*

Geshe Chaphur Lhundrup, a recent graduate of the Geshe degree program at sMan ri Monastery in Dolanji, India, was kind enough to share his experiences with training in the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* during his Geshe program. Questioned about the role of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* in his training, the Geshe brought out a text entitled *gSang don rnam 'byed 'phrul gyi lde mig*.⁵⁴ This text by mNyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan is one of a number of texts memorized in the Geshe training. This particular text serves as the outline of the key topics of the Secret Principles (*gsang don*). The first few pages of this text describe the root practice of the assembled deities (*spyi spungs*) and its branches. The root is based on the *gSang ba bsen thub*. In this text are enumerated three branches: the Six Principles (*don drug*), the [Nine] Mirrors, and the two points. Among the Six Principles our text, *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden*, is associated with the principle of meditation. The [nine] mirrors are then auxiliaries (*cha lag*). The particular texts associated with the Nine Mirrors follows the *gSang ba bsen thub* as quoted in Section 1.2 with the minor exception that the title of the mirror of method is given as simply *Single and Combined* (*rKyang sbrag*) rather than *The Single and Combined Thigle* (*Thig le rkyang sbag*), as we saw it earlier in this paper.

In practice, our Geshe indicates that the emphasis is on the tantric practices of the *gSang ba bsen thub* and these practices are augmented by meditation on the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden*. As the Nine Mirrors were merely auxiliaries, they received relatively little attention. In brief, it appears that the contemporary system of training at sMan ri monastery follows the general framework of practice described in the *gSang ba bsen thub* and its commentary the *bKod pa'i rgyan*.

3.4 *Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen on the Nine Cycles of the Hidden and the Minor Texts on Mind as an Integral System*

The final source we will use to understand how *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden* and the *Minor Texts on Mind* function in an integral system of practice is the works of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen. In volume 1 of *The Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness* Shardza discusses these texts, their enumeration, value (*dgos ched*), and sequence of practice (*go rim*). His comments on the sequence of practice are translated and discussed below:

Third, as for the sequence of practice: Through the *Cuckoo* [of *Awareness*] inspiration is generated. Through the *Greater Weighty Scripture* the [nature of] mind is recognized. Through the *Lesser*

⁵⁴ *'Phrul gyi lde mig*, sMan ri.

[*Weighty Scripture*] that very recognition is made firm. These are the three branches of the preliminaries.

Through the root, *The Nine Cycles of the Hidden*, the principle (*don*) of the distinction between mind and primordial wisdom (*ye shes*) [is understood]. Through *Resting Freely* confidence in the immutable is generated. Through the two *Continuities [of Awareness and Transmission]* one cultivates familiarity [with the nature of mind], and through these one [engages in] the three branches of the real basic [practice]. Through the quintessential instruction on [*Resting Freely*] one cultivates habituation [with the nature of mind] without engaging in effort, and through that one becomes allied with the three branches of the basic (*gzhi*) [practice].⁵⁵

A review of the contents of the Minor Texts on Mind enables us to slightly elaborate Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's descriptions: First, enthusiasm for practice is cultivated in the student through methods such as the twenty-one examples of generating hope and inspiration in the *Cuckoo of Awareness*. The student is then guided through a series of nine analytical meditations in the *Greater Weighty Scripture* aimed at enabling the student to analytically investigate, and eventually to recognize, the nature of his mind. This recognition of the nature of mind is stabilized by the *Lesser Weighty Scripture*.

Having recognized the nature of mind the student must gain facility in discriminating between everyday conceptual thought and primordial wisdom. To demonstrate the particular ability of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* to make distinctions between conceptual thought and primordial wisdom Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen quotes that text as follows:

Through the miraculous key of primordial wisdom (*ye shes*)
The bright green (*sngon po*) weed of delusion (*gti mug*) is separated
[out] (*dbye*).⁵⁶

In the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden*, this formula is repeated with dozens of various expressions of primordial wisdom paired with dozens of various expressions of conceptual thought.

The *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* continues to make its point through another poetic formula. One example of the formula is below:

The angry mind is like a demon (*bdud*).
The mind of loving kindness gives [it] a varnish (*rtsi*).
Nevertheless, that makes "nectar" (*bdud rtsi*).

⁵⁵ *dByings rig mdzod*, vol. 1, p. 48ff.: *gsum pa go rim ni khu byug gis spro ba bskyed/ lung non che bas sems bzung / chung ngus zin pa de nyid brtan par byed de sngon du 'gro ba'i yan lag gsum/ rtsa ba gab pa dgu bskor gyis sems dang ye shes phyed pa'i don la/ cog gzhas gis 'gyur med kyi gdengs bskyed/ rgyun thag gnyis kyis goms pa bskyed pas dngos gzhi 'gro ba'i yan lag gsum/ man ngag lhug pas goms pa bskyed pa la rtsol ba 'jug pa med pas gzhi'i yan lag gsum gyi grogs su 'gro ba'ol.*

⁵⁶ *dByings rig mdzod*, vol. 1, page 487: *ye shes 'phrul gyi lde mig gis gti mug tha ram sngon po dbye/.*

Equalizing the non-dual loving kindness and anger, [and]
 Sprinkling it with the dew of bodhicitta,
 Likewise, that makes “sprinkled dew.”⁵⁷

This formula continues with substitutions of each of the five mental afflictions, and over twenty other types of conceptual mind including analytical mind (*dpyod pa'i blo*), deluded mind (*'khrul pa'i blo*), clairvoyant mind (*mngon shes pa'i blo*) and so forth.⁵⁸

After gaining stability in discriminating between conceptual mind and the nature of mind, the student proceeds with the instruction of *Resting Freely*. In marked contrast to the directed investigations of the *Greater Weighty Scriptures*, *Resting Freely* guides the student on the manner of resting in that state using a series of terse quintessential instructions on topics such as gazes (*blta stangs*) and principles of the understanding (*shes don*). The emphasis throughout is on non-effort and resting, rather than willful effort. Through the instructions of the *Continuities of Awareness and The Continuity of Transmission* the student sustains familiarity with the nature of mind. Finally, in *Resting Loosely*, a teaching is given that is free from explanation (*shad du myed par bstan pa*) and the principle of non-meditation is demonstrated (*sgom du med pa'i don stan pa*).

3.5 Identifying the Thig le rkyang sbag

In the same bound volume in which we found *The Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*) we find a text with the title *Thig le dbyings ('chad) bsdus pa*.⁵⁹ In the same handwriting, in the pages that immediately follow appears a commentary entitled *Thig le dbyings kyi ti ga*.⁶⁰ In Appendix C we argue that this two are our best candidates for the *The Single and Combined Thigle* (*Thig le rkyang bag*) and its commentary. Our most important argument in Appendix C is based on a brief discussion of the Nine Mirrors in the *Commentary on Complete Discernment of the Secret Principles* (*gSang don rnam 'byed 'grel, Tengyur 227-1*)

⁵⁷ *Gab pa dgu skor*, e-text, p. 6ff.: */zhe sdang blo ni bdud 'dra la/ /byams pa'i sems ni rtsi 'dra gtong //bdud rtsi zhes kyang de la bya/ /byams sdang gnyis med mnyam pa la/ /byang chub sems kyi zil par thigs/ /zil thigs zhes kyang de la bya/*.

⁵⁸ This approach would be completely incomprehensible to the author had he not been exposed to a somewhat similar formula by the Karma Kagyu Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen master Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso (mKhan po Tshul khriṃs rgya mtsho). The Khenpo would have his students recite a formula that went, for example: “Anger is perfectly pure and therefore feelings are perfectly pure. Feelings are perfectly pure and therefore anger is perfectly pure. Thus anger, perfectly pure, and feelings, perfectly pure, are not dual, cannot be made dual, are not separate and are not different” (*zhe sdang rnam par dag pas/ tshor ba rnam par dag pa/ tshor ba rnam par dag pas/ zhen sdang rnam par dag pa ste/ de ltar na zhe sdang rnam par dag pa dang/ tshor ba rnam par dag pa 'di la gnyis su med de gnyis su byar med so so ma yin ta mi dad do/*). There were 110 different states of mind and states of realization that could be substituted in the formula and the resulting formulas would be repeated by some students for thousands of recitations. In this apparently childish exercise there was a surprisingly profound and lasting effect.

⁵⁹ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974, pp. 78–95.

⁶⁰ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974, pp. 97–138.

by Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan.⁶¹ In this the [*Thig le*] *dbyings 'chad* appears to be given as a variant title of the [*Thig le*] *rkyang sbag*.⁶² Moreover, the essential teaching of *The Single and Combined Thigle* (*Thig le rkyang sbag*) is described as the process of spreading out from the *Single Thigle* (*Thig le nyag gcig*) (corresponding to *rkyang*) to forty-five *thigle* that are associated with the peaceful deities of the *maṇḍala*, and then gathering this all back (corresponding to *sbag* or *sbrag*) into the *Single Thigle*. As this process of emanation and gathering of the forty-five deities is common to many practices associated with the *Maṇḍala of Peaceful and Wrathful deities* in Bon, we may never be able to conclusively prove that we have identified the exact text of *The Single and Combined Thigle*; however, we do believe that this is a viable candidate for that text. Equally important for us, with Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan's brief description of the practice of *The Single and Combined Thigle*, our Faustian anxiety regarding the existence of a lost text with unknown secret teachings has been mollified.

4. Summary and Conclusions

The objectives of this paper have been to clearly identify the titles of these texts that would, over time, constitute the early literature of the Mind Section of Bon, to identify the various editions in which they are available, and to begin to understand how they work together with other tantric elements to form a holistic system of training. Our approach has been to "assume nothing," and that approach has served us well. Our most trusted resource for Bon literature, *A Handbook for the Bon Kanjur*, was hampered by missing texts in the editions that it cataloged. *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts* was found to incompletely catalog texts that it did have at its disposal — cataloging only one of *The Minor Texts on Mind* when the edition it was cataloging actually contained six. Even our own *Handlist* failed us when it was posed with the modest challenge of cataloging an unnumbered volume.

The canon itself proved less than fully reliable. While *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur* indicates that it contains the outline, root text, and commentary of *The Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*), in fact it only presented variant editions of the *The Continuity of Transmission* (*Sems lung gi rgyun thag*) with the wrong titles.

Although we had some good reasons to doubt it,⁶³ in the end a small book, *The Cycle of Nine Minor Texts on Mind: Scriptures of the Highest Tradition of Dzogchen* (*Bla med rdzogs pa chen po'i bka' sems smad sde dgu'i skor*)⁶⁴ published with the modest ambition of creating a convenient and easy to use edition, proved to be our best single source of the literature of the Minor

⁶¹ Geshe Chaphur Lhundup suggests that this is a recent scholar at g.Yung drung gling monastery in Tibet, and that Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan was one of the teachers of the contemporary Bon scholar Yongs 'dzin bsTan 'dzin rnam dag (personal communication).

⁶² Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan deletes "*thig le*" from each of these titles.

⁶³ For examples see Achard, 2010.

⁶⁴ *Sems smad dgu*, 2005.

Texts on Mind. From our current perspective, that work has three deficiencies. The first is its failure, which we share, to provide a root text of *The Single and Combined Thigle (Thig le rkyang sbag)*. The second is the book's lack of clarity regarding the relevance of the *Commentary on the Space of the Thigle (Thig le dbyings kyi ti ka)* to the Nine Minor Texts on Mind. The final pervasive deficiency is that the precise sources of the texts that it assembles are unnamed and the criteria for the selection of these particular editions is not at all clear.

While we cannot claim to have discovered entirely new manuscripts or editions of any of the texts we consider, we have boosted confidence in the prior discovery of a candidate text for *The Continuity of State (Ngang thag)* that has long been thought lost. Altogether, we have identified and located all of sGa ston's Nine Minor Texts (Section 1.1)⁶⁵ and all but one of the *gSang ba bsen thub's* Nine Mirrors.⁶⁶ The failure to produce a compelling candidate for the "missing mirror," *The Single and Combined Thigle (Thig le rkyang sbag)*, does give a sense of a missing piece of a jigsaw puzzle. We just can't find a piece that fits the right spot; however, in Appendix C we identify texts that cover much the same semantic ground as *The Single and Combined Thigle*, and as a result we are confident we can at least cover the spot in the jigsaw puzzle left otherwise vacant by the missing piece.

In the process of writing this article we have come to question the correspondence between the *Nine Minor Texts on Mind* and the Nine Mirrors that 'A zha blo gros rgyal mtshan (Section 3.2), Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (Section 1.4), and Tshul khriims blo gros rgyal mtshan (Appendix C) all seem to take for granted. Specifically, we do not find *View and Meditation (lta sgom shog cig ma)* among the Nine Mirrors and we do not find either *The Single and Combined Thigle (thig le rkyang sbag)* or *The Continuity of State (ngang thag)* among sGa ston's list of Nine Minor Texts on Mind (Section 1.1).

Unfortunately the labors entailed in achieving the first two objectives of this article have left us with little time or printed space to address the third. Nevertheless, we hope to have shed some light on the content of these texts and contextualized their role in practice. In particular we have observed two ways in which this early Mind Section literature has been used. The first is based on the tantric work of the *gSang ba bsen thub* and its commentary the *bKod pa'i rgyan*. In this the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is used as a principal text for meditation at the end of the culmination of the completion stage practices, and the Minor Texts on Mind are used as auxiliaries. This approach is continued today in the Geshe training program of sMan ri monastery in Dolanji, India.

The second approach is as described by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen. In this approach the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* is used integrally with the other Minor Texts on Mind in a manner that describes a Dzogchen practice that is less tightly interwoven with a particular tantric cycle.

⁶⁵ With thanks to Jean-Luc Achard for help in identifying *View and Meditation in One Page (lta sgom shog gcig ma)*.

⁶⁶ With thanks also to Jean-Luc Achard for pointing us to the bound volume of the *drwa ba nag po*. Sang rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974. Jean-Luc Achard in turn directs all thanks to Slob dpon bsTan 'dzin nam dag who first pointed out this fact to Jean-Luc.

In this article we believe we have increased our understanding of this literature beyond Samten Karmay's footnote in *The Treasury of Good Sayings*, but our work has many shortcomings as well. Nevertheless, we are excited that as we have expanded the bounds of our understanding of this literature, an exciting frontier of research directions stands before us. These will be detailed in the section below.

5. Shortcomings of this Article and Directions for Future Research

This article has a number of significant shortcomings:

- The evolving relationship in Bon between the classification scheme of the Nine Vehicles of the Southern Treasures and the classification scheme of the Three Sections of Dzogchen deserves a more thorough investigation than we have been able to provide.
- We believe strongly that one can never get a real understanding of a Tibetan soteriological system until one thoroughly understands the line of human transmission through which we come to know of the system; however, we have not addressed this issue at all in this article. The best we can do at this point is simply to point to Shardza's description of the lineage of these teachings in *The Treasury of Good Sayings*.⁶⁷

In addition to addressing the shortcomings, we see a number of promising avenues for future research:

- Having identified a number of variant editions for all but a couple of the texts we are well poised to create a varorium edition, if not critical edition, of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* and *Nine Minor Texts on Mind*.
- With the existence of critical editions of these texts we will be well situated to translate them.
- Finally we are also well situated to make comparisons of the *Cycles of the Nine Hidden* and *Nine Minor Texts on Mind* with early works of the Nyingma literature from the Mind Section.

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Geshe Chaphur Lhundup, a recent graduate of Geshe training at Menri (sMan ri) Monastery in Dolanji, patiently read and explained the *Greater Weighty Scripture* with this author and also shared his first-hand experience with the literature of the *Nine Cycles of the Hidden* and *Nine Mirrors* that he gained during his Geshe training at Menri. While only a few "personal communications" are formally noted in the paper, extraordinary thanks go to Jean-Luc Achard for his innumerable helpful references, comments, and suggestions that pervasively improved both the nature and content of this

⁶⁷ Karmay 1972, pp. 57ff.

article. Dan Martin read an early draft of this article very thoroughly and kindly pointed out forty-nine corrections. Jacob Dalton read the article equally carefully, but with very different sensibilities, and requested that I clarify the paper in over two-dozen places. Lisa Brughera read three drafts carefully and helped to identify many inconsistencies with regard to titles, terminology, section numbering, language, as well as aberrant juxtapositions of titles from the Kangyur and Tengyur. Using a newly developed optical-character recognition system for Tibetan, Zach Rowinski was able to recognize computer-printed editions of a number of the texts used as references in this article. Kevin O'Neill edited this computer output and manually input other texts. Kevin deserves special credit and thanks for his ability to decrypt even the most concentrated *dbu med* script. Access to the resulting etext editions was invaluable in many ways – such as locating quotations from the *The Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*).



Appendix A: Table of Contents of Bon Kangyur Volume 172

Table of Contents of Volume 172 of *Mongyal Lhasé's Edition of the Kangyur*

gab pa dgu skor

ka/ byang chub sems kyi myu gu gab pa dgu skor/ 5 – 50

kha/ yan lag bcu ba/ 51—70

ga/ zur rdeg yan lag lnga pa/ 71—86

nga/ gab pa mde'u thung gi yan lag bzhi/ 87—94

[supplementary texts to the Nine Cycles of the Hidden Bodhicitta]

ca/ 'bru tig gis 'grel ba/ 95—130

cha/ sems gab pa dgu skor/ 131 --158

ja/ byang chub kyi sems gab pa dgu skor gyis nang nas bcings tshad gyis le'u/
159—224

[*sems phran* These works are cataloged in more detail in detail in Appendix B, Part 2]

nya/ gser gyi lung non che ba/ 225 - 246

ta/ man ngag gser gyis lung non/ 247 – 322

tha/ lung non chung ba/ 323 – 340

da/ sems phran rigs pa khu byug gi sa bcad/ 341 -348

na/ rigs pa khu byug gis gzhung/ 349 - 364

pa/ rig pa khu byug gis 'grel 365 – 474

pha/ cog bzhags gis sa gcod/ 475 - 502

ba/ rgyun thag gzhung sa gcod dang 'grel ba/ 503- 536

ma/ sems lung gis rgyun thag/ 537 – 540

tsa/ lung gi rgyun thag gis 'grel ba/ 541- 550

tsha/ sems kyis ngang thag 'thud kyi sa gcod/ 551 – 558 [mislabelled]

dza/ ngang thag gis gzhung/ 559 – 560 [mislabelled]

wa/ ngang thag gis 'grel ba/ 561 – 570 [mislabelled]

zha/ snang la dngos med 'dzugs tshugs lhug par bzhag pa'i le'u/ 571 - 584

**Appendix B, Part 1:
A Comparison of Titles of the Nine Mirrors**

Number/English	sGa ston's gter gyi kha byang	gSang ba bsen thub de kho na nyid nges pa'i rgyud, p. 76	Blo gros rgyal mtshan's commentary to the bSen thub p. 485	Shardza's dByings rig mdzod vol. 1	brGyud rim
1 The Single and Combined <i>Thigle</i>	sngags nang la zhi ba yongs rdzogs/ Thig le chad	Thig le rkyang sbags	Thig le rkyang sbag	Thig le rkyang sbag	
2 The Greater Weighty Golden Scripture	gSer gyi lung non	gSer gyi lung non che	Lung non che ba	gSer gyi lung non che ba 13 chapters	gSer gyi lung non che chung gnyis dbu 'chad le'u bcas
3 The Lesser Weighty Golden Scripture	Lung chung	Lung phran	Lung non chung ba	Lung non chung	gSer gyi lung non che chung gnyis dbu 'chad le'u bcas/
4 The Cuckoo of Awareness	Rig pa sems kyi khu byug	Khu byug	Khu byug	Khu byug 9 chapters	Rig pa khu byug gi rtsa 'grel sa bcad bcas/
5 Resting Freely	Sems kyi cog bzhag	Cog bzhag	Cog bzhag	Sems nyid cog bzhag 3 chapters	Cog bzhag gi rtsa 'grel sa bcad bcas/
6 The Continuity of Awareness	Rig pa rgyun thag	rGyun thag	Rig pa rgyun thag	Rig pa'i rgyun thag 9 chapters	Rig pa'i rgyun thag gi gzhung 'grel pa sa bcad bcas /
7 The Continuity Of Transmission	Lung gyun thag	Lung gi rgyun thag	Lung rgyun thag	Lung gi rgyun thag 9 chapters	Lung gi rgyun thig gi rtsa ba/'grel pa/
8 The Continuity of State		Sems kyi ngang thag thud	Ngang thag	Sems kyi nyag thag	Sems kyi ngang thag gi gzhung 'grel pa sa bcad /
9 Resting Loosely	Lhug 'jug	sNang la dngos med mdzub tshugs lhug par bzhag pa'i le'u	mDzub tshugs lhug par zhog	Man ngag lhug pa 8 chapters	nang la dngos med mDzub tshug lhug pa bzhag pa'i le'u bcas/

Appendix B, Part 2: Editions of Eight of the Nine Mirrors

Number/ English	Kangyur Volume 172	Tengyur Volume 164	Sems smad sde dgu Khri brtan nor bu rtse
2 The Greater Weighty Golden Scripture	gSer gyi lung non che ba 221–242 gSer gyi lung non 243–318	gSer gyi lung non che 315–334 gSer gyi lung non 335–398	gSer gyi lung non che ba 1–51 [gSer gyi lung non 11–51]
3 The Lesser Weighty Golden Scripture	Lung non chung ba 319–336	man ngag 'di gSer gyi lung non chung 399–415	gSer gyi lung non chung ba 52–60
4 The Cuckoo of Awareness	Sems phran rig pa khu byug gi sa bcad 337–344 Rig pa khu byug gi gzhung 345–360 rig pa khu gyug gi 'grel 361–470		Rig pa khu byug gi sa gcod 61–63 Rig pa khu byug gi gzhung 64–70 Rig pa khu byug gi 'grel ba 71–127
5 Resting Freely	Cog gzhas gi sa gcod 471–474 Cog bzhag gis gzhung 474–476 Cog bzhag gi 'grel ba 476–498	Cog gzhas gi sa gcod 415–417 Cog bzhag ma'i dpe rkyus 417–419 Cog bzhag gi 'grel ba 419–444	Cog bzhag gi sa gcod 128 Cog bzhag gi gzhung 129 Cog bzhag gi 'grel ba 130–140
6 The Continuity of Awareness	rGyun thag gis sa gcod dkyus 499–506 Byang chub sems rig pa rgyun thag gi dpe rkyus 506–509 Rig pa sems kyis rgyun thag gis 'grel pa 509– 532	rGyun thag gi sa gcod 469–473 Byang chub sems rig pa rgyun thag gi dpe rkyus 473–478 rRg pa sems rgyun thag gi 'grel ba 479–501	rgyun thag gi sa gcod 143–145 rGyun thag gi gzhung 145–147 Rig pa sems kyis rgyun thag gi 'grel ba 147–160
7 The Continuity Of Transmission	Sems lung gi rgyun thag 533–536 Lung gi rgyun thag 'grel ba 537–546 Sems lung gi rgyun thag gis rkyus 555–556 Byang chub sems lung gi rgyun thag gis dkyus las bkrol 557–566	Sems lung gi gyun thag gi rkyus 457–459 Byang chub sems lung gi gyun thag gi rkyus 459–468	Sems lung gi rgyun thag 161–162/ Lung gi rgyun thag 'grel ba 163–167/ 459–468
8 The Continuity of State	Sems kyi ngang thag 'thud kyi sa gcod 547– 554 Ngang thag gis gzhung 555–556 Ngang thag gis 'grel ba 557–566 all of these are mislabeled. They are properly associated with the Lung gi rgyun thag immediately above	Byang chub sems kyi nyag thag is noted as lost in the colophon on page 501	Ngang thag bskal pa'I sgron ma 175–195
9 Resting Loosely	sNang la dngos med mdzub tshugs lhug par bzhag pa'i le'u 567–580	Man ngag lhug pa'I rkyus tshig 445–446 mDzub tshugs 446 – 454 ... 454–456	sNang la dngos med mdzub tshugs lhug par bzhag pa'i le'u 168–174

Appendix C: Identifying the *Thig le rkyang sbag*

(This appendix presumes the rest of this article, particularly Section 3, as context.)

Despite our best efforts we have been unable to identify an edition of the first of the Nine Mirrors, *The Single and Combined Thigle* (*Thig le rkyang sbag*). The purpose of this appendix is to understand as best as we can what is the content of the *The Single and Combined Thigle*. This will help us in two ways. It will help us to understand “what we are missing,” and it will establish clear criteria by which we may evaluate future candidates for editions of this text. To begin with, we are perhaps overdue to consider the meaning of “*sbag*.” From an examination of other usages in the *gSang ba bsen thub* and its commentary, “*sbag*” seems to be an archaic variant of “*sbrags*”, meaning combined. Thus, our translation of *Thig le rkyang sbag* as *The Single and Combined Thigle*.

In the same bound volume in which we found *The Continuity of State* (*Ngang thag*) we find a text with the title *Thig le dbyings bsdus pa* and in the colophon: *gSas mkhar rin po che'i spyi spungs/ thig le dbyings kyi gsang thus*.⁶⁸ This text appears to be an abbreviated description of the manifestation of the *maṇḍala* of peaceful deities and we can find a corresponding abbreviated description of the *maṇḍala* of wrathful deities in Tengyur 114-8.⁶⁹ In the pages of the *Drwa ba nag po* that immediately follow, and in the same handwriting, there is a text with the colophon that states that it explains (i.e. it is a commentary on) the root text of the *thig le dbyings 'chad*.⁷⁰ On the title page of the volume these texts are called *Thig le dbyings ('chad) bsdus pa* and *Thig le byings gyi ti ka* respectively. These titles vary widely from the titles we presented for *The Single and Combined Thigle* (*Thig le rkyang sbag*) in Appendix B: Part 1, and there is no reason to presume that these particular texts are the editions of *The Single and Combined Thigle* together with a commentary that we seek. Nevertheless, as we will see they contain the material that we are looking for in *The Single and Combined Thigle* and thus help us to complete our understanding of the Nine Mirrors as a system. Let us begin by making an inventory of what we know about *The Single and Combined Thigle*.⁷¹

In the quote from the *gSang ba bsen thub* in Section 1.2 we learned that this text:

- 1) Corresponds to the mirror of methods, activities (*spyod pa*) in *The Single and Combined Thigle*.

In the quote from the *bKod pa'i rgyan* in Section 3.2 we learned that:

- 2) This text corresponds to the mirror of the enlightened body (*sku*).

⁶⁸ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974, pp. 78–95. We find another edition of the same text under the title *gSas mkhar rin po che zhi ba dbyings kyi gsang thus* in Tengyur 114—7.

⁶⁹ Compare with: *bsdud bar gzhung dang cha lag dang/ ... bzhung la zhi khro gsang thus sogsl. 'Phrul gyi lde mig*, p. 500.

⁷⁰ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974, pp. 97–138.

⁷¹ While some of what follows is redundant, we include everything we have learned to ensure to the reader that nothing of what we learned will contradict our conclusions.

- 3) This text reveals the immutable principle of the nature of mind (*sems nyid mi 'gyur ba'i don ston pa*).
- 4) Similar teachings may be found in the *sGron ma* or in the present [text] (i.e. the *bKod pa'i rgyan*).

Furthermore, from the *Commentary on Complete Discernment of the Secret Principles* we learn that it:

- 5) Bears the title *dbyings 'chad*⁷² at least as a variant and, when combined with the Cuckoo (*khu byug*), and together with *The Seven Smaller Texts on Mind* makes a cycle of nine minor texts on mind which correspond to the [nine] mirrors.⁷³
- 6) Is a scripture of activities that consist of alternately spreading out the forty-five [thigle] [and then] collecting (*sbrag*) [them together] with the one (*rkyang*) Single *Thigle* (*thig le nyag gcig*) of *bodhicitta*: a mirror of clarifying the practical application (*lag len*) of methods that make the mind pliable.⁷⁴

First we will reiterate that Tshul khrim rgyal mtshan appears to be implicitly describing an equivalence between the *Single and Combined* (*rkyang sbrag*) and [*Thig le*] *dbyings 'chad*.⁷⁵ The title *Thig le dbyings 'chad* is mentioned in numerous places; however an instance of that text, other than the *Thig le dbyings bsdus* that we consider here, has so far also eluded us. Note that the *Thig le dbyings 'chad* is also a discovery of gShen chen Klu dga'. Quoting sGa ston again: "With regard to Inner Tantra: *The Completely Peaceful; The Explanation of the Thigle* (*thig le dbyings 'chad*)."⁷⁶ See *Unearthing Bon*

⁷² As we note in the Conclusions, we have come to question the equivalence between the Nine Mirrors (Section 1.2) and the Nine Minor Texts on Mind (Section 1.1). Nevertheless, what is relevant here is that Tshul khrim blo gros rgyal mtshan apparently thought of them as equivalent, and as a result we can conclude that he is associating the *dByings 'chad* and *rKyang sbrag* for the same text.

⁷³ *gSang don rnam 'byed*, p. 38: *don drug las sgom don gyi cha ru gtong ba'i yan lag ni me long dang mthun pa'i sems phran sde bdun khu byug dbyings 'chad gnyis bcas dgu yis bskor ba de/*. To reiterate: with this statement the most natural interpretation is that he believes that the [*Thig le*] *dbyings 'chad* corresponds with the [*Thig le*] *rkyang sbrag*.

⁷⁴ *gSang don rnam 'byed*, p. 38 (underlining in the following attempts to emulate the original): [*gsal ba ming gis rgyas bar bshad pa ni*] *sems las su rung bar bya ba'i thabs kyi lag len gsal ba'i me long byang chub sems kyi thig le nyag gcig rkyang dril dang zhe lnga dgram ste sbrag res mos su spyod pa'i lung dang/* ... continues on to the other eight mirrors.

⁷⁵ We do not feel that this single mention of the [*Thig le*] *dbyings 'chad* is enough to establish, without doubt, the equivalence between the *Thig le rkyang sbrag* and the *Thig le dbyings 'chad*. One objection to this equivalence is that both the *gSang ba bsen thub* and its commentary, the *bKod pa'i rgyan*, refer to a *Thig le dbyings 'chad* as among the Six Principles (*don drug*). It does seem unlikely that the same text would be counted among the Six Principles and the Nine Mirrors, as the Nine Mirrors are mere auxiliaries to the Six Principles. On the other hand, in both the *Phrul gyi lde mig* of mNyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan and in the *gSang don rnam 'byed kyi 'grel ba* of Tshul khrim rgyal mtshan, it is not the *Thig le dbyings 'chad* but the *Thig le gsum sgril* that is listed among the Six principles. See for example *gSang don rnam 'byed*, p. 37.

⁷⁶ Namgyal, 2009, p. 100: *sngags nang la zhi ba yongs rdzogs/ thig le dbyings chad/*.

*Treasures*⁷⁷ for a good summary of various other references to the *Thig le dbyings 'chad*. In the absence of an edition of either the *thig le dbyings 'chad* or the *thig le rkyang sbrag*, Tshul khrim rgyal mtshan's statements only tell us that we should consider the two texts as highly related.

Second, the *Single and Combined Thigle* is associated with two different mirrors: the mirror of methods (1) and the mirror of the enlightened body (2).

We may also note some reinforced points: Both (1) and (6) associate the text with methods (*thabs*) and activities (*spyod*). Our candidate must not be an instruction manual on non-action and non-meditation.

Let us now systematically consider other elements that should belong to a candidate for *The Single and Combined Thigle* beginning with (3). While we find various references to the nature of mind (*sems nyid*) and immutability (*mi 'gyur ba*) in *Thig le dbyings bsdu pa*, we do not find in the root a pithy teaching that "reveals the immutable principle of the nature of mind." However, in its commentary, the *Thig le dbyings gi ti ga* we find:

As it is the nature of mind that is immutable in the three times, it is "thig."

As it abides entirely pervading the aggregates and sense bases, it is "le."⁷⁸

With regard to (6): Brief as it is, this is the most detailed and specific description of the content of the *Thig le rkyang sbrag* that we have. Specifically, it indicates that the text describes a practice of spreading out from the *Single Thigle* (*Thig le nyag gcig*) to forty-five *thigle* and then gathering back into the *Single Thigle*. First, let us remember that the *Single Thigle* is used as one of the numerous synonyms for the nature of mind. Second, we may immediately recognize that the forty-five *thigle* are associated with the forty-five peaceful deities in the *maṇḍala* of peaceful and wrathful deities. Finally, the process of spreading out and gathering back in is tersely referred to in tantric literature (of all Tibetan Buddhist schools) as emanating (*'phro*) and collecting (*'dus*). Can this practice of emanating out from the *Single Thigle* to the forty-five peaceful deities and then collecting back into the *Single Thigle* be found in the root text of the *Thig le dbyings 'chad*? Indeed, it can. While it's difficult to capture all these elements in a brief quote, we can see the key elements of this process unfold in the following:

Bodhicitta, the *thigle*, the non-duality of emanation and collection. [...]
In the *maṇḍala* that is complete with forty-five,
Through the emanation and collection of the essence mantra and the
emanation and collection (*'dzab*)⁷⁹,
Count!⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *Unearthing Bon Treasures*, 2001, p. 252.

⁷⁸ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974, p. 114: *sems nyid dus gsum du mi 'gyur ba ni thig yin la/ phung po 'kham dang skye mched la khyab bdal du gnas pa ni le yin/*.

⁷⁹ In fact *'dzab* here may imply the entire process of emanation and collection. Compare, *'Phrul gyi lde mig*: p. 518: *'dzab ni bye brag 'pho 'du dang/*

This process of emanation and collection is described in a variety of ways in this text. We feel that this is good evidence that this text at least embodies very similar teachings to *The Single and Combined Thigle*.

Finally, we consider (4): To reiterate, similar teachings may be found in the *sGron ma* or in the present [text] (i.e. the *bKod pa'i rgyan*). We cannot be certain which text the "*sGron ma*" refers to, but it is easy to check to see whether the teachings described in (6), and in more detail immediately above, can be found in the *bKod pa'i rgyan*, and, in fact, the practice of emanation and collection is explained very clearly in the *bKod pa'i rgyan*. Moreover, it is explained much more clearly than in the *Thig le dbyings bsdus*.⁸¹ While we only aimed to simply show that the teachings described in our copy of the *Thig le dbyings 'chad* could be found in the *bKod pa'i rgyan*, we may have shown why it has been so hard to find an instance of *The Single and Combined Thigle*. Any individual wishing to actually engage in the practice of emanating and gathering of the forty-five deities of the *maṇḍala* could find other texts which avoided the many idiosyncracies of the *Thig le dbyings bsdus* — the challenging *dbu med* penmanship of our manuscript, the archaic spellings, and the terse explanations — by simply using another more extensive and "modern" text.

We should note that the *Thig le dbyings gyi ti ka*, apparently based on the same manuscript as appears in the *Drwa ba nag po*,⁸² is included in *The Cycle of the Nine Minor Texts on Mind: Scriptures of the Highest Dzogchen*.⁸³ In the introduction of this book from Triten Norbutse it states that this work is not included in the *Nine Minor Texts on Mind* but it is included because it is a rare text and for the consideration of the learned. Unfortunately, the root text associated with this commentary is not included there.

All of these references to the function and content of the *Thig le rkyang sbag* that we have found are in harmony with the *Thig le dbyings ('chad) bsdus pa*. Thus we believe that the *Thig le dbyings ('chad) bsdus pa* and the *Thig le dbyings gyi ti ga* in the *Drwa ba nag po*⁸⁴ are very useful texts for understanding the most important elements of the *Thig le rkyang sbag* of the Nine Mirrors. We fall short of offering these as candidates for the *Thig le rkyang sbag* and its commentary because we have no basis for choosing these two texts from among a large collection of *zhi khro* literature that also describes the emanation and collection of the *maṇḍala* of peaceful deities.



⁸⁰ 'phro 'du gnyis myed thig le byang chub sems/ ... bzhi bcu rtsa lnga rdzogs pa'i dkyil 'khor du/ 'dzab dang snying po sngags kyi 'phro 'du yis/ gran no/.

⁸¹ For example see "meditation on emanation and gathering", *bKod pa'i rgyan*, 2005, p. 367.

⁸² Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974, pp. 97–138.

⁸³ *Sems smad sde dgu*, 2005, pp. 196–221.

⁸⁴ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, 1974, pp. 78–95.

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smon rgyal lha sras, Editor. theg chen g.yung drung bon gyi bka' 'gyur in 179 volumes. Published by si khron zhing chen par khrun lte gnas par 'debs khang, published in khreng tu'u, 1999. *A Handlist of the Bon Kanjur and Tengyur* corresponds to this edition which is widely available in the electronic (pdf) format due to the efforts of the Bon Foundation.

The Bon Tengyur and its Individual Works

We will reference individual *Tengyur* works using the numbering system of *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*. This edition of the *Tengyur* is also available in the electronic (pdf) format due to the efforts of the Bon Foundation.

Individual Works from the Bon Kangyur

bKa' rgyud skor bzhi

rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan rgyud bka' rgyud skor bzhi, pages 131-644 in *History and doctrine of Bon-po Niṣpanna-yoga: original Tibetan texts on the transmission, teaching, rites, and deities of the Rdzogs chen Zhan Zhun school of the Bon-po's*, Collected by Tenzin Namdak and Lokesh Chandra, Sata-pitaka series; Volume 73, International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi 1968.12 pages.

Also, Kangyur Volume 171 in *A Handlist of the Bon Kanjur and Tengyur*.

sGrags pa skor gsum

bZhod sTon dNgos Grub, rdzogs pa chen po sgrags pa skor gsum. Kangyur volume 174 in *A Handlist of the Bon Kanjur and Tengyur*. Another edition is cataloged as text number 207 in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*.

Byang chub sems kyi smyu gu gab pa dgu skor

gShen chen Klu dga', rdzogs pa chen po byang chub sems kyi smyu gu gab pa dgu skor. Kangyur Volume 172 as cataloged in *A Handlist of the Bon Kanjur and Tengyur*. See Appendix A for a table of contents.

A related, though not identical, volume that contains the root text as well as other texts related to the *Gab pa dgu skor* is also cataloged as running text 99 in *A Catalog of the Bon Kanjur*.

(*Byang sems gab pa dgu skor gyi rtsa 'grel, etext*)

As of this writing, the *Byang sems gab pa dgu skor* together with two commentaries may be found on-line as a pdf file at: <http://himalayabon.gotoip2.com/article/book/books/20100707218.html>

http://himalayabon.gotoip2.com/up_files/2010-7-9/2010070920251113.pdf

We will name individual sections as follows. Page numbers refer to pages in the pdf:

(*Byang sems gab pa dgu skor, etext*)

This is the root text, pages 1—80.

(*Sems lung gab pa dgu skor gyi 'grel ba rgya cher bshad pa, etext*)

This is the extensive commentary, pages 81—488.

(*Byang sems gab pa sa bcad, etext*)

This is the root text, pages 489—498.

(*Byang sems gab pa'i 'grel ba kun bzang gi dgongs pa gsal byed nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor, etext*)

This is the commentary by mNyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan, pages 499—748.

gSang ba bsen thub

Gab pa thugs kyi brnag pa, khro rgyud gsang ba bsen thub. Volume 145 as cataloged in *A Handlist of the Bon Kanjur and Tengyur*.

Also: volume 193-7 of the *Bon Tengyur* as cataloged in *A Catalogue of the New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*.

gSang ba bsen thub (2004)

gSas mkhar rin po che spyi spungs gsang ba bsen thub kyi rgyud dang 'grel b yid bzhin rnam par bkod pa'i rgyan. Bon Dialectic School, Solan, H.P., 2004. References throughout this paper are to this convenient edition written in *dbu can* script.

bKod pa'i rgyan (2004)

gSang ba bsen thub rgyud dang 'grel pa yid bzhin rnam par bkod pa'i rgyan. Gyung drung bongyi bshad sgrub 'dus-sde, Solan, H.P., 2004.

gSang ba bsen thub (1973)

'A zha Blo gros rgyal mtshan, *rTsa rgyud chen po gsang ba bsen thub kyi 'grel pa rin po che yid bzhin rnam par bkod pa'i rgyan dang bcas pa*, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, H.P., 1973.

gSang ba bsen thub (etext)

As of this writing, the *gSang ba bsen thub* and the *bKod pa'i rgyan* may be found on-line as a pdf file at:

<http://himalayabon.gotoip2.com/article/book/books/20100707218.html>

http://himalayabon.gotoip2.com/up_files/2010-7-9/2010070920021576.pdf

Works by or related to Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen

Enlightened Rainbows

Jean-Luc Achard, *Enlightened Rainbows*, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2008. 496 pages.

This work gives a useful numbering of every text in Shardza's writings. These numbers will be applied below with the usage "ER number(s) X-Y" indicates texts X through Y of *Enlightened Rainbows*.

The Treasury of Good Sayings

Samten G. Karmay, *The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon*, London Oriental Series volume 26, Oxford University Press, London, 1972.

We had two editions of Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's collected works at our disposal. One is an edition printed from blocks carved at sDe dge rdza steng chen dgon. The second is a modern typeset edition that follows page for page the woodblock edition but with different page numbers (e.g. 001 rather than 301). This edition is cataloged in *A Handlist of the Bon Kanjur and Tengyur*.

dByings rig mdzod, volume 1

Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen, *dByings rig rin po che'i mdzod (stod cha)*, Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness, volume 1 of Shardza's collected works. ER1. Also, *Tengyur* volume 278 as cataloged in *A Handlist of the Bon Kanjur and Tengyur*.

dByings rig mdzod, volume 2

Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen, *dByings rig rin po che'i mdzod (smad cha)*, Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness, volume 2 of Shardza's collected works. ER2. Also, *Tengyur* volume 279 as cataloged in *A Handlist of the Bon Kanjur and Tengyur*.

Other Tibetan Language Texts

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Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, editor. *sPyi spungs rin po che a dkar gsang sngags kyi bka' srung drwa ba nag po'i rgyud skor*, Tibetan Buddhist Monastic Center, Solan, HP, 1974.

A text entitled *gSas 'khar rin po che spyi spung sgron ma gsal ba'i tan tra las ngang thag bskal pa'i sgron ma ston* is somewhat incongruously included on pages 1–30 of this book. This book also includes: *Zhi ba rin po che thig le dbyings kyi 'phrin las* (pages 31–75), *Thig le dyings ('chad) bsdus pa* (pages 78–95), and *Thig le dbyings gyi ti ga* (pages 97–138).

brGyud rim:

dBra ston Ngag dbang sKal bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, sKu gsum ston pa'i gsung rab bka' 'gyur rin po che'i lung rgyun ji snyed pa phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i bzhugs byang brgyud rim bcas pa dri med shel gyi phreng ba, contained in second edition of *Bon Kanjur*, vol. 103, pp. 1–369 (*A Catalogue of the Bon Kanjur* catalogs this under running number 91).

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